



Northeastern University Faculty Senate

TO: The Faculty Senate
FROM: Secretary of the Faculty Senate
SUBJECT: Minutes, 20 November, 2024

Present: Professors Adams, Alexis, Bhutta, Bloom, Carr, Chiou, Di Credico, Diani, DiBattista, Dicristina, Eckelman, Godoy-Carter, Hamandi, Herron, Hill, Hodeghatta, Homan, Ingemi, Ivanova, Kahn, Kevoe Feldman, Lahr, Landsmark, Lykourino, Mellette, Molnar, Parameswaran, Rappaport, Rawson, Rejtar, Shrivastava, Sivak, Spencer, Stefanik, Strange, Tjiptowidjojo, Toledano Laredo, Triest, Un, Viola, Walker J., Walker L., West.

Administrators: Madigan, De Cremer, Dyal-Chand, Isaacs, Gallagher, Jackson, Tsai.

Absent: (Professors) Lowrey

Absent: (Administrators)

Call To Order: 11:45 a.m.

I. **SAC REPORT:** (The SAC Report has been posted on Senate Website.)

- Professor Dee Spencer, SAC Secretary, (DMSB) noted that since the last senate meeting SAC has met 3 times and has met with the Provost once. SAC met with elected senators on Nov. 6th.
- The 2024 Faculty Senate Standing Committees Fall Survey is out and closes on Fri., Nov. 22nd.
- The 2025 Klein Lecture Award call for nominations has been sent out. The deadline is Fri., Dec. 6th. Send nominations to the facultysenate@northeastern.edu.

II. **PROVOST REPORT.**

- The Northeastern Faculty & Staff News Hub conducted an interview with Provost Madigan regarding a number of topics, including issues discussed at the Faculty Senate.
- There is a lot of activity at the university related to AI. There is new website regarding AI: <https://ai.northeastern.edu>. There is also an AI guide from External Affairs that addresses branding and messaging.
- Overall, affinity groups are thriving. There is a new affinity group for Middle Eastern and North African faculty and staff.
- Professor Hanumanth Singh, COE - Electrical and Computer Engineering, is the new director for the Institute for Experiential Robotics.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Professor Justin Mellett (CSSH) : Faculty are concerned about benefit changes, including health premium increases, the reduction in camp days from Care.com, and the lack of a replacement for the home buying service partnership Landed.com.

Professor Mellett (CSSH): What are administration's goals for improving benefits in the coming years?

Provost Madigan: A new task force will be reviewing these issues.

Northeastern endeavors to be to be competitive with our benefits packages. We look carefully at what our peers are doing. Housing has been a problem. It is difficult to devise something that is meaningful but affordable. High interest rates impeded the success of Landed.com.

Michele Grazulis, Vice President of Human Resources, met with SAC Chair, Heidi Kevoe-Feldman. Someone from HR will be assigned to the HR Benefits Task Force to work on these issues. Benefit premiums increase annually, nationally.

Professor Louise Walker (CSSH): At the CSSH assembly 2 weeks ago, the Provost said that the continued focus on the Safe Campus Civil Discourse FAQ was a distraction. Professor Louise Walker worries that the Provost is underestimating the damage that has been done. Faculty have described the effect of the FAQ as chilling and are worried that the administration will not stand up for academic freedom and free expression. Faculty want to know if there have been any consequences for the people who wrote and approved the FAQ because the content suggests that they either misunderstand or disregard the core mission of the university.

Provost Madigan: Extensive edits to the FAQs were made as soon as faculty concerns were raised. Procedures were put in place to prevent future misalignment between FAQs, policy and the Faculty Handbook.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

A. ACADEMIC PROPOSAL: UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE PROGRAM IN THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST.

Professor Spencer read the following:

Resolution #1.

BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish the [Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting](#), BFA in the Office of the Provost as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee 9 October, 2024 (16-0-0).

Mike Jackson, Vice Provost of Curriculum and Programs: All of these degree programs are being presented as teach out programs for the potential merger with Marymount Manhattan College. These programs are currently highly enrolled at Marymount, and Northeastern wants to ensure that students are able to complete their degrees once the merger has been finalized. These programs will not be enrolling new students, post-merger.

If, post-merger, the university decides to keep the BFA in Acting, the program would go to the College of Arts, Media and Design. A full program review would be conducted. These students would graduate with a degree from CAMD because the Provost Office can't award degrees.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Professor Laney Strange (Khoury): Why are these programs being housed in the Provost's Office, rather than in CAMD? And if they are so popular at Marymount, why would we assume they would go away?

Vice Provost Jackson: They will be housed in the Provost's Office because the programs need to maintain the same courses and academic structure as the programs at Marymount. Because the Department of Education will review the merger, we cannot impose programmatic changes. This also allows us to track those students more effectively.

Vice Provost Jackson: Not aware of any conversations at this point in the merger process about which programs should be continued.

Professors Averett and Lahr (Mills): Could colleges other than CAMD absorb these programs post-merger?

Vice Provost Jackson: I do not have a good answer to that question. The majority of the focus to date has been on navigating the regulatory compliance and accreditation issues related to the merger. The merger could take place in six months or two years.

Professor Rappaport moved to vote on the resolution.

Professor Landmark seconded.

VOTE on the resolution **PASSED**: 29-7-5.

B. ACADEMIC PROPOSAL: UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE PROGRAM IN THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST.

Professor Spencer (DMSB) read the following:

Resolution #2.

BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish the [Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing](#), BFA in the Office of the Provost as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee 9 October, 2024 (16-0-0).

Vice Provost Jackson: This is another program offered as a teach out. The degree would be granted by the College of Social Sciences and Humanities.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Professor Walker (CSSH) asked Dean Elizabeth Hudson (CAMD) about the extent to which CAMD was involved in this plan.

Dean Elizabeth Hudson (CAMD): She had no objections to these programs, or the way they had been vetted. She understood that Vice Provost Jackson had to have a streamlined process. But she had not been consulted about the decision to run the program out of the Provost's Office then award the degree from CAMD.

Vice Provost Jackson: There is an urgency to get these programs to the Board of Trustees for their December 5th meeting. We intended to create a streamlined approach to get

programs that Northeastern does not offer through a governance timeline that will hold students harmless if the merger happens in August 2025.

Vice Provost Sheahan: The passage and timing of these programs affect regulatory filings with multiple agencies for the merger.

Professor Ocampo-Guzman, Chair of the Theatre Department: proposed to amend all the arts-related program proposals to add the language “in close collaboration with the College of Arts, Media and Design.”

Professor Carr (AMD) moved the amendment.
Professor Landsmark (CSSH) seconded the motion.

Motion **PASSED**: 35-3-2.

Resolution #1 was revisited with the amended language.

Professor Spencer (DMSB) read the following:

BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting, BFA in the Office of the Provost in close collaboration with the College of Arts Media and Design as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee 9 October, 2024 (16-0-0)

VOTE on the resolution **PASSED**: 35-3-3.

Professor Spencer (DMSB) revisited resolution #2 with the amended language:

Resolution #2.

BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish the [Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing](#), BFA in the Office of the Provost as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee 9 October, 2024 (16-0-0).

VOTE on the resolution **PASSED**: 27-5-7.

C. ACADEMIC PROPOSAL: UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE PROGRAM IN THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST.

Professor Spencer (DMSB) read the following:

Resolution #3.

BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish the Bachelor of Arts in Dance, BA in the Office of the Provost in close collaboration with the College of Arts Media and Design as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee 9 October, 2024 (16-0-0)

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

There were no questions.

VOTE on the resolution **PASSED** 35-3-4.

D. ACADEMIC PROPOSAL: UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE PROGRAM IN THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST.

Professor Spencer (DMSB) read the following:

Resolution #4.

BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance, BFA in the Office of the Provost in close collaboration with the College of Arts Media and Design as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee 9 October, 2024 (16-0-0)

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

There were no questions.

VOTE on the resolution **PASSED: 33-3-6.**

E. ACADEMIC PROPOSAL: UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE PROGRAM IN THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST.

F.

Professor Spencer (DMSB) read the following:

Resolution #5.

BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre, BFA in the Office of the Provost in close collaboration with the College of Arts Media and Design as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee 9 October, 2024 (16-0-0)

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

There were no questions.

VOTE on the resolution **PASSED: 35-2-4.**

G. ACADEMIC PROPOSAL: UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE PROGRAM IN THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST.

Professor Spencer (DMSB) read the following:

Resolution #6.

BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Design, Technology, and Stage Management, BFA in the Office of the Provost in close collaboration with the College of Arts Media and Design as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee 23 October, 2024 (19-0-0)

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

There were no questions.

VOTE on the resolution **PASSED: 34-3-5.**

H. ACADEMIC PROPOSAL: UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE PROGRAM IN THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST.

Professor Spencer (DMSB) read the following:

Resolution #7.

BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish the [Associate of Arts in Social Sciences](#), AA in the Office of the Provost as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee 23 October, 2024 (19-0-0).

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

There were no questions.

VOTE on the resolution **PASSED:** 30-7-4.

Before moving to the next resolution, Professor Spencer (DMSB) acknowledged Professor Louise Walker (CSSH), to speak about the Academic Freedom Resolutions.

Professor Walker (CSSH): The proposed resolutions were updated versions of the resolution that she presented at the last Senate meeting. The original resolution had been developed by a large group of faculty and brought to her by Professor Sri Sridhar (COS) and Professor Kris Manjapra (CSSH). Since that time, Professor Walker worked with Professor Spencer (DMSB) the SAC secretary, and Professor Sridhar (COS) to fine-tune the language. The resolutions have also been discussed in Elected Senators meetings. She thanked everyone who had been involved for their help.

I. RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AGENDA COMMITTEE TO CREATE AN ACADEMIC FREEDOM AD HOC COMMITTEE.

Professor Spencer (DMSB) read the following:

Resolution #8.

WHEREAS Section 2 of the Faculty Senate Bylaws of the Northeastern University Faculty Handbook establishes the Functions and Responsibilities of the Faculty Senate:

- b. To be consulted as either a whole body or in appropriate committees on all policies, proposals, and problems of faculty concern, including such matters as the creation of new colleges, new campuses, and new departments;
- d. To initiate consideration and recommendation on any matter of faculty concern; and
- f. To provide communication between the University faculty and the Administration;

WHEREAS the Administration made changes to Policy Number 617: Policy on Demonstrations without consulting the Faculty Senate;

WHEREAS the Academic Freedom Module of the Northeastern University Faculty Handbook states that Northeastern University subscribes to the *1940 Statement of Principles of Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure* issued by the American Association of University Professors and the Association of American Colleges, as amended in 1970;

WHEREAS existing policy language in the Statement on Free Expression in the Academic Freedom module of the Faculty Handbook is outdated and inconsistent with the recent statements of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), which robustly protect academic and extramural speech, controversial discourse, and peaceful protest;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the University Faculty Senate calls for the strengthening of policy language in the Faculty Handbook in the Statement on Free Expression, aligning it with the latest standards of the AAUP to ensure protection for all forms of academic expression and to prevent undue administrative interference in areas of teaching, research, and faculty autonomy;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, effective immediately, the Senate Agenda Committee will create an Academic Freedom Ad Hoc Committee. The Academic Freedom Ad Hoc Committee will review the existing policy language in the Statement on Free Expression in the Academic Freedom module of the Faculty Handbook, as well as Policy Number 617: Policy on Demonstrations, and make specific recommendations for improvements, including recommendations designed to improve shared governance.

Professor Spencer asked for a motion on this resolution.

Professor Carey Rappoport (COE) motioned to move the motion.

Professor Robert Triest (CSSH) seconded the motion.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION: There were no questions.

VOTE on the resolution **PASSED:** 37-0-2.

J. RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AGENDA COMMITTEE AFFIRMING FACULTY SENATE COMMITMENT TO FREE SPEECH.

Professor Spencer (DMSB) read the following:

Resolution #9.

WHEREAS Section 2 of the Faculty Senate Bylaws of the Northeastern University Faculty Handbook establishes the Functions and Responsibilities of the Faculty Senate:

- b. To be consulted as either a whole body or in appropriate committees on all policies, proposals, and problems of faculty concern, including such matters as the creation of new colleges, new campuses, and new departments;
- d. To initiate consideration and recommendation on any matter of faculty concern; and

- f. To provide communication between the University faculty and the Administration;

WHEREAS freedom of speech and freedom of expression are matters of faculty concern: they are foundational commitments of the university, essential to the protection of democratic values, academic excellence, and the nurturing of a non-punitive and inclusive environment for learning and research;

WHEREAS faculty have raised serious concerns about the fact that, in the spring of 2024, the Administration created and published, without consultation with the Faculty Senate, "Northeastern Global News: Safe Campuses, Civil Discourse: Frequently Asked Questions," which contained the Administration's answers to questions about freedom of speech and freedom of expression

WHEREAS faculty have reported that many of the answers in "Northeastern Global News: Safe Campuses, Civil Discourse: Frequently Asked Questions," chilled free expression within the university community; encouraged a surveillance atmosphere that hampered faculty core roles in research, teaching, and democratic discourse; eroded faculty governance; contributed to a hostile, rather than collaborative, relationship between the Administration and the faculty; and lead to inequitable burdens on some faculty, including those with less secure employment, women, and people of color;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the University Faculty Senate affirms its commitment to defending faculty's, staff's, and students' rights to freedom of speech, association, and assembly, both within the academic setting and as participants in wider societal discourse, without fear of retaliation, surveillance, or disciplinary measures;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the University Faculty Senate calls for the Administration to involve the Faculty Senate in the formulation and publication of any policies and external communications affecting freedom of speech.

Professor Carr (CAMD) motioned to move this resolution.

Professor Lahr (Mills) seconded the motion.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION: There were no questions.

VOTE on the resolution **PASSED:** 37-0-3.

K. RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AGENDA COMMITTEE TO ADD A FACULTY SENATE MEMBER TO THE POLICY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.

Professor Spencer (DMSB) read the following:

Resolution #10.

WHEREAS Section 2 of the Faculty Senate Bylaws of the Northeastern University Faculty Handbook establishes the Functions and Responsibilities of the Faculty Senate:

- b. To be consulted as either a whole body or in appropriate committees on all policies, proposals, and problems of faculty concern, including such matters as the

creation of new colleges, new campuses, and new departments;

- d. To initiate consideration and recommendation on any matter of faculty concern; and
- f. To provide communication between the University faculty and the Administration

WHEREAS the Northeastern University Policy Oversight Committee creates university policies of faculty concern;

WHEREAS no Northeastern University Faculty Senator is a member of the Northeastern University Policy Oversight Committee;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Senate Agenda Committee will annually appoint one Faculty Senator to serve on the University Policy Oversight Committee for that academic year.

Professor Bhutta motioned to move this resolution.

Professor Landsmark seconded the motion.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Provost Madigan indicated that the Senate would not appoint a member of to the Policy Oversight Committee, but would nominate a member to that committee, which he would then appoint.

Professor Spencer made a motion for a friendly amendment to change the word “appoint” in the resolution to “nominate.”

Professor Rappaport seconded the motion.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION AROUND THE PROPOSED CHANGE:

Professor Bhutta (Khoury): Why not nominate a faculty member from each college to serve on the Policy Oversight Committee?

Professor Spencer (DMSB): It is not a voting committee; our purpose would be to gather and offer perspective. A faculty member would represent the perspective of faculty.

Sr. Vice Provost Franko: There is one representative from each of the units on the Policy Oversight Committee, so it make sense if we call the faculty or the Faculty Senate one unit as well.

Professor Kahn, the senate Parliamentarian said the proposed amendment could be adopted without a vote as long as there were no objections.

There were no objections.

The revised resolution read as follows:

WHEREAS Section 2 of the Faculty Senate Bylaws of the Northeastern University Faculty Handbook establishes the Functions and Responsibilities of the Faculty Senate:

- b. To be consulted as either a whole body or in appropriate committees on all policies, proposals, and problems of faculty concern, including such matters as the creation of new colleges, new campuses, and new departments;
- d. To initiate consideration and recommendation on any matter of faculty concern; and
- f. To provide communication between the University faculty and the Administration;

WHEREAS the Northeastern University Policy Oversight Committee creates university policies of faculty concern;

WHEREAS no Northeastern University Faculty Senator is a member of the Northeastern University Policy Oversight Committee;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Senate Agenda Committee will annually nominate one Faculty Senator to serve on the University Policy Oversight Committee for that academic year.

VOTE on the resolution **PASSED** 39-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Professor Dee Spencer