



Northeastern University Faculty Senate

TO: The Faculty Senate
FROM: Secretary of the Faculty Senate
SUBJECT: Minutes, 12 March, 2025

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

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

Absent: (Professors): Eckelman, Parameswaran, Rappaport, Rejtar, Un.

Absent: (Administrators):

Call To Order: 11:45 a.m.

I. **SAC REPORT.**

(The SAC report has been posted on the senate website.)

- Reminder to vote on the Ratification of Proposed Bylaws amendments that closes on March 14.
- Reminder that the Northeastern New Political Landscape FAQs are continuously updated.
- Announcement of Faculty Senate Distinguished Service Award. A new annual recognition that honors exceptional contributions to shared governance through outstanding service in the Faculty Senate.

II. **PROVOST REPORT.**

Provost Madigan noted that higher education is facing significant headwinds of various kinds. Notwithstanding the university's overall healthy financial situation, the university is not immune to these headwinds.

Specific concerns include the threat to reduce the rate for indirect research costs and threats to research funding in general.

There is uncertainty regarding federal financial aid and the Department of Education. There are concerns about international students, visas, travel bans, and the overall attractiveness of the United States to international students. For these reasons, as well as market conditions in the professional graduate space, competition has slowed considerably.

Dozens of universities around the country are experiencing hiring freezes, potential layoffs and reducing graduate admissions.

The Provost said that dozens of people are working on the FY26 budget. The overarching goal is to protect the academic mission and the core values of the university. The budget will be built using conservative projections for revenue growth.

The university is going through the permitting process to rebuild Matthews Arena.

Four floors in Renaissance Park that were previously rented out will be turned into as many as 40 classrooms.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

- Professor Strange (Khoury): What is the timeline for communicating with the deans and colleges about any budget changes for FY26? This would affect faculty hiring. Is the university prioritizing supporting our most vulnerable faculty, students, and staff (international and gender diverse folks)?

Provost Madigan: They are working on the budget as quickly as possible.

Provost Madigan: Part of the university's core mission is to take care of everyone in our community, especially the vulnerable members.

- Professor Spencer (DMSB): Has the university lost any research funding yet? Is there a percentage of the portfolio that seems questionable?

Provost Madigan: A couple of USAID grants were cancelled. There were a few other subcontracts that were cancelled or paused. No NSF or DOD funded projects have been affected yet. We are cautiously optimistic that existing grants can be completed.

- Professor Homan (COS): COS and CSSH are due for their equity adjustments this year. Is the process going forward? She heard there is a hiring freeze in the COS that may have been directed by the Provost's Office.

Provost Madigan: we currently intend to proceed with equity adjustments, but the FY26 budget has not been finalized yet. There is no hiring freeze at this time, but we have slowed things considerably.

- Professor Ivanova: RE: graduate/post graduate students, those who have lost federal jobs will need to retool to better position themselves. Perhaps NU could create an AI certificate in policy or governance, for example.

Provost Madigan: This is a brilliant idea, particularly given our campus in Arlington VA. There are people working on this.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

A. ACADEMIC PROPOSAL: UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE PROGRAM

IN THE COLLEGE of ARTS, MEDIA AND DESIGN.

Professor Carr read the following:

BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish the Bachelor of Arts in [Film and Creative Media](#) in the College of Arts, Media and Design as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee 29 January 2025 (18-0-0).

Professor Carr: They have been working on this program for 5+ years. Students and faculty are very excited about it. Within Communication Studies and Media and Screen Studies, there is a production minor and a film minor. They are looking to combine that curriculum and expand it to involve more departments within CAMD.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

There were no questions.

The VOTE on the resolution PASSED: 42-1-0.

B. REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.

The committee's detailed final report and an updated version of the Oct. 2024 presentation are posted on the senate website.

Professor Kevoe-Feldman acknowledged Professor Apoo Koticha, committee chair.

The committee's presentation focused on the first of three charges:

1. Propose a merit pool increase for faculty compensation.
2. Review match-mate institution data provided by NU.
3. Compare salary raises and make recommendations for 2025 merit raises for full-time faculty.

Compared to the average across all our match mate institutions (without any COLA adjustment), Northeastern average salary is 3.8% below the match mate average.

NU average salary is 13.5% below the average salary of institutions in close proximity to NU (like Boston University and Boston College). It is hard for some faculty to live independently on their income.

Originally the committee proposed a salary increase of 8.4%. Since October, the situation in higher education has changed. As a result, the committee proposes that the 8.4% increase be spread out over two years.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

- Professor Shrivastava (COE): Our enrollments are increasing but our faculty numbers are not. NTT faculty are taking on greater teaching loads.

- Professor Shrivastava (COE): Faculty are told there are financial constraints on raises. We should see if administrator raises are comparable to faculty raises. ProPublica publishes the top administrator salaries.

Professor Toledano (COS): Faculty are consistently asked to practice fiscal hygiene and tighten their belts and slow down hiring; meanwhile the salaries of top administrators seem higher than comparable institutions.

Professor Sridhar (COS): There is a disconnect between the data we get from the University Fact book that boasts growing enrollments and booming revenues and what we are being told now: that there is a budget crunch, so faculty will not get the raises that are due to us. Why are we in a financial crunch? We have asked but we still don't have any clear answers.

- Professor Koticha: Last year, one of our charges was to look at the retirement plan. The Financial Affairs Committee asked if the chair of the Finance Group at DMSB (who is an expert in investment for retirement and advises many other universities about best practices) could participate as a non-voting member in the group that makes decisions about retirement plans and we were told that she could not.

Professor Sridhar added that this is a \$2 billion retirement plan with about 9,000 participants.

Professor Heidi Kevoe-Feldman called for a vote on the resolution.

WHEREAS the faculty salaries at all levels are up to 20% below Boston area match mates based on AAUP salary data,

BE IT RESOLVED that the recommended raise pool for merit be 8.4%, at a minimum, and that it be implemented in two equal parts, for FY 2026 and FY 2027.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Provost develop a plan to align faculty salaries with Boston area match mates.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Professor Dee Spencer