



Northeastern University Faculty Senate

TO: The Faculty Senate
FROM: Secretary of the Faculty Senate
SUBJECT: Minutes, 26 March, 2025

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

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

Absent: (Professors): Chiou, Ivanov, Parameswaran, Lowrey, Viola.

Absent: (Administrators):

Call To Order: 11:45 a.m.

I. SAC REPORT.

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

- Prof. Kevoe Feldman noted that the change to the Faculty Senate Bylaws has passed a university wide vote on 3_14_25.
- She shared a call for nominees for the Faculty Senate Distinguished Service Award. Nominations can be sent to: tinyurl.com/serveaward2025. The deadline is Friday, April 4, 2025.

II. PROVOST REPORT.

Provost Madigan noted that they are monitoring the situation regarding funding agencies very carefully. At this point, the university hasn't been severely impacted by some of the terminations.

The FAQ that is linked from the university homepage is updated regularly and provides a single source where you can see various issues being discussed.

The Provost reiterated that the core values around academic freedom in the Faculty Handbook and as contained in the academic plan have not changed.

The Provost highlighted the FAQ has information on who to call if an immigration official comes to campus; faculty and staff can call 617_373_1234 or email OGCimmigration@northeastern.edu. All RA's at student residences, have been trained and know about this.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

- Professor Toledano asked if Northeastern is planning to take a stand and make an external communication collaboration with other universities regarding freedom of speech or to cuts in federal funding, or both.

Provost Madigan said the university is in very close contact with other universities including the G14, a group of peer universities, there is no specific communication planned at this minute with other universities.

- Prof. Strange said there is a lack of clarity across colleges as to what is restricted in terms of the budget. Can the Provost work on bringing some clarity to this.

Provost Madigan noted that the university is going into FY26 where the budget has to be fairly flat as opposed to FY25. It's all about academic priorities and making sure we protect the academic mission and core activities of the university

III. NEW BUSINESS:

A. REPORT OF THE TRACE AD HOC COMMITTEE (PROF. STEVE LUSTIG).

Both the TRACE report and presentation have been posted to the senate website. Prof. Lustig reviewed the committee's charges, resulting resolutions and recommendations.

B. TRACE RESOLUTION #1.

Prof. Lustig read the following:

WHEREAS students are given neither a definition nor a rubric for the meaning and measurement of "effective teaching", and

WHEREAS a meaningful TRACE question must be composed as a precise and unambiguous query, appropriate for the students' training, that focuses on specific behaviors (actions) and outcomes, and seek an objective response that does not elicit bias, and

WHEREAS the TRACE question "What is your overall rating of this instructor's teaching effectiveness?" does not meet all these criteria, and

WHEREAS "effective teaching" is defined in pedagogical literature in terms of (1) the instructor using effective teaching practices (actions) and (2) the instructor enabling the achievement of the intended course learning outcomes,

BE IT RESOLVED that the TRACE question "What is your overall rating of this instructor's teaching effectiveness?" be removed from the TRACE survey, and substituted with multiple questions that query (1) the instructor using specific effective teaching practices (actions) and (2) the instructor enabling the achievement of the intended course learning outcomes, each question being composed as a precise and unambiguous query, appropriate for the students' training, and that focuses on specific behaviors (actions) and outcomes, and seek an objective response that does not elicit bias.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Prof. Rappaport commended the committee for a very impressive presentation. He liked that the committee identified problems and found areas for improvement.

Prof. West also commended the committee for a very thorough report.

Prof. Homan said when going through the promotion process typically you put together a teaching table which lists the instructor effectiveness score. If that goes away, is the committee proposing to change it out to being like measurement of learning outcomes?

Prof. Lustig said that wasn't in their charge – but if you needed one number you could take the average though he isn't a proponent of that.

Prof. Homan recommended a future committee could revisit that question.

The vote on the resolution PASSED: 43_0_0.

C. TRACE RESOLUTION #2:

Prof. Lustig read the following:

BE IT RESOLVED that the TRACE survey be revised to the structure and content presented as Appendix C according to the recommendations provided in this report.

APPENDIX C: Recommended Revised TRACE Survey Questions

You are encouraged to evaluate this class based on its content, your engagement with the material, and your mastery of intended course outcomes, and the instructor's actions, rather than any unrelated attributes. Given the intended use of the TRACE to enhance teaching, we welcome student comments that are thoughtful, professional, constructive, and considerate.

Student reflection

1. How often did you attend this class?

- 80-100%
- 60-80%
- 40-60%
- 20-40%
- 1-20%

2. The number of hours per week I devoted to this course outside scheduled class meeting times.

- More than 10
- 8-10
- 5-7
- 3-4
- 0-2

3. What could I have done to make this course better for myself?

Course-related questions

4. The syllabus was accurate and helpful in delineating expectations and course outcomes.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

5. Required and additional course materials were helpful in achieving course outcomes.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Learning-related questions

6. Class sessions (in person or online, or any other type of class meeting) were helpful for learning.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

7. I met the learning outcomes for the course.

- Met all
- Met most
- Met some
- Met few
- Met none

8. My grades in this course reflect my mastery of the course learning outcomes.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

9. This class had the expected amount of rigor in relation to the learning outcomes.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10. The classroom conditions (i.e., time of day, class size, exterior noise, less aesthetic environment) negatively impacted my learning and achievement of learning outcomes.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree

- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Instructor-related questions

11. The instructor explained how I would be graded in this course.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

12. The instructor helped the class identify ways to master the learning outcomes.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

13. The instructor created opportunities for me to be engaged in class.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

14. The instructor promoted a classroom environment that enables learning.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

15. The instructor clearly communicated ideas and information.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

16. What did the instructor do well?

17. What could be improved about the course?

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Prof. DiCristina referenced questions 11 & 17, asking how would that work in regards to team taught courses.

Prof. Lustig said that he would expect that you could have a TRACE for each instructor.

And if that is for some reason not possible, there is room in the essay questions about what did the instructor do well. And if there were multiple instructors, the student could comment on each.

Prof. Spencer said the addition of the question “How often did you attend this class” was great. She also said she has received several faculty complaints about students who drop a class late are still allowed to give feedback on faculty. Since this is something this current committee didn’t review a future committee should look at that.

Prof. Tijptowidjojo asked if students who have been caught cheating and reported to OSCCR for academic violations shouldn’t be allowed to fill out a TRACE evaluation for the instructor.

Prof. Lustig said this wasn’t in their charge but is a good point and should be reviewed by future committee.

The vote on the resolution PASSED: 44_0_0.

D. TRACE RESOLUTION #3:

Prof. Lustig read the following:

WHEREAS student evaluations of teaching have been established to be subject to bias,

BE IT RESOLVED that TRACE survey results be used as one component in more comprehensive assessment of teaching effectiveness in faculty merit, promotion, and tenure processes that includes peer evaluations and instructors’ teaching reflections.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

There were no questions.

The vote on the resolution PASSED: 44_0_0.

E. TRACE RESOLUTION #4:

Prof. Lustig read the following:

WHEREAS recent TRACE data aids students in choosing courses and enables instructor accountability, and

WHEREAS distant TRACE data do not necessarily reflect more recent teaching and course outcomes, and

WHEREAS limiting students’ access to distant TRACE data limits pre-conceptual bias and encourages instructors to experiment with new and improved methods,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate work with the TRACE vendor such that historical TRACE survey results be made available to students for 2 years prior of the current academic year.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Prof. Triest asked what happens when instructors change the courses that they're offering on a fairly regular basis? In a given year, it might have been three years since the instructor last taught that particular course.

Prof. Lustig said it might be that it's not just two years prior to the current academic year, but it could be described as two years of the course being taught from the prior academic year.

A friendly amendment added:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate work with the TRACE vendor such that historical TRACE survey results be made available to students for 2 years prior of the current academic year, or the last 2 times the instructor has taught the course, or extend longer than 2 years.

Prof. Spencer made a motion to approve the amendment.

Prof. Rappaport seconded.

The amendment was approved.

The vote on the resolution PASSED: 42_1_1.

F. TRACE RESOLUTION #5:

Prof. Lustig read the following:

WHEREAS recent TRACE data aids students in choosing courses and enables instructor accountability, and

WHEREAS distant TRACE data do not necessarily reflect more recent teaching and course outcomes, and

WHEREAS limiting students' access to distant TRACE data limits preconceptional bias and encourages instructors to experiment with new and improved methods, and

WHEREAS TRACE data made available to the students offer a biased perspective because the data do not include supporting response statements from the instructors,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate work with the TRACE vendor such that instructors have the optional opportunity to include their own response statements with the TRACE survey results made available to the students.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

There were no questions.

The vote on the resolution PASSED: 43_1_0.

G. TRACE RESOLUTION #6:

Prof. Lustig read the following:

WHEREAS high participation rates in TRACE surveys increase statistical validity of results,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate work with the TRACE vendor such that university, colleges, departments, and instructors can automate incentives to students to submit complete and thoughtful TRACE surveys.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

There were no questions and discussion.

The vote on the resolution PASSED: 42_2_0.

H. REPORT OF THE GLOBAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE - PROF. NIKOS PASSAS.

The GEC final report and presentation are posted to the senate website.

Prof. Passas reviewed the charges and recommendations made by the committee. Among the committees work they worked with the Provost's Office to develop a plan to build an online dashboard to streamline college activities across Northeastern's Global Network.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Prof. Ivanova wanted to mention interdisciplinary sabbaticals across the global campus. This is something where faculty could have a whole year of sabbatical when appointed across 2 colleges. They tried this year to have an interdisciplinary sabbatical with London but there are no procedures in place.

I. REPORT OF NUPATH AD HOC COMMITTEE - PROF. BRIAN O'CONNELL.

The final report of the NUPath committee has been posted to the Senate website.

Prof. O'Connell reviewed the committees charges and recommendations.

J. PRESENTATION:

**ALEXIS O. GOLTRA, CHIEF PRIVACY OFFICER AND SENIOR PRIVACY ATTORNEY
UNIVERSITY POLICY ON THE USE OF AI SYSTEMS**

Chief Officer Goltra wanted to bring faculty attention to a new policy that has gone through the drafting and Policy Oversight Committee review and approval process for the last eight months.

He has worked with stakeholders in the faculty, the Provost's Office, and Chancellor's Office, ITS and Research to come up with this policy on the use of AI in research, teaching and administration.

There is a new body called the AI Research Review Committee that is made-up of members of the faculty, OGC, Provost, HR and IT. The email for questions:
ai_review_committee@northeastern.edu

The meeting was adjourned at 1:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Professor Dee Spencer