Northeastern University
Faculty Senate

TO: Faculty Senate.
SUBJECT: 10_21_2026 Senate Minutes.

Present: Professors Alexis, Auguste, Bhutta, Boehm, Bormann, Desnoyers, DiBattista, Dummit, Eckelman, Farkas, Hand, Hill, Hinerman, Hodeghatta, Homan, Ingemi, Jackson, Kahn, Kelley, Lamin, Lessard, Lorette, Magowan, Maheswaran, McCoy Dunkley, McGivney, Musselman, Passas, Rejtar, Shrivastava, Sivak, Sobral Campos, Spencer, Walker J., Walker L., Young-Hong, Zellner, Zheng.

Administrators: Sheahan, Alshawabkeh, Amidon, Jackson, Knapp, Sceppa, Thurman.

Absent: (Professors): Chiou, Gatterbauer, Muzny, Orr-Skirvin, Ruberti.

Absent: (Administrators):

Call To Order: 11:45 a.m.

I. The minutes for the October 7, 2026 Senate meeting were approved.

II. **SAC REPORT** (The SAC report has been posted to the Senate website.)

Senate Chair Dee Spencer, DMSB, noted that since the Oct. 7th Senate meeting SAC:

- Met twice
- Met once with the Provost
- Hosted one Elected Senators Meeting
- Scheduled two presentations faculty requested for November 4th Senate meeting:

1. **Mark Jannoni**, Assistant Vice President for University Equity and Compliance and Title IX Coordinator

2. **Rubin Galindo**, Associate Vice President, Campus Policing/Chief of Police

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION.
There were no questions.

III. **PROVOST REPORT**.
Interim Provost Tom Sheahan made the following updates and announcements:

- Regarding computers or the lack of computers in the classroom, the Provost is working with Jennifer Brant-Gargan, CIO & Vice President of Information Technology to document what technology is available in each classroom. And the Provost Office is also exploring with ITS how to re-instate a device refresh program.

- Regarding a possible Snow day policy, the Provost is working with the Office of Emergency Management to explore this.
- The Provost Office has begun to work with the Faculty Senate committees on their charges for the upcoming year.
- Human Resources and Brett Sweet, the Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration, presented on open enrollment and health plan changes to department chairs, associate deans, and deans in recent weeks.
- Northeastern was selected by the CDC as one of five centers in the National Network of Influenza Modeling and Forecasting. The Provost congratulated the whole team who worked on that, particularly Alex Vespignani's, COS, team.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

- Prof. Bormann, CSSH, asked about a topic mentioned at a recent CSSH Town Hall, the plan to change significantly the core curriculum, including NU Path. What is the impetus for this overhaul and who is involved?

  The Provost responded that contributing factors include the difficulty students and advisors have navigating NU Path requirements, accreditation compliance, the forthcoming academic plan, and the changing skill needs of students in light of AI. He stated that the proposal is at a very early stage and that faculty and undergraduate associate deans are involved. He will bring a fuller presentation on this topic to the senate at a future meeting.

- Prof. Walker, CSSH, noted that colleagues have asked for a Faculty Senate committee to be constituted on the core curriculum, as the Senate had done previously for NU Path.

  Prof. Spencer, DMSB, stated that this was her first hearing of changes to the core curriculum and that the Senate Agenda Committee ("SAC") would discuss it at its next SAC/Provost meeting.

IV. **PRESENTATIONS**:

1. **SATYA DATTAGUPTA, CHIEF ENROLLMENT OFFICER, EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR & HEAD OF GLOBAL EXPANSION.**

   ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT UPDATE.

   Satyajit Dattagupta gave an overview of where the undergraduate class is coming in as well as the projected graduate class for this year.

   - He noted the higher education landscape is changing driven primarily by falling numbers of high school graduates and increased questioning around the value of college. Many institutions missed enrollment targets this year.
   - One institution that received a lot of publicity around this was Syracuse University, that used to be a very strong brand name but has since been unable to hit his enrollment goals resulting in steep budget issues for that institution.

   - Chief Enrollment Officer Dattagupta noted that in this climate, institutions that have a clear differentiation and a strong value proposition and can articulate that clearly to 17-year-old

students are still being able to be successful. Northeastern University falls in that category of institutions that has a very clear value proposition.

- Northeastern is welcoming approximately 7,200 undergraduates across the Global Campus Network, the largest incoming class in its history.

- At the graduate level, visa approval rates in South Asia and China have fallen by roughly 50–60 percent, and the university projects over 7,500 graduate students across the network, subject to uncertainty because many graduate students enter in spring. Domestic graduate growth and flexible placement across the global network are partial offsets.

- In summary, Chief Enrollment Officer Dattagupta said that enrollment at Northeastern is strong. There are some serious international headwinds that this nation is facing, and Northeastern is not immune to what's happening in the world.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:
Prof. Dummit, COS, asked for multi-year comparison figures for undergraduate and graduate populations.

Chief Enrollment Officer Dattagupta said the data are published on the UDS website and the new figures will be posted within about a week. Link to site: https://facts.northeastern.edu/. Undergraduate totals and first-year class sizes have grown for several years and graduate numbers are expected to decline.

Prof. Walker, CSSH, asked for a sense of the kind of categories of tuition that these new students are paying.

Chief Enrollment Officer Dattagupta said they lead with the Northeastern Promise which is that any student that comes to Northeastern and is admitted will have their full financial need met. And for Pell students, we will do that without loans. Also, if a student's financial situation changes, we will revise the financial aid package to make sure that a student can complete their education. That level of confidence in a student and a family's mind is why they're also coming to Northeastern. For our Boston class, 22% of the incoming class is Pell eligible. Additional financial aid information can be found at the UDS website: https://facts.northeastern.edu/.

Prof. Auguste, COE, asked about faculty and staff admissions versus contract transfers.

Chief Enrollment Officer Dattagupta stated that faculty/staff family admissions have increased across the global network, and that contract admission remains an option for students who are not yet academically ready.

2. **LULUAH SAFRI, ASSOC. VP – TOTAL REWARDS, COMPLIANCE & GLOBAL MOBILITY.**
   BRETT SWEET, SR. VICE PRESIDENT FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION.
   AMY MOLWAY, INTERIM CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER.

   (The HR presentation has been posted to the Senate website.)

BENEFITS OVERVIEW

Sr. Vice President Sweet gave an overview of the challenges and pressures facing higher education including: federal research funding, declining international enrollment (an estimated 100,000 fewer international students nationally this fall), and a projected 15 percent drop in high school graduates, particularly in the Northeast. National health care costs are projected to rise about 9 percent for calendar year 2027 (10–11 percent among peer institutions), driven primarily by pharmaceuticals, including GLP-1 drugs.

Vice President Safri reviewed the plan costs and funding for the upcoming year. Total annual cost of care is $119 million, about $12,000 per member in FY2026; the university funds 71 percent and members 29 percent, a split that has been constant. The university is self-insured with stop-loss coverage, and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (selected over Aetna through an RFP run with new broker Willis Towers Watson) administers the plan under a three-year agreement. The 2027 increase was held to 8.7 percent versus a projected 13.2 percent (possibly 14–15 percent) without changes; the peer average trend is 10.4 percent.

Open enrollment runs October 26 – November 6, 2026, through Workday. Drop-in sessions are scheduled for October 27 and November 3 (Renaissance Park, 5th floor); questions may be sent to the HR benefits office. New York City colleagues begin coverage enrollment January 1, 2027, with on-site support January 4–6 and 11–13.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Prof. Bhutta, Khoury, asked for prior-year cost figures and how much does Northeastern pay to Blue Cross Blue Shield to administer everything.

> Vice President Safri said historically, the university has always contributed 71% and the employee has contributed 29%. Vice President Sweet added that per-member cost last year was in the low $11,000s and that the cost per covered person is roughly $6,000 per year. The administrative fee was not addressed.

Prof. Lessard, COE, asked how the university decides between premium increases and higher deductibles, out-of-pocket maximums, and copays.

> Sr. Vice President Sweet described it as “art and science,” balancing the benefits cost against what the university and community can afford for salary raises, and acknowledged the changes create winners and losers.

Prof. Desnoyers, Khoury, noted widespread reports of difficulty and canceled prior authorizations following the change of pharmacy benefit manager at the start of the year and questioned whether the cost measures are equitable.

Prof. Sobral Campos, CSSH, asked Human Resources to examine whether plan changes over the past three years have disproportionately raised costs for women’s routine care.

> Vice President Safri stated she was not aware of changes to routine imaging, agreed to research further, and invited senators to give specific examples.

Prof. Walker**,** CSSH**,** asked how to reconcile record undergraduate enrollment with the benefit cost increases and noted that most faculty salaries are well below dean-level salaries.

Sr. Vice President Sweet responded that undergraduate demand is very strong but that international master's enrollment has declined, concentrated in two or three schools.

Prof. Shrivastava, COE, asked about university revenue.

Sr. Vice President Sweet reported FY2026 revenue of $2.46 billion, compared with $2.42 billion the prior year, with 2–3 percent growth expected this year, and explained that a 4 percent tuition increase yields about 1.5–2 percent net after discounting.

Senator Shrivastava also relayed a colleague's question about the Enhanced PPO deductible.

Ms. Safri responded that the deductible is nominal, competitive with peers, and can be paid with FSA funds.

Prof. Frank, COS, described the burden of the increased out-of-pocket maximum on a family with complex medical needs and difficulties with a specialty pharmacy.

Interim Human Resources Chief Molway stated there is no simple solution and that HR meets monthly with the pharmacy benefit vendor; Vice President Sweet stated Human Resources would contact Prof. Frank directly.

There were no additional questions.

IV. **NEW BUSINESS**

ACADEMIC PROPOSAL: UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE PROGRAM IN THE D'AMORE-MCKIM SCHOOL OF BUSINESS.

Prof. Spencer, DMSB, moved and read the following motion.

BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish the Bachelor of Business Administration, Global Business and Innovation, BBA in the D'Amore-McKim School of Business as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee 7 October, 2026 (19-0-0).

Prof. Musselman, CSSH, seconded the motion.

Prof. Spencer acknowledged Assoc. Dean of Undergraduate Education Daniele Mathras Fay, D'Amore-McKim School of Business, who presented the proposed degree, planned for launch in fall 2028 at the New York City and London campuses. Key features: include a four-year human-centered innovation studio developed with CAMD faculty; AI integrated throughout the core; and location-based concentrations (examples New York: investments/investment banking, fashion marketing, media and arts management; London: global finance). The degree meets NU Path and New York State liberal arts requirements, and was developed with faculty input across the network and approved through the school governance process.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Prof. Shrivastava, COE, asked for some background about the dissenting votes at the school and UUCC levels?

> Assoc. Dean Mathras Fay said she didn't have an exact answer. She said they had a lot of internal conversations about how this program might overlap with and or confuse students related to the BSIB program, which is DMSB's international business program that's located in Boston.

Prof. Walker, CSSH, asked if in the program there will be any online courses? And if so, how are you working to address integrity concerns?

> Assoc. Dean Mathras Fay said one of the things that differentiates this program is the studios are definitely in-person classes. These are hands-on; students are going to be working in teams, solving problems with the use of AI and using that as a brainstorming tool and an organizational tool. Large parts of this program are not meant to be delivered online.

There were no additional questions.

The vote PASSED: 30-1-6.

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m. (ET)

Respectfully submitted,

Professor Cecelia Musselman, CSSH
Senate Secretary