



Northeastern University
Office of the Faculty Senate

TO: Faculty Senate
FROM: George Alverson, Secretary, Faculty Senate
SUBJECT: Minutes, 21 January 2015

Present: (Professors) Alverson, Bickmore, Caligiuri, Carrier, Cokely, Crittenden, Daynard, De Ritis, Fitzgerald, Gouldstone, Hajjar, Hanson, King, Kruger, Lerner, Leslie, Makriyannis, Metghalchi, Nyaga, Piret, Rabrenovic, Rappaport, Suciu, Young

(Administrators) Ambrose, Aubry, Brodley, Courtney, Director, Fulmer, Gibson, Loeffelholz, Poiger,

Absent: Professors Charles, Devlin, Howard, Nelson, McGushin, Strasser, and Dean Ronkin

The Senate convened at 11:45 AM.

- I. The 3 December minutes were approved as written.
- II. Agenda Committee report. Professor Daynard reported that SAC had met four times since the last Senate meeting in December.

Professor Gilbert Nyaga from DMSB was elected to the Senate to replace Professor Justin Craig for one semester.

Requests for Senate elections have been sent to all Deans. Please schedule these important elections as soon as possible.

The SAC has been requested to convene a chair search committee for the Department of Pharmacy Science. Staffing is underway.

The Financial Affairs Committee has been given the following additional charge:

To review the existing benefit structure, analyze any changes proposed by the administration, propose possible changes, and determine the impact of proposed changes on faculty and staff. The Committee is specifically requested to consider the possibility of changing the default for pension plans and subsidizing T-Passes.

A Faculty Development Committee is being convened to address the following charges:

1. *Evaluate the impact of the requirement that faculty participate in Digital Measures.*
2. *As suggested by the Student Government Association, consider whether all faculty members should be required to perform confidential, anonymous mid-course student surveys.*
3. *Review the Faculty Handbook module on promotion procedures to determine if amendments should be considered.*

4. *What provisions are currently in place for reviewing holders of named chairs and determining whether they may continue to hold them?*

III. Prof Daynard read the following and it was seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED That, as of the 2015-16 academic year,

1. **Each College (Bouvé College of Health Sciences, College of Arts, Media and Design, College of Computer and Information Science, College of Social Science and Humanities, College of Engineering, College of Science, College of Professional Studies, D'Amore McKim School of Business, and School of Law) is encouraged to select one faculty member by February 1 of each year for a [name of College or donor] Excellence in Teaching Award. Each college may determine for itself the eligibility criteria and procedure for its Award, with the exception that significant student participation is required. If the college wishes to nominate its Award recipient for the University Excellence in Teaching Award, it should forward the recipient's name and an explanation of why the recipient was chosen to the Faculty Senate Office by February 1.**
2. **The University-wide Excellence in Teaching Award process, last amended on 6 October 1997, is discontinued. In its stead, the following provisions shall apply:**
 - a. **The University Excellence in Teaching Awards Selection Committee shall consist of four faculty members (with two-year staggered terms) chosen by the Senate Agenda Committee; an undergraduate student chosen by the Student Government Association; a graduate student chosen by the Graduate Student Association; and the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, who will chair the Committee.**
 - b. **The Committee will choose two of that year's college award recipients to receive the University Excellence in Teaching Award who will be honored at the University Honors Convocation.**

Professor Young noted that colleges have not discussed this matter and Professor Daynard pointed out that this is the opportunity to discuss it. The [existing procedure](#) is quite lengthy and is currently followed imprecisely. SAC also saw the selection of merely two faculty members and the selection process itself as lacking. The proposal encourages, but does not require, that the Colleges institutionalize a program to recognize excellence in teaching. Following that process, the Colleges may communicate to the Senate Office the names of persons to receive a University-wide award. The legislation is consistent with decentralization and encourages discussion and thought about the nature of teaching excellence and its importance.

Dean Gibson agreed with rationale for colleges to do more and also expressed concern about recognition across the Colleges for interdisciplinary faculty. Dean Fulmer said that BCHS faculty had not discussed this at all and encouraged SAC to think about a full vetting prior to acting in this capacity. Professor Daynard responded that every College faculty is anticipated to discuss their method for selection and proposed that such matters did not require College faculty consideration prior to be brought before the Senate. The proposal does not force any college to take part in conferring excellence in teaching awards.

Professor Crittenden said that the only major change is that, in the past, each could submit two faculty members to be put forth as finalists which will no longer be the case. Vice Provost Loeffelholz responded that the students, rather than College faculty, submit nominations. Current written procedures provide that students, alumni and faculty may nominate candidates. Over two hundred nominations are generally received of which approximately 120 to 150 are eligible for committee review. Professor Daynard confirmed that it is anticipated there will be College-level awards as well as University-wide awards.

Addressing Dean Gibson's concern, Professor Daynard suggested that Colleges canvas students thoroughly in order that exceptional interdisciplinary faculty are nominated. Dean Poiger suggested concurrent processes.

Professor Kruger, having served on the Selection Committee, reported that the current process is cumbersome and unwieldy. It is difficult for the Committee to review qualitative and quantitative data in a short period of time. He approves of streamlining the processing but had no objection to postponing the decision despite the matter not requiring College faculty approval, as Professor Daynard stated. Professor Kruger then proposed a friendly amendment that would state that committees' decisions be made by majority vote and that the chair be designated as *ex officio* (non-voting except in the case of stalemates). Professor Crittenden seconded and the discussion turned to the proposed amendment.

Professor Daynard noted that all committees operate by majority vote unless otherwise stated but it was logical to designate the chair as *ex officio*. He generally opposed motion.

VOTE on the amendment that decisions be made by majority vote and that the chair be designated as *ex officio*: FAILED, 4-22-4. Discussion returned to the original resolution.

Professor Young asked whether the intent is that the process be uniform across Colleges to which Professor Daynard responded that, as the proposal states, each College may determine their own process. Dean Fulmer then posited that if a College does not adopt a procedure [to award excellence in teaching recognition] their faculty would not be honored at Convocation. Professor Daynard affirmed and expressed doubt that any College would not wish to recognize excellence in teaching.

Vice Provost Loeffelholz agreed that the current process needs change. For instance, more students need to cluster around the excellent teachers rather than the current situation where the vast majority of nominees receive only a single nomination. However, she said that the resolution is untimely. Experiments are underway whereby several Colleges are undertaking their own selection process and clustering appears to be taking place more straightforwardly.

Professor Daynard added that the Students Government Association is supportive but wish to ensure student participation. Vice Provost Loeffelholz also reported that an undergraduate student and a graduate student each sit on the current committee.

Professor Cokely motioned to postpone the vote to the first Senate meeting in April; Dean Fulmer seconded. VOTE to postpone to 8 April 2015: PASSED, 26-2-4.

IV. Professor Leslie read the following and Professor Hanson seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate supports the recommendation of the Financial Affairs Committee for a merit raise pool increase of 4% in the fiscal year 2016, effective 1 July 2015.

Professor Wassall, chair of the Financial Affairs Committee was recognized and presented the FAC report via PowerPoint which may be found at: [FAC Report](#)

Trends: national economic growth and high student debt; regional decline in high school graduates; Northeastern academic and financial strength, increased undergraduate enrollments (and tuition).

Faculty salaries play an important role in how the University ranks and to continued high-profile hiring. As well, salaries and fringes for full-time faculty account for only 13.3% of the total operating costs.

The same matchmates comparisons were used as in previous years with slight alternations by the Provost's Office.

Recent raise pool increases at Northeastern are 3%. AAUP looks at absolute salaries in addition to percentage increases which is where Northeastern lags. Professor Wassall explained the mechanics behind the reason that Northeastern salary increases continue to trail matchmate institutions.

Faculty members hired in the past several years receive comparable salaries but longer term faculty are below the mean and administration should address this matter.

Also noted are changes in health insurance benefits where more costs are being shifted to some but not all employees.

The Senate Standing Committee for Financial Affairs recommends a 4% raise pool which, relative to overall expenses, is reasonable and will bring the median up to matchmate institutions.

Professor Daynard suggested a *friendly amendment* to add "and equity" which both the mover and the seconder accepted. As amended, the resolution states:

BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate supports the recommendation of the Financial Affairs Committee for a merit and equity raise pool increase of 4% in the fiscal year, 2016, effective 1 July 2015.

VOTE in favor of a 4% merit and equity raise pool increase of 4%: PASSED, 23-1-8.

V. Professor Fitzgerald read the following and it was seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish the BS in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics (PPE) in the College of Social Sciences and Humanities as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee on 8 October 2014 by a vote of 7-1-2.

Dean Poiger explained that no other university in the area offers this undergraduate program which is meant to attract a pool of strong students. Professors Orenstein (Political Science) and Setta (Philosophy & Religion) were recognized.

Professor Orenstein, noting the trend to interdisciplinary offerings, reported that the proposal seeks to attract talented students and provide options for all students. It will provide training for high level positions in business and government. Ongoing faculty searches related to this proposal are underway and have provided excellent candidates.

Professor Setta added that coordination with Economics and Political Science was challenging and rewarding with the results being strong ethics and theoretical components.

Professor Crittenden questioned why the UUCC vote was not unanimous. Professor Orenstein explained that there was one negative vote in objection to the GPA requirement which has since been adjusted from 3.5 to 3.0.

Professor De Ritis asked why this was not offered in the New England region to which Professor Setta explained that it is a complicated major that was demanding to organize.

Professor Lerner questioned who would provide leadership and Professor Orenstein responded that a joint search is underway and it is expected that the finalist will administer the program.

VOTE to institutionalize the BS in Politics, Philosophy and Humanities: PASSED, 32-0-0.

VI. Professor Hanson read the following and it was seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED That the University eliminate the following Associate Engineering degrees in the College of Professional Studies:

- **Mechanical Engineering Technology**
- **Computer Engineering Technology**
- **Electrical Engineering Technology**

Dean LaBrie was recognized and explained that these were no longer consistent with the CPS portfolio. They are accredited which means that CPS is required to support them but they have been in decline for a number of years. There are few students remaining and they will receive their degrees.

VOTE to eliminate three CPS degrees: PASSED, 32-0-0.

VII. Professor Rabrenovic read the following and Professor Cokely seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish new titles as follows:

Faculty members currently at the rank of Assistant Academic Specialist who hold a field-appropriate terminal degree may be appointed to the title of Assistant Teaching Professor;

Faculty members currently at the rank of Associate Academic Specialist who hold a field-appropriate terminal degree may be appointed to the title of Associate Teaching Professor; and

Faculty members currently at the rank of Senior Academic Specialist who hold a field-appropriate terminal degree may be appointed to the title of Teaching Professor.

It will be at the discretion of each College to adopt the Teaching Professor title series and to consider other terminally qualified full-time, non-tenure-track faculty members for appointment in these titles.

Professor Rabrenovic recognized Committee Chair Gardinier who explained that the current title of Academic Specialist is not typical to higher education. The Committee evaluated current titles here and at other institutions, keeping in mind the goals and functions of faculty holding this title. The change will affect 182 Academic Specialists with substantial experience and robust backgrounds. The proposed titles are more universally recognized and the Committee recommends that current ranks transfer to the proposed titles and that Colleges establish an advancement track should one not already be in place. She also urged that Lecturers who share the same level of background and experience take up the new titles as well.

Professor Metghalchi suggested that the titles need not include the word "Teaching" at all.

Professor Daynard noted that the resolution was modified from the original and better states the Committee's intent as well as allowing for some to retain their current [Lecturer] title.

Professor De Ritis inquired as to who determines the appropriate designation and what happens when someone does not meet the standard? Vice Provost Loeffelholz responded that national standards are in place and that those who may not meet the standard will retain the Academic Specialist title.

Academic Specialist Chi Kwong Chin of DMSB was recognized and added that the new designation will be more recognizable outside Northeastern. Academic Specialist Jenny Sartori of CSSH expressed concern that the proposal does not fully explain the position but acknowledged that the committee served a variety of constituents. She queried if it would be possible to have a range of titles.

Several Deans spoke in favor of the proposal noting that the Academic Specialist designation will be retained under certain circumstances; that the title will add value toward academic grants; and that Academic Specialists appear generally supportive.

Professor Kruger noted that certain sections of the Faculty Handbook which refer to “teaching faculty” will need to be amended. He then offered a “friendly amendment” as follows: *Faculty members in the Teaching Professor ranks shall be entitled to those procedures in the Faculty Handbook pertaining to Academic Specialists.* The mover and seconder of the resolution accepted this as a “friendly amendment.”

The amended resolution is as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish new titles as follows:

Faculty members currently at the rank of Assistant Academic Specialist who hold a field-appropriate terminal degree may be appointed to the title of Assistant Teaching Professor;

Faculty members currently at the rank of Associate Academic Specialist who hold a field-appropriate terminal degree may be appointed to the title of Associate Teaching Professor; and

Faculty members currently at the rank of Senior Academic Specialist who hold a field-appropriate terminal degree may be appointed to the title of Teaching Professor.

It will be at the discretion of each College to adopt the Teaching Professor title series and to consider other terminally qualified full-time, non-tenure-track faculty members for appointment in these titles.

Faculty members in the Teaching Professor ranks shall be entitled to those procedures in the Faculty Handbook pertaining to Academic Specialists.

VOTE to establish new titles for Academic Specialists, as amended: PASSED, 31-0-0.

A motion to adjourn was seconded.

The Senate adjourned at 1:16 PM

Respectfully submitted,

George Alverson, Secretary
Faculty Senate