Present: (Professors) Adams, Alshawabkeh, Aroian, Aslam, Bansil, Basagni, Board, Cokely, Daynard, Fitzgerald, Fox, Gaffney, Herman, Katula, Lee, Lefkovitz, McDonough, Muftu, Ondrechen, Peterfreund, Poriss, Rappaport, Sceppa, Stepanyants, Strauss, Yang, Zgarrick

(Administrators) Costa, Director, Finklestein, Gibson, Courtney, Loeffelholz, Ronkin, Van Den Abbeele, Aubry, Fulmer

Absent: Professors Fountain, Sherman

The Senate was convened at 11:49 AM.

I. The minutes of 19 September were approved with the following amendments by addition:

   a) Item I – Senate Agenda Committee report: To the end of the second paragraph, add, “Professor Daynard felt that the relationship between the Senate Agenda Committee and the Administration was off to a good start.”

   b) Item II – Master Plan, at the end of paragraph five: After "Professor Gaffney asked ... affirmative." insert: "He also asked if residential housing for graduate students was part of the plan, and the response was yes."

   c) Item V – Discussion about preparing associate professors for promotion to full professor at the middle of paragraph five: After "Professor Adams noted ... development," insert: "The discussion then expanded to suggest that the University help promote membership in the national academies. The Provost noted that the University’s creation of the ranks of Distinguished Professor and University Professor was a step in this direction."

II. Professor Daynard recommended that all present see the new Digital Commons at the library. He then reported the following:

   SAC met twice in regular session since the last Senate meeting and once with the senior leadership team.

   The following Senate committees have been staffed and charged. Full text of the charges may be found on the Senate website.
Senate Committee for Financial Affairs

Members:
Professor Paul J. Bolster, CBA-Finance & Insurance
Professor Jacqueline A. Isaacs, COE-Mechanical & Industrial
Professor John E. Kwoka, CSSH-Economics, Chair
Professor Edward McDonough III, CBA-International Business & Strategy
Professor Armen Stepanyants, COS-Physics

Committee charge:
1. Based on current information and any other analyses that it may wish to undertake, the Committee is asked to make recommendations on appropriate merit and market adjustment increases for FY 2014. The Committee should present its recommendations on these matters to the Faculty Senate Agenda Committee by October 31, 2012 for Senate consideration no later than November 14, 2012.

2. The Committee shall investigate whether established procedures for implementation of merit and equity faculty raises are being followed. The SAC respectfully requests that the Committee present a report, including recommendations and possible draft resolutions, by March 13, 2013.

Senate Committee for Academic Policy

Members:
Professor Nathan Felde, CAMD-Art + Design
Vice Provost Mary Loeffelholz
Professor Colleen Pantalone, CBA-Associate Dean, Undergraduate Program
Professor Nathaniel Rickles, BCHS-Pharmacy Practice, Chair
Professor Dagmar Sternad, COS-Biology
Professor Moneesh Upmanyu, COE-Mechanical & Industrial
Professor David Zgarrick, BCHS-Pharmacy Practice

Committee Charge:
1. Review the University’s policies on academic dishonesty described by the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR), and make recommendations, if deemed appropriate, to modify such policies.

2. In light of the students’ increased interest in study abroad opportunities and global experiences, primarily during the summer months, the Committee is charged to review the viability and cost-effectiveness of summer sessions attended by an ever decreasing number of students in different programs.

Senate Committee for Enrollment and Admissions Policy

Members:
Professor Dennis Cokely, CSSH-ASL
Professor Chris Gallagher, CSSH-English
Professor William Kirtz, CAMD-Journalism, Chair
Professor Patricia Mabrouk, COS-Chemistry
Professor Ron Smith, CAMD-Music
Committee charge:
In consultation with various University constituencies:

1. Provide recommendations for improving the recruitment practices and enrollment numbers for underrepresented minorities in the undergraduate programs at Northeastern University.

2. Make recommendations pertaining to the appropriate use of portfolios in the evaluation of student applications in the arts and related majors for purposes of admissions and financial aid decisions.

3. Examine whether current undergraduate admissions practices contain unintentional biases and make recommendations pertaining to appropriate admissions application evaluation practices and criteria in order to reduce any such biases, while maintaining high admissions standards.

Senate Committee for Library Policies and Operations

Members:
Professor Fleura Bardhi, CBA-Marketing
Academic Specialist Leslie Hitch, CPS
Assistant Dean Sarah Hooke Lee, Law-Research & Information Services, Chair
Professor Joseph Reagle, CSSH-Communication Studies
Professor Adam Reeves, COS-Psychology
Mohammad Taslim, COE-Mechanical & Industrial
Professor David P. Zgarrick, BCHS-Pharmacy Practice
Dean William M. Wakeling, ex officio member

Committee Charge:
To advise the Dean and Library staff, and to report to the Faculty Senate as appropriate:

- On the development of library information resources and collections in a variety of formats, ensuring appropriate attention to all relevant disciplines;
- On the priorities and options for Library resource and collections support of University research and scholarship across all relevant disciplines;
- On means to ensure that the Library’s information resources support all methods of teaching, including distance education and online learning; and on the integration of library information resources into educational technology platforms;
- On the opinions and sentiments of the faculty and staff relative to library information resources and collections;
- On ways to advocate for the importance of open access and related scholarly communication initiatives on campus to increase the distribution, impact and benefit of faculty scholarship and research, and on policies for the ongoing development, use and content of the University’s digital repository to preserve and present the scholarly and research output of the campus community; and
- On the adequacy of the resources available to the Library to carry out its mission.
III. Questions and discussion

Professor Gaffney inquired about the availability of slides on the Master Plan presented by Mr. Tedesco at the last Senate meeting. The Provost promised to follow up.

Professor Gaffney noted problems with discerning the numbers of enrollments in departmental courses whereupon Provost Director urged him to speak with his Dean as well as with Senior Vice President Mantella at the next Senate meeting. Dean Gibson assured the Professor that his office is focused on this problem and has improved the situation but that more improvement is needed.

IV. Address by President Aoun

The President’s address pertained to events and trends in higher education and how they affect Northeastern. Two major disruptions are facing higher education: 1) economic/financial disruption in which public universities and liberal arts colleges are being challenged for the foreseeable future; and 2) innovation and technology-based disruption whereby more research universities are entering into on-line dissemination of courses, spurred by the emergence of massive open online course providers. The latter will not provide a competitive edge for NU as everyone is moving in this direction. How will NU position itself?

President Aoun explained that there is underway a profound shift in higher education from being a vertically integrated enterprise to a horizontally integrated enterprise. Traditionally, the same institution is responsible for knowledge production, knowledge transmission, assessment, and credentialing. With horizontal integration, dispersed entities may disseminate knowledge either for free or for a fee; outside constituencies are ready to provide assessment of available courses and are attempting to partner with online education providers to assess student learning; and credentialing, which was monopolized vertically, is being assessed for possible oversight by outside constituencies, such as professional associations and state agencies. This shift introduces profound consequences for higher education/Northeastern. With the various components being addressed horizontally it becomes important for the institution to articulate the value of its education. If courses are free, why attend university? Northeastern has differentiated itself well by being a leader in co-op and experiential education with a global perspective.

A second trend is the coupling of cost with research, which has not been done in the U.S in the past. For instance, GE approached U.S. institutions to improve their imaging machinery and was turned down because the return on investment is low. GE’s research and development then went to India to devise better imaging machines at a fraction of the cost. So research is being sent to other emerging markets.

While NU is well positioned, its value must be constantly articulated. Online, professional masters degree programs provide a unique niche at this point in time and are being innovatively developed. Clients for these programs are being further developed. Both CPS and CBA have been leaders in specifically focused professional masters programs. Faculty members are crafting programs for hybrid platforms at the Charlotte and Seattle campuses, which affect the Boston campus. For instance, the number of undergraduate applications from North Carolina has increased since the opening of the Charlotte campus. In Seattle, a biomed facility focusing on infectious diseases and owned by a NU alumnus is providing opportunities to work on research.
In this disruptive environment, the attempt to position Northeastern for the future is being shaped by the faculty in the colleges. NU is also fostering entrepreneurship in a systematic way and is seeing impact on the students and on faculty colleagues with increased patents, invention disclosures, and increased start-ups being launched.

The next step is to assess. NU is exceptional in terms of research, community engagement, global engagement and experiential education but must be “best in class”. At the undergraduate level, NU is “best in class” in terms of experiential education and must explain to the world why this model is superior in order to maintain leadership in this domain. NU is also poised to become best in class in professional masters and in online education.

NU is not yet “best in class” in doctoral programs and must devise programs—existing or new—that will be. It is up to each college to identify domains in which to excel. NU cannot afford not to be “best in class”.

The floor was opened for questions.

Professor Strauss complimented President Aoun on the formulation and articulation of this vision and on effectively formulating how experiential education makes NU unique. The challenge for PhD programs is the lack of infrastructure in basic sciences to even hire faculty.

The President reported that 333 faculty have been hired in the past six years and plans are underway for another research building. Existing labs have been remodeled and 140 The Fenway has been added.

Professor Katula asked what is being done concerning unpaid co-ops and the costs of summer programs. President Aoun reported that the Department of Labor has proposed regulations restricting unpaid co-ops, but a coalition of university presidents is pushing back. In the last four years, the federal government has doubled Pell Grants and increased expenditures for NIH. However, no matter who may be elected President, the fiscal cliff will impact research and financial aid. NU and others are building contingency plans. Secondly, there are plans to increase the number of students on global experiences. The goal is not only to encourage more students to take part in the Dialogues program but also global co-ops. Presidential Scholarships are providing funds to students; Colleges must push the global experience.

Professor Bansil suggested that to energize faculty it would be helpful to know that adequate funds are available for start-up costs [of hiring new faculty]. President Aoun said that, in terms of infrastructure and envisioning the research structure, Colleges and central administration are working together to provide funds. Now is the time to determine where Colleges can be the best. Deans have been asked to step up fund-raising and a campaign is being launched. In addition, while the last Master Plan focused on residential space, the new one is focused on a premier research environment.

Professor Gaffney noted that this vision circles back to the roots of what NU has to offer—an apprenticeship university where students take part in research which cannot be compared with the internet experience. He advocated less reliance on part-time faculty and
more post docs who will extend to the professional masters programs. President Aoun agreed that NU has not moved away from its roots but is using an exceptional approach and is continuing to perfect what is offered.

Professor Ondrechen noted that the lack of a centralized graduate school and the hybrid budget system impose institutional barriers to interdisciplinary programs and to interdisciplinary PhD programs in particular. The President agreed that in order for PhD programs to compete, they must have quality and funding. It is clear that student support is based on grants obtained by faculty. If there are perceived barriers, faculty should speak with the Deans and the Provost. However, the President did not see barriers – funding must come from faculty grants to support both PhD level students and undergraduate students in the labs.

Professor Ondrechen persisted that while we, the PIs, are happy to fund our graduate research students, there must be a mechanism to fund first-year PhD students who are taking courses full time and are not available for extensive research productivity. The President replied that RCM is not the problem. Rather, if support is needed for first year students, talk to the dean. Cost-share structures are in place but one size does not fit all and the issues are different in each College.

Professor Daynard, noting the role of the university and the challenge of online education and what students do, suggested that the vocabulary needs to change from ‘knowledge transmission’ to ‘learning’. The Internet can transmit knowledge but it is the University that provides the skills, critical thinking capabilities, and experiences used throughout the students’ careers. The President agreed and reiterated that knowledge transmission is becoming a commodity but NU’s approach which brings the classroom and the world experience together, prepares the student for life. It is not enough to articulate this to students; NU must do so to the world.

The President concluded by saying that market disruptors typically are not the best products initially but are simply “good enough.” Therefore, simply because a disrupting product is initially inferior does not mean that it will not someday supplant current products. NU must continue to perfect and push into new domains but we must remember that we have a monopoly on nothing. Good ideas can and will be copied. How do we keep ahead? It is an opportunity.

The President exited and a motion to adjourn was seconded.

The Senate adjourned at 12:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jo Ondrechen, Secretary
Faculty Senate