Present: (Professors) Board, Carrier, Cokely, Daynard, Fitzgerald, Fountain, Fox, Garcia, Gouldstone, King, Kruger, Lefkovitz, Makriyannis, Metghalchi, Nelson, Noubir, McGushin, Piret, Rabrenovic, Rappaport, Stepanyants, Strasser, Strauss, Yang

(Administrators) Aubry, Costa, Courtney, Director, Finkelstein, Fulmer, Loeffelholz, Poiger, Ronkin

Absent: Professors Basagni, Craig, De Ritis, Lee, Ondrechen, Sceppa, and Dean Gibson

The Senate convened at 11:48 AM.

I. President Aoun reported that the most radical change in higher education in the last three years is the rise in non-traditional learners at 85% nation-wide. The higher education endeavor has catered to traditional students. NU has two choices: rethink the mission of the University or cater to the 15%. The latter will have consequences.

Technology has been a radical change but the President believes that it is becoming ubiquitous. It will not distinguish us.

The professional masters degrees provide opportunity for distinction by offering degrees in the many varied new fields that have arisen and NU is building a library of professional masters and looking at hybrid delivery. All of NU’s colleges are moving in this direction. There is no market in basing these offerings on our current disciplines. Rather, what NU delivers must correspond to the need as well as allow the students to work toward a better life. NU must accommodate the learner.

Students are also interested in outcomes and the curriculum must allow further opportunities in life. Higher education is becoming focused on input and output measures; more discourse of cost and value is taking place and models that are less costly and burdensome are being developed.

Demographics and technology changes are introducing enormous innovation. Adaptive learning is gaining a foothold with a shift away from the teacher-centered approach and more toward learning both in and outside the classroom, 24/7. Experiential learning is “in”. NU conducted a survey to understand what citizens, business leaders, and society want from higher education. It is well rounded learners who are ready for life and a career. The shift in higher education is towards personalization. The demographic shift is leading to customization.
A third aspect is regulation. American higher education is the most diverse in the world. Within the sets of private and public universities are small liberal arts institutions, religiously oriented institutions, and many more. There is no forced curriculum and there are diverse sources of funding for research and scholarship. However, the last four to five years has seen an increase in regulations and Washington is looking to imposing output measures. Output measures are jobs, cost of education, and other features. The implications are enormous and these measures could be in place as soon as next year.

A final point about change is desegregation of accreditation, the key to higher education which is the financial aid source. There is movement toward accreditation at the course level (rather than institutional level) because the content is becoming available through various channels allowing accreditation. Currently, higher education is vertically integrated with research, teaching, assessment of the learner, the credentialing of the learner.

It is an exciting picture for those who shape the future of higher education. NU has been in tune with reality because of the Co-op model and a history of adaptation. Moving forward, higher education is facing enormous demands, i.e. changing learners, new endeavors, and new technologies all based on what the learner wants.

In conclusion, the changing world of higher education offers opportunities for how NU positions itself to lead.

Professor Strauss expressed concern that, rather than NU’s greatness being based on undergraduate education, it appears the fast approaching model is to be based on the professional masters. Professor Strauss also brought to the President’s attention a problem with locks on labs and asked him to look into that matter.

The President responded that those institutions that will survive and flourish are those that are in tune with reality and are delivering quality education. NU sees high applications because of the first-rate education and NU is differentiated based on experiential education which leads learners to be ready for life. Secondly, students are coming to work with faculty at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Similarly, the professional masters are capitalizing on research at all levels as well.

Professor Gouldstone expressed agreement with pro-activity and flexibility and is involved in a group discussion on what is attractive to students based on many inputs. He noted a polarized discussion on on-line education and asked if it is polarized higher up? The President responded that on-line education is becoming ubiquitous and, secondly, with much hype on global level and rest of world is saying ‘no’. For instance, the government of India finds on-line courses un-adaptable and has begun looking elsewhere and adapting MOOCS to their own purposes.

Professor Rappaport inquired about balancing popularity with rigor and quality. President Aoun responded that NU is already in a quality situation but it is a complex situation. The faculty is in charge of courses -- the providers of content and quality at the course level. Studies are to be conducted to review the experiential model as well as the on-line model. Quality is being quantified with content and outcome.

Professor Lefkovitz inquired as to how to influence the measures that will determine NU’s success. She noted that a large part of what higher education does is to help students
appreciate the value of learning in a diverse learning community. Higher education is not just about content but about the process of learning; an approach to inquiry.

President Aoun agreed and explained that this is why the survey has been commissioned. Employers say they want good thinkers, communicators, etc. Some output measures would not address this so we must make sure we can shape the outcomes. <The President exited at 12:44 PM.>

II. The 25 September 2013 minutes were approved as posted.

III. SAC report. Professor Daynard reported that SAC met once in regular session since the last Senate meeting and once with the Provost.

**The Senate committee for Research Policy Oversight is staffed and charged as follows.** Full transcript of the charge may be found at the Faculty Senate website.

- Professor Ray Booth, BCHS
- Professor Rebecca Carrier, COE
- Professor Rashmi Dyal-Chand, Law
- Professor Miriam Leeser (Chair), COE
- Professor Alisa Lincoln, CSSH
- Professor Sanjeev Mukerjee, COS
- Professor Russell Pensyl, CAMD
- Professor Ronald Sandler, CSSH
- Professor Phyllis Strauss, COS

1. Review the existing policies and procedures related to conflicts of interest and commitment, especially as they pertain to the research activities of the faculty.
2. Examine the progress of the University’s initiative to promote interdisciplinary research.
4. Review existing policies and procedures at Northeastern University regarding Classified and Security Sensitive Information (SSI) research.

The proposed change in Faculty Handbook Bylaws will not take place at the 23 October Senate meeting, as expected. There were concerns expressed which are being addressed prior to bringing the matter to the floor.

IV. Provost report. Provost Director reported that NU was ranked 184 along with about 70 other US universities in world rankings. It is the first time that NU is within the top 200 in the world. Many metrics are considered and an analysis of those will take place.

V. Senate Committee for Financial Affairs report on University Expenditures.

Professor Kwoka, chair of the FAC provided a summary of the report. The motivation for inquiry was concern about costs relative to other universities. Key questions addressed were cost of revenue profiles relative to other institutions. The Committee did not look at the value of education or appropriateness of expenditures. The Provost’s office provided some data and enlisted the assistance of the Office of Institutional Research. Conclusions reached are entirely those of Committee.
IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) was the data primary source as well as University fact book data, University financial statements and IRS data. Focus was primarily on costs, revenues and staffing/compensation.

**COSTS** are over a ten year period. Total costs rose about 80% in nominal dollars (not inflation adjusted). The cost of instruction has risen substantially; research costs (supporting federally funded centers) have risen substantially as has academic support. The percent of total costs by categories shows that instructional expenditures have declined slightly (39.2 to 37.4%) and academic support has increased significantly. Other categories show little change in percentage.

NU versus other research universities. The chart showed an average of 100 institutions in two categories: high and very high. NU is firmly between those categories in raw dollars as is total expenditures. The instructional budget is significantly high and academic support, study service and others are high. Costs by FTE show similar results. This is a typical metric for standardizing across universities but costs are also dependent on other factors such as number of undergraduates, number of faculty, amount of research activity, medical school affiliation, etc.

**REVENUES.** The Committee again used IPEDS data which shows NU firmly lodged between research high and research very high. Tuition and fees are very high.

**STAFFING**  
IPEDS data was full of anomalies in this area so the Committee looked at NU over time rather than comparing other institutions. Total managerial/executive staffing rose about 30% mostly those without faculty status. Using NU Fact book data the Committee looked at the past five years for faculty, staff and total employees. The number of faculty has increased with significant increase among part-time faculty in CPS. Controlling for that, full-time faculty has not grown significantly as a percent of all employees.

Vice Provost Loeffelholz pointed out that CPS has expanded part-time faculty as they have increased their programs.

Professor Metghalchi asked for the number of tenured/tenure-track faculty to which the Provost replied that the number had been shown at the last Senate meeting.

**COMPENSATION.** Using IRS data the Committee tracked a small percentage of individuals over three years.

**OBSERVATIONS.** The Committee concluded that NU is not an outlier in its costs of revenue profiles overall and in most details. A significant exception is NU’s well-known tuition dependence.

A motion to accept the FAC report was made and approved by voice vote. **NOTE:** The FAC report and the PowerPoint summary may be found on the Faculty Senate website.
A motion to adjourn was seconded and, there being no objection, the Senate adjourned at 1:26 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jo Ondrechen, Secretary
Faculty Senate