Present: (Professors) Basagni, Carrier, Cokely, Daynard, De Ritis, Garcia, Gouldstone, King, Kruger, Lefkovitz, Makriyannis, Metghalchi, Noubir, Ondrechen, Parekh, Piret, Rabrenovic, Rappaport, Sceppa, Stepanyants, Strasser, Strauss, Yang

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

Absent: (Professors) Board, Craig, Fitzgerald, Fountain, Fox, Lee, Nelson

The Senate convened at 11:46 AM

I. The minutes of 9 October and 23 October were approved as written.

II. Professor Daynard reported that SAC met twice in regular session since the last Senate meeting and once with the Provost. The following committees were staffed and charged:

2013-2014 Senate Committee for Financial Affairs
Professor Justin Craig, DMSB-Entrepreneurship and Innovation
Professor Jacqueline A. Isaacs, COE-Mechanical & Industrial
Professor John E. Kwoka, Chair, CSSH-Economics
Professor Armen Stepanyants, COS-Physics

Charge: Based on current information and any other analyses that it may wish to undertake, the Committee is asked to make recommendations on University resource allocation and budget priorities as well as appropriate merit and market adjustment increases for FY 2015.

2013-2014 Ad hoc Senate Committee for Faculty Handbook Review
Professor George Adams
Professor Gerald Herman

Charge: The Senate Agenda Committee respectfully requests that the 2013-2014 Faculty Handbook Review Committee compare the most current version of the Model Tenure Dossier published by the Office of the Provost, to the Tenure Module of the Faculty Handbook for inconsistencies. Specifically noted is the discrepancy that currently exists concerning who may select and approve external reviewers. This and any other inconsistencies should be noted and recommendations made to align these documents.

A report and recommendations are requested no later than 6 December 2013 for review by the Senate Agenda Committee.
III. Questions and discussion. Professor Strauss complimented the Provost for resolving the issue of research lab access for undergraduate students. Provost Director explained that the ongoing committee is working to address the issues.

IV. Senior Vice President Mantella explained the undergraduate strategy as follows: maintenance of a highly talented and diverse student body; resilience through increased demand; support of students through degree completion; and added flexibility and 4-year tracks.

Applicant growth (44,208) is outpacing similarly ranked institutions. Cross application schools are Boston University, New York University, Cornell, Boston College, Tufts, Brown, Fordham, University of Pennsylvania, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and Drexel. NU’s SAT admit profile is changing with the entire curve moving higher which, the Vice President avers, makes for a strong academic experience. The mean SAT change leads to powerful win rates (those students who choose NU after being admitted to several institutions). The message is that of rising quality.

Diversity rates, specifically enrollments of students of color, have risen dramatically. Vice President Mantella was asked to define her terms and she identified students of color as African American, Native American, and Latino.

Freshman retention continues to rise; the six-year graduation rate is 82% and moving toward NU’s goal of 86%.

Vice President Mantella stated the the Senate endorsed the four-year option in 2002. This is an attractive option for incoming students and interest continues to rise. The norm in most NU colleges remains five-years/three Co-ops (5/3) but the objective of the four-year option is to enhance student flexibility. Students automatically placed in the 5/3 option lose the ability to graduate in four years. The Vice President presented a matrix of preferred times to degree and yield, noting that 79% of incoming students prefer the four-year option.

Professor Kruger asked for the Vice President’s justification for her hypothesis. Vice President Mantella reported that evidence indicates the four-year option is important in order to attract students. When the 5/3 is the default, students many times are not aware that they could have chosen the four-year option.

Professor Strauss noted that the yield is one out of five and NU could lose the advantage of offering the 5/3 plan. NU students are procuring jobs upon graduation because of their experiences. As well, classes are being filled with students of ever increasing quality. NU could lose more than would be gained by making the four-year option the default. Vice President Mantella reiterated that neither option is being ended. The four-year option will not be forced but will be the default option.

Professor Strauss reported that the faculty is being told that the four-year option is a “done deal” and this is worrisome. Dean Gibson responded that the four-year option must be created for all majors.

Professor Ondrechen opined that multiple options create attractiveness. A growing number of students graduate in five years with the BS and the MS. Perhaps the Senate could
facilitate knowledge about the options and urge departments to create model curricula for both tracks.

Professor Lefkovitz expressed concern that compressing the curriculum will not leave room for electives in order that a well-rounded liberal arts education may be obtained. In addition, students should be able to take overload courses in any semester without being charged extra. The Vice President acknowledged and agreed with both points. Creativity is important. Each department must look at how [the four-year] option fits.

Returning to the presentation, Vice President Mantella reported that the graduate professional strategy encompasses a national growth market. NU has outpaced other research universities and is among the top in terms of graduate professional program enrollment and number of programs offered. NU offers strategic global portals in high-growth regions. Charlotte is now offering 18 academic programs and Seattle is offering 29 academic programs. Enrollment targets at both sites have exceeded goals and new research partnerships have been identified. The graduate professional program portfolio continues to grow in online and hybrid delivery.

The floor was opened to questions. Professor Rappaport asked if a record of AP courses/credits was kept this year. The Vice President responded that it was not but that the trend continues upward.

Professor Ondrechen asked about a strategy to improve diversity. The Vice President of Enrollment Management, Jane Brown, responded that diversity had seen increases except among African Americans. Efforts have been intensified with a cross-cultural committee, targeted outreach and exploration of the types of information needed by potential students.

Professor Strauss reported that a recent graduate of the Masters in Biology has reported that NU’s reputation for the masters has plummeted. Vice President Mantella has seen no evidence of this at all and does not know how to interpret this one anecdote. Dean Gibson noted that the COS has adopted a strategy of placing more emphasis on the Ph.D. with less on masters programs that do not lead to the Ph.D. which could be the cause of such a report.

Professor Sceppa inquired about enrollments across the colleges. The Vice President responded that enrollments are up with the exception of some BCHS and CAMD programs and this may be due to industry shifts. Both architecture and journalism, for example, have experienced major industry shifts.

Professor Ondrechen asked what happens to the 18% that do not graduate in six years and the Vice President responded that identifying common reasons is an ongoing challenge. Most transfer to another institution but her group is attempting to access more comprehensive information.

Returning to Co-op options, Dean Finkelstein reported that the option had been introduced at the master’s level five to six years ago and it has improved attractiveness. It also allows feedback from the market which has been used to drive curriculum changes.

Professor Kruger observed that a related benefit of strengthening the four-year option is to boost the graduation rate. A disadvantage is created when attempting to compare NU to
other universities as none of them have the same offerings. He then asked whether NU’s tuition dependency rate is shifting given the increase in graduate professional programs.

Vice President Mantella answered affirmatively noting that tuition revenues are 75% undergraduate and 25% graduate. Undergraduate tuition revenues were at 90% in the recent past. The objective is to shift more toward 60/40. Professor Kruger wondered if the reason for striving toward such an objective is to make NU less vulnerable. The Vice President responded that there will always be the undergraduate experience but the world is going to change and shift. It is true that such a shift would provide less risk but, if done well, it should be synergistic and research opportunities and Co-ops should strengthen.

Professor Metghalchi posited that some undergraduates were not in the higher profile category and the Vice President responded that approximately 500 students with slightly lower profiles are accepted through NUIN, however, the students appear to be able to do the work. Professor Strauss noted that international students holding the international baccalaureate struggle. The Vice President offered to run a comparison to attempt to determine if there is a pattern.

Professor De Ritis wondered about those creative students who lack high GPAs and SATs but have strong creative portfolios. Vice President Mantella responded that her department has worked with CAMD on criteria outside those parameters but noted, too, that other applicants must be turned down when room is made for those students.

The Senate adjourned at 12:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jo Ondrechen, Secretary
Faculty Senate