TO: Faculty Senate  
FROM: Mary Jo Ondrechen, Secretary, Faculty Senate  
SUBJECT: Minutes, 27 March 2013

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

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

Absent: Professors Bansil, Nelson, Sceppa and Strauss

The Senate convened at 11:47 AM

I. The minutes of 13 February were approved as amended.

II. Professor Daynard reported that the Senate Agenda Committee had met four times since the last Senate meeting. SAC also met once with the senior leadership team and once with the Provost.

III. 2014 Budget Rollout. Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Nedell reported as follows:

The current economic climate shows a modest recovery; continued concern by students and families about college affordability; a low inflation rate at 2.1%; a gradual recovery in endowment funds; endowment spending at 4%; a limited but growing debt capacity; and continued dependency on operating revenue for capital funding and core financial strength. The University is in a good position from a debt allocation perspective.

2014 priorities are: a high value proposition; continued momentum in enhancing academics; alignment of financial resources with the University’s mission; investment in critical infrastructure needs; maintenance of a competitive tuition and providing for enhanced financial aid; and advancement of key academic student life priorities.

Academic priorities are continued hiring of new and replacement tenure-line faculty. It is anticipated that fifteen new tenure-line and 35 replacement tenure-line positions will be filled in 2014. These must include start-up costs and additional salary funding. Other priorities include support for instructional improvement and innovation, expansion of the University Scholars Program, development for innovative instructional programs, support for development of graduate professional and online degree programs, and strengthened Ph.D. programs.
Facilities priorities are continued investment in core facilities and new research initiatives, strengthening the research infrastructure, Phase II of the Digital Media Commons, and continued classroom improvement.

Senior Vice President Mantella reported that priorities for student life and support include continued tuition competitiveness. Northeastern University will experience the lowest tuition increase in more than thirty years in order to maintain competitive pricing below the mean of private peers and the top 50 private institutions. NU will continue to enhance financial aid to support students through their degree. Other priorities include student-identified priorities and investment in infrastructure needs including wireless expansion, expanded printing services, and additional student activities space.

Vice Provost Bernstein reported that graduate student priorities encompass increasing designated lounge and meeting space, increased support for TAs and RAs, expansion of staff support for graduate students, and increased career services support.

Professor Gaffney inquired whether funding is available for existing graduate student space. Vice Provost Bernstein responded that he will work with the Colleges on that matter. Provost Director added that this should be handled in partnership with the University and the Colleges.

Vice President Nedell summarized that NU’s financial goals are to fund its academic priorities and student life and support, as well as to improve its operating health. Drivers for improving operating health include retention of graduate programs, regional campus expansion, fundraising, and operating efficiencies. NU’s financial strengths include reinvestments from operations, endowment growth, fundraising, and debt management.

A tuition increase of 3.7% is planned along with room and board increases of 3 to 4% and graduate tuition rate increases averaging 4%. Financial aid has increased at more than double the rate of tuition and fees. Total undergraduate aid has increased from $130.2 million to $204 million from 2009 to 2014. The average net tuition increase after financial aid will be 2.9%.

Expenses: Faculty compensation increase will be 2% for merit and 1% for equity. The staff merit pool is 2.5% with bonus opportunities possible.

The floor was opened to questions.

Professor Adams noted that expenses are up by 7% and the net tuition will increase by 2.9% and inquired whether there will be more students next year or whether admissions will remain at 2,800. Senior Vice President Mantella confirmed that the entering student population will remain the same. Professor Adams then asked how the NU IN program will affect the number of students. The Senior Vice President responded that there is always a small transfer pool with multiple benefits including financial.

Professor Gaffney questioned how initiatives such as graduate student space are funded if the College does not put the matter forth as a priority. Dean Fulmer responded that discussions take place at the Deans’ Council meetings which should be based on discussions between college administration and faculty. The Provost followed by stating that there must be support from the college to fund initiatives.
IV. Senior Vice President Mantella reported that the press has reported on the White House college scorecard and other information which focuses on transparency of college costs for the consumer.

The scorecard reports the net cost, the graduation rate, student default numbers, and the placement rate. Northeastern rates high on the graduation rate at between 70-80% and shows strong loan default levels at approximately 3%. NU’s net price shows slightly higher. The financial aid supports are at nearly 90% and the strategy is that NU has held the net price constant. The average loan debt level is slightly higher than NU’s peers largely due to 5-year programs. This will continue to be a challenge.

On transparency, it is important that families understand costs both now and over time. The challenge with this legislation is that universities are highly varied so the question remains, what is the best way to put forth the cost for a full degree? NU will remain in the on-going conversation.

Professor Lefkovitz expressed concern that because the scorecard presumes the standard four years to graduation, it compares apples to oranges, causing disadvantage to those with the typical five years to graduation. Rather than promote a shorter time to graduation, NU could consider addressing the problem with the scorecard measure, asking for support from scorecard developers and explaining the problem with the scorecard to our constituents. The Vice President noted that students’ most desired model is four years with two coops, and that thought will be given to addressing the inequity built into the scorecard.

Professor Grabel inquired whether there are more students with advance credits. The Vice President responded affirmatively, noting that more of them are also pursuing a graduate education. She recalled that the Senate supported the four-year option in 2003, prior to the scorecard and prior to the current administration. Professor Grabel then enquired about the endowment funding compared to other institutions. The Vice President could not answer directly but noted that 4% of NU’s aid is funded compared to 20% at other institutions.

Professor Adams recalled his surprise that, according to the Boston Globe article, NU’s costs appeared significantly higher. Vice President Mantella responded that NU and the local institutions mentioned differ in terms of supporting the cost of the degree and NU’s trajectory is that the net price has decreased over the past several years while others are increasing.

Professor Daynard asked whether the NU student earns more over four to five years than students at other universities, i.e. do coops make any contribution at all. The Vice President said that several studies at NU show advantages but the University could improve by articulating those earnings. She noted, too, that students are picking up costs on internships.

Professor Ondrechen said the NU had incurred bad publicity and that the response in the media was weak. Senior Vice President Armini responded that it was an isolated story and NU does not wish to counter that the other Boston-area institutions have enormous endowments. The scorecard should be managed by articulating its complexity and that it is one available tool among many.

Professor Rappaport asked how seriously the public is taking the scorecard to which Vice President Mantella responded that applicants view it as one of many metrics.
Professor Fountain, noting that Boston College has decreased its acceptances, asked if there was discussion about attempting to control the number of applications. The Vice President said no. The metrics show that the exponential growth is at the top of the pool. Also, NU has a good record of graduating students whose first choice was not NU.

Dean Finkelstein noted that the yield rate increases after students visit the campus.

In response to Professor Ondrechen, Vice President Mantella reported that there were 15,253 admits and the yield rate is approximately 20%.

V. Professor Aslam read the following and it was seconded:

**BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish the Masters of Science in Game Science and Design in the College of Art, Media and Design and the College of Computer and Information Sciences as approved by the Graduate Council on 27 February 2013.**

Associate Dean Amidon and Professor Harteveld of CAMD were recognized and explained that this is a joint proposal with CCIS and is in alignment with University priorities. It is being administered by interdisciplinary faculty, will be offered as a hybrid degree with Seattle, and focuses on game science and design. Other similar programs focus on game technology or game art which the NU student will take as well but the program will also teach students to analyze data on users in order to understand the players. There is no other program in the world which offers this material.

Professor Peterfreund recommended that the admissions criteria and recruiting materials should include new information so as to be as persuasive as possible.

Professor Gaffney questioned whether this is desired as opposed to a degree in serious games and why there are no mathematics classes. Professor Harteveld responded that the proposal adds breadth and that it is assumed applicants will have mathematics. A course where admitted students can review their mathematics will be offered.

Professor Garcia noted that there is nothing related to the business perspective in this proposal. Professor Harteveld responded that there are efforts to connect more closely and two courses that pertain to the business perspective are suggested. Professor Amidon noted that those with business and mathematics degrees would be considered for admission.

Professor Rappaport questioned the demand and Professor Harteveld noted that gaming companies are currently hiring psychologists so there is increasing need for player-centric experts.

**VOTE to establish the Masters of Science in Game Science and Design: PASSED, 29-0-0.**
VI. Professor Herman read the following and it was seconded:

BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish the Master of Science in Regulatory Affairs of Food and Food Industries in the College of Professional Studies as approved by the Graduate Council on 27 February 2013.

CPS Associate Dean Otter was recognized and explained changes in the industry are complicating compliance and creating the need for educated professionals. This proposal will offer a competitive advantage and will be offered in partnership with FDLI. CPS Senior Fellow Kupferberg noted that the proposal is cross-disciplinary, the field is in flux with new legislation, and the curriculum has core principles of practical application and interaction with the environment. Electives are being offered on business, marketing and international regulatory affairs.

Professor Gaffney wondered how eighteen new courses will be developed. Associate Dean Otter responded that this will happen over time with three full-time faculty members, two of whom have been hired.

VOTE to establish the Master of Science in Regulatory Affairs of Food and Food Industries: PASSED, 28-0-0.

A motion to adjourn was seconded and passed. The Senate adjourned at 1:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jo Ondrechen, Secretary
Faculty Senate