

Northwestern University  
Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting  
Pancoe Auditorium - Evanston, Wieboldt 421 - Chicago  
February 6, 2013

---

Babette Sanders, Chair of the Faculty Senate, called the meeting to order at 5:15pm. There were 44 of 80 members in attendance, with 34 attendees in Evanston, 7 in Chicago, and 3 via streaming. The quorum of fifty-one percent was met. Also in attendance were the Faculty Senate past Chair and the Northwestern Emeriti Organization representative, both serving as honorary members of the Faculty Senate.

**1. Welcome by Babette Sanders, chair.**

Babette Sanders welcomed everyone and introduced members of the Honorary Degree Committee, Professor Ellen Wartella and Jake Julia, Associate Vice President and Associate Provost of Academic Initiative, and Senior Vice President for Business and Finance. She also introduced guest speakers Bob Gundlach and Ken Seeskin, slated to address NU Athletics, and Mary Finn, slated to report on educational affairs.

**2. Honorary Degree Presentation and Vote**

Ellen Wartella and Jake Julia presented additional Honorary Degree nominations. Senators were given an opportunity to give feedback and ask questions. At the conclusion of the discussion each senator was given a ballot and a vote was taken.

**3. Educational Affairs Committee Report**

Mary Finn is the Associate Dean of Undergrad Academic Affairs in Weinberg College, teaches in the English Department, and serves as the Chair of the Faculty Distance On-line Learning working group. On behalf of the Educational Affairs Committee, she gave a brief update on the two on-line learning initiatives, Semester Online and Coursera. Northwestern University has signed an agreement with Coursera, which offers "non-credit" classes at no cost to global students through its MOOCs, or massive open online courses, digital platform.

Semester Online is the partnership with fourteen schools, and counting, and offers online "for-credit" undergraduate courses through a consortium of colleges and universities. This educational model offers on-line courses that recreate a small in person virtual classroom setting. A faculty member or team of faculty members from the consortium will develop material that all students enrolled in the course will engage in. The consortium of colleges and universities will offer a semester's worth of courses every semester, which means Northwestern University will be offering semester courses also, but only through Semester Online. This presents a set of challenges for NU, particularly for the registrar. Mary explained that the Faculty Distance On-line Learning working group

is charged with developing processes so that the solicitation, the vetting, and the selecting of courses beginning in 2014, and going forward, does not happen urgently but rather in a process that is transparent, with a schedule, and with a timetable.

Faculty Senate members asked questions and made comments. In response to several questions, Mary Finn added that NU is responsible for developing one of the twelve to fourteen courses being offered. Most of the resources for developing the course materials will be provided by 2U, which partners with universities and provides them with the technologies, infrastructural, and capital (approximately \$100,000 per course) support for on-line programs. Additionally, NU has come up with some models, with no current fixed amounts, for how faculty will be compensated for the development time, for being a lead instructor, and additional funds for being a small group discussion leader.

Senators with additional questions or concerns were instructed to email Mary Finn or Jeanne Weiland Herrick directly.

#### **4. Report on NU athletics**

Babette Sanders announced the administration's approval to have a member of the Faculty Senate serve on the University Athletics Committee. She introduced Bob Gundlach and Ken Seeskin, who reported on NU Athletics. Ken Seeskin, Professor in Philosophy and Religious Studies, and Chair of the Committee on Athletics and Recreation, gave a brief overview of the committee. He explained that the Athletics and Recreation Committee is an oversight committee and does not set policy. Its goal is to see that policies, which are set elsewhere, are adhered to and that the department of Athletics and Recreation runs in a way that is consistent with the goals and expectations of the university. The committee is appointed by the president and it reports to the president. There are currently twenty six members consisting of twelve faculty, four individuals from central administration, four current student athletes, one alumnus, and five members of the department of Athletics and Recreation. The committee meets four times a year to discuss scheduling as it relates to the amount of class time students can miss, gender equity, student health and welfare, recreation, and, once a year, audit the highly confidential Athletics and Recreation budget. The committee monitors the grades of student athletes on a quarter by quarter basis and, once a year, it looks at the grades given to all classes in the university with more than twenty-five percent student athlete attendance to ensure that there are no classes where student athletes are given preferential treatment. Additionally, the committee conducts exit interviews upon graduation in the form of a questionnaire and a face to face meeting with a faculty member of the committee. Kenneth Seeskin presented statistics and outlined the academic achievements of student athletes.

Bob Gundlach, Director of the Weinberg Writing Program and Professor in the Linguistics Department, serves as the Faculty Athletics Representative for Northwestern to the NCAA and the Big Ten and has been in this role since 2001, as an apprentice, and 2002 as a full representative. The role is mandated by the NCAA and the appointment is made by the university president in consultation

with the Committee on Athletics and Recreation. The Faculty Athletics representative has three main areas of responsibility including participating in discussions with the NCAA at different levels and most significantly at the Big Ten level, signing off on NCAA procedural matters on the academic eligibility of each student athlete at NU each year, and monitoring the academic eligibility each quarter. In addition to NCAA responsibility, there are responsibilities with the Big Ten conference, which meets three times a year. He described the working relationship between the conference and the faculty representatives in detail. Bob Gundlach is also required to participate in the university's own governance system and is involved with the athletic department to monitor and ensure compliance with rules. He also meets regularly with the Committee of Student Athletes and with the Student Athlete Advisory Committee representatives. The role of the Faculty Athletics Representative at Northwestern is both a collaborative role with the Committee on Athletics and Recreation, and has some of its own domains of responsibility.

Senators were given an opportunity to ask questions and make comments. They discussed a wide range of topics including limiting contact practices for sports that have problems with concussions and head injuries, Athletics and Recreation budgets, and student athlete debt as it relates to graduation past the standard four year duration.

#### **5. Qatar arrest: Motion and Senate response**

Helen Thompson, Associate Professor in English and Chair of the Faculty Senate Budget Committee gave a brief overview of the events surrounding the arrest of the poet and University of Cairo student Mohammed ibn al-Dheeb al-Ajani in Qatar. In response to the arrest, she introduced the following motion:

*Whereas the poet and University of Cairo student Mohammed ibn al-Dheeb al-Ajani was sentenced to life in prison (as reported by the BBC and The Guardian, Nov. 29, 2012) for a videotaped reading of a poem allegedly insulting the emir of Qatar Sheik Hamid bin Khalifa Al Thani;*

*Whereas Northwestern University supports the universal human right of persons to freedom of intellectual, political, and artistic expression;*

*Whereas Northwestern University and the United States of America support UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 10 ("Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him") and Article 19 ("Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers");*

*Whereas Northwestern University maintains an intellectual and institutional presence in Qatar through Northwestern University in Qatar or NU-Q;*

*It is resolved that the Faculty Senate condemns the life imprisonment of Mohammed ibn al-Dheeb al-Ajani and supports freedom of intellectual and artistic expression for the people of Qatar.*

Mary Dedinsky, Medill Program NUQ, and Anne Sobel, Communication Program NUQ, were given an opportunity to respond to the arrest. Babette Sanders read the written response. In summary, the response stated that the administration and faculty at NU-Q are well aware of this situation and concerns have been expressed to those who can affect the ultimate decision. The administration and faculty at NUQ work hard on matters of freedom of expression every day, and will continue to do so, but there is concern that anyone can find themselves in a situation similar to that of the poet. Education City has been assured of full academic freedom and this commitment has been kept thus far. The NUQ senators also recommended a call for immediate resolution of this issue by freeing and exonerating the poet and, more importantly, having greater transparency on freedom of expression issues so that full information is available for consideration now and in the future.

The floor was open for discussion. After several remarks, the motion was tabled to allow additional time for Senators to actively seek input from their departments.

## **6. Divestment Resolution**

Christiane Rey, Distinguished Senior Lecturer in French and Italian and Chair of the Faculty Senate Non-tenure committee, reported that she has been in contact with a group of students, connected with the Associated Student Government (ASG) Senate, who have been working on a resolution asking Northwestern to divest from coal at this time, and fossil fuel industries long term. This movement is happening on more than 200 campuses across the US and in other countries, but the movement also affects anyone who has money invested in fossil fuel industries. This initiative is related to climate change. The ASG is interested in having the Faculty Senate, as a body, endorse their Divestment Resolution.

The floor was open for discussion and Senators expressed varied views on the matter. The motion was tabled to allow Senators more time to consider the motion and to seek input from the department they are representing.

## **7. Bill Osborn Visit**

Babette Sanders reminded everyone about the upcoming visit from Board of Trustees Chairman Bill Osborn, who plans to attend the March 6<sup>th</sup> Senate meeting to engage Senators in an open dialogue on university matters. Everyone was asked to think about topics for this important discussion to be added to the current list.

## **8. Social Responsibility Committee Report**

Chair Mary Pattillo reported that this year the Social Responsibility Committee is working on the issue of Diversity. Additionally, the committee has received a petition from the Native American and Indigenous Student Alliance to consider four things: 1) establish a commission to study the role of NU founder John Evans in the Sand Creek Massacre and formally acknowledge his role, 2) the establishment of scholarships for Cheyenne and Arapaho students at NU, 3) a memorial to those killed in the massacre, and 4) the establishment of a Native American Studies program.

## **9. Board of Trustees Meeting**

Chair Babette Sanders reminded Senators about the upcoming Board of Trustees meeting taking place November 9, 2012 from 12-1:30pm in the Allen Center Atrium Dining Room on the Evanston Campus.

## **10. New Business**

- Faculty Club: The Faculty Club remains an important issue and Senators would like to resurrect and continue to pursue this matter with the administration. An ideal location for the Faculty Club is the new construction along the lake.
- Background Checks: Based on new state laws, the university is moving forward to develop guidelines for who needs to have criminal background checks. It is certain that anyone who interacts with a minor on campus will be required to have a background check. Babette Sanders will forward information as it becomes available, to keep everyone apprised of what is happening.

## **11. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 pm.