The second meeting of the Northwestern University Faculty Assembly of the 2018–2019 academic year was held on May 22, 2019 at the James L. Allen Center in Evanston with videoconferencing to the Chicago campus in Wieboldt Hall 421. A number of faculty members participated remotely. University President Morton Schapiro and Faculty Senate President Baron Reed called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m. A quorum (10% of full-time regular faculty members) was not present.

A brief report was given by Faculty Senate President Reed.

This was followed by a presentation about The Graduate School (TGS) from Dean of TGS and Associate Provost for Graduate Education Teresa Woodruff. Dean Woodruff took questions following her presentation.

President Schapiro then gave a brief update on the university and spent the remaining time answering submitted questions and questions from the audience.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Jared Spitz
Secretary of the Faculty Senate
Northwestern University
Faculty Assembly
Summary of Questions and Answers
May 22, 2019

1. Welcome and Introductions: Faculty Senate President Baron Reed welcomed attendees and provided an overview of the meeting. He then introduced Dean of The Graduate School and Associate Provost for Graduate Education Teresa Woodruff. A summary of the proceedings follows.

2. TGS Presentation:

   ○ Dean Woodruff began by thanking all faculty for helping her transition into her new role as Dean of The Graduate School (TGS). She then launched into the five goals she set when she started the new position: 1. Stakeholder engagement (develop conversations across all the schools and be highly attuned to the different needs at each school). 2. Understand the core competencies of TGS (Dean Woodruff said these are on a very strong footing). 3. Examine the communication strategies for TGS (this meeting represents the first time TGS has spoken to the graduate faculty at large). 4. Think through the fiduciary management and oversight of TGS. Dean Woodruff said this last goal was altered significantly by the budget deficit. 5. Develop a strategic plan (vast amounts of data were collected from the graduate faculty, as well as small group ideations, which ultimately led to the Vision 2025 plan).

   Following those prefatory statements, Dean Woodruff began her presentation (located on the University Faculty Assembly section of the Faculty Senate website).

3. Questions from Attendees:

   ○ Professor Jeffrey Winters from the Department of Political Science said one of the problems graduate faculty have when funding is guaranteed for five years, but the expectation or average time to degree is a little over six years, is that many of the international students face a problem with keeping their visas. He said this is because the U.S. will only issue a visa for the guaranteed period. He asked if there is something Northwestern can do to prevent this problem.

   • Dean Woodruff said TGS continues to work, particularly with the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences (WCAS), to develop a strategy and metrics by which students can obtain information about what their future funding could be. Dean Woodruff said TGS realizes they may have to take a more active and direct approach with students facing this problem going forward so they can be assured of their situation earlier.
Professor Rebecca Zorach from the Department of Art History said students are not able to take Northwestern funding beyond their sixth year of study. In art history, which has a longer time to degree for very good intellectual reasons, students tend to have more access to external fellowships because of that extended period of study. However, at Northwestern, applying for multiple, or multi-year, external fellowships is disincentivized because they are only allowed to bank four quarters of their fellowship when they receive more than four quarters of external funding. Also, students are not allowed to receive funding beyond the sixth, or possibly with an exception the seventh, year. Professor Zorach said this is unnecessarily hurting some of her department’s best students. She asked if the limit on banking quarters is a temporary measure—fallout from the budget constraints—or if this is TGS’s practice moving forward.

- Dean Woodruff said she believes the University has done a good job reaching up to 20 quarters, which is the current funding allotment for graduate students. She said she is continuing conversations with Provost Holloway and Dean Randolph about the best structure of these quarters. There are differences across the schools, programs, and students. Every single student is a case-by-case situation. She said TGS tries to work with the schools themselves on those individual situations. She added that Kelly Mayo from WCAS has not reported any precarity with the funding this year. Dean Woodruff continued saying that they do not want to put any artificial barriers in the place of any individual student while still trying to make funding for all Northwestern graduate students as available as possible.

Professor Babette Sanders from the Department of Physical Therapy and Human Movement Sciences said her role within her department is assistant chair for student affairs. Accordingly, she said she was very interested in Dean Woodruff’s focus on the upcoming year. She asked if Dean Woodruff had a breakdown of the number of graduate students in Evanston versus Chicago. Professor Sanders also asked why CAPS services on the Chicago campus are limited compared to Evanston, especially given such a sizable graduate student population in Chicago, the heightened focus on well-being nationally and at Northwestern, and the growth in the number of graduate students using Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).

- According to Dean Woodruff, approximately 43% of Northwestern’s graduate students live in Chicago and 47% live in Evanston. The remaining 10% live elsewhere. (This data supplied by TGS after the Assembly.)

Dean Woodruff said that she and President Schapiro have held several meetings about student health recently. She said that she wants to make sure all graduate students have a chance to thrive, including with respect to their mental well-being. Dean Woodruff said TGS is expanding their thinking in this regard. She also believes the more students are involved in these conversations, the better. Part of that means making sure students know what is available through TGS and part of it is making sure students know what they can do themselves to be happy and healthy.
4. Report from President Schapiro:

- President Schapiro began his report by expressing how much he values graduate students. He said they are one of his top priorities as the budget gets balanced. Given that Conversations with the President was six weeks ago, President Schapiro elected to dive right into questions.

5. Questions from Attendees:

- Faculty Senator Claudia Swan from the Department of Art History asked about the slogan “AND is in our DNA.” For example, how is it interpreted, and are there more positive formulations, like pathways to interdisciplinary? Lastly, Senator Swan asked what the motto means to President Schapiro.

  - President Schapiro said it means many different things to different people. To him, he said the slogan evokes the breadth of the Northwestern education. He said Northwestern is not simply a STEM school, despite how the market or outside pressures push them in that direction. It also means Northwestern is located on a beautiful suburban campus, but it is right next to one of the great cities in the world. Furthermore, Northwestern is a great research university that cares about teaching at all levels. President Schapiro said the slogan does not mean that a student should triple major rather than deeply focus on one specific area while they are at Northwestern. He said the slogan is promoted by its roots in the interdisciplinary work at the University.

- Professor Donna Woods from the Department of Pediatrics elaborated on President Schapiro’s points by saying that the interdisciplinary culture is attractive to both faculty and graduate students.

  - President Schapiro said that should actually own the phrase more if it is going to be a part of Northwestern’s identity going forward.

- Submitted question: In a recent interview, you said that you read some 500 admissions applications every year, including those from children of donor families. What effect do you think this level of transparency has on the public’s impression of “side doors” admission to NU? What are the implications of telling a donor that their child will not be admitted?

  - President Schapiro said that if a person does something then they should be transparent. That is why he told the Daily about reading the 500 applications a year. All presidents are involved, in some way or another, with undergraduate admissions. What everyone found so outrageous, he said, was the fact that he admitted his involvement. President Schapiro said he admitted it in part because it is his field of research and has been for decades. He said he doesn’t want the deans or anyone else talking to the Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, because
with his background, all the development-related applications should go through him. He said he spends a lot of time on it, and he is acutely aware that for every student admitted, eleven are rejected. Given that, he said he is a very tough barrier. Plus, Chris Watson, the Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, has the final say. President Schapiro said he would never overrule him.

- Submitted question: How can the university ensure that the changing undergraduate student body—which now includes substantially more low-income, first-generation, and under-represented minority students than in the past—is fully at home at Northwestern? What challenges and opportunities do these demographic changes bring to the university?

  - President Schapiro said the opportunity is to better prepare people for a much more diverse world. The challenge is pretty much everything. Over the last ten years, Northwestern has doubled the amount of Pell-eligible students and vastly increased the number of international students. President Schapiro said of course this changes everything. Thus, inclusivity is a challenge he works on every single day.

- Submitted question: As the university looks ahead to coming out of a tight budgetary situation in a couple of years, what will be the top spending priorities moving forward?

  - President Schapiro said that he and Provost Holloway have been thinking long and hard about this very topic. One high priority he mentioned at the outset is Ph.D. students. President Schapiro said the University must support them at the highest level possible. He lauded those students and said taking financial worries off their plate is very important to him. Equalizing the undergraduate student experience is another priority. There are also a few infrastructure projects—Jacobs, lab space on the North campus, Deering Library. Hiring will need to be aggressive as Simpson-Querrey opens. He said Northwestern must also continue to invest in the research support system. The good news is that Northwestern has a seven-year plan that is already starting to come to fruition.

- Professor Sam Tenenbaum from the Pritzker School of Law asked what the school is doing to ensure that diverse political views are not only protected but also encouraged. He gave an example of a Christian student who came to him feeling like he could not express his beliefs openly.

  - President Schapiro said that Northwestern struggles with this problem like every other school. He said that Northwestern is not immune from the tense political environment in the United States. President Schapiro said he was surprised Professor Tenenbaum had brought up faith as a touchpoint in this debate because he felt Northwestern was one of the most open
places he has ever been with regards to spiritual belief. Overall, though, he said Northwestern does everything it can to protect freedom of speech.

Professor Carole LaBonne from the Department of Molecular Biosciences said she was very glad to hear that one of the priorities following the budget deficit will be graduate students. She followed up on Dean Woodruff’s point about STEM graduate students by stating that Northwestern’s funding lags behind peer institutions, and she said it is important Northwestern invest longer institutional support for those students.

- President Schapiro said it is natural for him to think more often about the full length of the time to degree because of his background in the social sciences and his daughter’s work in the humanities. That said, he knows how important the STEM fields are. Senator Tom Meade and others in the Faculty Senate have been very effective in reminding his administration of that importance.

- In lieu of a question, Director of the Office of Fellowships Beth Pardoe made a comment about graduate funding. She said she noticed a drop in students competing for grants. She encouraged faculty to please send graduate students to her office if they have questions—international students especially because they can qualify for certain grants even without citizenship.

- President Schapiro said he wants Northwestern to be a leader. He does not want to disincentivize applying for external fellowships. These not only help them study for the necessary amount of time, but they also help students get a job.

Submitted question: As you reflect on a decade leading Northwestern, what would you say is central to your legacy, especially in relation to the faculty? What would you hope is carried forward, someday, by future leaders of Northwestern?

- President Schapiro said that choosing Northwestern was probably a bit unusual. He said very few people move from being a president at a liberal arts college to being the president of a research university. They are quite different. Many people were worried he did not fully grasp the magnitude of STEM research and the like. But he said he was going to continue the trajectory Northwestern had taken, growing NIH funding, growing in research dollars, etc., but President Schapiro also said he did not want to do it on the backs of teachers. He prioritized great research while at the same providing great teaching for the next generation. Shared governance, he said, is also a huge part of his legacy now. He said he hopes the strong foundation in shared governance he and the Senate have built is permanent. If his legacy is anything, he hopes it is that faculty always are an important voice in how Northwestern moves forward.
With no new business, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jared Spitz
Secretary of the Faculty Senate