

2023-2024 Year-End Committee Report

Committee:	Educational Affairs
Charge:	To recommend best practices in academic organization, research, and teaching in order to shape the Northwestern educational experience.
Chair:	Jacqueline Babb
# of Meetings:	3

Completed Business and/or Accomplishments

The Educational Affairs Committee met once in fall, winter, and spring quarters.

The committee followed up on a spring 2023 [resolution](#) presented by the Educational Affairs Committee to increase admission and support of community college students. The resolution requested data on the admissions pipeline and student experience for transfer students, with particular attention to transfer students from community colleges.

Northwestern entered into an articulation agreement with Oakton College through the School of Professional Studies during the summer of 2023. The agreement outlines courses that transfer for credit, so Oakton students with 24 credit hours and a minimum GPA can apply for early admission to SPS. Students can select from five online and eight on campus programs to earn a bachelor's degree. Students have a dedicated adviser based on their program of interest.

Committee chair, Jacqueline Babb, collaborated with the Student Affairs Committee on a discussion with Associate Provost Miriam Sherin and Director of Undergraduate Education Lee West. This discussion illuminated support for all transfer students at the University and School levels. Student advising occurs at the School level and most programs meet with undergraduates quarterly. Weinberg has a dedicated advisor for transfer students. Students may also encounter advisors in athletics, OISS, study abroad, fellowship, and UGR. A pilot initiative that flags students who are struggling throughout advising systems is a means of ensuring student issues are readily addressed.

Transfer students may be eligible for first-generation low-income student (FGLI) programming and resources, such as Compass, a cohort-based peer mentorship program; Ryan Scholars financial support; Summer Academic Workshop to support FLGI students' transition to college; and Books for 'Cats, textbooks on loan for free.

It will take some time to measure the impact of the community college transfer student initiative and the Faculty Senate should continue to request updates and data.

Unfinished/Continuing Business

Committee Chair, Jacqueline Babb, serves as the Faculty Senate representative on the University Assessment and Accreditation Council. Northwestern is scheduled for its 10-year review in spring 2025. The Council is preparing the documents for the Higher Learning Commission visit.

The committee is in its second year of following up on a [2018 resolution](#) to reimagine the CTEC instrument. The Reimagine CTEC Committee, comprised of faculty and administrators, provided recommendations to reduce bias and gather actionable feedback. A work group of staff and administration revised the instrument accordingly, added a formative statement about bias, gathered feedback, and began testing the instrument. Based on a Faculty Senate recommendation, the CTEC work group added Chair Jacqueline Babb to its committee in January 2024. Jacqueline presented the most recent version of the CTEC instrument at the February 7, 2024 Faculty Senate meeting. Senators provided feedback, which was shared with the CTEC work group following the meeting. The feedback inspired a pilot initiative by the CTEC workgroup in conjunction with the Provost's office and the Searle Center to encourage teaching evaluation beyond CTEC. The pilot includes a three-pronged approach to evaluating teaching at Northwestern to include: student feedback, peer feedback, and faculty reflection and innovation. The pilot was presented to Associate Deans for Faculty in May 2024, with follow up discussions during the summer of 2024. CTEC testing is anticipated to resume in fall 2024 with select schools.

New Business for Next Year

The Committee was approached to investigate grading practices and norms in undergraduate courses by Senator Mark Witte. The Committee was unable to address this request given the scope and timing of the CTEC work.

The Committee was approached to investigate and support ungrading practices by Senator Casey Ankeny. The Committee discussed ungrading practices and requested that the 2024-25 Committee learn more to determine whether there is a role for Faculty Senate in that initiative.

The Committee will continue to monitor the Transfer Student Resolution. It will also continue its work on the CTEC reform and preparation for the 2025 Accreditation visit from the Higher Learning Commission.