

2022 Report of Educational Affairs Committee

Carol Heimer, chair

2021-22

The Educational Affairs Committee met twice during AY 2021-22 with emailed discussions supplementing these meetings.

Along with the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee (chaired by Regan Thomson), the Educational Affairs Committee developed and presented to the Senate a resolution in support of academic freedom at universities and K-12 institutions. This resolution was adopted by the Senate in March 2022.

Near the end of the year, the Educational Affairs Committee began a discussion of a second resolution on admission to Northwestern of transfer students from community colleges (draft title: “Senate Resolution in Favor of Increase Admission and Support for Community College Transfer Students at Northwestern”). The end of the year arrived before work on this resolution was completed. Contact people for this resolution included Mark Witte, chair of the Governance Committee, and Monica Prasad, sociology faculty member involved in work on this matter.

General notes:

Standing Senate committees have seemed most effective when they worked with (standing) Administration committees, providing a more robust portrait of faculty needs and interests to complement the Administration’s vision. In the case of the Educational Affairs Committee, though, it is unclear who exactly the Committee should be liaising with. Given the centrality of educational affairs to the University’s mission, there is no single Administration group to orient to. Instead, innumerable committees concern themselves with educational affairs.

A first task for the Educational Affairs Committee, then, might be to assemble a list of possible liaison points, perhaps gathering information either by inviting representatives of those bodies speak with the Committee or by having Committee members meet with representatives of such bodies and then report back to the Committee. After an initial round of information gathering, the Committee might then focus its efforts on a subset of the possible liaison points. Among the possible liaison points:

- [Searle](#) Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning; has an advisory board that meets quarterly
- [Accessible NU](#)
- Office of the [Registrar](#)
- Associate Provost for Graduate Education (Kelly Mayo, also Dean of the [Graduate School](#))
- [Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education](#) (Miriam Gamoran Sherin)
- [Open Educational Resources](#) (also in Provost’s Office?)
- [Undergraduate Student Lifecycle Committee](#) (in Provost’s Office) re support for first-gen, low-income (FGLI) students
- Provost’s initiative on [assessment of student learning](#)
- Contact points (Associate Deans?) within the various schools

- Curriculum development groups, such as the Buffett Institute for Global Affairs's initiative to develop a Sustainable Development Goals [\(SDG\) curriculum](#) by tagging courses with SDG content

As a second option, though, the Educational Affairs Committee might also work on topics that it deems to be of importance to the faculty, students, and university. In some cases, these might originate with the Committee, as occurred in our review and discussion of published materials and surveys on faculty experiences during Covid (Feb. 8, 2022 meeting). In other instances, the Committee might take up topics or initiatives brought to it by others or work with others jointly on such topics. An example of the latter would be the initiative on students transferring from community colleges, mentioned above. A third example is the review and reform of CTECs, apparently undertaken by the Provost's Office (for which no report is yet available, though I may be wrong on that). (An NU Daily [article](#) from 2018 reports on the early phases of this reform process. Claudia Swan, mentioned in the article, was chair of the Senate Educational Affairs Committee.)

Hopefully these steps would help clarify and firm up the Educational Affairs Committee's mission and agenda and allow it to become a more effective element of the Faculty Senate.