

## 2020-2021 Year-End Committee Report

<b>Committee:</b>	Faculty Handbook Committee
<b>Charge:</b>	Revises the Northwestern University Faculty Handbook, which constitutes the contract between the faculty and the University, and advises other committees as needed.
<b>Chair:</b>	Ceci Rodgers
<b># of Meetings:</b>	Six "in-person" meetings on Zoom (two each quarter); Additional meetings via email.

### **Completed Business and/or Accomplishments**

The Faculty Handbook Committee undertook two major tasks in 2020-21:

1. Revision of the Title IX provisions in the handbook and addition of Policy on Institutional Equity. The letter to Senators before the final vote at the November 2020 meeting is attached below.
2. Revision and enhancement of the handbook's Academic Freedom language in collaboration with the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee. The committees met jointly and separately in the winter and spring quarters to work on this. A final vote on the language takes place on July 14 at a special meeting of the Faculty Senate. The proposed language is attached below.

### **Unfinished/Continuing Business**

Depending on how the July 14 vote goes, there could be continuing business on the academic freedom language.

### **New Business for Next Year**

A university committee is working on a proposed "Respectful NU Policy." If this effort is completed in the 2021-22 academic year, the Faculty Handbook Committee will be called on to revise the handbook to reflect the new policy.

Dear Senators

The Faculty Handbook Committee has reviewed feedback from the Faculty Senate following the October meeting in which senators were presented a detailed explanation of new handbook language concerning the Interim Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment and the Policy on Institutional Equity.

The committee has approved a final version of the language and respectfully submits the changes to the full Faculty Senate for approval. Two pdfs are included in the meeting packet: a clean copy of the Faculty Handbook containing the new language and a copy that shows the final edits in track changes.

As a reminder, the policy changes were mandated by the Department of Education and were required to be in place by Aug. 14.

The new language:

1. Carves out the new Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment and links to the policy on the N.U. website.
2. Describes the behaviors that fall under the separate Policy on Institutional Equity and links to that policy on the N.U. website.
3. Directs faculty to university resources to help determine which policy covers a specific complaint.
4. Has been reviewed several times by Faculty Senate leadership and Faculty Handbook Committee members, as well as the full Faculty Senate, in concert with the Office of Equity, the Provost's office and the Office of General Counsel.

As a reminder, the purpose of the vote at the November meeting is to ratify what is required of the university by law. It follows a thorough review by the Faculty Senate. Specifically, Faculty Senate leadership has held multiple meetings with representatives from the Office of Equity, the Provost's office and the Office of General Counsel to better understand the new policies and to draft changes to the handbook language. The Handbook Committee has met twice since its formation in September before finalizing and approving the language.

**NOTE: The following is the proposed academic freedom language sent to Senators before the May Faculty Senate meeting (first reading). A second reading and vote was to happen at a special Faculty Senate meeting set for July 14.**

Proposed New Language for the Faculty Handbook  
Submitted by Faculty Handbook Committee and Faculty Rights and Responsibilities  
Committee

### I.1. Academic freedom

Northwestern University subscribes to the Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure issued by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in 1940, as amended in 1970, and the Statement on Professional Ethics adopted by the AAUP in 1966 and revised in 1987 and 2009.

Freedom in the pursuit and expression of knowledge is fundamental to the life of the institution. Academic freedom creates an environment in which faculty members may pursue their scholarly research, creative activities, publication, and teaching and related activities. It is essential to the university's fulfillment of its mission to discover, produce and communicate knowledge to students, to colleagues, and to the community at large. This mission depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition.

All faculty at Northwestern University, tenure-eligible and non-tenure-eligible, and all other officers of instruction to whom this handbook pertains, enjoy the protections of academic freedom in these endeavors, regardless of the campuses or branches of the university with which they are affiliated, inclusive of faculty participating in research, teaching, and related activities abroad, to the extent that applicable laws allow. In safeguarding the rights to academic freedom for themselves and for others in the community, faculty also accept their share of responsibilities for the governance of the institution, for fulfilling their duties with integrity and intellectual rigor and for following the University's Policy on Institutional Equity and all other University policies. These responsibilities do not limit academic freedom. Rather, they provide the conditions under which it can flourish.

#### I.1.a. Academic freedom in research and publication

Faculty are entitled to the full freedom to engage in their research or creative activities and to disseminate their work in scholarly and public venues, whether print or electronic, subject to the adequate performance of other academic duties; but research should be conducted in accordance with University policies and procedures.

#### I.1.b. Academic freedom and instruction

Faculty are entitled to the freedom to discuss their subject in the classroom or other academic settings. As teachers, faculty encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors.

#### I.1.c. Academic freedom as a citizen

When faculty speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and

their institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinion of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.

#### I.1.d. Academic freedom and its relationship to shared governance

Northwestern University adheres to the principle that “sound governance practice and the exercise of academic freedom are closely connected,” as expressed in the AAUP statement *On the Relationship of Faculty Governance to Academic Freedom* (1994). The statement further defines the close relationship of these distinct concepts as follows: “A sound system of institutional governance is a necessary condition for the protection of faculty rights and thereby for the most productive exercise of essential faculty freedoms. Correspondingly, the protection of the academic freedom of faculty members in addressing issues of institutional governance is a prerequisite for the practice of governance unhampered by fear of retribution.”

#### I.1.e. Academic freedom and disciplinary action

Disciplinary action will not be used to restrain faculty members in their exercise of academic freedom. If a faculty member believes a disciplinary action violates their right to academic freedom, the faculty member may appeal, as outlined in the Faculty Handbook.