2025-2026 Year-End Committee Report

Committee:	Student Affairs
Charge:	Collaborates with Northwestern student governance associations on issues involving faculty-student interaction and considers University-wide policies related to both undergraduate and graduate students
Chair:	Ana Maria Acosta, PhD
# of Meetings:	3

Completed Business and/or Accomplishments

The committee continued the work from prior years seeking to get an up-to-date view of the student experience at Northwestern. The committee met with various stakeholders, and these were the items that were brought to the committee

- Associated Student Government (ASG): the committee met with leadership and three of their executive board members. The main items on their agenda were the rise in academic integrity violations and how to deal with them, student access to training in AI, improving student wellness as related to academics which included formalizing policies for absences from class, and standardizing syllabi across departments and schools to include a minimum set of required items. They wanted to collaborate more with the Faculty Senate.
- Northwestern University Graduate Workers (NUGW): the committee met with the NUGW leadership and discussed the main items on their agenda which was mostly around preparing for bargaining their new three-year contract, including polling graduate students/workers. They are not happy with the deal that the University made with the government, in particular as it may impact international students, demonstration policies, trans student rights, immigration and others. They are concerned about the implementation of the agreement. As for the new contract, they are not expecting a big salary increase, or better healthcare plan, will advocate for healthcare coverage for dependents, and more importantly to expand the definition of graduate worker to include more students currently excluded. Students don't feel supported in terms of immigration, international students are having to seek information and training on their own. They pointed out that after they unionized, it has been difficult to get beyond 5th year funding.
- Undergraduate student access to medical abortion – after consulting with several different groups and Susan Davis, VP of Student Affairs, we concluded that this is something that the University has the power to implement through Student Health Services but for now has

decided that it is not a priority because students can be referred to healthcare provides that can prescribe medical abortion in the Evanston area.

- Cancellation of partnership with the Posse program – according to Susan Davis, VP Student Affairs, this has been in the works for a while, mainly because the students recruited into the program overlapped with those who don't need financial aid and given that Northwestern's financial aid is based on need, they would rather allocate those resources to support students from low income backgrounds. Other programs like Questbridge and STARS will fill the gap left by the Posse Scholars program.

Unfinished/Continuing Business

- Follow up with the different groups to assess their new priorities and progress on existing priorities
- It is worth circling back with Sarah Brown, Director of the Women's Center, regarding access to medical abortion to see if she has student specific asks
- The committee had expressed interest in expanding the availability of community service opportunities for students at Northwestern and partner with other faculty senate committees that are also interested in the topic from a social responsibilities and faculty perspectives. The project has been tabled for a couple of years in a row due to other issues coming to the foreground.

New Business for Next Year

- Follow up on international student issues and how Northwestern is supporting them and educating them on their rights.