

Northwestern University  
Minutes of the Faculty Assembly  
Pancoe Auditorium - Evanston, Wieboldt Hall 421 - Chicago  
November 15, 2016

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The first meeting of the Northwestern University Faculty Assembly of the 2016–2017 academic year was held on November 15, 2016, at Pancoe Auditorium in Evanston with videoconferencing to the Chicago campus in Wieboldt Hall 421. A number of faculty members participated remotely. President Morton Schapiro called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

A quorum not being present, the President and other senior administrators proceeded to answer written questions and questions from attendees.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

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# Northwestern University

Faculty Assembly

Summary of Questions and Answers

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1. **Welcome and Introductions:** University President Morton Schapiro, Faculty Senate President Laurie Zoloth, and Staff Advisory Council President Rhea Banks welcomed attendees and provided an overview of the format of the meeting. Senate President Zoloth noted that this Assembly was the first to include the Staff Advisory Council and expressed her desire for expanded collaboration between faculty and staff.

2. **Questions and Answers:**

- **Q1: NU boasts that women were accepted into NU in 1869 and in those nearly 150 years we have never, ever had a female university president. Fifty percent of the population; zero percent representation in the primary leadership role. What does that say about diversity and inclusion? Currently the President, Provost, and Executive Vice President are all male. Women are fifty percent of the population; zero percent representation in our top leadership. What does that say about diversity and inclusion? Currently we have twelve school deans, and eight of them are male. Fifty percent of the population; thirty-three percent school leadership representation. What does that say about diversity and inclusion?**
  - President Schapiro noted that gender diversity is only one measure of diversity. He also pointed out that five of his thirteen direct reports are women, which he suspected would be more diverse than peer institutions. That said, he added that there could always be improvements.
  - Provost Daniel Linzer commented that five out of thirteen deans are women. He noted that large numbers of recent chairs of decanal search committees have been women.
- **Q2: If there is a discrepancy between women's and men's salaries at the full professor level, why doesn't NU fix this with an immediate adjustment?**
  - Provost Linzer prefaced his response by noting that this question emerged out of the results of a study that had just been released. That study, which was faculty-run and controlled for extraneous variables, found that there was a significant difference of roughly five percent among full professors, but no statistical variation among assistant and associate faculty on the tenure track nor among non-tenure-eligible faculty outside of the Feinberg School of Medicine. After the report is finalized, it will go to the deans, who will then look at individual faculty and decide on corrective actions for salaries.

- **Q3: You brought up that there will be a separate study for Feinberg. What are the plans for that?**
  - Provost Linzer said that he did not know when exactly it would take place and that he did not want to speculate due to the complexities of designing to study. He added that preparations are currently underway.
- **Q4: The N for NTE faculty was less than for tenure-eligible faculty, and the variability was greater. Some colleagues have noted that it would be more difficult to find statistically significant differences because of this. How was this accounted for?**
  - Provost Linzer responded that the question should be asked of the faculty statisticians who analyzed the data. The administration only provided the data while the faculty statisticians defined the parameters of the study and the mode of analysis.
- **Q5: It took many years for a faculty-initiated study of gender inequality in faculty salaries to be carried out. Did you yourselves conduct any research on this matter?**
  - Provost Linzer answered that his preferred methodology was to start with a question and have the experts carry out the study and analyze the data. The faculty statisticians who analyzed the data did not have individual-level data, which is why the deans will be reviewing the study before making decisions on individual salaries.
  - **Q5A: What safeguards are there for the faculty in this?**
    - Provost Linzer responded that this report will inform the actions of the deans as they review individual faculty salaries, and Associate Provost Lindsay Chase-Lansdale will review the data with the deans.
  - **Q5B: We were led to believe that there were no female full professors in the department of Economics and a pitiful number in the McCormick School of Engineering.**
    - Senate President Zoloth commented that the Faculty Senate and its Secure Faculty Survey Committee are safeguards to ensure that changes are made in response to these analyses, she noted that both bodies would be interested in receiving comments from faculty.
- **Q6: When I served as chair of the Art History department, as I left, I reported to the Dean that there was a ten percent difference between male and female faculty salaries in the department across the board. Would it be possible to have direct representatives of the faculty—i.e., chairs—involved in these conversations with deans? Without that, I am not convinced that there will be adequate representation of faculty interests.**
  - Provost Linzer noted that there is a faculty-elected budget committee in Weinberg that sets salaries each year that will be reviewing any adjustments that come out of this analysis. He added that the Faculty Senate is part of this process and that Associate Provost Chase-Lansdale and the deans are faculty members. Provost Linzer said that

his office had published these data in order to ensure that the adjustments are made, and that the deans, the budget committee, and the Provost will review the chairs' recommendations. When appropriate, Provost Linzer said he would make additional adjustments outside of the salary pool.

- **Q7: I am concerned to learn of the health issues faced by our cornerback Matthew Harris due to repeated concussions. Are you confident that players like him who suffer concussions will not have any permanent brain injury as a result? If you are not confident of that, does Northwestern provide players with lifelong health insurance and life insurance? Finally, if you believe there is a significant risk for players like Harris who suffer these repeated concussions of permanent brain injury, can you tell the faculty how we can morally justify recruiting players to play a sport with such a risk of lifelong brain injury?**
  - President Schapiro commented that concussions are not limited to football and that percentages are substantially higher in soccer. He added that Northwestern has healthcare for all 507 varsity athletes, which he believes is the best in the Big 10 if not the best in the country. President Schapiro concluded that the University tries to protect athletes as much as possible and that Matt Harris was encouraged by many to retire.
  - **Q7A: Football does have a higher risk of brain injury. I have not heard any college president morally justify the risks of football when there are such high risks, especially when they are not compensated for those risks.**
    - President Zoloth commented that she disagrees with President Schapiro on this issue. She argued that the question is not what the moral justification is, but 1) at what point there would be enough evidence to decide that it cannot be justified? and 2) is there a process by which it can be ascertained how close that point is?
    - President Schapiro responded that he was not aware of any process for determining that point. He added that as an economist, he believes there is always a cost-benefit analysis and some point at which the costs outweigh the benefits.
- **Q8: What are the biggest challenges facing the University?**
  - President Schapiro responded that there are many challenges facing the University right now. First, he noted that Northwestern made a big bet on sponsored research, and the rates for sponsored research may change under the administration of President-elect Trump. Northwestern went from 41<sup>st</sup> in NIH and related funding in 1997 to around 18<sup>th</sup> now, which has allowed for an increase in spending on faculty hiring and infrastructure for Big Science. At the same time, though, President Schapiro commented that this means the University is less vulnerable to changes in undergraduate tuition, which now makes up slightly less than ten percent of operating

revenues. He added that he is always worried about the reversal of town-gown relations in Evanston, which have dramatically improved in recent years and which are critical for the University. President Schapiro concluded that he was worried that the University would make the wrong choices and that he felt it was his job to keep a moral compass and do the right things. He stated his hope that as Northwestern ascends in the rankings, the University never takes itself too seriously or loses its Midwestern values of humility, civility, respect, and lack of entitlement.

- **Q9: How do you expect the Trump presidency to affect the University in terms of financial aid? International students? Medical research dollars?**
  - President Schapiro noted that the effects are unpredictable. He stated that one area that could be impacted is sponsored research, but he is less concerned that the administration will make changes about Pell grants. President Schapiro added that it was hard to believe that the administration would close the borders, and he commented that he was more worried about losing the brilliance of international students than about losing their tuition. Finally, he stated his concern that the administration could dismantle Title IX and regulations that incentivize or force institutions to act for the public good, which could lead institutions to act in their individual interests rather than contributing to the prosperity of the U.S.
- **Q10: Can we speak to the overall environment that has been created since the election? I know lots of students are worried about outbreaks of anti-Semitism and racism and misogyny. What is being done institutionally to help our students, faculty, and staff cope with that?**
  - President Schapiro responded that the University stands ready to respond to these problems, to reinforce its values of inclusivity and diversity, and to protect students. He added that the University has great staff, great resources, and the will to keep the community safe.
- **Q11: I have heard from colleagues about verbal attacks against Muslim students on campus. Is there a systematic collection of information about these attacks to see what groups are being targeted? I think it is important to identify particular groups.**
  - President Schapiro responded that federal law requires the University to track these numbers and commented that while the University can always do more, it has been taking actions since before the presidential election. He also noted that Fall Faith Fest involved many Muslim students and that the University will do everything possible to keep students safe.
  - President Zoloth added that building an inclusive community depends upon the individual and collective contributions of the faculty, too, which highlights the critical importance of true shared governance. She remarked that faculty have now seen that they do not have access to levels of citizenship in the way they imagined and fantasized

they did, which makes it all the more important that faculty members take responsibility in their classes and in every institution where they do have power.

- **Q12: What is the university's plan to address gun violence in Chicago?**
  - President Schapiro responded that the University has a comparative advantage as it responds to certain global and local problems, and he particularly highlighted the work of Associate Provost Chase-Lansdale with the Institute for Policy Research, the University's relationship with community colleges, and the University's investments in District 65, Evanston Township High School, and Northwestern Academy. President Schapiro also noted that the research done and investments made at the University improve healthcare and education while creating jobs. He added that Northwestern has a responsibility to do the right thing with its endowment.
- **Q12: What level of resources should schools be allocating to administrative functions?**
  - President Schapiro responded that there is no set answer, but no more than necessary. He noted that administrative functions include Counseling and Psychological Services, for example.
- **Q13: We want to be in at the top of the US News and World Report Rankings, and in many ways we are. But we are not in the top 5 or even 10 in terms of faculty or staff salaries. With the new resources available to the University, why not spend money and raise faculty and staff salaries?**
  - President Schapiro began by agreeing with Provost Linzer that the solution to the discrepancy in full professor salaries along gender lines requires looking at salaries at the individual level and making adjustments. He then remarked that he would like to dedicate more resources to faculty salaries and noted that the University was already pushing for higher salary increases than peer institutions. President Schapiro concluded that if the endowment goes back to returning 7.5 percent nominal, he thinks the University should make a more dramatic statement in terms of salaries because it is the right thing to do.
- **Q14: What data and science are behind quantitative and qualitative faculty teaching requirements?**
  - President Schapiro noted that he has written a paper with David Figlio on measuring true student learning, and he imagines that a study could be conducted on how teaching load affects that learning. He suggested that teaching loads are more a result of history than of quantitative or qualitative data, but he is always seeking out ways to incentivize and reward great undergraduate teaching. President Schapiro also commented that while he is straightforward about the fact that Northwestern prioritizes its role as a research university, Northwestern faculty are unusual among peer institutions for their commitment to undergraduate teaching.
- **Q15: I want to make sure we are talking about increases in both faculty and staff salaries. Also, with the new Fair Labor Standards Act regulations on the horizon, how are you handling those who may be exempt but do not reach the threshold for meeting that anymore? Are they automatically shifted downward? What is going to happen to them?**

- Executive Vice President Nim Chinniah responded that the University has been working with postdoctoral fellows to match them at the minimum level and will work with staff in a very similar way. He noted that about 700 people will be affected, and 70 percent of them are postdoctoral fellows.
- **Q16: One thing that is surprising given how interdisciplinary Northwestern is is that no school seems to really support team teaching. You have to dodge and weave and lie and do crazy things to make it happen at all. I think it would help us a lot, especially in terms of interdisciplinary programs and interaction, to be allowed to do team teaching and to have it get credit in the way it does at other universities.**
  - President Schapiro commented that he learns much more from team teaching than he does from teaching on his own and that he thinks students do as well. He also noted that he helped develop a scheme to encourage team teaching while he was at Williams College.
  - Provost Linzer responded that he cannot speak for all of the schools, but he worked to encourage team teaching when he was dean of the Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences, including through the Kaplan Institute for the Humanities. He advised faculty to have a conversation on team teaching in their schools and explain the real advantages provided by team teaching rather than hiding it, especially if the two faculty members are teaching in a combined way and would teach the same number of students together as they would separately.
  - **Q16A: Empirically, it is much harder than that for most of us because we will go to our department heads, and they will typically not be supportive. There are all sorts of reasons for this, but it is really a barrier, and we really do not have things in place to make that as straightforward as at Chicago or MIT or Stanford.**
    - President Schapiro noted that this question highlights a key difference between Northwestern and these other institutions: Northwestern gives its constituent schools tremendous leeway in developing their own policies. He stated that although it is very tempting as president or provost to try to standardize policies, he does not believe that that is the best way to run the University. Instead, he suggested allocating funds to the Searle Center for Advanced Learning and Teaching to distribute to deans to incentivize this kind of teaching. President Schapiro concluded that he could not be more enthusiastic about the premise of the question, but he is constantly reminded, even in his eighth year, that the University is a confederation of schools with very little central authority.
- **Q17: Many universities have organized sabbatical programs. But at NU, each school has its own plan and some have none at all. Do you support a university-wide research leave/sabbatical for all faculty?**
  - President Schapiro commented that this seemed like a potential area for a university-wide policy, but the deans often oppose that kind of centralization.
  - Provost Linzer noted that even the three divisions in Weinberg have different leave policies because the nature of leave in the three divisions is so different. He stated that the leave policy is designed to promote faculty scholarly and creative work, and that

will vary by field and by school, from faculty working on book projects to faculty managing large laboratories.

- President Schapiro suggested that the central administration and Faculty Senate should work together to determine what university-wide policies should exist.
- President Zoloth mentioned that the National Institutes of Health has a sabbatical policy for its researchers.
- **Q18: What are the prospects for a child care center on site? Generations of children have grown up while we have waited for this.**
  - EVP Chinniah responded that having child care on site is the right thing to do and that there is an evaluation currently taking place to determine how to do this. He also noted that there are significant restrictions on where a child care center can be located (i.e., infant care must be on the ground floor), but he has asked the facilities team and someone in the Office of the Provost to work together and report back to Dan and himself. EVP Chinniah concluded that the question is not can we do it, but how and how quickly can we do it.
- **Q19: Is it conceivable that Northwestern would coordinate its calendar with the public school calendar or at least acknowledge that the District 65 calendar and Northwestern calendar have no relationship to one another whatsoever? Also, is it possible to factor in the absence of any on-site child care into faculty salary considerations? I do not want to go into how many times, as chair and mother of two children, I was the one who picked up the children. You may question that as being my family's priorities, but I would be willing to bet that there are other women in this room who have done the same.**
  - President Schapiro noted that there are Northwestern faculty living in many school districts, and, since it is difficult enough to coordinate the calendar internally, he does not imagine coordinating it with District 65 would be possible. In response to the second question, he stated that if the implication is that the lack of on-site child care has put women faculty and staff at a relative disadvantage as compared to peer institutions, that is undeniable. President Schapiro added that at Williams College, he made the extremely expensive decision to take child care in-house, but it was worth it to ensure the quality of child care and make it part of the educational mission. If Northwestern could offer that, he concluded, it would be a no-brainer to do it, regardless of the cost.
  - Provost Linzer noted that having conversations with the city of Evanston about this kind of project is only possible because of the improvements in town-gown relations under President Schapiro and EVP Chinniah. He related that only a few years ago, such a conversation would have immediately led to the response that on-site child care would not be possible with the city's zoning.
- **Q20: There are two university-wide task forces that have the potential for enormous impacts on Northwestern. One is the Black Student Experience Task Force. Could you update us on how the University is responding to those demands and to the strategies put forward in that report? The second one is the Global Strategy Task Force with an entire page-and-a-half of submitted questions: The process for how that was put together, the resources to fund global initiatives and where they will come from, the six themes, the role of the**

**faculty in this, and the role in general of the University. What do you make of these two big ideas, and what is going to happen next?**

- President Schapiro described the Black Student Experience Report as a sobering report. He pointed out an appendix in the report with a list of the ways that Black undergraduates were not able to fully avail themselves of everything Northwestern has to offer, noting that he thought it would be a good list of items to work on before realizing that the list was from 1981. President Schapiro concluded from this that Northwestern has to redouble its efforts and highlighted the efforts currently underway to renovate Black House, boost psychological and career services, and create support groups. He added that Northwestern chooses not to hide these kinds of reports so it can be held accountable, and while he was depressed by the inability to solve some of the problems on the report over several decades, the central administration was already moving to address its recommendations.
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