

Northwestern University
Minutes of the Faculty Senate
Videoconference
January 13, 2021

The Northwestern University Faculty Senate held its standing monthly meeting on January 13, 2021, over Zoom videoconference. A number of Senators participated remotely. President Therese McGuire called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. A quorum was present.

The president noted that the minutes from the November 18, 2020 meeting were approved and entered into the record.

The president then began her report.

The president said she is currently serving on three search committees for University-wide positions: Chief Investment Officer, Athletic Director, and the University Ombudsperson. Also, two faculty senators from the Executive Committee, Carol Heimer and Lilah Shapiro, are serving on the Provost's Office COVID-19 Tactical Response Team, a committee composed of faculty and administration and being chaired by Kim Yuracko, who is Associate Provost for Academic Projects. The president said this team is the first step in Provost Hagerty's response to the immediate call to action from the Organization of Women Faculty (OWF) regarding the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on women, URM, and NTE faculty. They met every week in December and will soon announce initiatives for the winter quarter. One is a COVID-19 caregiving grant. Another is a formal request to the deans to minimize non-essential administrative tasks for faculty. Finally, they hope to provide faculty with more research and teaching support through the work-study program.

The president said there are tentative plans to hold the annual meeting with the Board of Trustees on Thursday, March 4 at 10:00 a.m. Once the date and time are confirmed, the president said senators will receive a save-the-date notice from the Secretary to the Faculty Senate. The umbrella topic for this meeting will be diversifying Northwestern.

The president said the Senate and central administration received a report from Northwestern AAUP chapter with an accompanying request for the Senate's Executive Committee to respond. She noted that the report is an assessment of the actions taken by the University during the pandemic and in earlier periods. The authors, an ad-hoc committee, convened by Chapter President Jorge Coronado, assert that the University engaged in actions that "contravene the AAUP's core principles of faculty governance and academic freedom." The report concludes with nine recommendations in an attempt to remedy this claim. After receiving the report, the president said the Executive Committee discussed its contents at their meeting on January 5, 2021. After a wide-ranging conversation, the Executive Committee wrote a response to Professor Coronado making the following points: "We concur that there is room for improvement on the part of the administration in terms of transparency and consultation with the faculty in decision-making. However, we have a more tempered view of the situation for two reasons. First, decision-making during the pandemic was, and continues to be, exceedingly challenging, with effects that vary from one school to another. It is understandable that on occasion decisions will be made that we might question, although we do hope that the experiences of the current emergency can be used to craft and improve protocols for use in any future emergencies. Second, from the perspective of the Faculty Senate, there is significant consultation between the faculty and members of the administration. We (Executive Committee) commit to working with the administration to improve transparency and faculty consultation along three dimensions: better communicate the work of the Faculty Senate to all faculty. Building on the Senate's Budget and Planning Committee's relationship with the Resource Planning Workgroup, the Senate will improve faculty input on the budget and planning at the University-wide level, and to also improve transparency regarding the University's finances as a whole. Finally, building on the robust process of consultation between the leadership of the Faculty Senate and the Provost Office, we will strive to involve committees of the Faculty Senate in conversations with the Provost Office on relevant topics." The president said she considers the Executive Committee's response to the NU-AAUP report to be complete. However, she said if individual senators or Faculty Senate committees wish to further consider the report, they should do so and bring any findings back to the Senate.

The president concluded her report and opened the floor for questions.

Senator Luis Amaral said he was surprised by the lack of an attempt to hear from faculty both on the side of the administration and the Faculty Senate during the pandemic. Personally, he felt concerns he

had were not being heard. He asked if there was a preconception against inquiring about what the faculty are thinking and what their priorities are, because, he said, he felt there was action taken without the requisite listening beforehand. The president asked a follow-up question wondering if the lack of attempt to reach out fell at the feet of the Senate or the administration. Senator Amaral admitted he was unaware of the processes—whether it should have been the administration or the Senate to contact and listen to faculty concerns. He added that he found it surprising that there was no widespread survey trying to discover what faculty thought about decisions like bringing back the students. The president said that on many of these decisions there was consultation between the Provost Office and the Senate leadership. She also suggested bringing this question up to the Provost later on in the meeting because her understanding is the Provost consulted many faculty with expertise in these areas before making the decision to bring students back to campus. She added that Provost Hagerty came to the Faculty Senate meeting in October with the sole purpose of getting feedback from the faculty on how things were going, both during the spring quarter last year and at the start of the fall quarter.

Senator Kyle Henry said he was one of the co-authors of the report. He asked how much the Faculty Senate is advocating up versus waiting for the administration to bring a policy to a small body like the Executive Committee of the Senate and approving what they bring. He said his concern was about the modes of communication and process, specifically is the Senate acting on the faculty's behalf or reacting to administrative decisions.

Senator Karen Alter said her position is somewhere in between the report and the Senate's response. Personally, she didn't want to be involved in every conversation, she does think there is room for reflection inside the Senate on how conversations between faculty organizations could be improved. Senator Alter is also the co-chair of the Organization of Women Faculty which did a survey of women faculty to ask what they were experiencing during the pandemic. They also came up with a report and sent it to the Faculty Senate and the administration for consideration.

Senator Robert Hariman said he agrees that there is room for improvement in communication because at times during this crisis he has done a poor job of communicating with his own faculty in his department. He also added that he was part of the Senate leadership during the financial crisis. They met with the Provost monthly and were always discussing decisions not yet made. To a certain extent, he said the faculty have to have faith in their leadership, and the leadership must also do a good job

reporting out. In respect to grading, Senator Hariman also reminded senators that the administration asked for an emergency meeting of the Senate to discuss options for spring quarter grading prior to instituting the changes. There have been subsequent meetings with the full Senate as well about a host of other issues related to the pandemic. In the last few years, he stressed the fact that the Senate has built an organization where senators and the Senate leadership are directly involved in advising decision-making at the University level. He also cautioned against a false narrative that undermines the progress the Senate has made over the last few years. The president reiterated those points and also offered that from her perspective the administration benefits from those conversations as much as faculty do.

Past President Lois Hedman brought up the point that some decisions were being made over the summer. The Senate is customarily dormant during this time, which became a problem because faculty are scattered, and it is also unclear who is a senator during that time. She felt the Senate needed to codify when a senator's term ends. This would allow the outgoing senator to remain active over the summer and thus be prepared to address any issue that might arise. She also concurred with the president's argument—during her time in Senate leadership, they've made the case to the administration that senators are helping them address broad faculty concerns.

Senator Carol Heimer shared two points, the first being that faculty's level of involvement is higher than it appears, which is a success in that faculty are being consulted, but it is also a failure because faculty aren't sharing often enough what they are doing. The second point she made is that many faculty are wearing multiple hats i.e. she is a senator, but she also serves on the COVID-19 Tactical Response Team. To Senator Alter's earlier point, she said she had two chances to consider OWF's proposal. She pointed out that this is one way faculty often fail to understand collaborative efforts and how information is dispersed and agreed that all of them could do a better job making clear the extensiveness of the types of consultation.

Senator Henry thanked everyone for their explanations of Senate operations. He said much depends on the representative in each department if any communication occurs downward. Without that trickle of communication on down, most faculty are left to the Daily Northwestern or what they overhear. He also shared a hope for reconceptualizing service at the faculty level—how to value, rate, and reward it.

Concluding her report, the president asked the Senate if they had any objections to changing the agenda so that the administrators present could speak first, followed by questions from the senators and then committee reports. Hearing no objections, the president then introduced Provost Kathleen Hagerty and Senior Vice President for Business and Finance Craig Johnson.

Senior Vice President Johnson said the University's financial statements for Fiscal Year 2020 showed the University had a surplus of \$83.4 million. This was all on revenues of \$2.54 billion. Although, Senior Vice President Johnson acknowledged the surplus came at a significant cost. Initially, the University projected around \$90 million in revenue losses for FY2020 from things like tuition reductions, diminished housing revenues, the cancellation of the Big Ten basketball tournament, reduction in elective surgeries and other health services, and also a reduction in philanthropy. At the time, according to Senior Vice President Johnson the endowment also experienced a 40% equity drop. As a result of these troubling signs, he said the University took action in the form of 242 furloughs, pausing the University's retirement contributions in June 2020, deferred discretionary spending, and also instituted a hiring freeze. Those mitigations, he said, allowed the University to save about \$55.3 million in compensation savings, \$22 million of which came from the retirement suspension. He added that there were around \$63 million in savings in non-personnel costs. The University also offered a voluntary separation plan. Approximately 190 individuals availed themselves of that opportunity. Senior Vice President Johnson said there were also some layoffs further on in the year as things transpired. Senator Amaral interrupted Senior Vice President Johnson asking if there were slides that accompanied the many figures being presented. Senior Vice President Johnson said there are public financial statements and he said he would also find a way to put together these numbers in a more digestible way. He continued by saying that those actions and the rapid correction of the markets allowed the University to end the year with a positive result. Despite that good news, he provided a cautionary statement about the costs of the pandemic, which will mostly impact FY2021 and began in September 2020. There was, he said, a \$50 million hit the University had to absorb due to reduced housing on campus, reduced TV and concession revenue from athletics, and the discount on tuition. In addition, the University has spent between \$30-40 million on COVID testing, PPE equipment, and reconfiguring environments to meet safety standards.

Provost Hagerty said the University is looking ahead to next year as they process their budget. She indicated there were a couple of priorities as the University hopes to emerge from austerity soon. The

highest priority is faculty and staff compensation. The plan was to implement raises last year and then the pandemic hit. Provost Hagerty reiterated increasing the salary pool remains her top priority moving forward. She said the University would also like to invest in facilities, namely increasing their IT infrastructure, specifically systems that directly impact research. Lastly, they hope to make other strategic investments that support research and promote health and safety. She said they continue to monitor the effects of the pandemic and she believes they could be in a much better spot next fall. One of the questions she's also been receiving is when faculty hiring will resume, and she added that it definitely needs to start again. She stressed prudence, but she wants departments to start looking for people. Moving forward with research planning, the Provost's Office continues to consult with the Senate. In particular, Senator Martin Lariviere, who chairs the Budget and Planning Committee and joins the Resource Planning Workgroup for their discussions.

The president opened the floor for questions.

Senator Bob Gordon said the S&P 500 rose 15% during 2020, so to the extent that Northwestern is invested in stocks, the University is wealthier than it was a year ago. He asked how that fact has affected the University's thinking when considering eliminating furloughs or advancing the missions of various parts of the University. Senior Vice President Johnson said that some of the endowment is significantly restricted. He said, however, that Northwestern did have 7% growth in the endowment through August. Assets also increased and these were some of the signals they used to decide to reinstitute matching contributions for retirement. That also has led them to addressing the salary pool for FY2022, which Provost Hagerty mentioned earlier. As far as furloughs, Senior Vice President Johnson said 90% of them have been recalled with 14 individuals still on furlough last time he checked. Senator Gordon said that is good news and asked Provost Hagerty a follow-up question. He wanted to know how she prioritized the need to match offers at very highly paid departments to build their national reputation versus the incredible pressure he feels as chair of the Salary and Benefits Committee to do something about diversifying the faculty, increasing NTE salaries, and making more equity-based moves as it pertains to faculty hiring. Provost Hagerty said that the University has to participate in both. She said while that may seem obvious, it is the truth. She said they are paying particular attention to some equity issues Senator Gordon raised and she believes people will see the results of those efforts soon.

Senator Fred Turek said the emailed report on the University's finances noted the priority in the administration to increase the salary pool among faculty to "attract and retain." He indicated that he would like more transparency around salaries, particularly how much of the salary pool went into retaining a highly compensated faculty member who received an outside offer, or who was recruited, versus the other 90% of faculty. Provost Hagerty said they do not decide individual salaries. Central administration instead makes an allocation to the deans and they decide how to distribute that allocation. Senator Turek followed up by requesting that the deans at the various schools be transparent about how salaries were proportioned.

Senator Henry seconded Senator Gordon's comments about how pooled resources are distributed for faculty. He said that without cost of living raises over the past few years, faculties' salaries effectively diminish. This impacts morale and threatens sustainability, he argued. Provost Hagerty said she understands his point about morale, and this is why increasing the salary pool is their top priority. Senior Vice President Johnson said that was also one of the reasons they pushed to turn retirement contributions back on.

Senator Amaral considered how compensation at Northwestern and other schools gets pushed higher by faculty who are good at getting offers from somewhere else. He wondered also if faculty believe that to be the best model for a university. Conversely, he said they could use a model where they pay higher salaries at the beginning of faculty's careers and then they don't see as big an increase throughout their career. He said he is quite happy with his salary as a full professor and he would feel better if faculty at other levels were making more money. He then asked a question centered around the fact that some universities are around for a very long time, and are meant to be a nonprofit, thus wondering why during a worldwide catastrophe there is an imperative Northwestern remain in the black. Senior Vice President Johnson said that in March when the equity markets were crashing, schools were shutting down, the Big Ten Tournament was being cancelled, it was hard to know what was going to happen. He also pointed out that decisions are made with the Board of Trustees and multiple other constituencies like the Faculty Senate and they made the most informed decision they could at the time. He acknowledged too that there was the expectation that they would dip into the endowment given the crisis at hand. In hindsight, one may say they went too far, but he said this is a point in time within a storm that is still raging, and no knows exactly when it will end and what the ultimate fallout will be. Because of that, and because of the significant needs that are still coming like the increase in the salary

pool and the deferred maintenance, Senior Vice President Johnson said they will also keep higher payouts from the endowment on the table given the extraordinary circumstances we are facing. Provost Hagerty added that there was no plan to run a surplus. There were simply many unexpected things that turned out positively for the University's finances.

Senator Harris Feinsod said that the *Chronicle* reported that there were approximately 400,000 jobs lost since the beginning of the pandemic. On top of that, the humanities have faced contraction for the last four decades, thus leaving current Ph.D. students with an unprecedented job market—students cannot commit their future to the pursuit of these studies. He wondered how much energy and resources could be committed to offer some type of economic opportunity to those that want to pursue the mission of scholarly inquiry going forward. Provost Hagerty said that the University will continue to hire in the humanities. In the short run, she noted that they have set the graduate student budget to accommodate Ph.D. students who are beyond the five-year stipend. Also, the University must find a way to help graduate students find paths beyond being a professor. She sees that as an obligation, but it is difficult as one school, she argued, to sway larger trends in academia. Yet, she remained open to was of advocating for increasing hiring broadly in the humanities.

Past President Hedman expressed concern not about finances, but bandwidth. She singled out the report of the Senate's Non-Tenure-Eligible Committee last year which provided ways to improve the lives of NTE faculty beyond simply raises. Provost Hagerty said that there is already some reprieve from spending every minute of every day talking about COVID. Recently, she said the Provost Office examined ways in which they can better and more consistently measure service. By gathering that data, the Provost said she sees a path to better managing service and rewarding faculty for their efforts. Promotion path in every school is another area she wants to focus on, and they are continuing to make steps in that direction.

Senator Carol Schmidt asked how the Qatar campus has fared during the pandemic, both financially and overall. Provost Hagerty said NU-Q has a wonderful new dean, Marwan Kraidy, who began last spring. They are financed by the Qatar Foundation. There have been some struggles due to the blockade from Saudi Arabi and several other countries. However, the blockade is set to end, and diplomatic relations should be restored very soon. NU-Q like the rest of Northwestern is set to enter a positive new phase.

With no further questions, the president thanked the Provost and the Senior Vice President for their presentation and willingness to answer questions.

The Senate then heard Standing Committee reports.

Senator Mark Witte, the chair of the Governance Committee, entered the following proposed amendment to the Faculty Senate Bylaws into the record for a first reading:

Article II, Section 1

Each department ~~in the College and in the several Schools~~ *or other tenure-home unit* of the University shall elect one of its members to the Faculty Senate from among those department/*unit* members who are members of the Faculty Assembly. In addition, the non-tenure-~~track-eligible~~ faculty of each school *or college* shall elect one non-tenure ~~track-eligible~~ member who is a member of the Faculty Assembly as its representative, and the Northwestern Emeriti Organization shall elect one of its members as its representative. The University Libraries shall elect two librarian faculty to represent all departments and faculty that report to the Dean of Libraries. Tenured and tenure-track faculty are eligible for election immediately upon their University appointment. Non-tenure-~~track-eligible~~ faculty who are members of the Faculty Assembly are eligible for election after one year.

Senator Witte said the Governance Committee proposed this amendment because it became clear in an inquiry from the Center for Race and Ethnic Studies that there were tenure track faculty who lacked representation because they had no department affiliation and were hired by, and could potentially receive tenure from, the Center. This required that the above changes accommodate those faculty to ensure they are represented in the Senate.

Senator Lariviere, chair of the Budget and Planning Committee, shared these [slides](#) which lay out the process by which his committee works with the University's Resource Planning Workgroup. This is the inaugural year of that partnership and Senator Lariviere said he met with the Workgroup for the first time in December. The workgroup identified three areas of focus for FY2022: strengthening the

compensation pool, restoring support for basic infrastructure through targeted investments in IT and facilities (something Senator Lariviere said faculty have a stake in and should keep an eye on), and prioritizing health and safety. The Budget and Planning Committee also asked their own questions that went beyond some of these generalized priorities. He indicated that one of their focus areas was the loss of staff in some departments, and staff that remain are stretched thin. However, he said the administration does not currently plan to replace the staff who left, some of whom were laid off and many others took the voluntary separation package. The committee also asked about the psychological support services for students and the administration said this remains on their radar. Other items of discussion were increased support for first generation and low-income students and diversifying the faculty.

Senator Dan Foltz asked about where the money for IT will be directed, specifically honing in on whether it would be for large scale infrastructure projects or personnel hires. Senator Lariviere said he wasn't sure about personnel. His understanding was the administration has been delaying upgrades to things like the financial system and hoped to invest their money there first.

Senator Christina Kiaer said she was happy to see the increase to the faculty salary pool forthcoming. However, considering the fact that her department (Art History) lost a significant number of staff, faculty are picking up the administrative slack, which is additional work that is not reflected in increases in faculty salaries. Senator Lariviere said this is similar to the discussion about salary dispersal—those types of decisions are being made at the school level.

Senator Henry said that compared to other schools, Northwestern's departmental support staff are quite small in number, especially now with more cuts. He wondered if the Senate has done a survey of department chairs to see where they might feel they are under-resourced because some schools seemed to be experiencing a bigger hit than others. Senator Lariviere said his committee would consider that.

Senator Judy Franks asked what budgetary category the library falls under. She said she is concerned about the cuts to access to subscriptions and databases she uses regularly. Senator Lariviere said he was not sure. He said he believed the meeting he went to was not meant to cover the entire budget, but rather priorities for FY2022. Senator Franks asked for his committee to monitor the situation.

Senator Gordon gave an update on the Salary and Benefits Committee's resolution from last year. His committee focused on the portable tuition benefit the University offers. During the austerity measures related to the budgetary crises, the University reduced the portable benefit from \$12,000 to \$5,250 for current staff and removed the benefit altogether for incoming staff. There was concern about that cut, so the Salary and Benefits Committee asked Senate Researcher Tricia England to survey peer institutions. She found that Northwestern was an outlier in its generosity. After discovering that, the committee decided to focus on those who were currently enrolled in a program. The Senate then passed a resolution asking the administration to allow those who were already enrolled in programs and were counting on those funds, to continue receiving the full benefit until their program was complete. The University eventually agreed to defer the cut until January 2022. As for this year, Senator Gordon said his committee has several goals, the first being to emulate the Budget and Planning Committee's communication with the administration. Accordingly, the head of benefits, Anne Fish, joined his committee in the fall. They will continue these efforts of improving communication by inviting the director of compensation, Deborah Hinx, to their winter quarter meeting. Substantively, he said the committee plans to focus on compensation this year, particularly non-tenure eligible faculty's compensation. The plan is to utilize the Senate's staff once again and survey peer institutions to see where currently salaries rank in the market. Also, Senator Gordon said that the committee plans on reviewing a salary study from five years ago that his committee did that focused on gender equity. He said it is a good time to see what progress was made based on their earlier findings.

Senator Gordon during new business called attention to the Jacobs Center remaining vacant for the last four years. Senator Jagannathan concurred with Senator Gordon's comments. Senator Amaral asked if there was a committee dedicated to communicating with the faculty. The president said she felt the Executive Committee would do that but was open to suggestions. Senator Henry then wondered if there were metrics from the University on what would trigger the orange or red zones on the COVID dashboard, which would create a greater lockdown. The president said she would ask the administration.

The meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jared Spitz

Secretary to the Faculty Senate