

Northwestern University
Minutes of the Faculty Senate
Videoconference
October 6, 2021

The Northwestern University Faculty Senate held its first standing monthly meeting of the 2021-2022 academic year on October 6, 2021, over Zoom videoconference. President Robert Holmgren called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. A quorum was present.

The president noted that the minutes from the July 14, 2021, meeting were approved and entered into the record.

The president then began his report.

The president said the Senate worked closely with the administration to come up with solutions to the numerous challenges COVID posed last year. He said he believed they were reasonably successful in doing that.

Another longstanding issue the Senate addressed and finally came to fruition last year was the establishment of an Ombud's office. Sarah Klaper, the new Ombudsperson, joined the Senate later in the meeting.

The president said two members of the Faculty Senate—Past President Therese McGuire and Senator Steve Adams—are currently serving on the Community Safety Advisory Board (CSAB). The CSAB released its first set of recommendations earlier this year. The president noted that CSAB will continue to do its work through the fall quarter.

Last year, the president said the Senate completed two initiatives involving the Faculty Handbook. The first one was to make the Faculty Handbook consistent with federal Title IX guidelines. The second

was a significant update to the Academic Freedom policy that, among several other things, explicitly extended academic freedom to non-tenure eligible faculty.

The Senate also passed a host of resolutions last year. Several of them addressed the incidents with the Cheer Team. The president said there will be two speakers this fall that will focus on those issues: Senior Associate Vice President for Equity TiShaunda McPherson at this meeting and newly appointed Athletic Director Derrick Gragg in November. Other resolutions from last year addressed the temporary suspension of matching retirement contributions. The University paid a one-time bonus to all faculty and staff, which was partly a response to those losses.

This year the president expects the Faculty Handbook and Faculty Rights and Responsibility Committees to review the University's Respectful University Policy during the winter quarter. Implementation of that policy would once again require changes to the Faculty Handbook.

The administration asked the Senate to expand the Committee on Cause this year because of concern over the potential for appeals to sanctions handed down to faculty who did not comply with the University's vaccine mandate. However, the president said it appears there might only be a single case of non-compliance.

The president said the Student Affairs Committee will be looking into matters related to student safety, especially Greek Life given the recent news.

The president said the Senate leadership met with the Provost Office earlier that day. Two items he wanted to report from that meeting were that there are only six undergraduates in quarantine and contact tracing has provided no evidence of transmission from a classroom.

The president concluded his report.

The president then opened the floor for questions related to his report.

Senator Luís Amaral asked for clarification on the Respectful University Policy. In principle, the president said, the policy encourages and supports lively debate, but protects faculty from enduring demeaning or disparaging comments during said debate. It is an update to the Civility Policy, which is currently in effect. The president acknowledged that this could be a challenging issue.

Senator Mark Witte asked about the students in quarantine. He said he recalled seeing more than the six positive tests reported earlier in the meeting. The president clarified stating that six on-campus undergraduates were in on-campus quarantine.

Senator Rick Cohn asked how the bonus amount was determined by the administration. The president said it was a percentage of the salary—a three percent bonus up to \$100,000 in salary and two percent for anyone paid above that figure. Senator Cohn asked if that made up for the retirement contributions and the president said he didn't believe so.

Senator Shilajit Kundu asked if the salary bonus was across all University systems. The president said his understanding was the bonus was for all benefits-eligible faculty and staff.

Senator Kyle Henry said he wanted to congratulate the Senate for passing the resolutions related to retirement contributions because it expressed the frustration among faculty. He also asked if there were any incidents related to the Respectful University Policy. The president said he was unsure, but he promised there would be ample faculty input throughout the policy-making process.

Senator Ezra Getzler said he was frustrated with the implementation of the bonuses because, for a certain number of faculty, the bonus was lower than individuals who earned more or less than them. He also was puzzled by the choice to provide a bonus that was taxable.

The president then made a motion to approve the Standing Committee Chairs. The motion was seconded, and with no discussion, the following Standing Committee Chairs were approved:

Senator Martin Lariviere, Budget & Planning Committee; Senator Allan Horwich, Committee on Cause; Senator Carol Heimer, Educational Affairs Committee; Senator Hermann Riecke, Faculty Handbook Committee; Senator Regan Thomson, Faculty Rights & Responsibilities Committee; Senator Mark Witte, Governance Committee; Senator Anne Waller, Non-Tenure Eligible Committee; Senator Fred Turek, Research Affairs Committee; Senator Hao Zhang, Salary & Benefits Committee; Senator Joshua Hauser, Social Responsibility Committee; Senator Steve Adams, Student Affairs Committee.

The president then made a motion to approve the Committee on Cause members. The motion was seconded, and with no discussion, the following members of the Committee on Cause were approved:

Senator Allan Horwich (Chair); Senator Celia O'Brien; Senator Lilah Shapiro; Senator David Uttal; Senator Belma Hadziselimovic; Senator Christina Lewicky-Gaupp; Senator Sarah Bartolome; Senator Jennifer Cole; Senator Joseph Ferrie.

The president introduced Senior Associate Vice President for Equity TiShaunda McPherson. She gave an overview of the Office of Equity. The slides for her presentation can be found [here](#).

Following SAVP McPherson's presentation, the president opened the floor for questions.

Senator Getzler asked what the definition of an "academic environment" is when considering issues of harassment or assault. SAVP McPherson said the University has a broad definition of academic environment, including the physical campus, buildings the University controls, athletic events at home or away, academic conferences, and even virtual spaces. Senator Getzler also asked about digital accessibility and the requirements expected of faculty when they create a website. SAVP McPherson said if it is a University-sponsored website, then yes, it must meet the accessibility guidelines set by the Office of Equity. She said each school or department should have an accessibility expert to help faculty meet these expectations.

Senator Amaral asked if there was a number faculty could call to ask any questions they might have related to the Office of Equity. SAVP McPherson said the number is 847-467-6165. She added that the

Office of Equity has weekly office hours on Thursday from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Senator Amaral asked whether emails sent to the Office of Equity are confidential or not, and whether phone calls are recorded or not. SAVP McPherson said phone calls are not recorded. She said if someone asks a general question, that would not be recorded in the Office of Equity's case management system. However, if the individual does make a report, then it will be recorded. She added that individuals may make anonymous reports through Ethics Point on the Office of Equity website.

Senator Barbara Newman asked if the digital accessibility policy was temporary because of the abundance of remote learning and work or if it was permanent. SAVP McPherson said that policy is permanent.

Senator Josh Hauser asked what challenges SAVP McPherson thought the Office of Equity might face with the return of students, faculty, and staff to campus. SAVP McPherson said they expect to see an increase in reports—discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct. In the first couple of weeks back on campus, she said that hypothesis has proven true: the Office of Equity has seen a dramatic increase in reports. Requests for accommodations have also tripled from two years ago and doubled since last year, she said. They are doing their best to address these increases and will continue to add staff as needed.

Senator Henry asked if data was kept on the number of reports that have come in, and if so, how granular the data is. SAVP McPherson said they do track data on reporting. The Office of Equity releases an [annual report](#) detailing such data, but due to some staffing shortages last year's report won't be out until later this fall. She said reports are broken down in several different ways for administrators to use at their discretion. They won't publish school or departmental data. However, she said they will share that data with school leaders privately.

Senator Christina Lewicky-Gaupp said she is a faculty member who travels to hospitals around the area. She asked if the Office of Equity was the right office to contact if issues occur off the central campus. SAVP McPherson said yes. If someone affiliated with Northwestern experiences some type of harassment or discrimination from someone who is not a member of the Northwestern campus

community, they will provide support for the Northwestern community member in whatever ways they can but might not be able to investigate depending on the location.

With no further questions, the president thanked SAVP McPherson for such a helpful and informative presentation.

The president then introduced new Ombudsperson Sarah Klaper. She gave an overview of the Ombud's office and its role on campus. Her presentation can be found [here](#).

Following Ombudsperson Klaper's presentation, the president opened the floor for questions.

Senator Cohn asked if an email sent to the Ombud's office goes directly to Ombudsperson Klaper. Ombudsperson Klaper said yes: faculty can either email the office's email or send an email directly to her. Eventually, she said, she will have a program coordinator in her office. That person will then receive Ombud's emails and share them with her or answer quick referral questions.

Senator Tarita Thomas asked if, or how often, Ombudsperson Klaper worked on the Chicago campus. Ombudsperson Klaper said she does have an office on the Chicago campus. She hasn't spent regular time there yet, but she can make arrangements to meet there anytime.

The president asked Ombudsperson Klaper if there was anything from her tenure at the University of Northern Illinois that she would like to apply at Northwestern. Ombudsperson Klaper said establishing the office was a huge step for Northwestern. She hopes this office will be at the front of people's mind when they encounter a difficult situation and have questions about what to do next. She reiterated that she is a confidential resource and can also provide information on what steps to take and what will happen when those steps are taken.

Senator Turek asked what the most common situations Ombudsperson Klaper encounters. Ombudsperson Klaper said for faculty it is frequently helping them navigate tenure and promotion issues. For students, she says they often have an issue in a class that they feel needs resolution.

Senator Lois Hedman said she's happy this office exists and that she hopes Ombudsperson Klaper presence will be a game changer for the Northwestern community. Senator Hedman then asked if the results of a visit are tracked by her office. Ombudsperson Klaper said there is no requirement that an individual return and tell her what happened. For that reason, she doesn't often know what happened after someone visited her office. She will, however, be tracking the actions she's taken as far as referrals or mediations. She will also be putting a survey tool on her website.

Senator Karen Alter said she was so encouraged by the process for the setup of the Ombud's office and indicated how impressed she was with Ombudsperson Klaper personally prior to and since she's come on board at Northwestern. Senator Alter then asked about how presentations from the Ombud's office function. Ombudsperson Klaper gave an example of a presentation she gave at NIU on boundaries with students and how it related to Title IX. She said she wouldn't give something similar here because there is an Office of Equity, but it is an example of how she can educate faculty on policies and guidelines at Northwestern.

With no further questions, the president thanked Ombudsperson Klaper for her enlightening presentation.

The president asked if there was any new business.

Senator Henry said he was considering a resolution based on one of the key recommendations from the GQNBT+ Task Force Report. This report came out in 2019 and Senator Henry said there has been an issue getting all-gender restrooms on campus, particularly in his building, Annie May Swift Hall. He said he would like to propose a resolution calling on the University to meet the recommendation of implementing all gender restrooms across the campus. Senator Henry said this issue needs to be elevated because there are students, faculty, and staff studying and working in these buildings and they don't feel comfortable.

The president asked if there was an appropriate committee to review this draft resolution. He said, for example, he would be willing to share it with the Executive Committee to review the language before submitting it to the full Senate. The president also indicated that Senator Henry had mentioned this topic prior to the meeting and he and the Senate leadership had spoken to the Provost Office. His understanding was the University was stuck behind the building code set by the City of Evanston requiring all buildings in the city to have an equal number of male and female bathrooms, and gender-neutral bathrooms can't count against the gendered ones.

Senator Henry said the LGBTQ faculty and students are frustrated that they must do the lobbying rather than the University lobbying as a collective. He added that he would like to creative problem solve with the administration rather than simply hearing they are stymied by political forces.

Senator Amaral said he was disappointed that there is no plan to achieve the recommendations. He said it would be important to determine a timeline for what needs to happen next with the city and then on campus. He also suggested the Social Responsibility Committee would be eager to take on this issue.

Senator Alter said that many colleagues in her department would like to support this issue and she hoped she could bring something tangible back to them. She also expressed confusion over why Northwestern couldn't ask for zoning derogations for campus buildings.

Past President Therese McGuire said her understanding was the administration has lobbied with the City of Evanston. But the city council doesn't seem to be interested in solving this problem. She said she knows the Provost supports having gender-neutral bathrooms.

Senator David Schoenbrun voiced support for the resolution both on his behalf and from others in his department. He said the Senate can provide visibility to an issue like this and put pressure on the administration to follow the recommendations provided by a task force they convened.

Senator Steve Adams thanked Senator Henry for bringing this issue forward. He said he's heard about the problem with bathrooms in Annie May Swift Hall for some time now. He said he is thinking about

ways that the Senate can help create a culture where at Northwestern we can do things to address marginalization before we are forced. He said he would support a resolution on bathrooms and a more general resolution about shifting institutional culture.

Senator Henry said he was happy to forward the resolution to the Social Responsibility Committee and they could provide friendly amendments before bringing it to the full Senate at the next meeting.

President-Elect Ceci Rodgers said she was supportive of that process.

Senator Hauser promised—as chair—that the Social Responsibility Committee would meet and have something for the Senate in November. He also acknowledged the importance of Senator Adams’ statement on institutional change.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jared Spitz

Secretary to the Faculty Senate