

Northwestern University
Minutes of the Faculty Senate
Guild Lounge and Videoconference
November 9, 2022

The Northwestern University Faculty Senate held its standing monthly meeting on November 9, 2022, in the Scott Hall's Guild Lounge and over Zoom videoconference. President Ceci Rodgers called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. A quorum was present.

The president noted that the minutes from the October 12, 2022, meeting were approved electronically and entered into the record.

The president then began her report.

The president said University President Michael Schill plans to hold monthly meetings with a broad group of senior leaders to discuss issues of concern to the Northwestern community. As President Schill said at the October meeting, the Faculty Senate President or her proxy will attend each meeting. The first such meeting will be held in November. The president said she would report on the proceedings at the January meeting, and also asked senators to share any topics they think senior leadership should be discussing.

Recently, the Senate leadership (President, Past President, President-Elect), were briefed by Provost Kathleen Hagerty and Associate Provost for Faculty Sumit Dhar on the salary equity study. The president said the study has been underway for the past six months, and the Office of the Provost, along with the Office for Institutional Research, are collating the data. A faculty working group, that includes Senator Bob McDonald, chair of the Salary and Benefits Committee, will then analyze the data and produce a final report. The president said the report should be complete by this time next year.

The president said the graduate students are in the midst of a campaign to unionize. The Student Affairs Committee invited leaders of the Northwestern University Graduate Workers (NUGW) to speak at a recent meeting. The dean of the Graduate School also spoke with the committee, she said.

The president thanked Senator Petia Vlahovska, who agreed to represent the Faculty Senate on the Buffett Institute for Global Affairs faculty advisory committee. The president also thanked Senator Jill Wilson, chair of the Educational Affairs Committee, for representing the Faculty Senate on the Provost Office's assessment and accreditation council. She added that participation in University-wide committees is an important way for faculty and the Faculty Senate to have input on procedures and policies at Northwestern.

The president concluded her report and asked if there were any questions. Seeing none, she moved on to standing committee reports.

The Senate then heard reports from several standing committees, the first three of which were in response to a motion to send a letter from the Organization of Women Faculty (OWF) to the appropriate committees.

Senator Therese McGuire, chair of the Budget and Planning Committee, said her committee met on October 26. At that meeting, they discussed two items from the OWF letter that fell within their purview: How the budget is put together to reflect academic priorities at the university and how decisions are made to spend, or make special draws, from the endowment, and the constraints and/or restrictions on the uses of endowment funds. Based on the discussion, Senator McGuire said the committee's next steps will be to meet with senior administrators to gain a better understanding of those two processes.

Senator McDonald, chair of the Salary and Benefits Committee, said his committee met on November 1 and discussed various topics from the OWF letter. He noted that Senator Karen Alter, co-chair of the OWF, is a member of the Salary and Benefits Committee, and informed the committee that OWF is working on a report on on-campus childcare. Senator Alter said she would share OWF's findings with the committee. Senator McDonald said the committee also agreed to let the Provost Office's pay equity study to be completed before weighing in. He said the committee does recommend working on benefits. The first step they will take is to meet with the Executive Director of Benefits and discuss both how decisions on benefits are made and how those decisions are communicated.

Senator Gina Petersen, chair of the Secure Faculty Survey Committee, prefaced her comments by saying the committee had begun its work before the OWF letter, and that her report would be both on the OWF letter and the cumulative work the committee has done up to this point. She then invited other senators to join the committee. She said the committee is quite small and that everyone except her is from Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences. As such, perspectives from the other schools would be welcome. Currently, Senator Petersen said, the committee is considering two ways of gathering faculty input: A concise survey scoped to guide the Faculty Senate's work (owned by the Senate and perhaps fielded every 2 years) and a comprehensive survey led by the administration, with significant faculty input from both within and outside the Faculty Senate. She added that the comprehensive survey could be run either by an external vendor or follow the model of the last faculty survey run in 2015, which was commissioned by a committee appointed by the Office of the Provost.

Senator Kyle Henry said it was great to hear the committee's plans and that he felt a biannual survey would be most effective for the concise survey. He noted that having quantitative data on how faculty goals and priorities are being met would be useful.

Senator Barbara Newman said the Social Responsibility Committee considered a set of survey questions put forward by one of its members. She then asked Senate Secretary Jared Spitz to share those questions with the Survey Committee.

Prior to the next committee report, the president cautioned senators from discussing the pros and cons of the graduate student unionization drive, which began in October. She said the National Labor Relations Board has specific rules about noninterference once a unionization drive is underway.

Senator Ana Maria Acosta, chair of the Student Affairs Committee, said her committee met with NUGW and, separately, Graduate School Dean Kelly Mayo, to receive an update on graduate student unionization efforts and the university's efforts in addressing past and present graduate student requests. NUGW leaders Sara Bowden and Emilie Lozier gave a brief history of graduate student efforts to unionize across the country. They also presented a list of institutions in Illinois

that already have graduate student unions, noting that University of Chicago and Northwestern University graduate students are both also in the process of unionizing. Senator Acosta directed senators to the [NUGW website](#), which lists five priorities: Competitive pay (argues that stipends have not kept up with inflation nor is it competitive with peer institutions), comprehensive healthcare (costs almost doubled from \$1,300 in 2017 to \$2,500 today), more support for international graduate students, professional standards in labs and classrooms, and power and protection in the workplace. She said NUGW want faculty to respect the democratic process and created a [faculty neutrality pledge](#) asking faculty to express their support for the graduate students right to organize and to remain neutral during the unionization process. Senator Acosta said NUGW also shared that they have over 2,000 card signatures, out of approximately 3,500 graduate students, well over the 30% threshold required by the NLRB to hold a vote to unionize.

Following NUGW's presentation, the committee heard from Dean Mayo about past and present TGS efforts to support graduate students. Senator Acosta shared a quick listing of those initiatives: Guaranteed funding for five years (95% of graduate students receive funding for a sixth year if its needed), created easier access to funding beyond the sixth year, and provided consistent stipend increases of 2-3% per year (Dean Mayo said he advocated for larger increases and acknowledged that graduate student income is at the lower end of the scale, meaning inflation impacts them more than most). Dean Mayo also reported that the graduate student stipend is ranked tenth, according to U.S. News and World reports, and pointed out that that the stipend is higher than University of Chicago, Duke, Cal Berkeley, and University of Michigan. Dean Mayo also shared with the committee that he tried to push for child dependent care coverage last year, but was unsuccessful. Dean Mayo told the committee he would try to get this benefit again this year. TGS also allocates \$650,000 each year for travel and research grants. Dean Mayo also said that every STEM graduate student receives a guaranteed four quarters of support. Senator Acosta reported that information about unionization has been shared by TGS with the deans. Dean Mayo noted that information on unionization will be disseminated more broadly once an official petition for an election has been submitted. Dean Mayo also said that President Schill is interested in receiving feedback from faculty on graduate student unionization. Lastly, Dean Mayo said he was open to continuing the conversation around graduate student unionization with the Student Affairs Committee and the Faculty Senate once the petition to unionize is submitted to the NLRB. Senator Acosta said the Student Affairs Committee has many more questions. Namely, what is at stake if graduate students

unionize, and what is the impact on faculty and research at Northwestern. She said they will invite Dean Mayo back once the process moves along. She also encouraged senators to educate themselves on the [NLRB guidelines](#) during a unionization drive.

Senator Ezra Getzler said he visited the NUGW website and he found a post that calls for the dismantling of the police department at Northwestern. He said it was worth getting to the bottom of what NUGW represents and what their aims are. Senator Acosta indicated that NUGW said they represented graduate workers.

Senator Henry asked about what the plans are for deans to educate faculty on the graduate student's unionization campaign. Senator Acosta said information on unionization was passed down from TGS to the deans. However, she was unsure if the deans then communicated with faculty at their respective schools. Senator Henry then asked a clarifying question about the steps involved in unionization. Senator Acosta shared the steps. First, potential unions gather a majority of signatures from graduate workers on union cards (already done at Northwestern). Then, those cards will be submitted to the NLRB to call for a union election. An election will then take place. If the graduate students win, they will elect a bargaining committee to negotiate based on their platform. Then, graduate students will vote on a contract negotiated between the union and the administration.

Senator Jack Tumblin said that all faculty in McCormick received a detailed email on graduate student unionization. He then asked about whether or not the faculty neutrality pledge was a conflict of interest. Senator Acosta said no. She said the pledge is an opportunity for faculty to acknowledge their role in this process, which is to maintain neutrality and to guarantee that whatever the outcome of the vote is, it won't affect the relationship between faculty and graduate students. Senate Researcher Tricia England said she shared a link to the pledge in her weekly news digest.

Senator Newman asked if the vote is 70 to 30 in favor of the union, will all graduate students be a part of the union or only those who voted in favor of unionization. Senator Liz Hamilton, who is one of the representatives from the Library, which voted to unionize last year, said every graduate student would be represented by the union, but members have the option of paying a fee to opt out of the union. However, those who choose to leave the union will still be covered by the contract the union agrees upon.

Senator Martin Lariviere wondered if this union drive covers all graduate students at Northwestern or if some schools or departments were excluded. Senator Acosta said her understanding is that every student in the Graduate School will vote on the union, but will exclude students from the professional schools, like Pritzker and Feinberg.

Senator Jennifer Cole said there was a recent meeting between the department chairs and the dean in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and a representative from the general counsel's office. She said they learned that all graduate students will be represented by the union, but only during quarters when they receive payment from the university and perform a service for the university.

The president said she can look into the Senate receiving a briefing like the one received in Weinberg.

Senator Rebecca Zorach returned to the earlier reports on the [OWF letter](#) and wondered if the Senate can take any action at this point. The president said the Senate could endorse the recommendation from the committee. Parliamentarian Roger Boye said the committees fulfilled the obligation of the motion from the October meeting, which was to report back to the Senate.

Senator Sara Solla said the Senate has received an answer from the committees and that she wanted to move forward.

Senator Henry then made a motion to endorse the letter from the Organization of Women Faculty. The motion was seconded. The floor was then opened for discussion.

Senator Karen Alter said she was happy other senators revisited a motion to endorse the OWF letter and that the committees are welcome to continue looking at pieces of the letter.

Senator McDonald noted that it is possible for individuals to endorse the letter without a full endorsement from the Senate.

Senator McGuire seconded Senator McDonald's point. She said the OWF letter advocates for many different positions—some she agreed with and some she didn't—and therefore she was against the Senate endorsing the entire letter.

Senator Solla said that while Senators can endorse the letter individually, she said the Senate was asked to endorse the letter and that is what needs to be voted upon.

Discussion ended and the Senate held a vote. The Senate approved the motion to endorse the letter from the Organization of Women Faculty.

Following the vote, the president welcomed and introduced Vice President for Human Resources Lorraine Goffe.

Vice President Goffe thanked the Senate for this opportunity, and for their interest in staff turnover and retention. She said she joined Northwestern in February 2022. Before she arrived, she went through a comprehensive review of HR and its processes. Shortly after her arrival in March, she said she conducted a survey of former employees—anyone who had left the university in the past twelve months. She said she wanted to make sure Northwestern understood why staff were leaving the university. Five areas were highlighted once the survey was complete:

1. **Salary**—staff who left believed there was not enough done to repair the damage done by the lack of a merit increase and the retirement match pause.
2. **Quality of direct supervisors**—some respondents were concerned managers were not capable of recognizing the contributions of staff.
3. **Perceived lack of career advancement opportunities**—many said managers either didn't prioritize, or didn't have the tools, to help staff with their professional development goals, and that there was no clear pathway to promotion at Northwestern.
4. **Lack of flexibility and remote work options**—university had not yet set its policy on remote work, which drove some individuals to leave the organization in search of jobs with a guarantee to work remotely full-time.
5. **Job related stress and burnout**—increased workload due to the large number of vacancies and felt managers didn't have the tools to address the burnout staff were feeling in real time.

Vice President Goffe said those issues are not unique to Northwestern. She stressed that these are unprecedented times and the whole world is grappling with challenges they have not faced before. She then addressed each of the findings individually. In terms of salaries, Vice President Goffe said there are a lot of variabilities, especially when comparing them to Northwestern's peers. For example, she said, salary for a certain position depends on the individual's education level and experience, but also on the budget available in the school, department, or unit. She said HR did make some significant market adjustments to "job families" over the past nine months. She said they are also trying to think about salaries more proactively. HR is working on a new job architecture to ensure the job families are aligned with the market, that their compensation philosophy is consistent across the enterprise, and that pay decisions are based on objective data. She said this is a large project, but when completed it will be beneficial to Northwestern for years to come. She also added that Northwestern provided merit increases in September. The average pool was 4%, plus an additional 1% available to address equity issues. Vice President Goffe said they are currently working on the fiscal year 2024 recommendations. Part of that work will be to examine the market and Northwestern's peers. She said they also make sure health insurance premiums are income-based.

Vice President Goffe said addressing the quality of direct supervisors is challenging because relationships are fostered locally. She said they are looking for funding to purchase a university-wide survey tool. This will help HR gather survey data in real time. She said they also want to provide the proper tools for recognition.

Vice President Goffe said the new job architecture will also help better define titles and career paths. That clarity will allow employees to see what they can work toward. The key, she said, is to keep good talent here at Northwestern.

Vice President Goffe noted that Northwestern has established clear [guidelines](#) for remote work. She said they understand they still might lose some employees who want a fully remote work experience. She said they believe having people on campus is critical to the mission and priorities at Northwestern.

Regarding burnout and employee stress, Vice President Goffe said they launched an [Employee Assistance Program](#) in October. The services are offered at no cost to the individual and there is a diverse group of counselors on hand to navigate complexities with a wellness focus. She said in May they launched a new pilot concierge service that pairs professional healthcare coaches with employees (pilot is for faculty only, but plan is to extend to staff soon). The concierge service, she said, helps with managing care transitions and life events.

As important as these changes are, Vice President Goffe said they still need to fill jobs. She said they are making progress on filling positions. In April 2022, there were 718 open positions at Northwestern. By October 2022, the University was down to 645. She said HR also shortened the average time it takes to fill positions from 65 days in April to 60 days in October 2022. Additionally, Vice President Goffe said they created several working groups to address some of the openings in highly competitive fields, like research. The team working on recruitment analyzed IT positions across the institution and shared information across schools and units. After making significant improvements in hiring IT positions, they are applying the same strategy to research. HR also acquired a LinkedIn account to proactively find candidates suited for Northwestern. Vice President Goffe said this recruitment tool has led to a significant increase in applications. HR also uploaded testimonials from staff on the website to communicate to potential employees what makes Northwestern unique and valuable as an employer.

Vice President Goffe ended her presentation by saying that faculty can help by acknowledging the staff's ability to contribute to the mission while also balancing staff's desire for career advancement.

The president then opened the floor for questions.

Senator Greg Beitel said he was impressed with how much faster the hiring process is now compared to a few years ago. He then asked what the current turnaround time is when a job request is submitted to HR. Vice President Goffe said she did not have the numbers on hand for the turnaround time. She did say that when she arrived, she focused on the reduction in time it took to get an individual hired and working. She said she also just hired an Assistant Vice President three weeks ago and his task right now is to review the areas where bottlenecks in hiring are occurring, and analyze ways to reduce those delays.

Senator Carol Schmidt relayed the challenges of employees working side-by-side for two institutions, as they do in the school of medicine. For example, in her department they have staff who are Northwestern University employees working alongside Northwestern Memorial Hospital employees, the challenge being their benefits and days off differ. Senator Schmidt said there was one employee hurt by the fact that Juneteenth was a University and federal holiday, but not a paid holiday for NMH staff. She asked if the University has an opportunity to speak to HR at the hospital in situations where these employees often work together. Vice President Goffe said this specific phenomenon is not something she has examined since she has worked at Northwestern, but she is not unfamiliar with the problem. She said she already had plans to schedule a meeting with the head of HR at the hospital. However, she expressed skepticism that Northwestern University would have any control over such a change. She did promise to ask though, and to try and find common ground between the two organizations where possible.

Senator David Uttal said that one of the competitive advantages to being employed by Northwestern is the opportunity to seek further education. Nonetheless, he expressed concern about the cost burden placed on employees even at a 90% reduction, especially compared to public schools in the area. He asked if a part of recruitment could be negotiating more comprehensive benefits packages that might include something like 100% tuition reimbursement. Vice President Goffe said they are working on a total compensation statement that tries to paint the picture of the value of Northwestern's benefits. She wants to highlight those areas so current and potential employees can easily see what they are getting beyond salary. She added that she appreciated the comment about the tuition benefit and promised to consider looking more deeply at the way benefits are structured.

Senator Henry asked what the average or rolling number of position openings was prior to the pandemic. Vice President Goffe said she would get that number and share it with the president so she can then distribute it to the Senate. Senator Henry asked if it is possible to compare Northwestern's salary with its peers in the top ten. Vice President Goffe said Northwestern won't be able to tell by individual institutions, but they can determine the overall market. She said one of the surveys they do is with the private schools from the Association of American Universities. Those are done anonymously so schools can be upfront and also, with enough feedback, determine what the

market is for a specific position. Senator Henry followed up by asking where Northwestern is at among its peers. Vice President Goffe said Northwestern is at market for some positions and is likely lagging the market in other positions. With the job architecture project, she said, they will be better able to tell where they stand for all positions.

Senator Alter asked if other universities have a life-cycle set of benefits—for those early in career, perhaps having children, and then maybe later on auditing classes after children have moved out—that would attract employees to stay throughout their career. Vice President Goffe said a life-cycle benefits package doesn't exist yet, but they are constantly assessing how Northwestern's benefits meet the needs of its diverse community. Senator Alter also asked how many people participated in the exit survey. Vice President Goffe said there were several hundred and the response rate was approximately 34%.

Senator June McKoy said the hospital oftentimes has its own agenda, and if holidays are not included, it is incredibly difficult to change that fact. She made a recommendation for Northwestern to lobby the hospital to honor holidays like Juneteenth for its staff.

Senator Mark Witte said that merit raises were appreciated, but it is also frustrating to staff given where inflation is at. Speaking on behalf of staff he worked with, he said there was a request among them to have more flexibility when it came to promotions within roles, the notion being that staff have to leave a department or school and go somewhere else within or outside the university to receive a raise. Vice President Goffe said this is something HR will review when they reconstitute the job architecture. Some policies, she acknowledged, might need to be changed when the new structure is put in place. She did say these types of moves are challenging because every job has a ceiling value. Without added responsibilities, there is a chance the university might overpay for a particular role. She did acknowledge that this was a common feeling among employees—that they like where they are and want to remain there, but struggle without the added benefit of more pay for the experience they've accrued during their tenure.

Senator Solla commented on the culture of an organization. She said sometimes it seems like Northwestern's culture is lacking in certain areas, not in every department, but in some where staff don't feel like there are opportunities or that people are happy to have them there. She urged Vice

President Goffe to consider this less measurable component while she also works on making quantitative changes. Vice President Goffe said Senator Solla made a very important point. She said when they are training supervisors, they stress many of the points made by Senator Solla because improving the culture locally makes all the difference.

Senator Acosta followed up on Senator Witte's point about advancement, stating that, as an employer, it is very hard to promote within unit, even when a department has the money and a more than capable staff. She said the barriers in HR make it impossible to implement any sort of raise or promotion for those staff. She asked if HR was planning on changing these processes in any way so as to make it easier on employers to retain their excellent staff. Senator Acosta also asked if HR had gathered demographic data in terms of individuals from minoritized backgrounds when they conducted the exit survey, and if those individuals' top five reasons for leaving Northwestern aligned with the overall top five shared earlier. Relatedly, Senator Acosta asked if the Diverse Slates Candidates policy was still in operation. In response to Senator Acosta's first question, Vice President Goffe said they are reviewing Northwestern's compensation process and policies. She said they did collect voluntary demographic information during the exit survey and there wasn't enough to show any differentiation by racial group. By gender, however, one of the differences was that women more highly rated flexibility. Vice President Goffe added that the Diverse Candidates Slate policy is still in place. She said they are reviewing it right now to see if there is compliance, first, and if there are better outcomes because of the policy.

With no further questions, the president thanked Vice President Goffe for her informative presentation and for the candid discussion.

The president asked if there was any new business.

Senator Getzler said there has been a lot of interest in the world press on human rights in Qatar due to their hosting of the World Cup. Since Northwestern has a campus in Qatar and since Qatar's director of the World Cup called being gay "haram," which means forbidden, and a "defect of the mind," Senator Getzler decided to make a motion expressing concern for LGBTQ residents and visitors to Qatar. The motion was seconded and went through several friendly amendments during discussion. Eventually, the following motion was approved by the Faculty Senate: "The Faculty

Senate of Northwestern University expresses its concern for LGBTQ residents and visitors in Qatar, where the University has a campus.”

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jared Spitz
Secretary to the Faculty Senate