

Northwestern University
Minutes of the Faculty Senate
Videoconference
February 10, 2021

The Northwestern University Faculty Senate held its standing monthly meeting on February 10, 2021, over Zoom videoconference. 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 January 13, 2021 meeting were approved and entered into the record.

The president then began her report.

The president said the Executive Committee met with the senior administrative leadership at the Winter Summit. One agenda item she noted was an update on The Graduate School (TGS). The Executive Committee offered to work with the Provost Office and Dean Kelly Mayo as they rethink options about how best to deliver the services TGS provides. Provost Kathleen Hagerty agreed to this offer. The Executive Committee will then identify senators to serve on an ad hoc committee for this purpose.

The president said that plans are underway for the Senate's annual engagement opportunity with the Board of Trustees. This year's event will take place over Zoom on March 4 at 10:00 a.m. The topic will be "Diversifying the University." The Senate leadership has worked with the Office of Administration and Planning on framing and a set of questions for senators, trustees, and senior administrators to consider at the meeting.

The president said the Organization of Women Faculty sent a letter on February 7th to Provost Hagerty and Associate Provost for Faculty Sumit Dhar. The letter requested changes to the year-end assessment of faculty to acknowledge and accommodate the extraordinary demands placed on faculty during the pandemic. The president said the chair of the Salary and Benefits Committee, Bob Gordon, agreed to

have his committee consider the letter at its meeting later this month and will report back to the Executive Committee with any suggestions for Senate action.

The Senate then went into a closed session to consider an honorary degree nominee.

The president then introduced Open Resource Librarian Lauren McKeen McDonald to discuss the Open Educational Resources Faculty Grant. Librarian McDonald said this grant was designed to encourage faculty to create open educational resources (OER) to replace commercial textbooks. OER are teaching materials available free of charge and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions. The primary goal of the grant is to save students money, she said. But there are other benefits like guaranteeing access to course materials on the first day of class, which she noted as especially challenging during the pandemic. They are also trying to contribute to underrepresented subject areas, like languages, in order to have better representation across disciplines. The grant provides \$5,000 to develop, use, and publish OER for a Northwestern undergraduate course by 2023. Librarian McDonald also said that grant recipients receive individualized support from librarians on finding, using, and publishing OER. In the past two years, an estimated 2,100 students have saved \$345,000 using OER material developed by Northwestern faculty. She said application materials are due on March 26. More information can also be found on the [OER website](#).

The president then opened the floor for questions.

Senator Luís Amaral wondered if it was possible to have someone help write OER material with a larger narrative in mind. Access to such a person, he said, would be even more helpful than simply receiving money. Librarian McDonald said that some of the grant recipients have used the money as a stipend or taken part of the money and used it for graduate assistants. The library though, she said, could help source people outside of the department if the faculty member felt that was necessary.

Senator Mary Zimmerman asked how easy it was to revise material that was already in OER. Librarian McDonald said it was very easy to revise. She gave an example of a statistics professor who created what amounts to a live website granting him the power to edit material as needed. She said this information could then be exported as a pdf and put into a Canvas course or sent to students who might not have a reliable internet connection.

The president entered a motion to ratify the following changes to the Faculty Senate Bylaws:

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.

The motion was seconded, and with no discussion a vote was held and the motion was approved.

The president then introduced the following resolution from the Executive Committee to amend the University Statutes:

Whereas, the Northwestern University Statutes determine the structure of faculty governance, and

Whereas, the Faculty Assembly Bylaws must be in accordance with the University Statutes,

Be it resolved, that the Faculty Senate requests the Board of Trustees amend the University Statutes to reflect the following language derived from the current Faculty Assembly Bylaws:

Article VI

“These bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the Faculty Assembly by two-thirds vote providing that at least 10% of the faculty is present and that notice of any proposed amendment

has been sent to the membership at least one week in advance of the meeting. If 10% of the faculty is not present, the proposed amendment is sent to the Faculty Senate which is the elected representative body of the faculty as a whole. The bylaws will be considered amended if two thirds of the full membership of the Faculty Senate votes its approval.”

The motion was seconded, and with no discussion the motion was approved.

The president then introduced the new Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer Robin R. Means Coleman along with two members from her office, Assistant Provost Mónica Russel y Rodríguez, and Manager of Native American and Indigenous Initiatives Jasmine Gurneau.

Chief Diversity Officer Coleman thanked the Senate for the invitation to share her vision for the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion (OIDI). She then outlined her strategic plan. She used the acronym IDEA—Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accountability—as a guide for her office and the University’s strategic priorities. These broad ideas, she said, are grounded in statements in the University’s current strategic plan: a commitment to student experience and diversity and inclusion, commitment to faculty, and to excellence in research, scholarship, creative work, and teaching (Equity), and commitment to balancing Northwestern’s present and future needs (Accountability). Likewise, Chief Diversity Officer Coleman said the mission of OIDI aligns with these values but goes into more detail. It moves beyond composition, which is still important, and centers itself in the hard work of maintaining a welcome and inclusive climate. She then went into more detail in how all members of Northwestern can advance IDEA. She said Accountability is the most important. Northwestern can begin by establishing benchmarks, many of which already exist, and then evaluating and assessing progress. Equity, she said, speaks to the wholistic climate at Northwestern. Not just pay, but the way people are treated. She continued by stating that Diversity must be informed by a scholarly understanding of what it means to be diverse—the variety of group experiences that result from the social structure of society. She stressed that diversity is a broad concept that includes the differences in in society’s opportunities, the shaping of social institutions by different social factors, the formation of group and individual identity, and the processes of social change. Inclusion, finally, means developing a supportive campus climate that values well-being for all. To enact IDEA, Chief Diversity Officer Coleman argued that everyone is in fact a Diversity Officer. She said we must hold each other

accountable and constantly assess the work being done. And Northwestern must also market IDEA beyond the campus to ensure that everyone feels they can succeed at Northwestern. The conceptual framework for IDEA, she said, stretches across five broad categories: organizational structure and change, academic and administrative policies, climate (classroom and campus), curricular transformation, and assessment (programs and curricula). The first step for her office in terms of accountability is to institutionalize a University Diversity Strategic Plan, which involves establishing accountability measures, securing funds to support progress, and developing processes for visible functionality. She then shared slides with compositional data at Northwestern. One noteworthy point she made was about neurodiversity, and how she hopes others will recognize and acknowledge neurodiversity beyond students.

The president thanked Chief Diversity Officer Coleman and then opened the floor for questions.

Senator David Schoenbrun mentioned the National Center for Institutional Diversity and the Collegiate Fellows program at the University of Michigan, which is where Chief Diversity Officer Coleman spent part of her career. He was curious to know what was of particular value from these two programs and in particular what could be brought to Northwestern. Chief Diversity Officer Coleman said she has looked at reports from the centers across the country and what she learned is that those institutes are primarily postdoctoral programs that last two years—the first year they get acclimated and the second year they spend looking for jobs. At Texas A&M, she said she took the best of these programs and implemented a faculty hiring program. Instead of focusing on postdocs, she said they focused on hiring and retaining faculty. She hired forty faculty of color a year through Texas A&M's faculty pipeline program. The way they were able to do that was modeling their program on the programs at Michigan and beyond, providing institutional benefits like they do at Northwestern, and they did two additional things besides hiring on the front end: they provided those faculty with executive leadership coaches and gave them the title “advanced scholars” based on an NSF grant. She added that these are not expensive programs, and they work. She also wants to bring that idea to Northwestern.

Senator Karen Alter asked what concerns this pandemic causes in terms of the goals that Chief Diversity Officer Coleman outlined for her office and for the University. Chief Diversity Officer Coleman said that our society has been dealing with many pandemics. This one, she said, forced all of us to stop and look hard at various structures, like the way labor is accounted for on a faculty's annual

review form. Even broader, the work-life balance and inequities in health care—these issues were social pandemics, she said, long before COVID.

Senator Julie Marie Myatt said she sees a disconnect between conversations about diversity at Northwestern and the admissions department. She wondered what on the admissions level might change to move from dialogue to action. Chief Diversity Officer Coleman said that she is quite new, but she has heard positive data around the number of applications from students of color and also matriculation. Assistant Provost Mónica Russel y Rodríguez added that at TGS they have made huge strides in recruitment and matriculation for students of color. She said they also hired a full-time expert in Native American student admissions at the undergraduate level. Their efforts in reaching out to the Native American community have been very successful.

Senator Kyle Henry said one of the challenges he's found during his tenure at Northwestern is moving beyond self-selection for DEI work. Chief Diversity Officer Coleman said that the moment to move beyond self-selection is when we hold each other accountable to be a part of these efforts. Leadership must be held accountable both up and down.

Senator Josh Hauser asked what rises to the top as a priority in these first few months. Chief Diversity Officer Coleman said she has fixed in her mind thirty-, sixty-, and ninety-day work. She reiterated her efforts to form a University-level diversity strategic plan and an assessment and evaluation process. She emphasized that these initiatives are not about undoing the work that is already out there. Rather, it is about collecting all that work, assessing the best practices, and sharing that with the community. The other item on her list is the faculty hiring program that she mentioned earlier from her time at Texas A&M. She even noted that she already has the branding figured out: IDEAs Scholars.

Senator Amaral said he has seen a lot of turnover of leadership at Northwestern, and nationwide. He said this creates difficulty in regard to accountability. He cited the Board of Trustees as an example of a more stable body and wondered if Chief Diversity Officer Coleman has spoken to them about her vision. Outside of them, he wondered what other groups could still maintain accountability despite turnover. Chief Diversity Officer Coleman said there is no exception to the ways in which University's evaluate, measure, and assess. Situating accountability in central administration gestures towards its longevity. Presidents and Provosts can turnover, but how those offices are assessed will not change.

Past President Lois Hedman said she was struck by Chief Diversity Officer Coleman's plan to hold seminars so ideas can be shared across the whole University. Structurally, Northwestern is decentralized in that each school is a very different place, and she sees these seminars as a crucial piece to connection between the schools. Chief Diversity Officer Coleman said that beyond the seminars, she is also investing her full weight behind the diversity leaders' group. They are relying heavily on them as they are developing their strategic plan. They also serve as a liaison between her office and the faculty.

Senator Emmy Murphy said she was curious about how broad Chief Diversity Officer Coleman sees neurodiversity and how it compares, or fits into, other types of accessibility. Chief Diversity Officer Coleman said that a diversity strategic plan should not only attend to the very important and urgent concerns around race and race relations on campus and in the community, but highlighting neurodiversity also signals the inclusivity that OIDI strives for and must achieve. In thinking about climate, she said neurodiversity isn't getting enough attention in her opinion, and that if we are all neurologically diverse and we would all benefit from the principle of inclusivity, then it stands to reason that we will all be better equipped to engage with DEI work.

Senator Harris Feinsod asked what Chief Diversity Officer Coleman would like to see from senators as their department's representatives. Chief Diversity Officer Coleman said two things come to mind: she expects to be invited back often i.e., holding her accountable as well, and she expects hard discussion and questions as they develop their strategies in OIDI.

Senator Amaral said one thing that would be helpful is making as much data available as possible i.e., having a good mirror to look at what is going on here and not just reporting the data that people want to see, but rather how people want to be represented. Chief Diversity Officer Coleman agreed. She sees an opportunity for radical transparency to not just benchmark at Northwestern and comparing it to Northwestern's peers, but using valuable data from schools not normally considered that might have something worth paying attention to.

The president thanked Chief Diversity Officer Coleman once again for joining the Senate.

During new business, Senator Allan Horwich expressed his distress and shock at the allegations in the *Chicago Tribune* from a former cheerleader who detailed a disturbing and abusive culture on the cheerleading squad. He asked if there is anything the Senate can do—knowing full well there is current litigation—to stress to the administration that these issues must be handled. The president said the Senate leadership held their monthly meeting with the Provost the day prior. She said they cannot talk about the lawsuit, but investigating, and reforming if need be, the culture on the cheerleading squad is a top priority.

The meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jared Spitz

Secretary to the Faculty Senate