

Northwestern University
Minutes of the Faculty Senate
Videoconference
May 12, 2021

The Northwestern University Faculty Senate held its standing monthly meeting on May 12, 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 April 14, 2021 meeting were approved and entered into the record.

The president then introduced Feinberg Vice Dean for Diversity and Inclusion Clyde Yancy and Vice President and Associate Provost and Chief Diversity Officer Robin Means Coleman—who are the co-chairs of the Community Safety Advisory Board—and Senator Josh Hauser for a conversation on racial justice at Northwestern University.

Senator Hauser began by thanking Dr. Yancy and Professor Coleman for once again joining the Senate. He gave a brief outline of the discussion and then turned the floor over.

Dr. Yancy likewise thanked Senator Hauser for his work and for his willingness to facilitate the discussion. He also expressed his condolences for the loss of Senator Stephen White, who served on the Community Safety Advisory Board until he passed away suddenly earlier this year. Dr. Yancy then proceeded to provide a history of the Community Safety Advisory Board (CSAB). He said the CSAB was created in an effort to take a fresh look at campus security as well as improve communication between groups that were unsatisfied with the current security arrangement and the administration. Simultaneously, he said, the heft of the social justice movements worldwide was felt locally at Northwestern, and questions were being posed about why Northwestern needed a police department, why officers carried weapons, and why police were responding to scenes where there was no immediate threat of violence. He said these questions were appropriate as were the concerns about still needing an element of safety and security on Northwestern's campuses. Fast-forwarding to CSAB's mission, Dr. Yancy said two external firms were commissioned by Northwestern to review the safety and security on

its campuses. One firm focused on the functionality of the NUPD and the other was more holistic in its review of all safety and security on campus. While those reports were being developed, he said, CSAB conducted a listening tour with different groups of students, staff, and faculty that ran from the middle of November 2020 through the middle of January 2021. Dr. Yancy said CSAB discovered that the environment in which Northwestern community works and lives is felt to be unsafe, not because of a physical threat, but rather an emotional unsteadiness about the external influences, like police, that are perceived differently by different types of students. What most engaged Dr. Yancy was, he said, the fact that people are not happy on Northwestern's campus. For students, they understand the strength and value of the education they are receiving, but the climate, he said, is not conducive to wellness. In other words, the climate—defined by how we interact with one another—at Northwestern is problematic, Dr. Yancy said. With this information in hand, CSAB, a diverse, vocal group of students, faculty, staff, began its work. They began by responding to the external reviews and shared those responses with senior administrative leadership. Dr. Yancy said the output from the CSAB thus far can be found on their [website](#) along with the agendas for each of their meetings. He then provided an overview of CSAB's recommendations based on the reports, which notably included a reinvention of how Northwestern engages mental health episodes and a new analysis of the definition of security that follows some of the principles of abolition. He paused there to make clear that Northwestern will not do away with all security measures on campus. Rather, CSAB seeks to reframe how those security measures operate. That's why, he said, CSAB has called on the expertise of a number of individuals to guide them in their efforts. Earlier that day, CSAB met with a representative from Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) to discuss how the University might reinvent and better equip CAPS to address many of the situations police are currently called into. Dr. Yancy then asked Professor Coleman for her perspective.

Professor Coleman said that Northwestern and many institutions tend to stand on task forces and initiatives when responding to protests and demands. She said she is still wading through dozens of reports from previous task forces commissioned to address many of the same issues. This, she said, signals a need for change. Her goal for CSAB is ensuring it remains proactive and that the work of the task force is institutionalized, which means CSAB would end as an entity in June and the work would continue in perpetuity across the University.

Dr. Yancy added that—thanks to the Senate President notifying them—a parallel effort is taking place in the City of Evanston. A member of the city’s board, Professor Andrew Papchristos, also advised CSAB and is a professor of sociology at Northwestern. Thus, both groups, he said, are taking a scholarly approach to the definitions of safety and security. One takeaway from the listening tour Dr. Yancy offered before turning back to the moderator was that a uniformed officer has one approach, enforcement, but more realistically that one person has dozens of other responsibilities, areas in which there is very little or no training, like mental health interdiction. Most of the calls on a college campus, he said, are for help and support, not for enforcement, which makes it clear there needs to be a change in how the University responds to these episodes.

Senator Hauser alluded to Professor Coleman’s statement about Northwestern’s history of task forces and ad hoc committees commissioned to address issues of racial justice on campus. Which led to the question of whether there is institutional inertia around addressing racism and whether or not this moment is any different from the prior ones. Professor Coleman acknowledged that the number of reports she reads is sobering, as are the same issues surfacing again and again across multiple reports. She said each individual on the call, and each individual at Northwestern, has formally and informally served as a diversity, equity, and inclusion lead. What is challenging, she said, is that work is cyclical, and it is apparent what works needs to be done, which needs to be institutionalized rather than assigned to another task force. Dr. Yancy added that because of the nature of the issue on the table, inertia is expected. If there were not inertia, he said, this would have been solved a long time ago. The goal is to change culture and change behaviors, and that is one of the most difficult things to do in life. He said he would not walk away from the challenge of overcoming inertia. He noted, too, that contextualizing the implicit bias training and the efforts on the part of the schools, the staff governing group and others to hold open forums on racial justice—all these combined suggest there is a good faith effort to overcome these challenges.

Senator Hauser said that Senator Barnor Hesse, who sits on the Social Responsibility Committee and is a member of the African American Studies Department, has broached the topic of separating the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and rooting out anti-racism and anti-blackness, which his department raised in a [letter](#) to the administration last summer. Senator Hauser then asked if the distinction raised in the letter rang true and wondered too if the University is too hesitant to talk about anti-racism. Dr. Yancy said that the Feinberg School of Medicine never had a Vice Dean for Diversity

and Inclusion. That position is only six years old, adding that he is the first to hold such a position. He said that is one example of the University's commitment to bringing into the executive leadership a voice solely dedicated to DEI work. He noted three other important points: TiShaunda McPherson was hired to lead the Office of Equity and will ensure that office devotes its attention to matters of equity. The second point, he said, is diverse leaders, like himself, to address matters of safety and security. The third point he said is the hiring of Professor Coleman, who was the best candidate in the country. Leadership, he said, has been showing through these hires and their budgetary commitments they are willing to take on DEI work. Professor Coleman said DEI and anti-racism overlap, but they are not the same thing. What is interesting, she said, is that Senator Hesse and a group of other faculty generated one of the reports Professor Coleman is currently reading. She offered an alternative question: Are we as a collective willing to talk about anti-racism? Because clearly Senator Hesse has been talking about anti-racism, she said, and offering explicit solutions for what we can do. The question remains whether or not he and others will be heard.

Senator Hauser then asked the panelists what specific reforms CSAB is considering recommending. Dr. Yancy said he made a pact with the membership of CSAB that they will jointly make their decisions on recommendations. What's being considered though, he said, at the very least is fundamental change in scaling the size of the police department. They are also directly considering a proposal to limit the carrying and use of weapons as much as possible. And they are also considering a proposal to reallocate resources removed from the police budget to offices like CAPS. Going forward, Dr. Yancy said there will be a series of unstructured meetings and following those discussions he should be able to share concrete and substantive recommendations with the administration. Professor Coleman also added the retreat the CSAB will be having will be another moment to finalize recommendations.

Senator Hauser then opened the floor for questions.

Senator David Uttal thanked the panelists for their efforts and agreed that he sees, and is hopeful for, change. One thing he noted during the discussion is that the CSAB process seems top-down heavy, and he expressed concern over directives being formulated and coming from the top rather than from the broader community. Professor Coleman said the CSAB will inform leadership, so the information is flowing up rather down. Earlier, she noted that everyone at Northwestern leads on DEI work. These two groups are tasked with informing the decisionmakers on the best rules, policies, and procedures.

Dr. Yancy said one reason he articulated leadership so frequently is because the charge he was given was one that was predicated on leadership receiving a plan from CSAB, and that ultimately the administrative leadership would be the final decisionmaker. Senator Uttal followed up by saying that change will happen through the efforts of faculty, staff, and students. Dr. Yancy and Professor Coleman both agreed.

Senator Luís Amaral said he was frustrated the CSAB made a pledge to not share information about where they are heading. If more information was shared, he said, that might encourage broader input. He added that he believes those in positions of influence and expertise should speak up about what they think is right and what they think is wrong. He then asked if the co-chairs of the CSAB would prioritize their colleagues in the administration or stand with those who worked to get the CSAB created. Dr. Yancy said the reason he is co-chairing the CSAB is because he believes Northwestern needs to get to a different place, because he's sensitive to those that have been disaffected. He said what they are working towards may not be palatable to the President of the University. He also added that he understands the frustrations about process, but this is the one he was tasked with in a very short timeframe. With that, Dr. Yancy said he invites more input because CSAB wants to represent everyone's interests. He noted, too, that the work of CSAB—and the grassroots effort that started it—is a work in progress.

Senator Hauser thanked Dr. Yancy and Professor Coleman for joining the Senate.

The president then began her report.

The president said Northwestern made the announcement that the University will require students to be vaccinated against Covid-19 for the coming academic year.

The president said the University Presidential Search is now underway and Senate President-Elect Bob Holmgren is the Faculty Senate's representative.

Tomorrow, the president said, Northwestern will be announcing its inaugural ombudsperson. The Senate began this work in 2017-18 and the president acknowledged she was glad to see it come to fruition.

The cheer-team incident resolution the Senate passed at the March 10, 2021 meeting requested that the administration report to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee on a quarterly basis on the status of the situation and the actions being taken, the president said. Provost Hagerty agreed to attend the final Executive Committee meeting of the year on May 24, 2021. The president said she will report on what they learn in that meeting from Provost Hagerty at the June 2, 2021 Senate meeting.

The president concluded her report.

Senator Henry said he would reserve his comment for new business, but he wanted to note that the timeline the president outlined for the report from the administration might not be quick enough with the recent hiring of Athletic Director Mike Polisky.

Senator Kathy Martinez said one of her colleagues feels uncomfortable that Northwestern is requiring students to get the vaccine, but not faculty and staff. The president said the administration is still considering requiring faculty and staff to get the vaccine, but they have not made a final decision yet. She also promised to relay that faculty member's concerns.

The president said that the Executive Committee serves as the nominating committee for the election of President-Elect. This year, she said, the Executive Committee has chosen to nominate Senator Ceci Rodgers, Chair of the Faculty Handbook Committee. The president then asked if there were other nominations for President-Elect. With none, she announced that Senator Rodgers will run unopposed for President-Elect.

The Senate then turned to the [proposed recommendations for academic freedom language](#) in the Faculty Handbook.

Senator Harris Feinsod, Chair of the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee said that his committee and the Faculty Handbook Committee inherited proposals for revisions to the academic freedom language in the Faculty Handbook. He indicated that the language put before the Senate represents a big step forward in updating, refortifying, and enhancing Northwestern's academic freedom protections as they apply to the key areas of academic life and as they interface with the

University. Senator Feinsod then detailed how the current policy before the Senate went through both the Faculty Handbook and the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committees, numerous meetings with General Counsel and the Provost Office, a presentation to the Deans' Council, a presentation before the central administration at the Executive Committee's quarterly Summit meeting, and once again with the Executive Committee prior to being brought to the Senate. He then thanked all the senators, past and present, who worked on the proposal and also Associate Provost Sumit Dhar. Going forward, Senator Feinsod said each senator should share the proposed language with their constituents to collect feedback. He then asked senators to return any feedback they receive to either himself or Senator Rodgers by Friday, May 21, 2021. The aim, he said, is to have a second reading and vote at the June 2, 2021 Faculty Senate meeting. Senator Feinsod then detailed what has changed and what hasn't in the new academic freedom language, a record of which can be found by accessing the above link and cross-referencing with the current [Faculty Handbook](#).

Senator Rodgers then asked the senators if there were any questions about the proposed changes.

Senator Karen Alter said the timeline the committee has outlined for feedback is unfeasible in part because of the numerous responsibilities faculty in Political Science must complete before the end of the year.

Senator Kyle Henry echoed Senator Alter's comments regarding the timeline. He then shared a few concerns from the Northwestern chapter of the American Associate of University Professors (NU-AAUP): invoking tenure at the end of the second paragraph in the first section, "The institution of tenure is indispensable to creating the conditions under which said mission can be realized," i.e., tenure creates the condition for academic freedom. NU-AAUP noted that the comments about "integrity and intellectual rigor" might be misplaced in that it's unclear who would be evaluating those terms. He then read a lengthy proposed addition to paragraph three that he said he would share with the two chairs by email. Senator Feinsod said the first sentence in the document notes that "Northwestern subscribes to the Statement of Academic Freedom and Tenure issued by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in 1940, as amended in 1970, and the Statement on Professional Ethics adopted by the AAUP in 1966 and revised in 1987 and 2009." Senator Henry said that stating tenure's importance explicitly in the Faculty Handbook is necessary. Senator Feinsod said that with respect to the comment about integrity and intellectual rigor, the committee's language came from the AAUP's Statement on

Professional Ethics about intellectual honesty. Senator Henry's last's statement was that—in the NU-AAUP's chapter's belief—coupling the statement about intellectual rigor with the University's Office of Equity could be somewhat problematic.

Past President Lois Hedman said that since 2017 the changes to the academic freedom language in the Faculty Handbook have been an ongoing conversation in the Faculty Senate. She said she believes Senator Rodgers and Senator Feinsod have done an excellent job, especially by bringing forth the two key items faculty have asked for: explicit inclusion of NTE faculty and including shared governance under the protection of academic freedom. Senator Hedman added that the Office of Equity has no jurisdiction over adjudicating academic freedom violations. Rather, there are faculty committees that are tasked with reviewing those cases.

Senator Fred Turek said he was surprised that the language appears to show that academic freedom is limited to within the scope of University policy.

Senator Robert Hariman said that while we should take the necessary time to deliberate, there is a countervailing concern: the current academic freedom policy is inadequate. The proposed policy, he said, gives faculty far greater protection, and protection to more people. The current policy could be interpreted as applying to only those that teach, which is why, he said, he is concerned about taking the summer to consider the policy further.

President-Elect Holmgren noted that there are those who believe academic freedom should only apply to those with tenure, and that was why the committees set out to explicitly extend academic freedom to NTE faculty.

Senator Amaral said he sympathized with Senator Hariman's statement on the adequacy of the current academic freedom policy. He wondered, though, how frequently the academic freedom language will be revisited. He also stated that he hopes the Senate can meet more frequently to discuss matters like the academic freedom policy in depth. Senator Rodgers reiterated the point about the policy being a big improvement to what the faculty have now.

Senator Henry asked what about the previous academic freedom policy is lacking and what it might leave faculty vulnerable to if left unrevised. Senator Feinsod said the inclusion of NTE faculty was a gateway for more comprehensive revisions. He made the point that after four years, this is by far the best document brought forward that was agreed upon by both the Faculty Senate committees and the administration.

The president thanked Senator Feinsod and Senator Rodgers for their efforts. She once again asked senators to collect feedback from their constituents and share it with the committee chairs by May 21, 2021.

The president then announced the news that Athletic Director Mike Polisky resigned, effective immediately.

The Senate then heard a standing committee report from the Budget and Planning Committee.

At the April meeting, the Senate asked the Budget and Planning Committee to investigate several questions regarding financial decisions the administration has made during the pandemic. The president then introduced Senator Marty Lariviere. Senator Lariviere then shared a lengthy, detailed [presentation](#) that centered around four key questions: Should the Senate consider a forensic audit as Johns Hopkins did? Can Northwestern reimburse the matching retirement funds? Has the University received a windfall from strong stock market gains over the last few years? Was there a rainy-day fund?

Following the presentation, Senator Lariviere made a motion to approve the following resolution:

Whereas, on April 14, 2021 the Faculty Senate Executive Committee was informed that the Board of Trustees did not view the COVID-19 pandemic as a once-in-a-century shock to the University but akin to events such as the subprime mortgage crisis and the terrorist attacks of September 11th, and

Whereas the Board of Trustees views such once-in-a-decade occurrences as insufficiently severe to warrant a special draw from the University endowment, and

Whereas the Board of Trustees did take special draws from the University endowment to address budgetary shortfalls in 2017, 2018, and 2019, and

Whereas the University and its Board did not suspend faculty and staff retirement contributions following previous shocks, economy-wide or otherwise, but did for the pandemic, and by doing so unilaterally rewrote the implicit contract between the University and its faculty and staff,

Be it resolved that the University and its Board of Trustees should quantify the level of risk faculty and staff face going forward by providing benchmarks for the University's enrollments, revenues, and costs that would again result in the suspension of faculty and staff retirement contributions and other benefits, and

Be it further resolved that within the current fiscal year the University and its Board of Trustees should create a "rainy-day" fund, separate from the endowment, that can be used to address future financial shocks without having to impose significant and painful cuts across the university.

The motion was seconded, and the floor was then opened for discussion.

Senator Amaral asked if the University has had lower returns over the last ten years and has less liquidity in terms of how they invest. Senator Lariviere said that is correct, but over the last fifteen years the University has outperformed the market.

Senator Henry said he would vote for the resolution because it signals the faculty's concerns about the financial governance of the University.

Senator Christina Kiaer said she is also in support of the resolution. She then asked if it would be possible to give faculty and staff lump sums of money rather than putting the money back into their retirement accounts. The president responded that the University has pledged to give a three percent salary increases each year for the next two years, which is a different way of returning the money to faculty and staff. Senator Kiaer responded that the salary increases were long overdue given the recent

budget crises and salary freezes and raises that match the cost of living don't make up for the cutting of retirement benefits.

Senator Turek said he is wary of giving the administration full power to determine how raises are dispersed because there has not been any transparency about how the increase in the salary pool will be managed.

Senator Hariman said this report and subsequent resolution from the Budget and Planning Committee is exactly how the committee system should work. He said he would be in favor of adopting the resolution.

Following discussion, the Senate voted to approve the resolution.

The Budget and Planning Committee then introduced a second resolution:

Whereas the University's financial position is now far better than feared at the start of the pandemic,

Be it resolved that the University should take steps to restore lost faculty and staff retirement contributions as well as needed spending and staffing.

A motion to approve the resolution was made by Senator Lariviere. The motion was seconded and with no further discussion the resolution was approved.

The president then asked if there was any new business.

Senator Angela Lee said the Organization of Women Faculty will issue a statement to the University President and Provost demanding a transparent review of what took place during the incident with the cheer team. They will also ask, she said, for an oversight structure that identifies and addresses concerns of women and black athletes.

Senator Alter then made a motion to postpone any vote on the new academic freedom language until the fall. The motion was seconded. The floor was then opened for discussion.

Past President Hedman made a motion to postpone consideration of Senator Alter's motion until the June 2, 2021 Senate meeting. The motion was seconded. The floor was then opened for discussion.

Senator Henry concurred with postponing until the next meeting.

Senator Amaral asked if it was possible to hold a meeting of the Faculty Senate over the summer. The president said the Senate would consider that possibility if it becomes necessary.

Following discussion, the Senate approved Past President Hedman's motion to postpone consideration of Senator Alter's motion until the next Senate meeting.

With no further new business, the meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jared Spitz

Secretary to the Faculty Senate