

Northwestern University  
Minutes of the Faculty Senate  
Guild Lounge and Videoconference  
June 7, 2023

The Northwestern University Faculty Senate held its standing monthly meeting on June 7, 2023, in the Scott Hall's Guild Lounge and over Zoom videoconference. President Ceci Rodgers called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

The president noted that the minutes from the May 10, 2023 meeting were approved electronically and entered into the record.

The president then began her report.

The president congratulated President Michael Schill on his formal installation last week as Northwestern's 17<sup>th</sup> President. She said the inauguration and the activities surrounding it were thoughtful and thought-provoking, warm and inclusive, and that she thought President Schill laid out a clear and ambitious path for the University. She added that she appreciated his steadfast support of shared governance, which he's demonstrated in large and small ways, including his presence at monthly Senate meetings.

The president said the second Faculty Assembly of the academic year was held on May 22. The topic was "The Role of Athletics at a University Like Northwestern" with a particular focus on the impact of a 2021 ruling that allowed student athletes for the first time to profit from their Name, Image and Likeness (NIL). President Schill chaired the Assembly, and the Senate President moderated a panel that included Athletic Director Derrick Gragg, two of his colleagues, along with faculty representatives for the Big Ten and the Committee on Athletics and Recreation. The discussion centered on the seismic changes taking place in collegiate athletics and their likely impact. Panelists answered questions from faculty on a range of topics, from how student athletes are advised on majors to the status of the new stadium. The president said it was an enlightening 90 minutes. Video of the event is posted on the [Faculty Assembly website](#).

The president said that she, Governance Committee Chair Mark Witte, and Senate Secretary Jared Spitz met with Nathan Taylor, Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trustees (BOT), to discuss the Senate's request for greater transparency on the Board of Trustees website. To that end, she said the Faculty Senate leadership and Senate Secretary will be given the names of Board of Trustees committee chairs each year. If any of the Faculty Senate committees are working on something that would benefit from coordination with a corresponding Board of Trustees committee, the chair of that committee can notify the Senate President, who will reach out to the BOT office. She said this was a significant step, as coordination with Board committees has not happened before, and while the Senate leadership will have access to the Board's committee chairs, the names will not appear on the Board's website. As Chair of the Board, she said Peter Barris serves as the public face of the Board and prefers to shield other board members from the many requests that come in from people who are advocating for various things. As part of the request for greater transparency, the Board will also make changes to its website to include more explanatory information about the Board, what it does, and what the committees do.

Finally, the president shared three presidential goals that the Senate accomplished this year.

First, she said the Secure Faculty Survey Committee debated two methods of surveying the full faculty and recommended that the University update the Faculty Perspectives Survey that was administered in 2015. Work on this will continue next year. Separately, the committee, led by Senator Gina Petersen, designed and administered an internal survey of the Senate aimed at determining senators' needs and priorities, and further improving shared governance at Northwestern. She said President-Elect Regan Thomson will use the findings to inform his leadership of the Senate next year.

Second, the president said she enhanced communication and transparency through the quarterly Faculty Senate newsletter. She added that she's heard directly from faculty that it has helped them understand what the Senate does and how the Senate leadership and their Senate representatives can

serve them. She also noted that one of the most-clicked links continues to be “Who is my Senator?” Also, as promised, the Faculty Senate website is currently being revamped. She said she and Senate Secretary Spitz are working with global marketing with a goal to make the website a more useful and educational tool for senators and the wider community. The hope is to have the website finished by the end of the summer.

Third, the president said the Senate returned to primarily in-person Faculty Senate meetings after two years of mostly meeting by Zoom. More senators are coming to Scott Hall and Guild Lounge, she said, to interact face-to-face; the journalists who cover the Senate are coming in person; and more of the senators who are here, in person, are contributing their ideas and opinions. She said this demonstrates how much senators care about the Faculty Senate, shared governance, respectful dialogue and debate, and Northwestern. She added that active participation and engagement are very much needed, and that it’s not hyperbole to say that the positive functioning of the Faculty Senate depends on it.

The president then concluded her report.

The president then opened the floor for questions.

Senator Kyle Henry asked if there was a sense of when the Board of Trustees’ internal program review might be finished. The president said that review is still in process, and the leadership reminded the Board they would like to hear a report on the program review once it is complete.

Senator Bob McDonald, chair of the Salary and Benefits Committee, then presented the annual [faculty salary report](#). He first acknowledged and thanked Senate Researcher Tricia England for compiling the data, and also Debbie Crimmins from Institutional Research, who supplied the internal data. He also acknowledged that no table answers every question, but the committee continues to hone its process and the numbers still provide interesting insights. The conclusion from the first table (peer institution comparisons of salaries for tenure-track full professors), Senator McDonald said, is the institutions in the top ten and institutions 11-20 remain roughly constant over time. Northwestern generally comes in the middle of the pack. The next table, containing comparisons for tenure-track assistant professors, is roughly the same, he said.

Senator McDonald then moved on to Northwestern-specific data. He shared the Provost's Office salary tables, which are on the [Provost's Office's website](#). However, one change the committee was able to secure are the tables—starting on page seven of the report—that examine continuing faculty (faculty who were in the same rank in 2023 and 2022). These tables provide a better sense of salaries for people who stayed within a rank over a given time. The idea, he said, is to produce the same measure of raises across a constant population.

Lastly, Senator McDonald went through the tables with computed raises for each of the ranks (pages 11 and 12) in tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty. He pointed out a few anomalous numbers and explained, in one case, why salaries might drop in a certain rank i.e., faculty retiring or leaving the university. The final table is what the committee hopes to do more broadly—by school and by rank—computing an average raise for continuing faculty.

The president then opened the floor for questions.

Senator Karen Alter said she was puzzled by the raise figures in relation to the salary pool last year. Senator McDonald said he was not sure why exactly the figures in the last table didn't align with the salary pool.

Senator David Schoenbrun asked if the Provost's Office separated retention offers from the standard raise pools, which might explain Senator Alter's point about the raises being higher than the reported salary pool. Senator McDonald said he did not believe there was any such separation.

A motion was made to allow President Michael Schill to address the Senate. The motion was seconded and promptly approved.

President Schill said he believed Senator Schoenbrun was correct. He said the salary pool was 4%, and there are numbers higher than 4% in the table. The figures on page thirteen of the report show promotional increases within rank, retention, and salary pool.

Senator Rebecca Zorach asked if it was possible to get a sense of how "time in rank" relates to the various levels of salary. Senator McDonald said that was an excellent question. However, he said answering with this kind of data was likely impossible because it would be too granular and might

reveal identities. However, he did say he believed that question would be addressed in the current salary equity study being run by the Provost's Office.

Senator Barbara Newman asked a clarifying question about the 2023 academic year data. Senator McDonald said it was for the 2022-23 academic year—the salaries for the fiscal year of 2023, which runs from September 2022 through August 2023.

Senator Sara Solla said the final table shows a total of 1,007 faculty, which she claimed was a 3% reduction in full-time tenure-track faculty. Senator McDonald said he didn't have exact data on the current number of full-time tenure-track, but since the data is for continuing faculty, the lower number is likely due to promotions out of rank, retirements, and faculty who left the university.

Senator Luis Amaral said he pulled these reports from the last ten years and stated that he thought it was more illuminating to look at the data over several years as opposed to two. He said that he looked at the median salary within rank across schools and essentially faculty salaries are growing approximately at the rate of inflation. He said he also examined the salaries for Northwestern's Presidents and Provosts, which have grown at a much higher rate. He then suggested plotting some graphs and looking at a longer time span for next year's report. He also offered to help with that work.

Senator Steve Jacobsen said one item the committee discussed was the difference between public and private universities. He questioned why private universities do not, like their public peers, make their salaries public. He said it could address issues of equity and Northwestern could become a leader in that movement.

With no further questions, the president thanked the Salary and Benefits Committee for their work on the faculty salary report.

The Senate then held a vote for Faculty Senate President-Elect. Senator Jill Wilson was chosen as the next Northwestern Faculty Senate President-Elect.

Senator Mark Witte, chair of the Governance Committee, then gave a brief overview of the [proposed amendments to the Faculty Senate Bylaws](#). A motion was then made to approve the proposed amendments. The motion was seconded, and the floor was then opened for discussion.

Senator Therese McGuire said the Governance Committee worked hard on this proposal and she congratulated the committee on its efforts. She said these proposed changes as they stand will be a great help to the Senate leadership.

Senator Newman asked if there was a situation where faculty are clamoring to be committee chairs or do arms need to be twisted. The president said mostly the latter, but in some rare cases the former does occur.

Senator Amaral thanked Senator Witte for his work. He said he worked with him on an initial draft of this proposal. He also said he appreciated Senator Witte's effort to allow him to be involved in the process. Senator Amaral did however express one concern about how the Senate deliberated the measure in that he thought promoting more discussion through breakout groups would've been more beneficial. He said he would not support the amendment, but he did support the work that the committee did.

Senator Zorach said she was happy to vote for this change and that she also appreciated the balance the committee was trying to strike. She asked if it had been considered to have committees nominate two names to put into the mix. Senator Witte said that as an iteration, yes, they have considered it.

Senator Henry said that motivating more people to be interested in Senate business depends on the kinds of proposals and motions being considered. He asked the leadership to be responsive to those they represent. He said he appreciated the surveying done within the Senate and hoped for a survey of the full faculty soon. Senator Henry added that he sat on the Governance Committee, helped craft the amendments, and acknowledged the current iteration was a good first step.

Senator Mark Johnson said he thought debate in the Senate is limited and controlled. He said he prefers Senator Amaral's original proposal of having the committees hold votes. He said he opposed the proposal for that reason.

President-Elect Regan Thomson said he didn't plan on being passive about this amendment. He said he plans to invite senators to nominate themselves for the position of committee chair. He noted that he will take everyone into consideration.

With no further questions, a motion was made to vote by ballot. The motion was seconded and approved.

The Senate then voted on the original motion to approve the proposed amendments to the Faculty Senate Bylaws. The results were as follows: 41 in favor, 15 opposed, and 2 abstentions. However, Article VI, Section 2 of the current Bylaws requires a two-thirds vote of the full Senate membership (62 of 93 seated senators) in order to amend the Bylaws, and states that, “If a proposed bylaw is approved under the ordinary voting rules outlined under section 4 of Article IV, the remaining required votes may be submitted by electronic means within two weeks of the meeting at which the initial vote is taken.” [After two weeks, the motion failed; the final vote tally was as follows: 57 in favor, 15 opposed, 2 abstentions].

Senator Gina Petersen, chair of the Secure Faculty Survey Committee, then presented the [results of internal Faculty Senate survey](#). Senator Petersen said some of the results in the survey suggested the Senate explore holding a Senate meeting on the Chicago campus next year, holding a Senate-wide orientation in the fall, and Senator-only receptions to foster camaraderie. She said that most senators believe shared governance is critical to a well-functioning university and that the Senate should be a critical part of that. However, the percentage of those who believed the Faculty Senate currently enhances shared governance fell significantly. She also noted one comment about Senate meetings, which was a call to have more “thoughtful, spirited debate between senators on important topics.”

The Senate then broke into small groups for fifteen minutes to discuss the results. Following that, Senator Petersen asked each table in the room and each breakout group on Zoom to share what they discussed.

Senator Newman said one idea her table had was to have a floating report on what has become of the last three years of resolutions. Second, they wanted to have reports be pre-circulated by administrators so that discussion can be emphasized at Senate meetings. Her table also said committees should be mandated to meet quarterly. They also proposed making committee service voluntary. Lastly, the committee thought amendments to the Bylaws should be passed with a 2/3 majority vote of those present at the meeting as opposed to 2/3 of the entire Senate.

Senator Zorach said her group discussed having at least one or two committee chairs report at every meeting. This would lead to more accountability and it would also enable those not on the committee to learn about what committees are working on.

Senator Tom Gaubatz said his group thought it would be useful to have an explicit conversation on what the Senate means by “shared governance”—what are we governing and how. He said his group also found the small group discussion useful and productive and suggested doing such activities at Senate meetings more often. He added that they thought small group discussions might be a useful forum for collaboration before administrators come to speak to the Senate, which would allow for questions and issues to be presented to the administrator beforehand. Lastly, Senator Gaubatz said his group thought more communication early in the year between committee chairs and the senators could help guide the work of all committees.

Senator Beverly Walther said her group had a couple of ideas around changing Senate meetings. The first was to create an atmosphere that would encourage interactions between the senators, particularly new senators. They also thought it would be important to provide materials in advance of the meeting presentations and that all presenters should be encouraged to provide a more effective way of sharing the data and their conclusions. This could lead to more focused meetings and more substantive discussion. Regarding committees, Senator Walther said they thought it would be useful to have each senator go back to their department to solicit ideas they want the Senate to address. The group also thought there should be a regular reevaluation of standing committees.

Senator Jacobsen said his group also valued the small group discussion and remarked on how effective it was. They also suggested more education on how to put a resolution forward. In terms of improving committee effectiveness, electing chairs of committees the year prior could be beneficial to continuity. As for shared governance, his group suggested having a Faculty Assembly meeting devoted to shared governance, and the following Senate meeting would also be focused on shared governance. He suggested potentially inviting Adam Goodman, Director of the Center for Leadership, to that Senate meeting.

Senator Jim Mahoney said his group was composed of mostly new senators. He said that as new senators they were slightly disoriented at the beginning of their terms. In addition to the packet of materials and the initial introduction to the Senate, they felt that new senators might benefit from

speaking with one or two experienced senators who had been able to make a difference in the Senate. Senator Mahoney also said it might be helpful to have experienced senators speak about what the Senate has done before and how it operates.

Senator Witte said his table thought the Senate should choose discussion topics. They also thought committee charges could be clearer, and that orientations for committees would be effective. Also, Senator Witte's table thought committee reports were too short and tended to be a fait accompli. They also suggested reports and resolutions be sent to the Board of Trustees. Also, they encouraged more breakout room discussions and more clarity on how the Senate President is chosen.

Senator Clara Peek said their group touched upon a lot of the points made thus far. She said that her table emphasized the benefits of a hybrid meeting and respecting those who attend remotely, but also exploring practices and pedagogy (like the breakout rooms). Her group also echoed the need for meetings on the Chicago campus at least once a year. In terms of committees, they suggested discussion between the committee chairs to stimulate engagement. They also suggested that breakout rooms could be employed within committees to better capture ideas and to hone the mission. Lastly, Senator Peek's group suggested a brief recap—what was accomplished, what worked, what didn't—of committee work at the final meeting of the year.

Senator Cat Fabian said her group suggested introducing more standardization and accountability measures for committee work to improve the effectiveness of committees. They also suggested committees provide cost benefit analyses. For Senate meetings, they suggested distributing a roster of Senate speakers at the beginning of the year. Finally, they suggested inviting someone from the AAUP to speak to the Senate about shared governance more broadly, especially in relation to how relatively young the Senate is (constituted in 2011).

Senator Petersen thanked everyone for their thoughts and engagement.

The president then thanked Past President Bob Holmgren for his service the past three years in the Faculty Senate leadership. She also thanked Secretary Jared Spitz and Senate Researcher Tricia England. She likewise thanked Parliamentarian Roger Boye, the Executive Committee, and all senators.

President-Elect Thomson then gave a heartfelt thanks for Senate President Ceci Rodgers's leadership over this past year.

The president then asked if there was any other new business.

Senator Amaral acknowledged and thanked two senators, Senator Alter and Senator Henry, who were finishing their final year in the Senate.

The meeting then adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jared Spitz  
Secretary to the Faculty Senate