

Northwestern University
Minutes of the Faculty Senate
Videoconference
August 9, 2023

The Northwestern University Faculty Senate held a special meeting on August 9, 2023 over Zoom videoconference. Past President Ceci Rodgers called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. A quorum was present.

The past president noted that the minutes from the June 7, 2023 meeting were approved electronically and entered into the record.

The past president, on behalf of the Executive Committee, then brought [four resolutions](#) to the floor. She said the resolutions were authored by six Northwestern faculty members with input from Faculty Senate leadership and the Social Responsibility and Student Affairs Committees. She noted these resolutions were in response to events over the past month, set in motion by the University's July 7 announcement that an outside investigation found allegations of hazing in the football program were credible, and that then-Head Coach Pat Fitzgerald would be suspended for two weeks. The following day a story in the Daily Northwestern contained revelations about the sexual nature of some of the hazing and the devastating impact it had on players. The six faculty wrote an open letter to President Michael Schill, Athletic Director Derrick Gragg and Board Chair Peter Barris outlining their concerns and calling for specific actions. They also pointed to a Faculty Senate resolution passed in 2021, also with their collaboration, that called for a needs assessment for accountability and training in the Athletics Department after reported incidents of sexual harassment and racial discrimination on the cheer team. The past president added much has happened in the past month, including additional allegations of hazing and racial discrimination in other athletics programs, the firing of Coach Fitzgerald and of the head baseball coach, Jim Foster; multiple lawsuits filed by former athletes against current and former Northwestern administrators and the Board of Trustees; and new measures to prevent future hazing and discrimination. Last week, she said President Schill announced former Attorney General Loretta Lynch would oversee a

comprehensive review and assessment of the entire athletics department. While these latter two items are positive steps, she said the Executive Committee felt it was important for the Senate, as the faculty's only representative voice, to go on record with recommendations for a path forward through this crisis. She said they also felt the moment was urgent enough to warrant a special meeting.

The past president said the Senate would consider each of the four resolutions individually, meaning the Senate would discuss and vote on each resolution, one by one.

The past president then asked if there were any questions about the format before she introduced the Senate's guests.

Senator Ezra Getzler said he would have preferred a preliminary discussion on process before the resolutions were presented. He said there is almost no support for the resolutions in his department. The past president said he would have ample opportunity to provide comments during the discussion periods of each resolution. She said she did not want to talk about them as a group.

Senator Luis Amaral asked what Senator Getzler would prefer instead of a resolution. Senator Getzler said he would engage with that when discussion began.

The past president then introduced Susan Pearson, Professor of History, Caitlin Fitz, Associate Professor of History, and Kate Masur, Professor of History with a courtesy appointment in Black Studies.

Professor Pearson thanked the Senate for the invitation. She then gave a brief background on the genesis of the resolutions and acknowledged the faculty—Amy Stanley, Professor of History, Beth Hurd, Professor of Religious Studies and Political Science, and Jessica Winegar, Professor of Anthropology—who were absent that night, but were co-authors along with her, Professor Fitz, and Professor Masur.

Professor Pearson said the six faculty members first organized during the mistreatment of the cheer team and to protest the appoint of Mike Polisky as Athletic Director. [Three resolutions](#) were passed by the Faculty Senate in 2021 to address the problems in the Athletic Department then. Professor Pearson said the needs assessment called for in one of the resolutions was never carried out by

President Morton Schapiro, and President Schill had acknowledged as much, promising to implement a needs assessment in his announcement that former attorney general Loretta Lynch would lead an investigation into the Athletics Department. Professor Pearson also noted the six faculty members teaching of athletes, their participation in sports growing up in high school and the collegiate level, and the fact that many of them enjoy attending Northwestern sporting events with their families.

Professor Pearson said the resolutions were crafted in cooperation with the Faculty Senate leadership, and are more necessary and relevant as more information emerges. That very day, she said, several coaches and players wore t-shirts with the phrase “Cats Against the World” on the front and number 51, ex-Coach Fitzgerald’s former uniform number, printed on the back. She said these actions took place while President Schill assured the faculty that he and other leaders are rooting out hazing at Northwestern and there is zero tolerance for such behavior. The t-shirts, she said, centered the aggrieved former coach and not the victims of the hazing.

Together, Professor Pearson said, the four resolutions being considered that evening cross different dimensions of the crisis Northwestern faces. The first two resolutions address the investigations President Schill had promised and has begun. Not only calling for the investigations, but that all findings be made public, along with its plans to implement the recommendations that come out of that investigation, and that follow-up evaluations be made at two-year intervals for at least the first four years following the initial investigation. The second resolution addresses the relationship between Athletics and academics at Northwestern. She said resolution two gives more details about what the assessment should include in its investigation. Professor Pearson noted that resolution number three calls for institutional reform of the oversight of athletics. Lastly, she said resolution four calls for the university to pause the fundraising and planning of the \$800 million new football stadium.

The past president then opened the floor for discussion on the first resolution:

RESOLUTION 1: Stop hazing and abuse within the Athletics Department

WHEREAS according to a report by an independent investigator hired by the university in the past year, at least 11 current or former students on the football team acknowledged that hazing has been ongoing within the football program, and

WHEREAS our students have been victims and also perpetrators of hazing, sexual assault, and racism, and such behaviors have in some cases gone unchecked by authorities entrusted with students' well-being, and

WHEREAS recent revelations about hazing on the football team and recent allegations of abuse on other teams reveal widespread violation of the university's policies, and

WHEREAS these incidents recall the Athletics Department's failure to adequately address the cheer team's complaints of racism and sexual harassment in 2021, which resulted in the resignation of Athletic Director Mike Polisky and a Faculty Senate resolution calling for a needs assessment for training and accountability measures within the Athletics Department, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the university ensure that such abuses cease by (a) completing in a timely manner the recently announced external review of the culture and leadership of the Athletics Department and its accountability mechanisms, while ensuring that outside investigators are free of all conflicts of interest with the university and its trustees; (b) making public the findings and recommendations of the investigation, while protecting students' anonymity (c) developing and publicly explaining a comprehensive plan for long-term oversight of the Athletics Department, drawing on the investigators' recommendations as well as on scientific research on best practices for protecting students by eradicating cultures of hazing, harassment, and abuse; and (d) incorporating an automatic mechanism for periodic follow-up evaluations by an outside arbiter in two-year increments for at least four years.

Senator Caryn Ward thanked the authors of the resolutions. She then made a motion to strike the phrase "in a timely manner" for a more specific date, "by June 2024." The motion was seconded and the floor was opened for discussion.

Senator Mark Witte made a motion to amend the amendment, adding in a status report every six months.

Senator Amaral said he thought it would make more sense to add in the end of April.

Senator Henry said he would vote against this change. He said given the crisis and level of controversy, the phrase “timely manner” makes it known the administration should get the report out as soon as possible without putting unnecessary constraints on the investigation.

Senator Mark McCareins asked the drafters of the resolution what, if any, of the requests are mooted as a result of the appointment of Loretta Lynch. If nothing is mooted, he asked if they hope for dual tracks of investigation. Professor Masur said the resolution was envisioned as complimentary to and in support of Attorney General Lynch’s appointment as outside investigator. She said the intention of all these resolutions was to have Faculty Senate input as the University confronts this crisis.

Professor Pearson said only (a) has been satisfied, but (b), (c), and (d) in the first resolution have not been.

Senator David Kalainov asked that Attorney General Lynch have a copy of everything the Senate passed. He also said the Senate should agree on a definition of hazing. Professor Masur said the University has a definition of hazing and a hazing policy in writing and the University referred to it as such in their initial outside investigation.

Senator Angela Lee said that since we do not know what is involved in terms of every facet of the investigation and how long it might take, she would favor an interim date or the original phrase.

Senator Karen Alter said she understands the push for more specifics, but she prefers “in a timely manner.” She said if legal parameters prevent sharing certain public details of the report, she would like to see a Faculty Assembly on this very topic with as many specifics as possible. She also encouraged the Senate to think about the resolutions as a package because they were designed that way.

Senator Henry said he is in support of all four of the resolutions. He said trust has been violated. The Senate needed to make its voice heard, especially in terms of oversight and transparency. He said whatever the Senate does, it should think about the broad implications of these resolutions. Senator Getzler made a motion to strike the phrase “Athletics Department’s” and replace it with the term “University’s.”

Senator Therese McGuire said she hoped the Senate would stick to the plan outlined by the past president and consider each resolution on its own merit.

The past president acknowledged the varying opinions on how to proceed. She said she believes they need to be considered on their own. She then consulted the parliamentarian, Roger Boye. He said there was an original amendment on the floor that has been moved and seconded.

Senator Amaral said the little changes in words will not modify people’s feelings on these resolutions. He said revisions can be made later. The past president said revisions cannot be made later. She said the first motion should be considered.

Senator Sara Solla proposed an alternative motion, “by June 2024, preferably by the end of April.” The motion was seconded and the floor was opened for discussion.

The Senate then approved the motion strike the phrase “in a timely manner” and replace it with the phrase “by June 2024, preferably by the end of April.”

The Senate voted on and approved the motion to strike “Athletics Department’s” and replace it with the term “University’s.”

The Senate then returned to original motion as amended.

Senator McCareins said the second “whereas” clause made a declaration he did not support, that the students have been victims and perpetrators, which was made as a statement of fact, and might be vulnerable to defamation laws.

Senator Solla suggested minor copyediting changes, including adding a comma and a semicolon.

President Regan Thomson voiced his support for Senator McCareins' statement. He then made a motion to delete the second whereas clause. The motion was seconded and the floor was opened for discussion.

Senator Henry said he supported that motion.

Senator Amaral made a motion to strike the phrase "our students have been victims and also perpetrators of hazing, sexual assault, and racism, and". The motion was seconded and the floor was reopened for discussion.

Senator Ward asked if the phrase could be attributed to the University's report and would be less defamatory.

Senator Rebecca Zorach said she likes preserving the mentioning of the students' well-being. She said the third whereas also alludes to portions of the second whereas that were cut.

Senator Holmgren voiced support for Senator Amaral's motion.

The Senate then voted on and approved a motion to strike the phrase "our students have been victims and also perpetrators of hazing, sexual assault, and racism, and".

Following that, the Senate returned to the original motion as amended. With no further discussion, a vote was held and the Senate approved the following amended resolution:

RESOLUTION 1: Stop hazing and abuse within the Athletics Department

WHEREAS according to a report by an independent investigator hired by the university in the past year, at least 11 current or former students on the football team acknowledged that hazing has been ongoing within the football program, and

WHEREAS such behaviors have in some cases gone unchecked by authorities entrusted with students' well-being, and

WHEREAS recent revelations about hazing on the football team and recent allegations of abuse on other teams reveal widespread violation of the university's policies, and

WHEREAS these incidents recall the University's failure to adequately address the cheer team's complaints of racism and sexual harassment in 2021, which resulted in the resignation of Athletic Director Mike Polisky and a Faculty Senate resolution calling for a needs assessment for training and accountability measures within the Athletics Department, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the university ensure that such abuses cease by (a) completing by June 2024, preferably by the end of April, the recently announced external review of the culture and leadership of the Athletics Department and its accountability mechanisms, while ensuring that outside investigators are free of all conflicts of interest with the university and its trustees; (b) making public the findings and recommendations of the investigation, while protecting students' anonymity; (c) developing and publicly explaining a comprehensive plan for long-term oversight of the Athletics Department, drawing on the investigators' recommendations as well as on scientific research on best practices for protecting students by eradicating cultures of hazing, harassment, and abuse; and (d) incorporating an automatic mechanism for periodic follow-up evaluations by an outside arbiter in two-year increments for at least four years.

The past president then opened the floor for discussion on the second resolution:

Resolution 2: Evaluate and improve the relationship between academics and athletics at Northwestern

WHEREAS Northwestern University is first and foremost an institution of higher education, and

WHEREAS student athletes at Northwestern attend primarily to obtain an education and a college degree, and

WHEREAS problems in the Athletics Department impact the reputation of the entire University and the experience of students, faculty, and staff, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the University undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the relationship between the academic mission of Northwestern and its athletics program. The findings and recommendations of this evaluation should be publicly released and implemented. Topics should include but not be limited to the quality and rigor of education that student athletes receive, the demographic impacts of sports programs on the composition of the student body; the financial impacts of athletics programs, including fundraising, on the academic mission; and opportunities for collaboration and learning between academics and athletics at Northwestern.

A substitute motion was made by Senator McGuire and Senator Jon Guryan:

Resolution 2: ~~Evaluate and improve~~ Strengthen the relationship between academics and athletics at Northwestern

WHEREAS Northwestern University is first and foremost an institution of higher education, and

~~WHEREAS student athletes at Northwestern attend primarily to obtain an education and a college degree, and~~

WHEREAS training for and competing in collegiate athletics is an integral part of the educational experience for student-athletes at Northwestern, and

WHEREAS student-athletes at Northwestern are deserving of the support of faculty and staff, and

WHEREAS problems in the Athletics Department impact (1) the educational experience of student-athletes, (2) the reputation and performance of the entire University, and (3) the experience of students, faculty, and staff, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the University undertake a comprehensive evaluation of ~~the relationship between~~ how the athletics program furthers the academic mission of the university. ~~Northwestern and its athletics programs.~~ The findings and recommendations of this evaluation should be publicly released and implemented. ~~Topics should include but not be limited to the quality and rigor of education that student athletes receive, the demographic impacts of sports programs, including fundraising, on the academic mission, and opportunities for collaboration and learning between academics and athletics at Northwestern.~~

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University empower a faculty-led working group (1) to devise new avenues of engagement between faculty and student-athletes and (2) to create opportunities for collaboration, mutual support, and learning between faculty and the coaches, staff and leadership of the Athletics Department. ~~academics and athletics at Northwestern.~~

Senator McGuire thanked her colleagues who drafted the resolutions. She said that while she and Senator Guryan offer substantial changes to resolution two, they believe their intentions were the same as the original authors, which was to support student athletes and ensure their educational experience was enhanced by their athletic experience. She said that, as currently written, she and Senator Guryan believe resolution two would undermine resolutions one and three, which they both strongly support.

Senator Guryan then detailed the reasoning behind the new version of resolution two (shown above). He said he and Senator McGuire began with the premise that athletics and academics were inextricably linked at Northwestern. And that while the original version of resolution two does not directly call for the elimination of athletics at Northwestern, they were concerned some students athletes would potentially interpret it that way. He said they tried to craft a substitute resolution that looked forward, having at least one resolution working towards healing. As with the original version of resolution two, he said they kept the evaluation of how athletics functions at Northwestern, and they also added a call for increased engagement between the student athletes and faculty, along with increased collaboration between faculty and the coaches and leadership of the Athletics Department.

Following the overview, Senator Guryan made a motion to approve the substitute motion. His motion was seconded. The floor was then opened for discussion.

Professor Fitz said she agreed with Senator McGuire and Senator Guryan regarding what sports in their best form can offer students. She said the original version of each resolution was intended to support student athletes and athletics, to allow them to thrive over the long term. However, she said she disagreed with the substitute amendment for two reasons. First, she said she would prefer to keep the specifics in the first “be it resolved” of resolution two. Second, she said the amendments assume athletics already furthers the academic mission before the assessment has taken place. Anecdotally, she said her students have shared varying experiences in athletics as it related to their studies.

Senator Getzler said he personally felt resolution two was much less urgent than resolution one. He also commented on the amendments, noting that in the second “be it resolved” he disagreed with the call for the University to appoint a faculty-led working group because he thought the Senate should be tasked with such an appointment. He also suggested changing the words “should be publicly released and implemented” to “will be publicly released and implemented.”

Senator Mark Johnson said he was concerned the proposed changes removed too many important items, particularly the specific topics like the financial impact of athletics programs on the academic mission. Thus, he said he was not in favor of the amendments.

Senator Amaral said he appreciated this resolution had encouraged the Senate to talk about athletics broadly. He said he sees two types of student athletes: the ones who are wealthy and participate in nonrevenue generating sports and the moneymaking sports in which athletes from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds are taken advantage of. He said he would like to see athletics be available to every student at Northwestern. He said athletics needs a comprehensive review because, in his view, athletics does not work in concert with the university’s academic mission. He said the amendment moves the university in the wrong direction. Therefore, he said he was in favor of the original version.

Senator Henry said he was also in favor of the original resolution. He said he believed there was a strong link between money and culture, particularly cultures of silence and reputational management that ensure money is kept flowing in the university. He said that athletics sometimes does not adhere to the chartered mission of the university. He added that he would like the faculty to be allowed to view and assess athletics' financial reports.

Professor Pearson clarified two items: the reason resolution two came forward now was due to President Schill's announcement that said, in addition to looking into hazing and racism allegations, the University would also be looking at the relationship between athletics and academics, opening the door for the faculty to offer what they want to know about those two entities and how they coincide. Also, in terms of demographics, Professor Pearson said that athletics recruitment favors wealthy, white students, which is important to examine given the elimination of affirmative action.

Senator Greg Beitel noted the complexity of the relationship between academics and athletics. He said he was afraid that opening the door on the whole of athletics would dilute the faculty's stance on the hazing incidents. He hoped this issue would be a separate item for the Senate to consider in September.

Senator McCareins focused on the original draft and asked the authors if they wanted to have an audit commissioned to examine the academic integrity of the education student athletes receive at Northwestern. Professor Masur responded by stating that a number of student athletes have publicly said, in various ways, their participation in athletics diminished their opportunities to receive a high quality education at Northwestern. Not because of anything a faculty member did, but rather they were encouraged to take a lighter load and were unable to pursue the kind of education they wanted given the demands on their time. She said it was not intended as an audit of teaching or classes.

Senator Solla said she was in favor of a thorough examination of the student athlete experience. However, she said the timeline of resolution two doesn't exactly align with the urgent matter at hand. She said she was in favor of a more concise, less specific resolution that still called for an exploration of the dynamics between athletics and academics, saving room for a faculty-led conversation down the road.

Senator Zorach called the question. The Senate voted on and approved the ending of discussion on the substitute motion.

The Senate then voted against the substitute motion submitted by Senator McGuire and Senator Guryan.

The Senate then returned to discussion of the original motion (to approve resolution two).

Senator June McKoy supported what Senator Solla said about the urgency of the hazing issue and the importance of focusing on that than the issue of athletics as a whole.

President Thomson said no matter the outcome of the vote, he promised he would revisit the topic of athletics at the first Senate meeting next year, and also potentially create an ad hoc committee focused solely on athletics at Northwestern.

Senator Henry called the question. The motion was seconded. The Senate then approved ending discussion on resolution two.

The Senate then approved the original version of resolution two (listed above).

The Senate moved on to resolution three:

RESOLUTION 3: Ensure future accountability of Athletics Department leadership and create a safe place for all students

WHEREAS power imbalances between staff and students and among students may create a culture of fear of reprisal and of loss of respect and opportunity for student athletes who come forward to discuss certain experiences,

WHEREAS the university's Committee on Athletics and Recreation – although it conducts anonymous surveys of current varsity athletes and in-person exit interviews with graduating athletes – has been unable to surmount the structural impediments to disclosure and has

failed to uncover incidents of hazing, sexual assault and racism facing students in the Athletics Department, and

WHEREAS existing policies for constituting the membership of CAR and defining its mandate have also not resulted in meaningful oversight of Athletics, and

WHEREAS the recent outside investigator's report found that football coaches and staff had "significant opportunities" to discover and report the hazing conduct, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the university establish an oversight mechanism through which high-level university authorities outside the Athletics Department have meaningful autonomy and authority to hold the leadership of the Athletics Department accountable for maintaining ethical standards and protecting the well-being of students. Faculty should play a central role in the oversight function; members of the oversight body should be appointed by the Faculty Senate or another office or body that is independent from the Athletics Department and the Office of the President, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the university consult with experts on protecting student athletes to create a permanent, secure mechanism through which students may voice their concerns, as well as specifically dedicated resources for student athletes who have suffered from hazing or other harms.

The floor was then opened for discussion.

President Thomson voiced his support for resolution three.

Senator Ward asked about faculty oversight and why the authors did not simply list the Faculty Senate as the only body able to appoint members to the oversight committee. Professor Masur said one of the goals was to maintain faculty oversight; they did not want to diminish the amount of faculty input. The reason resolution three, she said, lists an alternative option was because meaningful oversight of athletics, in her view, will require more than just faculty. She said they didn't want to presume the Faculty Senate would be the only stakeholder. Senator Ward said her concern about that was there is not a feeling of safety and confidentiality with the current oversight structure

and she worries they would assign more of the same type of administrators to the oversight committee. Professor Masur said she appreciated that point. She said the public nature of this crisis will lead to new structures and new level of accountability, and part of the resolution was meant to keep structural possibilities open.

Senator McGuire said she was in favor of resolution three. She said believes there does need to be more accountability within the Athletics Department. She said she wants the Senate to go on record condemning the hazing and calling for more accountability within the Athletics Department. She then made a motion to strike the last sentence in the first “be it resolved” paragraph: “Faculty should play a central role in the oversight function; members of the oversight body should be appointed by the Faculty Senate or another office or body that is independent from the Athletics Department and the Office of the President.”

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

Senator Getzler made a motion to amend the amendment, striking only the second half of the sentence: “Faculty should play a central role in the oversight function; members of the oversight body should be appointed by the Faculty Senate ~~or another office or body that is independent from the Athletics Department and the Office of the President.~~”

The motion was seconded and the floor was reopened for discussion

President Thomson said what the Senate was asking was a huge responsibility for faculty. He suggested appointments should be in consultation with the faculty.

Senator Getzler did not accept that friendly amendment.

Professor Masur said she preferred the original language because she wants effective and meaningful oversight. If it was only a Faculty Senate committee, she’s concerned it wouldn’t be as powerful or effective.

Senator Henry said he concurred with Professor Masur’s statement.

Senator Amaral proposed an alternative amendment. However, the parliamentarian ruled that there can only be an amendment to an amendment.

The Senate then voted and approved striking the following phrase from resolution three: “or another office or body that is independent from the Athletics Department and the Office of the President”.

Senator Solla made a motion to extend the meeting. The motion was seconded. The Senate then approved the motion to extend the meeting past the time listed on the agenda.

The Senate then returned to the main motion, to approve resolution three, as amended. With no further discussion, the senate voted on and approved the following amended resolution:

RESOLUTION 3: Ensure future accountability of Athletics Department leadership and create a safe place for all students

WHEREAS power imbalances between staff and students and among students may create a culture of fear of reprisal and of loss of respect and opportunity for student athletes who come forward to discuss certain experiences,

WHEREAS the university’s Committee on Athletics and Recreation – although it conducts anonymous surveys of current varsity athletes and in-person exit interviews with graduating athletes – has been unable to surmount the structural impediments to disclosure and has failed to uncover incidents of hazing, sexual assault and racism facing students in the Athletics Department, and

WHEREAS existing policies for constituting the membership of CAR and defining its mandate have also not resulted in meaningful oversight of Athletics, and

WHEREAS the recent outside investigator’s report found that football coaches and staff had “significant opportunities” to discover and report the hazing conduct, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the university establish an oversight mechanism through which high-level university authorities outside the Athletics Department have meaningful autonomy and authority to hold the leadership of the Athletics Department accountable for maintaining ethical standards and protecting the well-being of students. Faculty should play a central role in the oversight function; members of the oversight body should be appointed by the Faculty Senate, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the university consult with experts on protecting student athletes to create a permanent, secure mechanism through which students may voice their concerns, as well as specifically dedicated resources for student athletes who have suffered from hazing or other harms.

The Senate then considered resolution four:

RESOLUTION 4: Temporarily pause planning and marketing of the new Ryan Field

WHEREAS in recent years the university has made major and high-profile investments in athletics, particularly in the football program, while harassment and abuse in the football program went unchecked, and

WHEREAS the university has announced plans to construct a new \$800 million Ryan Field, and envisions this project as a “once-in-a-century” investment in the campus and community, and

WHEREAS such a defining, long-term investment must be developed and considered with care and intention, and

WHEREAS the university must demonstrate and prioritize an unwavering commitment to its academic mission, students’ welfare, and Athletics Department reform, free of the distraction of a major construction project, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees and Northwestern leadership pause the planning and marketing of the new Ryan Field until the university demonstrates that it has taken the steps described in the three preceding resolutions.

Senator Amaral then made a motion amend resolution four as follows:

RESOLUTION 4: ~~Temporarily pause planning and marketing of the~~ Abandon plans to build a new Ryan Field

WHEREAS in recent years the university has made major and high-profile investments in athletics, particularly in the football program, while harassment and abuse in the football program went unchecked, and

WHEREAS the university has announced plans to construct a new \$800 million Ryan Field, and envisions this project as a “once-in-a-century” investment in the campus and community, and

WHEREAS such a defining, long-term investment must be developed and considered with care and intention, as over-investment in Athletics has created overwhelming amounts of debt at other schools – Athletics at Rutgers University, a B10 member, that has accumulated \$250 million dollars in debt that have required loans from the University– and

WHEREAS the university must demonstrate and prioritize an unwavering commitment to its academic mission, students’ welfare, and Athletics Department reform, free of the distraction of a major construction project, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees and Northwestern leadership abandon plans to build a ~~pause the planning and marketing of the new Ryan Field until the university demonstrates that it has taken the steps described in the three preceding resolutions.~~

The motion was seconded.

Senator Amaral said he liked all the resolutions, but he didn’t think resolution four went far enough. He said overspending on athletics can have catastrophic financial outcomes. He also pointed out the budget crisis at Northwestern came in 2019 immediately following the building of a \$250 million-plus athletic facility.

Senator Zorach spoke against the amendment. She said she agreed in substance with what Senator Amaral said, but she thought the pause was more appropriate at the time and these changes might be detrimental to the other resolutions.

Professor Fitz echoed Senator Zorach's comments. She said favored hearing the results of the investigation first before deciding on what officially to comment on regarding the new Ryan Field.

Senator Solla said she supported Senator Amaral's sentiment. However, she thought it was the wrong strategy to ask for the abandonment of the new Ryan Field at this point in time. She said the pause gives an opening to continue the discussion.

Senator Thrastos Pappas made a motion to amend the substitute motion by striking the word "Abandon" and replacing it with "Reconsider," both at the beginning of the resolution and in the "be it resolved" paragraph. The motion was seconded and the floor was opened for discussion.

Senator Cat Fabian made a motion to amend the amendment by adding the words "Pause and" to both the beginning of the resolution and in the "be it resolved" paragraph. A point of order was made and the parliamentarian made the same ruling as before i.e. no amendments to amendments to amendments.

Senator Amaral said he thought there were two strategies for negotiation: asking for what you want and negotiating against yourself. He said he doesn't want the stadium to be built so that is what he is asking. He said he would vote yes for the other version if his amendment got rejected.

Senator Solla said she would like to delete the reference to Rutgers. The past president reminded Senator Solla that they were only voting on the amendment to the amendment and would return to the original proposed amendments once a vote was taken.

The Senate then voted and approved the motion to amend the substitute motion by striking the word "Abandon" and replacing it with "Reconsider," both at the beginning of the resolution and in the "be it resolved" paragraph.

Following that vote, a quorum was lost. Therefore, having lost a quorum, the Senate could not vote on resolution four as amended. The Senate adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jared Spitz
Secretary to the Faculty Senate