

June 2, 2014 Assembly Meeting Highlights

Announcements concerning Special Senate Committees on Salary and Benefits and Climate Change: The Salary and Benefits Special Senate Committee, led by Chair Michael Schmitt, is looking into various aspects of salaries and benefits for the faculty and lecturers including possible inequities related to gender and race, policies concerning setting the scale of raises and benefits, and the importance of salaries in relation to other priorities at the university. The findings and data will be compared school by school, and department by department and compared to peer institutions. The plan is to gather data, make queries, and draw conclusions by this coming Fall or Winter, and then in the Spring audit the work and revise as necessary to ensure it is complete, thorough, and correct. A final report is expected in September 2016.

The Sustainability Council, under the leadership of Rob Whittier, Director of Sustainability, is working to create a long term vision for Northwestern and also to establish short term goals that would support the vision. The council, in partnership with the Special Senate Committee on Climate Change, is forming a set of working groups made up of faculty, staff, and students, to tackle specific areas such as greenhouse gas emission and energy, green building, infrastructure, transportation, research and curriculum. The group is planning to reach out to the faculty body to solicit additional participants.

The NU Will Campaign: As of March 2014, the University has raised \$1.52 billion of the \$3.75 billion goal, and will need to raise \$8.8 million dollars a week for the next five years in order to reach the campaign target. Raising funds on this large of a scale is a daunting, the president said, but everyone is working together and making significant contributions towards reaching the goal, including faculty, students, and staff.

Sports at NU -- unionization, safety and academic issues: Questions were raised by Professor John Elson about whether Northwestern University is adequately protecting the educational interest, safety, and health of football players. The president and Professor Ken Seeskin of CAR responded that the university is aware of the lasting impacts of athletic injuries in football and other sports and is taking it seriously. Athletes are closely monitored, and even prohibited from practicing more than 20 hours a week. (The Chair objected that the figure excluded travel time, game time, and medical treatment or therapy.) The president added that NU has a group of medical doctors who have no reporting relations with Athletics and Recreation, and so are able to make unbiased decisions about athlete well-being.

Concerns were raised about whether NU recognizes that there is an inherent or structural conflict between the interest of the football players in education, safety, and health, and the interest of coaches and the university which derives millions of dollars from sports. The president replied that sports do not generate meaningful revenues, accounting for less than 3% of the overall NU budget. Academics do not subsidize sports and sports do not subsidize academics.

NU's response to Title IX requirements: At the recommendation of faculty, Lindsay Chase-Lansdale reported, leaders in Title IX worked for over a year to develop two new policies that were sent to faculty last September for comment and then implemented in January 2014. One policy addresses sexual misconduct, stalking, dating, and domestic violence, applicable to everyone at the university, and the other addresses consensual, romantic, and sexual relationships between faculty, staff, and students. Some of the changes include an expanded definition of consent, prohibiting different types of sexual misconduct, and prohibiting any relations between faculty and undergraduate students or coaches and students, a policy which NU is one of the first universities to implement. Formal guidelines about how sanctions should be administered are currently being developed. NU has launched a Title IX website which explains policies and procedures.

NU's investment in coal and other extractive industries that negatively impact the environment, the Stanford example: Medill School of Journalism student, Scott Brown, talked about undergraduate student involvement in Northwestern's DivestNU campaign and encouraged everyone to support the initiative which asks NU to withdraw investments in coal and relocate them to renewable energy projects. The trustee investment committee led by William H. McLean has been meeting with undergraduate students for a number of years and as a result, a review of the investment portfolio was done. Recommendations will be made to the Board members who are responsible for all of the investment decisions.

Status of the diversity requirement: Susan Lee reported that the Educational Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate will be following up with the schools to find out the status of course development for the new curricular requirement for social inequalities and diversities. Members of the committee will be looking to make sure that courses are not just repackaged and that they are embracing the proper learning outcomes as well as providing specialized training for graduate students to take on difficult dialogues.

University Response to Sand Creek Massacre: Gary Fine read a statement calling upon the president to lead a year of reflection and remorse to commemorate the Sand Creek Massacre. The president replied that a committee was formed to look into the historical record of the Sand Creek Massacre, with the membership consisting of people from Native American communities, historians, and experts in following the money. A report of the findings was released and can be found at: <http://www.northwestern.edu/newscenter/stories/2014/05/john-evans-study-committee-issues-report.html>. The University has also established a representative committee to consider the degree to which NU is morally complicit, and make recommendations about how it should respond.

First generation and low income students at Northwestern: Monica Prasad made a brief presentation about the need to expand educational opportunity at NU to students from low income families. She pointed out that there is not a lot of socioeconomic diversity at Northwestern University, with 15% (up from 8.7% in 2008) of students coming from the bottom half of the distribution and 85% from the top half. Approximately 10% of the students are first generation students whose parents did not go to college. When compared to other universities, NU falls somewhere in the middle of the pack. The president answered that the university continues to make progress in this area but more needs to be done. President Schapiro has made this issue a priority and is committed to doing whatever it takes to move things forward.

Ongoing campus building projects: Northwestern University continues to make progress on current building projects, including the Kresge renovation, which will cost \$80.2 million. The north parking lot is now open and provides approximately 500 spaces. NU is in the process of raising funds for the new medical research building, which will cost a little over \$400 million to complete. The new sports and football practice facility is also moving forward at a cost of approximately \$250 million

The end of NU's online learning partnerships: Dan Linzer reported that the university launched Semester Online about nine months ago as a pilot and the results were mixed. Academically, results were all at or above on the ground courses in similar areas. What didn't work, from the company's perspective, was the financial model, which they wanted to change beyond the pilot year but would not work for NU. Provost Linzer reported that the partnership with Coursera will continue. Coursera's digital platform for massive open online courses (MOOC), allows Northwestern courses to be offered to anyone, anywhere, at no cost. Faculty will thereby have opportunities to experiment with new teaching tools and Northwestern University to have an impact that extends beyond the campus.