

Northwestern University
Minutes of the Faculty Assembly
Lutkin Hall and Zoom
October 15, 2025

The first meeting of the Northwestern University Faculty Assembly of the 2025–2026 academic year was held on October 15, 2025, in Lutkin Hall in Evanston and over Zoom. A number of faculty members participated remotely. Interim University President Henry Bienen called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. A quorum (10% of full-time regular faculty members) was present.

1. State of the University Address from University President Henry Bienen

President Bienen gave a brief opening address on the state of the university. After highlighting some good news—the Nobel Prize in Economics won by Professor Joel Mokyr and an additional gift for the Buffett Institute—President Bienen updated the faculty on the lost research funding, stating that the administration has yet to reach a deal with the federal government, and, consequently, the Board of Trustees has agreed to fund research through the calendar year. President Bienen assured faculty he would not sign any deal that would threaten the autonomy of the university to teach and research what it wants and hire who it wants. He did say he wants to make a deal to get the research funding back and will continue to try and negotiate with the federal government.

The floor was then opened for pre-submitted questions and questions from the floor. Discussion centered on the aforementioned research funding losses and protecting academic freedom at Northwestern.

2. Faculty Assembly Bylaws Resolution

Faculty Senate President-Elect Rebecca Zorach presented the following resolution:

Whereas, the Northwestern University Statutes articulate membership in the Faculty Assembly as,

“The membership of the University Faculty Assembly consists of all regular full-time faculty members in tenure and non-tenure track positions. This includes faculty who hold the titles of Professor, Associate Professor, or Assistant Professor (each including Clinical, of Instruction, of Practice, in Residence), who are members of the Librarian Faculty, or Research Faculty, as well as administrators with a faculty appointment within the University in one of the titles or memberships listed above.” and

Whereas, Article II of the Northwestern University Faculty Assembly Bylaws articulate membership as,

“The membership of the Faculty Assembly consists of all full-time regular faculty members in both tenure track and non-tenure track positions. This includes clinical and lecturer faculty who hold the rank of Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Clinical Professor, Clinical Associate Professor, Clinical Assistant Professor, Professor of Instruction, Distinguished Senior Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, or Lecturer, as well as administrators with a faculty appointment within the University in one of the ranks listed above.” and

Whereas, members of the Librarian Faculty or Research Faculty are explicitly included in the Assembly by the University Statutes, they are not listed in the Assembly Bylaws, therefore

Be it RESOLVED that Article II of the Northwestern University Faculty Assembly Bylaws be revised to read as follows:

“The membership of the University Faculty Assembly consists of all regular full-time faculty members in tenure and non-tenure track positions. This includes faculty who hold the titles of Professor, Associate Professor, or Assistant Professor (each including Clinical, of Instruction, of Practice, in Residence), who are members of the Librarian Faculty, or Research Faculty, as well as administrators with a faculty appointment within the University in one of the titles or memberships listed above. Other titles or memberships deemed to represent regular full-time faculty status at the University will also be included in the definition of the membership of the Faculty Assembly.”

A motion was made to approve the resolution. That motion was seconded, and the floor was opened for discussion.

There was one clarifying question during discussion.

The motion to approve the resolution passed with a vote of 552 to 6 (with 12 abstentions).

3. “Compact” Resistance Resolution

Professor Laura Beth Nielsen presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Trump administration, on October 1, 2025, presented ten conditions on federal funding to nine of our peer universities, conditions that among other things: threaten interference in admission decisions; entail the surveillance of community members’ personal views; demand changes in universities’ governance structures and the closure of units deemed ideologically suspect; require that institutions commit to the use of force against campus protest and to the enforcement of specific definitions of gender; create unacceptable constraints on students’ programs of study; limit international student enrollments; and essentially commit to an annual performance of loyalty in order to receive federal funding,

BE IT RESOLVED that this Faculty Assembly opposes any capitulation on the part of Northwestern University to these or similar demands that undermine constitutional rights, democratic principles, faculty governance, institutional autonomy, and academic freedom.

A motion was made to approve the resolution. That motion was seconded, and the floor was opened for discussion.

With no discussion from the floor, the motion was voted on and passed with a vote of 595 to 4 (with 8 abstentions)

4. Old Business: Follow-Up on Resolution Passed at Spring 2025 Faculty Assembly from Northwestern’s American Associated University Professors Chapter

Professor Laura Stokes and her AAUP colleagues pointed to the response, or lack thereof, by the administration and Board of Trustees to the resolution passed at the April 21, 2025, meeting

of the Faculty Assembly. They emphasized that faculty governance is not perfunctory, but rather vital to the institution, and that academic freedom must be protected at all costs.

5. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.