

# Northwestern University

Minutes of the University Faculty Assembly Meeting of June 2, 2015

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The University Faculty Assembly held its second and final meeting of the 2014-15 academic year on Tuesday, June 2, 2015 in Pancoe Auditorium on the Evanston Campus, with a videoconferencing connection to Wieboldt Hall 421 on the Chicago Campus. The meeting was called to order at 4:10 PM by NU President and Assembly Chair Morton Schapiro. Approximately 100 Faculty and Administrators were in attendance.

## 1. Welcome by NU President and Assembly Chair Morton Schapiro and Faculty Senate

**President Stephen Eisenman:** Assembly Chair and NU President Morton Schapiro and Faculty Senate President Stephen Eisenman each welcomed everyone and made separate opening remarks. President Schapiro announced that given there has never been a decision made on a policy about Faculty Assembly and Faculty Senate meetings being closed to media or not, Chronicle of Higher Education Journalist Robin Wilson was in attendance.

- 2. Divestment Updates:** Faculty Senate President Stephen Eisenman gave a brief introduction and update on Divestment. He reported that Northwestern students have strong ties to support divestment in coal and also wider fuel investment, so they have been meeting with the Trustees Investment Committee and will continue to do so on a regular basis. Students have asked for and received Faculty support. President Eisenman announced that on April 1, 2015 the Faculty Senate, the Faculty representative body, adopted the Associated Student Government (ASG) “Proposal for an Advisory Committee on Socially Responsible Investing” that can be found at <http://www.northwestern.edu/Faculty-senate/documents/2014-2015/Proposal-Advisory-Comm-Socially-Responsible-Investing-Apr-15.pdf>.

President Morton Schapiro expressed his strong support for divestment. He openly shared his viewpoint with the Trustees Investment Committee, but explained that ultimately members of this Committee have legal responsibility and authority and are the fiduciary stewards of the University. President Schapiro emphasized that Committee members take the responsibility seriously, which can be seen by the incredible job they have done maximizing return and bringing NU its financial success.

Vice President and Chief Investment Officer William McLean explained that the investment Committee looks at social issues and divestment issues, continues to dialogue with students on coal divestment, and is considering the formation of an advisory Committee. He reported that currently Northwestern has a lot invested in venture and biotechnology and, today, ten million dollars are being invested in coal companies out of the ten billion dollars in total, which means the University has upwards of a hundred million dollars invested in things that are deemed as looking towards the future, solving problems. The investment Committee will continue to push for socially responsible investment decisions that have positive impacts and that will also strengthen the University’s financial standing. President Schapiro will continue to voice his support for divestment to the investment Committee.

- 3. Status update on the "Provost Initiative on Support for Faculty Excellence":** Associate Provost Lindsay Chase-Lansdale reported that over a month ago a one page survey was sent out to Faculty asking for feedback on various items such as Northwestern as a whole and its future direction, where Faculty are getting intellectual stimulation and how, and how NU can continue and evolve its excellent multidisciplinary innovative initiatives. A number of the survey questions are open ended and she stressed that the Administration is carefully reading each response and taking them seriously. Associate Provost Chase-Lansdale emphasized that the survey is highly confidential and reported that so far only 34% of the 75% response rate goal has been met. Two more reminders will go out to those who have not yet responded, but she asked Faculty to encourage colleagues to complete the survey as soon as possible in the hope of finishing by the end of this academic year so that by Fall Faculty will have a distillation of the findings.

Associate Provost Lindsay Chase-Lansdale announced the administration's plan to undertake a Faculty salary study that will tackle how compensation at Northwestern maps on to people's accomplishments, seniority, plan, and so forth. A peer institution analysis will also be done to see how NU compares. The Administration has obtained the leadership of Larry Hedges, Chair of Statistics, Paola Sapienza, Kellogg Finance, and Hongmei Jiang, Statistics, to guide the process. The results of the study will provide a variety of tools useful for everyone in the University including chairs, deans, and leadership.

In addition to the Faculty salary study, Associate Provost Chase-Lansdale reported, the Administration is investigating other ways to foster Faculty success, and moving forward would like to have more information in order to provide added resources for strategic and innovative ideas so that Faculty can do their best work. Executive Vice President Nim Chinniah, has already begun a number of initiatives to reduce administrative burden to free up Faculty time. Another theme of the administration's work is to focus on the lifecycle of Faculty from the time they begin to the time of retirement or joining the Emeriti Faculty and are particularly interested in understanding transitions across the life course of Faculty development and opportunities, not only to be promoted as a professor of instruction or for tenure, but also for important turning points for leadership opportunities. Additionally, the Administration will continue to place a strong emphasis on diversity and inclusion and is also very interested in work, family, and community intersections.

Faculty expressed concerns about the true confidentiality of the survey results and how the Administration will respond and take action once the findings are in. Associate Provost Chase-Lansdale explained that survey responses are separated from any names and assigned a number, and when a response is specific to a department or person it is carefully sequestered and not reported. There is a process in place once all of the results are in that includes short-term deadlines, short-term action goals, and long-term goals, and will be a three to five year initiative with the exception of the Faculty salary study which may take longer. The Administration will hold a variety of different forums next year in the form of a town hall meeting and different types of communication, both small and large groups, on findings.

**4. Report on meeting/retreat with the Board of Trustees: mechanisms for improving the NU undergraduate experiences:** Provost Daniel Linzer reported on the March Board Retreat attended by Trustees, Leaders of the University, Deans, and Vice Presidents. The Retreat, which focused on big questions that would propel Northwestern University forward to even greater levels of excellence, featured panels of University leaders mixed together to discuss four major areas. The first panel discussed Global Northwestern, which included a dialogue about the recent Bertie Buffett gift and the transformation of the Buffett Center into the Buffett Institute as well as a moment of reflection on the impact of the previous retreat, the current state of the Doha campus, and next steps.

The second panel focused on NU's research enterprise and, in part, reported on progress being made in the major search in creative areas that were identified in the University wide strategic planning process including what investments have been made, how those areas are developing, where there are areas that need attention, and where there are emerging opportunities since that plan was put in place. There was a great deal of discussion surrounding data science and how NU is accessing, storing, developing algorithms, interpreting, leading to research outcomes and policies with using large data in all the schools. The panel also talked about what Northwestern should be doing and thinking about to position itself to achieve the highest level possible for the student and Faculty using big data research.

The third panel focused on the undergraduate experience, which ranged across all aspects of undergraduate life from student affairs to academics and what students are experiencing from the time they think about applying to NU through the time they graduate. One of the outcomes of the discussion was that in March NU established a task force that Indira Raman is chairing that is asking questions about the undergraduate academic experience only. The vice president of the Associate Student Government (ASG) will liaise between the task force and the student body.

The fourth panel, led by Executive Vice President Nim Chinniah, focused on the resources available to meet NU's ambitious goals through the capital campaign and through the growth in the endowment, balancing the opportunities and needs of the present with the future so the University doesn't over benefit the present to the disadvantage of the future nor advantage the future to the disadvantage of the present.

**5. Undergraduate Education Reform: channeling all applications into one pool so students apply to NU rather than to the separate schools:** Provost Daniel Linzer explained that logistically it would be very difficult to channel all applications into one pool so students apply to NU rather than to the separate schools and it would create many challenges for the University and the student. With manageable segments of education, it is clear what staffing is needed to offer a Fall quarter curriculum and students have a clear picture of what course they need to take. Going to a single point of entry will create, for example, an imbalance in the Faculty available to teach in some areas based on student demand. President Schapiro added that even though students apply and are accepted to a particular school, they are free to change tracks or to take courses that are of interest to them that are not necessarily a part of their required academic work.

- 6. New Business: Status of two separate formal complaints against the Faculty Senate President, no longer on the Assembly agenda:** Philosophy Professor Baron Reed asked for an update on two separate formal complaints that have been raised against the Faculty Senate President, one arising from President Stephen Eisenman's discussion on an ongoing Title IX investigation on the floor of the Faculty Senate and the other from his presentation of an antibodies report to the Administration without Faculty Senate approval. Faculty Senate Vice President Edward Hughes explained that the Senate Executive Committee decided to remove both items from the Assembly agenda and formally discuss these issues at the June 3rd Senate meeting. All Faculty are welcome to attend this Senate meeting.

Title IX: Senate President Stephen Eisenman addressed a Title IX complaint that was recently lodged against him by students unknown because of his recent discussing, in general terms without any names used, a matter that was a grave threat to academic freedom on the campus. He thought that addressing the matter to a closed body, the Faculty Senate, was an appropriate and necessary thing to do in fulfilling a major responsibilities as Senate President. After an external investigation ensued, the charges were withdrawn and the case against President Eisenman was dropped, and the University has decided not to follow up in any way. President Eisenman does not blame the students who brought the charges against him, but holds the University Administration responsible, the Title IX office, and the Office of the Provost for bringing in outside investigators instead of first investigating internally to determine if appropriate to go outside.

In response, President Schapiro explained that when an allegation is brought forward it is addressed and investigated in a fair way internally, but when there are charges against the Administration and Administrators also, as was the case here, it is impossible to keep it internal when people are conflicted. He stressed that there is no desire to go outside the University unless it is very clear that it is the only way to have a credible investigation, which is what happened in this case. Northwestern University does not operate outside of state and federal law so there are many restrictions on how things are handled, which are not meant to infringe on freedom of speech of Faculty but rather to ensure full compliance with the law.

- 7. Adjournment:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Snyder  
Faculty Senate Administrative Coordinator