

Northwestern University
Minutes of the Faculty Assembly
Guild Lounge- Evanston, Wieboldt Hall 421 - Chicago
November 1, 2018

The first meeting of the Northwestern University Faculty Assembly of the 2018–2019 academic year was held on November 1, 2018, at Guild Lounge in Evanston with videoconferencing to the Chicago campus in Wieboldt Hall 421. A number of faculty members participated remotely. University President Morton Schapiro and Faculty Senate President Baron Reed called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. A quorum (10% of full-time regular faculty members) was not present.

A brief report was given by Faculty Senate President Reed. This was followed by a panel discussion on the faculty’s role in student well-being moderated by Faculty Senate President-Elect Lois Hedman. Members of the panel included Jonathan Holloway, Provost; Todd Adams, Dean of Students; John Dunkle, Executive Director of CAPS; Mona Dugo, Senior Associate Dean of Students; Gayle Woloschak, Associate Dean for Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Affairs. President Schapiro then gave a brief update on the university and spent the remaining time answering submitted questions and questions from the audience.

The meeting adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

Jared Spitz
Secretary of the Faculty Senate

Northwestern University

Faculty Assembly

Summary of Questions and Answers

November 1, 2018

1. Welcome and Introductions: Faculty Senate President Baron Reed welcomed attendees and provided an overview of the meeting. The traditional question and answer format was preceded by a panel discussion on the faculty role in student well-being moderated by President-Elect Lois Hedman. Members of the panel included Jonathan Holloway, Provost; Todd Adams, Dean of Students; John Dunkle, Executive Director of CAPS; Mona Dugo, Senior Associate Dean of Students; Gayle Woloschak, Associate Dean for Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Affairs. Below is a summary of the proceedings that has been edited for clarity.

2. Panel Discussion:

- President-Elect Hedman began the discussion by asking Executive Director Dunkle the following: How have the challenges facing our current students changed in the past few years? What are some of the ways the University has been adapting to those challenges? And what mental health resources are available for students in both Evanston and Chicago?
- Executive Director Dunkle: I've been at Northwestern for 24 years and have been Executive Director of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) for 14 years. To answer this question, I would go back even further than a few years—I came here in 1995—and during that time 939 students accessed our services. This past academic year over 3,100 students reached out for services from CAPS. This high demand has led us to three main areas of service CAPS provides: clinical (largest area and most in demand), outreach and educational programs (QPR training, sleep programming, etc.), and a training program for graduate and post-doctoral students.

One of the biggest challenges CAPS has observed over the past few years is that stress and anxiety are on the rise among students. Depression used to be the number one concern at counseling centers, and about seven years ago that switched to stress and anxiety, particularly social anxiety. Part of this is driven by the internet and connectivity's shifting landscape. Another challenge, along these same lines, is the increase of media exposure to violence around the world, which can lead to students feeling unsafe.

One very troubling national trend is the rise in suicidal ideation. Recently, university counseling centers came together to find a way to collect data in a more centralized way. This had never been done before. Now, when we compare data with other schools, we are confident the benchmarking we do is comparable. One of the things we have noticed in recent years is that the number of students who have come in and say they have seriously considered

attempting suicide has gone up every year the last six years. Of the around 167,000 students for whom we have data nationally, nearly 36% reported suicidal ideation. This is a frightening statistic because these are the most at-risk students. Northwestern students, however, are lower than that average.

Other challenges that we and many other schools face are perfectionism, alcohol and drug use, and poor sleep. The last two years we have distributed sleep kits to all incoming undergraduates because sleep is a major issue. Relationships, broadly defined, are also an issue we attend to. Another recent phenomenon across the country is the rise in rapid access appointment requests. Because we take all requests very seriously, our routine access requests are bottlenecked when an individual requests rapid access.

Northwestern has done a lot to address these concerns. We believe in community support networks. We work closely with the Dean of Students Office. We work closely with CAPS liaisons in every school. We do a lot of orientations where we try to reach as many people as we can. If the focus is only on CAPS, we will not succeed. This is a collaborative support effort in every sense of those words.

- President Elect Hedman asked Senior Associate Dean Mona Dugo how faculty can play a constructive role in connecting students to CAPS when they are suffering through a crisis. Additionally, she asked what role the Dean's Office should play in such a situation.
 - Associate Dean Dugo: First, I would like to talk about the support networks that are in place independent of CAPS, and then I would like to talk about how students can access those networks. One rumor I would like to dispel is that access to CAPS is limited. That is not true—students can absolutely access CAPS. It might take a few days for an appointment, but if a student is ever in crisis in front of you, please walk them over to CAPS. They have crisis counselors on hand to deal with these types of situations.

As far as the Dean's office goes, years ago, when I started working here, I created what we call Student Assistance and Support Services. We are essentially a central point of contact where students can access all of the resources at Northwestern. We are an office of four people who worked with 769 students last year, and about 550 of those students presented with an emotional or mental health concern. Over 100 presented with suicidal ideation. Right now, we are functioning as a crisis unit given the high volume of students seeking our support with serious mental health concerns. We also process all of the medical leaves and reinstatements, both undergraduate and TGS, at Northwestern.

In many ways, we are what I call tactical interventionists. Say a student has been off the radar for three weeks—not attending any classes, not responding to communication attempts. What we would do then is reach out and find the student by sending a resident director to their door, call their emergency contact,

or call the police if they are off campus and not responding to us. Once we reach the student and they tell us what is going on, we can help sort out what the options are for a student in whatever situation they may be in. In addition to mental health crises, the Dean of Students Office also works with students who have physical health crises. Another resource worth highlighting is our threat assessment team. If faculty have a student they feel is a threat to others, they should reach out to the Behavioral Consultation Team.

What we ask of faculty is if you are seeing signs of distress in a student, please start a conversation with that student by simply stating some changes you have noticed in the student's behavior. While this is undeniably difficult, it is much better for these conversations to start locally. Once that conversation has begun, then the faculty should direct the student to the proper resources based upon the student's response. Additionally, our office is happy to consult if a faculty member would like more assistance.

- President-Elect Hedman noted that graduate students face many challenges at Northwestern. In addition to the same concerns that undergraduates have, graduate students may also have to navigate difficult relationships with advisers while facing the difficult prospect of a shrinking academic job market. She then asked Associate Dean for Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Affairs Gayle Woloschak how TGS works with faculty to help handle these difficult situations.
 - Associate Dean Woloschak: There are a couple of things I would like to say up front. One is that graduate students are in a very vulnerable situation. They are vulnerable because they are dependent upon their mentors for many things, such as success broadly defined, how long it takes to finish, letting them know whether or not they did a good job, and how to handle the especially difficult task of telling them why they did a bad job. This means the responsibility we have to help graduate students is great. Postdocs are also in a similar situation, and most fall under the purview of The Graduate School.

Dean Woodruff listed three priorities for this year when working with graduate students: advocate, cultivate, and connect. I am going to focus on advocating here because it seems the most relevant to the conversation we are having today. Two of our most frequent issues are graduate students who are either having academic problems or problems with their mentors. First, we always encourage students to contact us and the mentor to hopefully work through some type of mediation. I work very hard to ensure TGS remains an advocate for graduate students.

Moving to our next steps, one issue we have noticed is that, when a graduate student is having a more serious problem, we are being notified way too late. Identifying concerns earlier could help keep the students and the faculty members from dealing with more stressful and complicated problems down the road. One reason for this is that students, and faculty sometimes, often endure difficult situations for far longer than they probably should. We are trying to

develop our own approach to try to catch stuff like this sooner, but we ask faculty, if you see something like this happening, please let us know. We are also trying to develop programs to help with mentoring. Anyone interested in programming of this kind should absolutely contact TGS.

- President-Elect Hedman said that the makeup of the student body has grown increasingly diverse in a variety of ways. She then asked Dean of Student Affairs Todd Adams how the university ensures everyone has the chance to thrive at Northwestern.
 - Dean Adams: Our office works incredibly hard to ensure there is equity of opportunity, that there are environments here that ensure there are multiple ways for students to engage with Northwestern, with their peers, and with faculty. I think there are three ways we are helping students be more connected: awareness and education, early intervention, and structural supports that continue to evolve as the makeup of our student body continues to evolve.

For awareness and education, I think there is an understanding that we need to know more about the students that we have. While we have diversified the student body, we need to better understand the student experience. In the last few years, there have been a number of assessments done to get data, particularly qualitative data, to better understand what students are finding at Northwestern, and how their identities inform their experience. Recently, we have learned much about the needs our first-generation and low-income students have, but we still have a lot to learn about how students are navigating help-seeking behaviors, their knowledge of what resources are available, and how we can play a role in connecting them earlier.

The Black Student Experience Survey and subsequent task force are other resources we are relying on heavily to guide us in our efforts to assist students. Knowing what is going on in the world and that students are engaged with, and react to, is important. We do quite a bit of training with faculty along these lines. Many of you are aware of our social justice education program. We train academic departments, academic advisers, all of our RAs, and all of our peer advisers on diversity, equity, and inclusion. We also have a True Northwestern dialogue series that every incoming undergraduate student, including transfers, participates in during Wildcat Welcome. These are all things that have emerged in the last three to four years, and the touchpoints that we are getting are starting to present.

Transitioning to early intervention, what I mean by that phrase is that we have a number of ways faculty are in touch with our office. Anyone can reach out during business hours, and we even have an on-call system for instances when contact needs to be made after business hours. This system is available for all of our students in residence, but it is also available for faculty as well. This allows us to access information earlier and utilize the unique access we have across the campus. We also have NUHelp. This is a website and also an app. There are a

variety of important resources located in one place, and I encourage everyone to use NUHelp.

Another noteworthy area of support is Student Enrichment Services (SES). This division within Student Affairs was created specifically to support first-generation and low-income students at Northwestern. This is a place where those students can find access to support, community with other students, and also a fund (Student Emergency and Essential Needs Fund) that is available for essential needs, whether it is classroom-related or somehow tied to their experience at Northwestern.

- President-Elect Hedman said that Northwestern students are known for their intensity both in and out of the classroom. The slogan “AND is in our DNA” seems to capture this culture of creativity and determination. At the same time, the Daily Northwestern regularly runs pieces about undergraduates who are concerned about the prospect of trying to live up to this standard. She then asked how faculty can help students find the best definition of success.
- Provost Holloway: In my tour around campus—both in Evanston and Streeterville—last year, I often talked about the faculty’s need to embrace rigor. We must be excellent in everything we are doing. That goes for the administration as well. And as the undergraduate population becomes more diverse in ways that other panelists have outlined, teaching, even administrating a university, is more complicated than ever. In doing so, we need to maintain our commitment to rigor, but we also need to be empathetic. This does not mean people without a background in social work, for example, are now expected to be social counselors. But we are all human actors that deal with complex lives, and it is a call simply for the faculty to empathize with students who are likely coming from very different backgrounds, if only for the fact that, judging from age, the faculty are analog and the students are digital. Information flows in very different ways amongst our students.

Stepping back and looking at the slogan “AND is in our DNA,” when I was in transition to provostship I was consuming everything I could about Northwestern to understand it better, and we have this brilliant piece of marketing and a brilliant exploration of Northwestern’s interdisciplinary ideal and execution. The unintended consequence of this slogan, which is really about coming to Northwestern and experiencing lots of different things, is that it has been experienced differently, and sometimes negatively, by many students. And what faculty need to recognize is that students got here by adhering to the “and” ethic. They got here because they were pushed and pushing themselves from ninth grade on. Our task is to deprogram that a little bit. To trim back this compulsion to do fifteen different things and instead do three things really well—sleep being one of them. Faculty can be that humane adult actor and suggest to students that they take a breath, do fewer things, and do them at the level that you are capable of.

3. Questions from Attendees:

- Faculty Senator Venkat Chandrasekhar said that one of the problems that has emerged in recent years is privacy concerns. One question faculty continue to ask themselves, he said, is: who can I ask, or should I even ask, when I think a student is in trouble? He wondered if he was allowed to ask his faculty colleagues about a student he was worried about.
 - Executive Director Dunkle: CAPS may not be able to share information about a student, but you can certainly call us and share information. We will work very closely with the Dean of Students office to get as much information as possible to make sure everything is okay. Again, if you're noticing something that you think is not right, odds are someone else has noticed something as well.
 - Dean Adams: Echoing John's point, call us. Let your academic department know, and let the academic advisor know. You can always call us, though.
 - Associate Dean Dugo: I think your question was also about the possibility of violating FERPA if you asked other students or faculty about a student's wellbeing. While I am not a lawyer, I can almost certainly say that would not be in violation. If you have concerns about a student's health or safety, then it is okay to ask others around you if they have similar concerns. We will always err on the side of the health and safety of the student and will deal with a lawsuit about privacy should that be the case because the alternative is far worse.

4. Report from President Schapiro:

- President Schapiro began his report by reiterating the point that Associate Dean Dugo made about student safety. He said his job is to keep students safe, and he will deal with the consequences if a legal issue should arise when attempting to keep students safe. He also said in reference to the "AND is our DNA" slogan that we thought it was a clever marketing tagline and that it has been misrepresented to some degree. At convocation this year, President Schapiro said that he and Provost Holloway talked about what "and" means. The slogan's intention is the essence of the liberal arts education: an overall survey of disciplines that will prepare a student for the world. President Schapiro said it was never intended to obligate students to double major or join every club. He did say he appreciated the activists who pushed back against the slogan because it helped clarify what they intended.

5. Questions from Attendees:

- A professor said that it is hard for students who are used to so much success to recognize they are in trouble. It is even harder to then go to someone they respect and admit that they may be in trouble. However, the students usually know. Often times professors hear from friends of the student before they hear from the student

themselves. The professor then asked if students have been involved in the process of identifying a potential mental health issue.

- Dean Adams: This is a really good point. I'll start by saying there is not one approach to these issues. It is a multi-pronged approach, and students are a big part of it. Along those lines, the students helped us develop NUHelp and the app was launched in conjunction with Associated Student Government (ASG). Furthermore, one of the reasons, among many, that we have a two-year residency requirement is to keep students on campus so that they have an opportunity to build a community before they study abroad or live off campus. A connection is formed with the campus community, with each other, and with campus resources.

Faculty are really our best resource. If I may, I would request faculty take a moment with students during a private interaction—discussing a paper or assignment—to ask them a higher order question about themselves. This can make a world of difference.

- Associate Dean Woloschak: From the graduate student perspective, at TGS we have formed a graduate student leadership advisory committee that has representatives from each of the different departments. That group has brought problems directly to TGS. We are hoping to evolve that into a student Senate.
- Senator Candy Lee asked what the panel thought a student graduating from Northwestern should be prepared to do, both being prepared for the world and being happy. Do we have a sense that our graduates possess that preparation and happiness when they graduate?
 - President Schapiro: We survey a lot to answer this very question, including the senior survey with the COFHE schools. They also do a follow-up after they graduate. The results indicate that students do really well financially and are generally successful. Almost all the outcomes are good, but every once in a while they ask if graduates are happy. The responses to that question are depressing. It's really shocking because these are the best and the brightest. They sacrifice so much, and their parents sacrifice so much, to attend these world-famous and incredibly competitive private colleges and universities, and they are not very happy. As an educator and a parent, this worries me a great deal.

6. Submitted Questions:

- Four hours after Shane Columbo, a new graduate student, had moved to Evanston, he was killed by a stray bullet. Other shootings have also occurred in south Evanston and Rogers Park in the past several months, and many of the large number of Northwestern students, faculty, and staff who live in or commute through the area are fearful for their safety. Has Northwestern worked with the

Evanston and Chicago police departments and other community stakeholders to ensure that this situation is being addressed?

- President Schapiro: This takes us into even further depressing territory. Shane's death was an absolute nightmare. But the answer to the question is our police, Evanston's police, Chicago's police, and Loyola's police are all working together to try to make the Rogers Park area as safe as possible. If people have any other suggestions about what we can do, please let us know.
- The university is currently operating under austerity measures in order to close a budget deficit. What is the long-term financial outlook for Northwestern? How long will the tight controls on spending be in place? Will the university be able to call upon the resources needed for faculty retentions? What do plans for future hiring look like?
 - President Schapiro: Of course we have a top-ten endowment, and we are always top-ten in annual fundraising. The future is very bright. Right now, we are very close to putting FY2018 to bed. We are in better shape than we thought. This year (FY2019) the Board approved a \$47 million deficit. I think we will be able to hit that mark. A year from now, in FY2020, it looks pretty good. This has undoubtedly been difficult, but we are on track for significant improvement next year, and even more so the year after that.

In terms of faculty retention, we have saved money for that. It was one of our priorities when organizing the budget over the next three years and beyond.

- The university's *We Will* campaign was recently extended. Can you comment on the priorities that will shape the university's fundraising? Will we see greater attention paid to the academic side of the university?
 - President Schapiro: We just passed \$4.1 billion in fundraising, and of that \$4.1 billion, around \$400 million goes to athletics and recreation (club sports, intramurals, gym amenities). It is about ten percent so far of the money that has come in for this campaign. Last campaign, it was around eight to nine percent. Of the additional billion plus that we will raise, the amount for athletics and recreation will be below ten percent. When we finish the campaign, I think the total will be below nine percent.

I was really happy the Board extended the *We Will* campaign because it is going great. Much of the additional billion will be directed towards need-based aid, not just for the undergraduates, but also at the professional schools and to a certain extent at specific graduate programs. We are also making need-based aid available to non-U.S. citizens for the first time, and Buffett matched that aid. We have also brought in close to 70 endowed chairs. My guess is over the next two years we will bring in another 20. The Ryans generously pledged to bring down the price of chairs from \$3 million to \$2 million by donating \$1 million to every chair that is endowed. It is a wonderful moment when endowed chairs are

awarded. You get to hear about the life and career of a brilliant scholar. I want to go to a lot more of those award ceremonies before I leave Northwestern.

- How has the budgetary situation impacted funding for graduate students? Faculty in STEM disciplines have asked for an increase in support from one to two years. At the same time, faculty in non-STEM fields are concerned about support beyond the five years currently offered to incoming students. Will Northwestern be able to support its graduate students in a way that is competitive with peer institutions?
 - President Schapiro: We completely retooled the stipends a few years ago, including raising the stipends from \$21,000 a year to \$31,000 annually. Other schools followed our lead when that happened. We just heard how tough it is to be a graduate student. We don't want the living standards to compound all the stressors mentioned earlier. So, we have been very aggressive in raising the stipend.

In terms of how many years we offer, we expanded that as well. I know Teresa Woodruff, the new Dean of TGS, is working on a new plan. Provost Holloway can share a little more about that.

- Provost Holloway: Dean Woodruff has heard the concerns STEM faculty have about the support they receive from TGS. It is absolutely her ambition to increase STEM graduate student support from one year to two. However, it is expensive, and she is working through different financial models to get there. What is also important to know, this increase in STEM support, which is coming down the line at some point, is not at the expense of students who are not in the STEM fields. I remain steadfast in ensuring there is support for the humanities and social sciences.

Unfortunately, the funding model for graduate student support is not sustainable in its current mode. The difficult truth behind grad student funding is that we need to find a way to have our ambitions, which are as high as they can be, to take our aid package, which is already competitive with our top peers, try to be responsive in the ways Dean Woloschak mentioned earlier, and make the money work. Clearly, this is a difficult problem to solve. One thing we did this year was I increased the grad student budget around seven percent. And before, we were funding TGS after the fiscal year. Now, we give them the money up front and are moving towards a three-year model. This will help TGS do better modeling for the departments as well as help the Provost Office set their budget.

- Faculty Senator Venkat Chandrasekhar stated that in addition to funding for only one year, Physics, and many other departments, do not have enough graduate students. He then asked if there was anything being done to address this problem.
 - Provost Holloway: We are looking into it right now. The challenge is the sustainability issue I mentioned earlier, and that is why we have had to hold a

number of programs flat. The only real answer I have now is that we are aware of it and are working on addressing this problem as it pertains to the sustainability issue I mentioned earlier.

- President Schapiro: While the number of Ph.D. students has not grown in the last year and a half, the number is up considerably since I started. The number of master's students has grown exponentially as well.
- Faculty Senator Laurel Harbridge-Yong said that with the pressure of finishing in five years and the inability of banking funding beyond their fifth year, grad students are under an enormous amount of stress. She asked what TGS is doing to support graduate students and their mental health under such pressure.
 - Associate Dean Woloschak: First, I will say there are a lot of deferments still in place that allow for extension beyond five years, particularly if you don't have a job or have a job that is not directly in your area of expertise. In the STEM fields, almost everyone gets deferments right now. As far as the stress goes, there is so much put on graduate students right now, but I think the five-year plan does take some of the stress off.
 - Executive Director Dunkle: On the CAPS side, 42 percent of the students who come to CAPS are from the professional schools or TGS. Their needs are very different than the undergraduates, and I would like to focus more on this issue as we go forward.
- Faculty Senator Helen Thompson said that five years in the humanities is not a realistic timeline. In her discipline, English, the first two years are course work, the third year still involves some course work, two qualifying exams, and a dissertation prospectus. She said this is the fastest time possible to gain a pretense of mastery of a deep field of knowledge. So, that leaves two years to write a dissertation, which only the fastest writing, most accomplished student could do, which she said couldn't have done. Senator Thompson said that English actually funds the sixth year from their department because they recognize how cumbersome this timeline can be, and it is also the only way they can stay competitive. But that is not sustainable, either. She thinks it is worth having a conversation about the five-year plan and its feasibility because it does not work in the humanities.
 - Provost Holloway: I agree with everything that you said. We have been talking with Dean Woodruff and her staff regularly about this issue. There does seem to be a lot of misinformation floating around about severe cutbacks and things of that nature. The fact is, though, you are exactly right. We need to develop a set of principles that allow for structure and process for budgeting reasons, but also flexibility for the fact that, for example, some fields require individuals to learn two languages. We are trying to build flexibility into the system.

Respectfully submitted,
Jared Spitz
Secretary of the Faculty Senate