

Northwestern University  
Minutes of the Faculty Assembly  
Kellogg Global Hub- Evanston, Wieboldt Hall 421 - Chicago  
May 30, 2018

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The second meeting of the Northwestern University Faculty Assembly of the 2017–2018 academic year was held on May 30, 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 Robert Hariman called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m. A quorum (10% of full-time regular faculty members) was not present.

A brief report was given by Faculty Senate President Hariman. This was followed by a discussion between Provost Jonathan Holloway and Faculty Senate President Elect Baron Reed on “Protests and Political Correctness on Campus.” Provost Holloway then took questions from the audience. 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 5:59 p.m.

Jared Spitz  
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# Northwestern University

## Faculty Assembly

### Summary of Questions and Answers

May 30, 2018

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**1. Welcome and Introductions:** Faculty Senate President Robert Hariman welcomed attendees and provided an overview of the format of the meeting. The traditional question and answer format was preceded by an interview of Provost Jonathan Holloway by Faculty Senate President Elect Baron Reed. Below is a summary of the proceedings that has been edited for clarity.

**2. Interview:**

- President Elect Reed: It has become increasingly common to hear that universities have begun to coddle their students by restricting free speech on campus in the name of political correctness. Yet, this is almost never the way university administrators describe their own action. So what is political correctness? And what does it mean to criticize something as being politically incorrect?
  - Provost Holloway: You used a lot of key terms in your query – coddling, political correctness, etc. – that have their own politics independent of what truly embodies free speech. In this current moment, much of the furor and rhetoric deriving from these terms boils down to resistance to change. What that change is, however, is dependent on the moment. When I was an undergraduate at Stanford it was the hotbed of the attack on Western culture, and this became political correctness run amok. It’s important to remember that Stanford was in a state where huge demographic shifts were taking place: the way our campuses “look” will be different. This is why you saw backlash from state legislators trying to make English the official language of the state and other instances like that. This is all symptomatic of a fear of something coming.

Now, at universities you have increasing demographic complexity in the undergraduate student body. Adding in the phenomenon of social media, which does have a lot of intemperance built into it across the political spectrum, and the political zeitgeist of partisanship, you get a campus that has changed – and I think the change is a good thing. This is reflected in President Schapiro’s 20 percent Pell eligible students by 2020 initiative: the student body is more culturally and intellectually diverse. If you bring all of this together, it creates a clash between the students and the old guard, and this is not a new phenomenon. Overall, I think a great university is a place that is always changing even as it is holding onto tradition. That’s the illogic of the university, that is has to be both.

- President Elect Reed: It seems that there are perhaps two different ways of managing that sort of change while holding onto tradition. Let me mention one particularly loaded

way in which this debate has been playing out. In 2016 the Dean of Students at the University of Chicago sent a letter to all incoming first-year students saying that they “do not support so called trigger warnings and they do not condone the creation of intellectual safe spaces where individuals can retreat from ideas and perspectives at odds with their own.” At the same time, at Northwestern, President Schapiro has been defending safe spaces on campus, arguing that they are necessary. As he wrote in an opinion piece, “the best hope we have of creating an inclusive community is to first create spaces where members of each group feel safe.” There was a program with Katie Couric that aired recently in which she posed these as two ends of the spectrum. Is this a tempest in a teapot, or do you think it is fair to say that Northwestern is creating an alternative model of what it is to build an academic community?

- Provost Holloway: It’s much more than a tempest in a teapot. I’m envisioning things being stoked with huge billows and some mythological creatures hunched around a big fire; it’s nasty and it’s mean and it’s deeply disingenuous. It is mythic at this point.

When the Dean of Students sent out the memo at UChicago, I immediately went to their website to verify whether or not this was real. By coincidence, the first thing I saw was an advertisement about their LGBTQ center as a safe space on campus. Clearly not everyone got the message. The fact is if you think about what UChicago is saying and what they were doing, almost every university does that. Of course, this was before groups began trying to embarrass public universities [due to their legal obligation to absolute free speech] by “exposing” something that they aren’t actually about. There have been excessive cases on campuses where students were upset a certain speaker was there, a speaker who was invited merely to instigate rather than debate. That’s fine – I don’t want them there either, for the most part. But I’m going to defend the speaker’s right to be there.

I would say it is a tempest in a teapot because it is a contrivance. But it is so compelling, beguiling, and exciting (for the wrong reasons) that it just keeps going and going. President Schapiro, if you look at the editorials, does not condone the classroom as a safe space. Classrooms are places of intellectual challenge and disruption, and President Schapiro will say that to the end of his breath. However, isn’t it humane that there might be a place someone can go so that you don’t have to do that twenty-four hours a day? Going back to a demographically complex undergraduate student body, we have students receiving cultural messages on a daily basis – whether intended or not – like, “How did you get in? It must have been affirmative action, it must have been this. Oh, you are one of those kids.” It gets to a point where your campus doesn’t feel like your campus. It can feel like a hostile environment. The presumption is that you don’t have the intellectual prowess to be here. The fact is that they do have the talent to be here. But if the messages they receive regularly are that you don’t belong here, isn’t it humane to say you do and to fashion places on campus that reaffirm that?

Frankly, safe spaces aren't new! Safe spaces are old. Upon its inception, the whole university was a safe space for white males. Of course, things have changed since then. A more modern example is the faculty club. Hillel is a safe space. The list goes on. Why are we upset – this is the litmus test – if black students, brown students, gay students, poor students, want a safe space? That's a mirror to us, and it's not a good reflection.

- President Elect Reed: As you mentioned, the students at the undergraduate level are more diverse than has ever been the case in the history of Northwestern. And yet they are walking into an institution where change happens at a much slower pace among the faculty. As we saw from the task force on the black student experience, one of the things they have been asking for is a greater degree of comfort with faculty in addressing a much more diverse student body. How does that play out in the expectations that faculty carry into their classrooms and the way in which they structure the conversation around difficult topics?
  - Provost Holloway: Painfully. Slowly. The students are digital, and the faculty are analog. We all just need to be aware of the differences and work towards the ideal of a beloved community. At my first meeting with the Faculty Senate when I was provost designate in 2017, there was a request from Associated Student Government and the Student Affairs Committee to put on syllabi a message to students about mental health: essentially if you are having a hard time, please come see me or here is a number to call. There was a very long debate. Roberts Rules of Order had to be invoked. This was because there were certain faculty who had legitimate concerns about the expectations of what it means to be a faculty member, specifically lacking training in spotting or dealing with a mental health crisis. What I heard was not asking for expertise but giving advice on where to go when asked for help. This is a phenomenon that occurs everywhere – A was not hearing B, and vice versa.

Faculty at Northwestern are independent actors. They are given the freedom to roam, explore, and be brilliant. That's great. But the downside of that is [that] trying to get independent actors to carry out something that is centrally mandated is exquisitely difficult, even when, in my opinion, it is a social good.

- President Elect Reed: Do you find yourself as an administrator treating these sorts of issues differently than you would have as a faculty member? Specifically regarding issues of free speech or what values are taught in the classroom?
  - Provost Holloway: On those issues no. When I was a faculty member I was a part of the resistance. Then, I became a dean and had a new perspective. Circumstances change once you have a new orientation. But when it comes to what I will call value statements, I don't think I have changed my position. The nuance that I bring to a situation has definitely changed. I went from being an independent actor to someone with a broader view when I was dean to a much broader view now as provost. But the value premises about who I am and what I want to stand for as a scholar haven't changed at all. My level of expectation of

the pace of change is different. And my understanding of the various political realities at any given moment is definitely different. But not the commitment. In fact, it's been liberating – and this is a tip of the cap to President Schapiro because he encourages his administration to speak up on value issues. That's a big reason why I wanted to come here.

- President Elect Reed: It seems like speaking about these issues has become an increasingly large part of the job for individuals in administration. As the line between public and private discourse has tended to erode, one of the things you see nationally is a student somewhere does something spectacularly ill-advised at 4:00 a.m. in the morning on social media. Next thing you know it's on the front page. Typically, administrators are called upon to have a very quick statement of the university's values. How do you manage these sorts of things?
- Provost Holloway: It's often heartbreaking. We all did dumb things when we were 20. That's called being 20. It's just that 20-year-olds don't have the freedom of anonymity that we enjoyed. That's the heartbreaking part. At the same time, how a 20-year-old who has grown up with social media thinks that anything is private is beyond my ability to imagine. There is a way in which I don't have much sympathy for the concept. But the fact is they are 20, and you should be allowed to make mistakes and get a pass. But we don't live in that era any longer.

The answer to your question is contingent. I think back to situations where students really messed up in way that I personally found offensive. Then again they are 20 and they are human beings and they shouldn't become proxies for other people's bad faith battles – that's unethical. So, you run to that student's defense. I've defended students who in a political sense don't deserve an ounce of my time, but as an administrator they deserve all of my attention. I've also run to the defense of students who I thought had a really bad moment, and they paid for it in ways that nobody deserves. Ironically, I had to go to their defense in ways that were entirely private because to go to their defense publicly would make things worse. You have to calibrate in every instance: 1. What is the thing you have to do to protect the student? 2. Will you, by intervening, publicly make it worse or make it better? That really depends on the situation. But I really am loath to allow our students to become punching bags. We need to teach the next generation, but not like that. We also need to keep being educators even when they keep screwing up because we must have a belief that they are redeemable in certain ways. They will appreciate it in time.

### 3. Questions from Attendees:

- Past President Edward F.X. Hughes: You give a lot of deference to the fact that one is 20. Isn't there a responsibility beyond giving them a pass to educate and guide young students into adulthood?

- Provost Holloway: Let me be clear, the answer to that question is absolutely yes. But we need to be empathetic while we are educating them. We should not be afraid of saying no to students, or saying you're incorrect. We have to do that, too. But we have to give them more of us than mere dismissal. That's my point.
- Submitted question: How do you imagine ensuring faculty and other community members rights to freedom of speech while also ensuring students' free rights to protest?
  - Provost Holloway: The faculty have freedom of expression. That is sacrosanct. Of course, student protests are also totally appropriate. Hopefully, we work together even in their protest in ways [so] that each of us can understand that we are invested in a community. If I have the right to offer my ideas, someone has the right to protest them. You don't have the right to silence me, though. That's a different issue. For example, if anyone is disrupting a classroom as a political statement, that's fine. But they should pay the consequences for that disruption as well.
- Submitted question: Can you clarify the grounds upon which student protestors will or can be punished for their actions?
  - Provost Holloway: The demonstration policy has been posted for community review and faculty can review the policy on the policy review website (Faculty Senate President Hariman added that the policy was revised after going through the Senate). The spirit of this review process is to make sure that people's rights are protected.
  - President Elect Reed: This is a positive example of shared governance. There was feedback on the demonstration policy from the Senate very early on that was taken to the Policy Review Committee. The committee met with a variety of different people, including the Dean of Students Office and the student groups who were most vocal. Many of the assumptions and reservations the students had about the university's attitude towards protesting were assuaged.
- Faculty member: What is the normal channel for distribution of policies under review?
  - Associate Provost Andrea Bueschel: We will make sure the Senate sends out all materials for review (President Elect Reed added that the review period has been extended through the end of the year).
- Professor Alvin Tillery: In political science, we have been embroiled for two years in a difficult and abusive situation. How do we in this community of independent contractors draw a line when you are trying to root out abuse and punish abusers when

they shield themselves behind claims of academic freedom? Is there a way that the administration can clarify what is actually academic freedom and what is misconduct?

- Provost Holloway: There are a number of different policies up for review that speak to issues that you have raised. The Faculty Senate and administration had hoped to finish up the changes made to the disciplinary appeals process. But in order to allow all parties equal amount of time to comment, we decided to keep the review period open until the fall. By then, we should have much greater clarity from a policy perspective on the kind of issues that you raised. These are deeply complicated issues. I can say we are working towards an answer that is fair to all parties.
- Audio malfunction; question was missed.
- Provost Holloway: My vision builds off of President Schapiro's vision. I don't say that lightly. I believe that is deeply important. It is a vision that champions excellence for faculty research, pedagogy at the highest levels, but also shepherds its resources responsibly, taking the long-term view rather than the short-term one. It also is about understanding the positive good that comes out of demographic complexity, and pursuing it at the undergraduate, graduate, faculty and staff levels. I'll wrap up with this statement: I believe we are already one of the world's great universities, and I will do everything I can to preserve that excellence, which means we must be committed to rigor, however that is expressed. That said, being rigorous should not mean that we sacrifice an empathetic approach to our community. That is my vision.

#### **4. Report from President Schapiro:**

- President Schapiro began by reviewing recent events over the last few days, including the tragic death of a Northwestern undergraduate student. He expressed profound sadness and the difficulty of losing a student. He then opened the floor for questions.

#### **5. Questions from Attendees:**

- Professor Barbara Newman: Why do you think student mental health has become so incredibly fragile and what do you think we can do about that?
  - President Schapiro: As President, I'm never the same after the death of a student. I continually ask myself what I could've done. And I'm not a mental health expert by any means, but I've learned more than I ever thought I would about this subject. At Northwestern, unfortunately, we are not immune to these problems. We will continue to provide the best mental health services available for students no matter what the cost.

- Professor Babette Sanders: The student health insurance is periodically up for review, and in the last review it was clear that the student health insurance has generous support for mental health services. It is my understanding that the University was considering dropping the benefit. I strongly urge you to keep that benefit because it is so important. CAPS cannot meet all the needs of our current students. Additionally, please do not forget the Chicago campus when you are looking at CAPS and mental health support.
  - President Schapiro: Your point is very well taken and I really appreciate your genuine compassion and concern. And you are absolutely right. There will be no financial constraint on the health and safety of our faculty, staff, and students at any institution where I am president.
  
- Professor Sarah Maza: On the humanities and social science wing of the campus, there is an enormous amount of concern right now based on what we are hearing from The Graduate School (TGS): funding for sixth year students from interdisciplinary grants has been cut despite always holding these grants for those students in the past. We are being told the budget for TGS is being trimmed, and it is putting pressure on time to completion of degree. For students in the humanities and the social sciences, the time to completion must be six or seven years. It is impossible to do it faster. Do you have any reassurance to give, especially to the graduate students?
  - Provost Holloway: Much of what has been written in the Daily Northwestern is incorrect. We have one of the most generous packages for graduate student funding. In fact, we recently made some structural adjustments in the budget to ensure TGS is properly funded.
  - Vice Provost Chase-Lansdale: I met recently with Dean Woodruff about this very topic. There have been some mixed messages about funding. For example, we guarantee five years of funding, but students can actually bank one of those years if you receive a training grant or a research assistantship, for example. The interdisciplinary fellowships that Professor Maza referred to are in a special category, and there has been change in that area.
  - Professor Maza: It is a fact that several people who were granted fellowships on paper have now had those fellowships rescinded.
  - Vice Provost Chase-Lansdale: In the past, students applied to fellowships through Searle or the Block Museum after their five years of funding. Now, TGS is making it policy for students to apply to those fellowships within that five-year window.
  
- Professor Thomas Meade: The sciences are also suffering. We receive one year of support at Northwestern. Currently, nine of our peers fund graduate students in the sciences for a minimum of two years. What do you think the long-term possibility is of receiving a second year of funding for graduates students in the sciences?



- Provost Holloway: Dean Woodruff is trying to fix this problem. Right now, we don't have answers. But I can tell you that we have heard your concerns and are looking into the issue.
- Professor Lois Hedman: What can Northwestern do to bridge the divide between universities and the public at large?
- President Schapiro: Since 1979, there has been an unexpected trend in the United States and western Europe in the growth of economic inequality. When I started teaching that year at the University of Pennsylvania, from 1900 to 1979, the disparity in wealth had shrunk. Almost 40 years later, 1979 turned out to be the high point in the distribution of wealth.
- I've written a lot about whether or not elite higher education private schools exacerbated the problem of inequality. That's one reason I pushed to increase the number Pell-eligible students at Northwestern. Nine years ago we were last in our peer group in Pell-eligible admits. Now, we are second. We reached our goal of twenty percent of the entering class as Pell-eligible. As Jonathan alluded to, by simply admitting these students it doesn't mean they all have the same experience. But we are working hard to try to make every student at Northwestern feel comfortable here. I'm proud of that.
- Professor Hedman: That message must be delivered to the broader community. I'm proud to be a part of an institution that has made these initiatives a priority.
  - President Schapiro: This was the topic at the most recent AAU meeting held in D.C. – How can we change the narrative, particularly among Republicans and the faith they have lost in higher education? This is a tough question, and sometimes I wonder if I am hurting rather than helping. But I'm trying to productively and honestly articulate our vision to as many people as I can.
- Professor Karen Springen: What should we say, to students in particular, about the budget deficit?
- President Schapiro: The situation is evolving. We now have greater transparency about the process. We also have a better understanding about the reasons why we are in this predicament – one of them being funding we set aside for scientists that was not a part of the endowment, and they happened to ask for it at once. Ultimately, we were spending down in a predictable way – labs and infrastructure for research – but not in a way that was totally clear until recently.
- Professor Barbara Newman: As a follow up to the last question, the faculty salary update is two months later than usual this year. Is that due to the deficit, or are there other reasons for the delay?

- President Schapiro: We are still wrapping our arms around the deficit right now and how best to deal with that situation. My guess is that salaries will be lower than what they would have been otherwise.
- Professor Carol Stern: Are you committed to keeping faculty salaries competitive next year and into the future?
  - President Schapiro: The Chronicle of Higher Education put out their annual salary survey and for the first time ever Northwestern was ranked ninth in full professor salaries. We fought for this and I don't want to give that back. Even if we don't gain ground this year, my hope is we won't lose ground either.

## 6. Submitted Questions:

- Has the administration implemented a systematic response to survey data that shows that full professor female faculty are paid about 5% less than male faculty at the same level? This situation may reflect a systemic discrepancy which implicates issues like service burdens. Is there any plan for review and possible redress at this systemic level?
  - President Schapiro: The answer is yes. Vice Provost Lindsay Chase-Lansdale, Professor Paola Sapienza, and others met with all the deans, looked through all of the cases, presented the cases, and then made determinations based on the 2015-16 study. I'm proud that we uncovered something and were transparent about what we discovered. I'm also proud we are addressing the issue.
  - Vice Provost Chase-Lansdale: I want to add that another study is planned for 2021. Three faculty members – Paola Sapienza, Larry Cristiano, and Larry Hedges – have agreed to continue. We also have invited a representative from the Organization of Women Faculty – Christine Percheski – as well as a representative from the Faculty Senate to be on this working group now. One of the most important pieces of feedback we received was in order to have stronger studies in the future, we need to start thinking about variables now. We also send all of the data we receive to the Deans when they are assessing salaries for the next year. In addition, the Provost Advisory Council on Women Faculty recently finished nine focus groups where we heard directly from all faculty about their experience at Northwestern. There will be a report in the Fall on what we found.