

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the first issue of the 2017-2018 Faculty Senate newsletter. My first assumption in communicating with Northwestern faculty is that we are extremely busy doing what we came here to do: the research, teaching, artistic production, clinical practice, and other work that defines the university. Moreover, we now do our work within the constant din of the digital information environment, and this email certainly is not the only one you will receive today. It is provided, however, to keep you briefed on Senate issues and actions, and to keep the channel open should you need to bring your concerns to the only elected and representative body of the University faculty.

These issues in the near term include two matters brought before the Senate at its October 4 meeting. The first was a set of proposed changes to the University Policy on Non-Retaliation. The Senate committees on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities and on the Faculty Handbook provided a joint report on the proposal that has been sent to the administration as part of the process of community review. The second item was a new version of the University Policy on Disruption and Demonstration that had been announced during the summer. Problems with the broad definition of "disruption and demonstration" were identified, and the matter has been sent to the Faculty Handbook committee, which will draft a policy statement for Senate consideration.

Additional issues that currently are under review in the Senate committees include:

- revision of faculty appeals processes;
- examination of confidentiality rules;
- review of academic freedom and freedom of speech policies;
- review of sexual misconduct and harassment policies;
- continued attention to NTE salaries and other concerns;
- review of policies on research funding;
- review of University benefits policies, including attention to child care;
- enhancement of sustainability initiatives at Northwestern;
- assisting with policies for a need-blind student experience and student wellness;
- strengthening the liberal arts education and the academic culture.

The list is not exhaustive. Other matters also are being discussed, and we continue to work on implementation of recommendations from last year such as calendar change, an improved ombuds program, and better integration of faculty into University planning processes. All of these measures are undertaken in the spirit of shared governance and on behalf of making Northwestern a better university.

There are good reasons to believe that these initiatives and others of the past few years are bearing fruit. The administrative response to Senate engagement has been superb. Most of the work that we now do together is not done on stage, but President Schapiro's commitment to the Senate was evident when he invited me to be the speaker for the welcoming dinner for Provost Jonathan Holloway on September 25th. It was an honor both to represent the faculty and to welcome Jonathan. (In case you are interested, you can find the speech [here](#).) Other steps forward include adding a Senate liaison to the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee, providing recommendations for decanal hiring committees, and establishing liaisons with key offices on campus to provide faculty review and revision of policies prior to implementation.

Our effectiveness is grounded in our democratic charter and professional organization. The Senate consists of 96 members, representing each academic department of the University and the Library

along with representatives for non-tenure-eligible and emeriti faculty. Senate activity is directed through the following structure:

- The regular meetings (eight are scheduled for this year) are used for preliminary and final discussion of resolutions, policy recommendations, and other actions.
- The standing committees (there are 12 of them) draw on the Senate research staff and relevant stakeholders in the University to draft resolutions and proposals for full deliberation by the Senate and the administration.
- The leadership (president, president-elect, past-president, and the chairs of the standing committees) meet regularly with faculty and the administration regarding matters of interest.

These activities are supported by the Senate staff. Jared Spitz is the administrative coordinator who also has research responsibilities, and Beth Healey is our staff researcher who also assists with administrative tasks. Jared has an MA from the University of Chicago, and this December Beth will be awarded a Ph.D. in History from Northwestern. Together they will ensure that we can respond in an informed manner to any issues that arise regarding academic values and interests.

Long story short, the Senate is working daily to represent the faculty in university governance. Your own work probably leaves little time to think about that. When you do need to raise an issue, however, we want to be able to do justice to your concerns, and to work on behalf of your ideas and our shared values.

Should you have any concerns, questions, or suggestions, please feel welcome at any time to contact your Senate representative, or the Senate staff, or me. We are here to serve.

Sincerely,

Robert Hariman
Professor, Communication Studies
President of the Faculty Senate