

AGENDA

Meeting of the Faculty Senate

June 3, 2026

5:00–7:00 p.m. (CDT)

Guild Lounge and Zoom

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| I. | Call to Order | Ian Hurd (5:00 p.m.) |
| II. | Report of the Faculty Senate President | Ian Hurd (5:05 p.m.) |
| III. | Vote for President-Elect | Ian Hurd (5:10 p.m.)
Ana Maria Acosta
Ian Horswill
Seth Lichter |
| IV. | Faculty Salaries | Ian Horswill (6:00 p.m.)
Tricia England |
| V. | Restructuring Standing Committees | Rebecca Zorach (6:30 p.m.) |
| VI. | New Business | (6:45 p.m.) |
| VII. | Thank You | Ian Hurd (6:50 p.m.) |
| VIII. | Adjournment | (7:00 p.m.) |

Faculty Senate President Elect Candidate Statement 2026

Ana Maria Acosta

May 26, 2026

Thank you for the nomination for President Elect of the Faculty Senate. I am seeking a leadership role in the Faculty Senate because I believe that we need a united and strong Faculty Senate to resist the pressures on academic freedom and freedom of speech coming from the government, to hold the administration at our university accountable for upholding our values of diversity and inclusion that are central to its mission, and to advocate for faculty governance and work toward a true partnership with the administration that includes and values our voice when making decisions that impact faculty directly or indirectly.

I am a Professor in the department of Physical Therapy and Human Movement Sciences, Feinberg School of Medicine. I was raised and received my BS in Electrical Engineering in Bogotá, Colombia, South America. I immigrated to the US freshly out of college to get a MS in Biomedical Engineering at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH. That's when I was first exposed to movement and rehabilitation science research, designing tools and methods to advance our understanding of movement impairments following cervical spinal cord injury, and more importantly, using this knowledge to design interventions to restore lost function and improve the quality of life of those living with movement disabilities. I stayed on to complete my PhD in Biomedical Engineering with the goal of pursuing a research career in movement and rehabilitation science. Almost 25 years ago, I started at Northwestern University/Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago as a postdoc, applying engineering methods to understand the why and how of movement impairments in the upper limb following hemiparetic stroke. As a faculty member in the Research track initially and then in the Clinician-Educator track (also non-tenure eligible) in Feinberg School of Medicine, I built a research career studying different aspects of movement control following stroke and designing and developing rehabilitation robotic devices for diagnosis and treatment of movement impairments in this population.

Early in my career I helped create and currently manage two PhD training programs based in The Graduate School and Feinberg School of Medicine and affiliated with Biomedical Engineering, PTHMS and NUIN (Northwestern University Interdepartmental Neuroscience program). The goal of these programs is to train the next generation of Movement and Rehabilitation Scientists. Mentoring students in these programs and in my lab has been deeply rewarding and meaningful. It was an obvious choice to join and chair the Student Affairs committee in the faculty senate, where I could keep faculty informed of student life at Northwestern, including important developments like the graduate student unionization and contract negotiations and the impact of government executive orders on international students.

I have had the opportunity to interact with Northwestern faculty across schools and disciplines through various opportunities and roles in TGS, NUIN, Feinberg and in the faculty senate, giving me a more holistic view of our university. Being on the Chicago campus and in the medical school gives me a very different perspective on Northwestern, one that mainly includes professional and PhD students, and whose mission is very much centered on biomedical research. Interacting with faculty on the Evanston campus, especially in non-STEM fields, has highlighted the opportunities and challenges inherent in faculty governance. If elected, I aim to listen to all voices and work with each and every one of you to address issues concerning our rights as Northwestern faculty and elevate them to the administration and board of trustees while continuing to protect academic freedom and advancing faculty governance.

New leadership in the administration of Northwestern brings new opportunities to advance faculty governance. In collaboration with all of you, if elected, I will take full advantage of these opportunities. My career in biomedical research has taught me humility when presenting and advocating for my ideas. Not everyone will agree that they are the best ideas or that my approach is optimal or that it will even lead to success. When that is the case, we have to go back to the drawing board and start fresh with new ideas or new approaches. I commit to bringing this humility to the faculty senate and listening to disagreement and different points of view to advance our collective vision for academic freedom and faculty governance. Regardless of the outcome of this election, I look forward to continuing our work together in the senate.

Candidate Statement: Ian Horswill

I believe the Senate needs to change. That's more important than who the president is. It also isn't something a president can do on their own. So this is my pitch to you for what I think we need to do, together, whomever is elected.

We never were a senate

It's useful for us to be named the Faculty Senate. That said, the modern notion of a senate is a legislative body. We are not that: we have very few legislative powers. The historical notion is a council of elders who the head of states consults on important matters. We are not that either.

Given the powers we have, we are something closer to a lobbying organization. Some might argue we *should* be a legislative body, but the only way to become such a thing would be to lobby for it.

We should seek to be an effective lobbying organization. We should look at how professional lobbying organizations operate and adopt their practices where appropriate. I propose we:

- Make alliances with other groups on campus, particularly staff and student organizations.
- Educate ourselves about who makes which decisions. This will allow us to engage with specific committees/individuals, rather than writing resolutions to the administration as a whole.
- Educate ourselves about the constraints under which those administrators operate.
- Actively propose policies to those relevant individuals or committees.
- Educate them about the impact of their decisions on the faculty, staff, and students, and how to more effectively communicate with us.
- When possible, explain to them why our suggestions are in Northwestern's interest broadly, not just the interests of the faculty.

Reactive to proactive

In recent years, the Senate has been largely reactive: the administration does something, and we pass a resolution in response. Much of that is inevitable given the upheavals of recent years. But where possible, we should shift to a proactive stance. I propose we:

- Write white papers proposing new policies we think would be advantageous.
- The first white paper should propose the implementation of open-comment periods for important policy changes, so that problems can be fixed before they are implemented.
- Work to place faculty members on important administration committees. Many decisions are made that impact faculty without first learning what that impact would be.

Who I am

My original training was in robotics and machine vision, but my current work involves developing technologies to allow designers of video games and interactive narrative pieces to better express their authorial intent to the system, allowing more fluent authoring of character and system behavior.

I have served as both Director of Undergraduate Studies and of Graduate Studies for the Computer Science Department. From 2004-2010, I served as Director for Northwestern's Animate Arts Program, a joint undergraduate program in art and technology between the schools of Communication, Engineering, Music, and Arts and Sciences

I have also served as Chair of the Standing Committee of the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence's Symposium Series, Program and General Chair of both the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Interactive Digital Entertainment, and of the Conference on Foundations of Digital Games. I also served on the Board of Directors of the Society for the Advancement of the Science of Digital Games.

Faculty Senate Presidency Statement – Seth Lichter – June 3, 2026

The Senate's authority derives from its legitimacy as the representative body of the faculty—an authority neither the administration nor the board of trustees possesses. Yet they often speak as if they are in close partnership with the Senate in a system of shared governance, claiming to consult with us and take our advice. In practice, this is not the case. The Senate must actively exercise its authority and not let it be appropriated without our approval. We can gain and maintain our place in shared governance by (i) taking the initiative and by (ii) moving expediently.

The Senate should be more assertive in initiating change rather than waiting to respond to decisions. We have a wide arena in which to act—reassessing long-unexamined procedures and establishing new processes that better protect the teaching and research mission of the faculty. By raising the profile of the Senate, taking on key issues, advancing proposals, and offering concrete recommendations, the Senate can draw the university into sustained and meaningful engagement with us. We should not be passively waiting for an invitation from them.

At the same time, we must accelerate our interactions with the board and the administration. When our responses are delayed, our voice is diluted and our influence diminished. Acting with alacrity is efficient. I do not feel that this would require a greater time commitment from the Senate (well, perhaps, a bit!). We should discuss having a more flexible committee structure and find ways to bring in Senators whose interests and expertise align with the issues at hand. In addition, we should redirect effort away from prolonged internal iteration and toward advancing our priorities promptly.

Recent university decisions reflect not a failure of intent, but a failure of shared governance. By initiating proposals addressing issues and by working expediently, we can achieve the shared governance that will lead to better decisions and outcomes.

Finally, let me add a few personal notes. I have a Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University, a MS in Aeronautical & Astronautical Engineering from MIT. I was, perhaps, unique in the history of MIT in that, before even arriving as a first-year graduate student, I wrote my own proposal to the federal government to fund my research. The research topic that I chose was bird flight. How birds fly is a difficult problem as wings are flexible, constantly changing their shape, and are called upon to provide both lift and thrust. During my summer vacations, I trained a pigeon to fly a course past a camera. My proposal was successful, due in part to my providing data from those pictures. Thereafter, I received my PhD in Mechanical Engineering, also from MIT.

During my student days, I hitch-hiked extensively across the US and Canada. After graduating, my job offer from University of Arizona did not start for almost a year. I spent that year living in Germany, and then traveling through France, Tunisia, Algeria, Mali, and Burkina Faso. I speak French, German, and Dutch, though only at a very low level of competence. I am now a professor in the Mechanical Engineering Department, with a specialty in statistical mechanics.

Preliminary Faculty Salary Report, 2025-26

SOURCE: This report draws from the appendices of the national [AAUP Faculty Compensation Survey](#)

- [Preliminary Results, 2025-26](#)
- [Appendix 2025-26](#)
- [Preliminary Results 2024-25](#)
- [Appendix 2024-25](#)

Peer Comparison: Tenure-Track Full Professor							
Comp 2026 Avg Full Professor Salary	School	2026 Avg Full Professor	2025 Avg Full Professor	25-26 Annual Growth Rate	Comp Annual Growth Rate Rankings	2011 Avg Full Professor Salary	Comp 2011 Avg. Full Professor Salary
1	Stanford	325.5	318.5	2.2%	9	188.4	4
2	Princeton	323.9	314.7	2.9%	7 (tied)	186.0	5
3	Columbia	316.6	316.8	-0.1%	16	191.4	2
4	MIT	306.1	292.8	4.5%	2	165.8	11
5	Harvard	300.7	314.5	-4.4%	19	193.8	1
6	Chicago	292.0	287.6	1.5%	12 (tied)	190.0	3
7	UCLA	291.1	282.9	2.9%	7 (tied)	153.7	17
8	Penn	290.1	280.7	3.3%	6	175.1	8
9	Yale	286.5	283.2	1.2%	14	177.1	6
10	NYU	284.6	280.2	1.6%	11	175.9	7
11	Northwestern	253.3	253.0	0.1%	15	169.5	10
12	Cal-Berkeley	246.3	232.8	5.8%	1	149.1	20
13	Rice	243.9	235.3	3.7%	5	155.2	16
14	Hopkins	236.6	233.0	1.5%	12 (tied)	**	**
15	Brown	230.1	221.2	4.0%	4	150.7	19
16	Georgetown	226.3	226.8	-0.2%	17	158.9	14
17	Cornell	225.4	221.1	1.9%	10	157.8	15
18	Wash U	207.8	210.2	-1.1%	18	164.9	12
**	Vanderbilt	**	229.4	**	**	151.3	18
**	Duke	**	**	**	**	163.4	13
**	CalTech	**	**	**	**	171.5	9
Average		271.5	266.8	0.0%		151.7	

*1000s

**While CalTech, Duke, and Vanderbilt have historically been a part of this report, current salary data for these schools were not available at the time of this report's creation.

Peer Comparison: Tenure-Track Assistant Professor							
Comp 2026 Avg Asst. Professor Salary	School	2026 Avg Assistant Professor Salary*	2025 Avg Assistant Professor Salary*	25-26 Annual Growth Rate	Comp Annual Growth Rate Rankings	2011 Avg Assistant Professor Salary	Comp 2011 Avg. Assistant Professor Salary
1	Columbia	176	175.2	0.5%	15	97.2	7
2	MIT	173.2	167.6	3.3%	5	100.0	6
3	Penn	168	163.5	2.8%	7	106.8	2
4	Stanford	167.3	165.3	1.2%	12	103.4	4
5	Harvard	166	184.7	-10.1%	18	104.0	3
6	Princeton	154.9	150.1	3.2%	6	90.8	11
7	Yale	149.5	146.2	2.3%	8	87.5	15
8	NYU	146.3	138.9	5.3%	1	95.6	10
9	Cal-Berkeley	144.6	138.6	4.3%	2	88.4	14
10	Chicago	144.5	144.0	0.3%	16	100.5	5
11	Cornell	142.4	139.6	2.0%	10	96.5	9
12	UCLA	139.8	134.9	3.6%	3	84.0	18
13	Hopkins	137.4	132.7	3.5%	4	**	**
14	Northwestern	134.2	133.1	0.8%	14	96.8	8
15	Rice	133	130.8	1.7%	11	86.4	17
16	Brown	124.2	121.6	2.1%	9	80.9	19
17	Georgetown	121.1	119.9	1.0%	13	88.9	13
18	Wash U	119.8	123.2	-2.8%	17	89.9	12
**	Vanderbilt	**	122.9	**	**	74.6	20
**	Cal Tech	**	**	**	**	108.1	1
**	Duke	**	**	**	**	87.2	16
Average		146.8	144.5	1.4%		98.0	

*1000s

**While CalTech, Duke, and Vanderbilt have historically been a part of this report, current salary data for these schools were not available at the time of this report's creation.

Proposed Senate Committee Structure for 2026–27

Faculty senate committees are not defined in the by-laws, and leadership can make changes in accordance with evolving needs and opportunities. This is the proposed new committee structure starting in the fall, with changes highlighted, for your review and any comments or questions.

Here are the changes in brief:

- members of the Committee on Cause will serve on other committees and be convened into CoC only as needed
- Survey Committee becomes Community Affairs Committee
- Facilities Committee and Information Technology Committee are newly created
- Faculty Rights and Responsibilities and Handbook Committees merge into one
- Governance broadens to Governance and Policy

Budget and Planning Committee

The committee collaborates with administrative offices to ensure that University planning processes align with academic values and faculty interests.

Committee on Cause

The committee investigates appeals by faculty members in cases where the administration has imposed a sanction or is pursuing suspension or termination for Cause. **Members will serve on other committees and will be convened only as needed, in which case they may temporarily step away from their other committee assignments.**

Community Affairs Committee

The committee communicates and forges connections within the university community and with the broader community. It periodically creates and assesses surveys, communicates about senate priorities within and beyond the university, and facilitates opportunities for faculty to provide expertise on matters of interest to the community.

Educational Affairs Committee

The committee shapes the Northwestern educational experience by recommending best practices in academic organization, research and teaching.

Facilities and Sustainability Committee

This committee addresses facilities issues and sustainability and works with the administration to provide faculty input on these topics.

Faculty Rights and Handbook Committee

The committee attends to policies regarding academic freedom, teaching, research, interpersonal conduct, terms of appointment, promotion, tenure and related matters, and as needed proposes revisions to the Northwestern University Faculty Handbook, which constitutes the contract between the faculty and the University.

Governance and Policy Committee

The committee works on issues of shared governance and university policy, and proposes changes to senate and assembly by-laws as necessary.

Information Technology Committee

Works on issues of technology facilities and policy, data security, and AI in research, teaching, and learning. May call on expertise of members of other committees (such as educational affairs, facilities, research, social responsibility) as needed.

Non-Tenure Eligible Committee

The committee identifies issues and advises on best practices related to non-tenure eligible faculty.

Research Affairs Committee

The committee addresses issues that impact research-related activities conducted by the faculty.

Salary and Benefits Committee

The committee examines matters related to salary and benefits, including salary equity and health, education and childcare.

Social Responsibility Committee

The committee reviews University policies and practices (including investments) with regard to fairness, decency, and other community values and responsibilities.

Student Affairs Committee

The committee collaborates with Northwestern student governance associations on issues involving faculty-student interaction and considers University-wide policies related to students.