

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the second issue of the 2017-2018 Faculty Senate newsletter. As before, my purpose in writing is to brief you on Senate issues and actions, and to invite you to bring your concerns to the elected and representative body of the University faculty.

A significant portion of the work of the Senate this year has been devoted to review and revision of University policies, including policies on non-retaliation, demonstrations, sexual misconduct, waste management, research data, research faculty leaves, and conflicts of interest. These reviews began with Senate committees participating in the University-wide community review process. Subsequent developments have led to more direct engagement. The University Policy Review Committee now includes, as a regular appointment, a member of the Senate; this is the first faculty appointment to that committee. President-Elect Baron Reed is filling the position this year, and continued participation will ensure that the PRC policy review schedule is integrated with the Senate's schedule going forward. Furthermore, as the standing committees of the Senate have been involved in the reviews, we have developed strong working relationships with relevant administrative offices.

Additional reviews are underway. Most notably, the University faculty grievance and appeals processes are receiving sustained attention, both to update and improve many details of policy and procedure, and to address general concerns about the design of, and relationships among, the various hearing committees. As with many of our other reviews, consideration has included research on comparable practices at dozens of peer institutions. We are working closely with the Provost's office on this topic, and we hope to have recommendations for revision completed by June, although some matters may require continued review in the next year and beyond. As many of these changes apply to the Faculty Handbook, they will be presented to the full Senate for deliberation and approval.

Senate activity is addressing additional concerns, including Non-Tenure Eligible faculty support, CTEC revision, and reductions in student course costs (textbooks and materials). Unfortunately, Senate action on the first two items scheduled for the March meeting had to be delayed when the meeting was cancelled due to the emergency lockdown on the Evanston campus.

At its November meeting, the Senate was presented with a resolution regarding the NTE unionization election. After a presentation on the resolution and Senate debate on a motion to endorse the resolution, the matter was referred to the Senate's Non-Tenure Eligible committee. That committee is scheduled to present their report at the April meeting. At that meeting, the Senate also will consider a motion from the Executive Committee urging the University to address NTE faculty concerns directly.

At the April meeting the Senate also will consider a proposal calling for revision of the current course evaluation instrument (the CTECs). Several offices and organizations in the University are interested in reviewing the CTECs, and the Senate motion calls for a coordinated approach.

The Senate will continue to address concerns regarding student costs, particularly as they place unintended burdens on some students. After hearing from Kourtney Cockrell of Student Enrichment Services as well as various student groups, the Senate's Student Affairs Committee produced a course materials document that faculty can use to easily reduce course costs. That document will be available next week at the Student Affairs page on our website following a scheduled upgrade. This issue is relevant to ongoing Wellness initiatives, which continue a discussion begun last year. The committee chair, Karen Springen, also is working on concerns regarding student experiences of security threats, as psychological and social disruptions occur and affect the learning environment even when good procedures are followed correctly.

Senate activity also has included dedicated interactions with the University leadership:

- In November, the Senate had its annual luncheon with the Board of Trustees.
- The Trustees agreed to the appointment of a Senator to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board, and Baron Reed is now serving in that role. That is the first faculty appointment to any Board committee.
- At the January meeting, Provost Holloway presented the first of what will be an annual address to the faculty.
- Each quarter, the Senate Executive Committee meets with the President, Provost, and other senior administrators. These candid conversations have included attention to confidentiality norms, sexual misconduct policies, and other matters of concern. The Senate leadership (President, President-Elect, and Past President) also had our annual strategic planning meeting with the administration; I will be saying more in the next newsletter about our plans for the coming year, but a very productive discussion already has led to work on behalf of several policy initiatives to further enhance research and teaching at Northwestern.
- The leadership meets monthly with the Provost and members of his administrative team. These discussions cover a wide range of topics, including issues regarding faculty support services, University planning processes, etc. These discussions often are complemented by additional work with other University offices.
- At the Provost's request, we have recommended faculty who then have been appointed to dean, director, and VP search committees, and we have been consulted on other positions as well.

All of these measures represent the Senate's commitment to shared governance on behalf of academic values, faculty interests, and the continual improvement of Northwestern University. They also reflect the excellent cooperation we experience with the University administration at every level. These are important relationships, and they are pathways for dedicated and creative faculty involvement in the life of the University.

The next Senate meeting is April 18, and the meeting will begin with remarks by J. Landis Martin, Chair of the Board of Trustees, followed by a Q&A session with the Senators. The Spring Faculty Assembly will be held on May 30, where President Schapiro will speak and take questions from the audience. Both meetings are open to the public, and all are welcome.

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