

Northwestern University  
Minutes of the Faculty Senate  
Guild Lounge and Videoconference  
October 16, 2024

The Northwestern University Faculty Senate held its first standing monthly meeting of the 2024-2025 academic year on October 16, 2024 in Scott Hall's Guild Lounge and over Zoom videoconference. President Jill Wilson (Industrial Engineering and Management Sciences) called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. A quorum was present.

The president noted that the minutes from the June 5, 2024 meeting were approved electronically and entered into the record.

### **Actions**

1. The Faculty Senate approved both the standing committee chairs and the members of the Committee on Cause.

### **Meeting Summary**

#### **I. Changes to Student Handbook**

The Faculty Senate welcomed Vice President of Student Affairs Susan Davis and Dean of Students Mona Dugo. [Slides](#) were shared with senators in advance. Questions submitted in advance informed the first portion of the discussion.

The bulk of the submitted questions focused on the demonstration policy. Both Vice President Davis and Dean Dugo provided context for the changes. Last spring, when the encampments began the community standards team began benchmarking policy changes at around twenty peer institutions, constantly balancing students' rights to free expression with the everyday functioning of the institution. They made clear that the people on the ground at the demonstrations are student affairs staff, who are there to help students, to instruct them on time, manner, and place restrictions, and to inform them when policies are violated. They

added that staff receive ongoing training in de-escalation and current policies and wear purple vests to make their presence clear to students.

Time, place, and manner restrictions are limited to the Rock. The administration chose to place restrictions on protests around the Rock because of complaints from faculty that classes were being disrupted. They chose 3 p.m. as the time to allow protests after consulting with the registrar's office, who determined that the majority of the classes in buildings that surround the rock are over around 3 p.m., and virtually all of them are done by 5 p.m. (policy states that no protests can take place at the Rock before 3 p.m., and no amplified sound before 5 p.m.). Northwestern also does not require reservations, but they do encourage them.

In addition to the demonstration and display policies, one of the updates to the Student Handbook was to the intimidation standard, which allowed for more a nuanced interpretation of intimidation. Northwestern looks for severity, a pattern, and the scale and impact on a student's life.

When the president opened the floor to senators, discussion zeroed in on how information about processes is shared and what is actually happening when sanctioning is reported accurately. The display policy was also a point of discussion, specifically what harm was being prevented by enacting such policies. Benchmarking processes also came under scrutiny. Vice President Davis said that, with regard to signage, Student Affairs wanted to create some consistency in the rules across the campus, not just have ad hoc policies in each of the buildings. She also made clear the Provost's Office headed up the benchmarking for the demonstration and display policies, and that those policies go through the Policy Review Committee. With respect to the student code of conduct and the intimidation standard, she said they tried to dial in to the case experience here and weigh it against current policies.

Senators who spoke on this topic: President-Elect Ian Hurd (Political Science), Debu Chakravarti (Obstetrics and Gynecology), Susan Pearson (History), Rebecca Zorach (Art History), Thrastos Pappas (Electrical and Computer Engineering), Kasey Evans (English)

## **II. Report of the Faculty Senate President**

The president's report can be found [here](#).

- The president notified senators of two interactions the Senate has had with administration: The Executive Committee met with President Schill and Provost Hagerty for the Fall Summit to discuss recent University budget changes, the impact of graduate student unionization, and to get an update on the President's priorities. The president also said the President Schill will be holding small lunches with senators this fall.
- The NTE Salary Equity Committee will meet again on November 4. Intention is to distribute a survey on NTE experiences this fall.
- Update on Committee on Athletics and Recreation: the committee tasked with reviewing the Paul, Weiss report will recommend Senate representation.
- Senate Leadership is looking into fiscal and logistical challenges of bringing international guests to campus as well as suspension of the CTA 201 benefit. They will report back as they learn more.
- Save the date: Faculty Forum on Campus Speech Policies, November 1, 11:30-12:30 in Swift 107. This event is open to all faculty.

## **III. Ratify Standing Committee Chairs, Committee on Cause Members**

The Senate approved the following standing committee chairs: Michael Fishman, Professor, Finance (Kellogg), Tom Hope, Professor, Cell and Molecular Biology (Feinberg), Jacqueline Babb, Senior Lecturer, Int. Marketing Communications (Medill), Anne Zald, Librarian (University Libraries), Mark Alznauer, Associate Professor, Philosophy (WCAS), Ceci Rodgers, Professor, Non-Tenure (Medill), Cat Fabian, Associate Clinical Professor, Non-Tenure (SoC), Swati Kulkarni, Professor, Surgery (Feinberg), Ian Horswill, Associate Professor, Computer Science (McCormick), Danny M. Cohen, Associate Professor of Instruction, Non-Tenure (SESP), Rebecca Zorach, Professor, Art History (WCAS), Ana Maria Acosta, Professor, Phys. Thpy. and Hum. Mov. Sci. (Feinberg)

The Senate approved the following members of the Committee on Cause: Tom Hope, Professor, Cell and Molecular Biology (Feinberg, Chair), Mark Johnson, Professor, Biomedical Engineering (McCormick) Caryn Ward, Professor, Journalism Undergrad (Medill), TJ Billard, Assistant Professor, Communication Studies (SoC), Faisal Akkawi, Faculty Director, information Systems (SPS), Julia Oliver Rajan, Associate Professor of Instruction, Spanish and Portuguese (WCAS), Heather Risser, Assistant Professor, Psychiatry and Behav. Sciences (Feinberg), Susan Pearson, Professor, History (WCAS)

#### **IV. Faculty Handbook Sections on Faculty Discipline**

The president shared a presentation (linked above in slides #27-32) provided by Associate Provost Sumit Dhar, who was unable attend the meeting. Questions other than those addressed in the Faculty handbook were noted for referral to Associate Provost Dhar.

The presentation detailed various types faculty discipline based on type: faculty fitness, discrimination and harassment, research misconduct, temporary suspension, and any other type of discipline (she did not elaborate on research misconduct and harassment cases because those are handled by different offices). Within those pathways are two distinct paths, one in which no chance of termination or suspension is possible and the other in which termination or suspension is possible. Faculty have input in both pathways, through the Committee on Cause (a Senate standing committee) and/or the Faculty Appeals Panel (committee of 3, chosen by the Provost, with an opportunity for faculty member to veto any faculty on the list of potential panel members). Some criteria for the committees are that members can't be from the same school as the faculty being investigated, at least one member must be non-tenure-eligible on the Faculty Appeals Panel, and at least two must be non-tenure-eligible on the Committee on Cause.

Senators expressed concern about a Dean's ability to remove teaching assignments without opportunity for appeal. It was shared that the Faculty Senate is a co-author of the Faculty Handbook and could propose any changes it sees necessary to the processes.

Other questions about faculty's obligation to serve as witnesses during an appeal and the difference between "general" and "severe" in the faculty disciplinary processes were raised.

Senators who spoke on this topic: Mark Johnson (Biomedical Engineering), Rebecca Zorach (Art History), Jean-François Gaillard (Civil and Environmental Engineering), Kalyani Chadha (Medill), Debu Chakravarti (Obstetrics and Gynecology), Past President Regan Thomson (Chemistry), Nasrin Qader (French and Italian), Susan Pearson (History)

## **V. New Business**

Senators discussed a recent letter from Northwestern's AAUP chapter on academic freedom at the University. Evaluation of issues raised in the letter was referred to the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee for further investigation.

Senators who spoke during this portion of the meeting: Rebecca Zorach (Art History), Ceci Rodgers (Medill), Simone Ispa-Landa (Sociology), Sara Solla (Physiology), Seth Lichter (Mechanical Engineering), Sarit Markovich (Strategy), Nasrin Qader (French and Italian), Kalyani Chadha (Medill), Susan Pearson (History), Mark Alznauer (Philosophy), Mark Johnson (Biomedical Engineering), Danny M. Cohen (Non-Tenure, SESP), Past President Regan Thomson (Chemistry), Judy Rosenbaum (Pritzker)

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jared Spitz

Secretary to the Faculty Senate