

Northwestern University
Minutes of the Faculty Senate
Hardin Hall - Evanston, Wieboldt Hall 421 - Chicago
October 17, 2018

The Northwestern University Faculty Senate held the first meeting of the 2018-19 academic year on October 17, 2018, at Hardin Hall in Evanston with videoconferencing to the Chicago campus in Wieboldt Hall 421. A number of Senators participated remotely. President Baron Reed called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m. A quorum was present.

The President welcomed the Senate, introduced the Senate leadership, Senate staff, and parliamentarian. He then gave a report: An ombuds working group has been established by the Provost. The Senate has two representatives on that committee, Karen Springen and Laurence Marks. The group is tasked with studying different models for an ombuds office and how those offices interact with offices throughout the university. The group was formed partially in response to a Senate proposal passed in April 2017 advocating for an ombuds office.

The President reported that the Faculty Fitness Panel, which was voted on at the June 2018 Senate meeting, has been finalized. He added that the final Faculty Fitness Panel policy is largely the same as the one passed by the Senate. The only notable difference is the membership of the panel, namely that an Associate Dean from a school not affiliated with the faculty member in question was chosen in lieu of a non-faculty administrator.

The President said that a task force on reconsidering CTECs has been formed under the leadership of Bennett Goldberg and Jaci Casazza. The Senate will be represented by Claudia Swan.

The President said he was asked to speak at the New Faculty Welcome event in September. A resource guide was provided to new faculty, and a link to the [guide](#) is now available on the Senate website.

The President said that the Sexual Misconduct Policy has also been finalized. The updated version has greater protections for due process for both complainants and respondents, which, the President said,

should ensure fairer results. Changes were made after extensive community review, including discussions last year in the full Senate.

The President highlighted two upcoming events: first, the November 1st Faculty Assembly, scheduled for 4:00-5:30 p.m. in Scott Hall's Guild Lounge. All Senators are expected to attend the Assembly and should also encourage their colleagues to do so. Second, the luncheon with the Board of Trustees is scheduled for November 16. The President said the format will be the same as last year, i.e., small table discussions with the theme "Opportunities for Academic Innovation." The President noted that the luncheon is an excellent opportunity to engage in shared governance with the Trustees. He said Northwestern is strongest when there are common goals and robust communication between the faculty, the administration, and the Board.

Following the President's report, an honorary degree nominee was presented by the chair of the Honorary Degree Committee, Edward Malthouse. A vote was then held to confirm the nominee.

The President entertained a motion to confirm the chairs of Faculty Senate Standing Committees. The motion was made and seconded, and the Senate confirmed the chairs as follows: Senator Sri Sridharan, Budget & Planning Committee; Senator Allan Horwich, Committee on Cause; Senator Claudia Swan, Educational Affairs Committee; Senator Richard Kieckhefer, Faculty Handbook Committee; Senator Jennifer Cole, Faculty Rights & Responsibilities Committee; Senator Laurel Harbridge-Yong, Governance Committee; Senator Elsa Alvaro, Non-Tenure Eligible Committee; Senator Thomas Meade, Research Affairs Committee; Senator Robert Gordon, Salary & Benefits Committee; Senator Lilah Shapiro, Secure Faculty Survey Committee; Senator Joshua Hauser, Social Responsibility Committee; Senator Karen Springen, Student Affairs Committee.

The President entertained a motion to confirm the members of the Committee on Cause. The motion was made and seconded, and the Senate confirmed the members as follows: Senator Allan Horwich (Chair); Senator Celia O'Brien; Senator Lilah Shapiro; Senator David Uttal; Senator Belma Hadziselimovic; Senator Hao Zhang; Senator Sarah Bartolome; Senator Hermann Riecke.

The Senate heard a report from the Faculty Handbook Committee. President-Elect Lois Hedman—former chair of the Faculty Handbook Committee—presented changes to the Faculty Handbook that have been considered for over a year. She noted that the Handbook is a living document and revisions are always being considered. Revisions for the 2017-18 academic year were presented at the June 2018 Senate meeting. At that meeting, the Senate extended the window for feedback to the October 2018 Senate meeting. Over the summer, the Handbook Committee and Provost Office carefully considered all faculty feedback and came up with the current revisions.

President-Elect Hedman then gave an overview of the proposed changes to the Faculty Handbook. Much of the focus for revisions was placed on faculty disciplinary and appeals processes. The revisions separate sexual misconduct, harassment and discrimination, research misconduct, and other disciplinary procedures. They also simplify, clarify, and specify mechanisms for notification of faculty, investigations preceding decisions about sanctions, the role of Faculty Appeals and Committee on Cause panels, and transparency in communication and decision-making. The policy explicitly encourages informal resolutions processes. There are also separate processes for suspension and termination and non-suspension termination situations. The sexual misconduct, discrimination, and harassment policy violation procedures were also revised. These revisions clarify the role of the Office of Equity during the investigation phase, add text about each party having the opportunity to review the penultimate draft of the findings letter and offer feedback, and clarify the roles of the Sanctioning Panel and Faculty Appeals Executive Committee throughout the appeals process.

In June, some faculty members raised concerns about the “reasonable person” standard laid out in the Handbook. President-Elect Hedman said that the committee had weighed this criticism throughout the summer, sought advice from legal experts in the Law School, and ultimately decided that the reasonable person standard defined objectivity in these circumstances.

President-Elect Hedman then concluded her presentation by highlighting updates to the “Faculty Grievance” and “Faculty Fitness for Duty” sections of the Handbook.

Current Faculty Handbook Committee Chair Richard Kieckhefer gave a brief overview on his committee's work for the upcoming year. This included reviewing University academic freedom policies and procedures, adding the Ombuds program to the Handbook when ready, and meeting with the Deans and Provost's Office to determine other priorities.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the proposed revisions to the Faculty Handbook. The floor was then open for discussion.

During discussion, the Faculty Handbook Committee agreed to give further consideration to the reasonable person standard in the Faculty Handbook.

The question was then called and the motion to adopt the revisions to the Faculty Handbook was approved.

Provost Jonathan Holloway began his remarks with a brief survey of how the University found itself in the midst of a budget deficit. A summary of the Provost's rundown of the deficit is as follows: Around this time last year, the system notified the central budgeting office that the University was running a budget deficit. One source of the deficit was a decision made several years earlier, when the University was sitting on a large amount of cash for a number of years, to make "big bets"—hiring stellar faculty, the Simpson-Querry building, etc. The problem was exacerbated by the spending of \$50 million in August by faculty who were promised funds when they were hired. This came as a surprise because the budgeting system was not built to notify anyone of these expenditures ahead of time. A further issue is that the University ran over \$600 million in surpluses and invested those surpluses in the endowment rather than in a more fungible savings account.

The Provost also said that when he spoke to the Senate last January, he was reporting the facts as he understood them at the time. With the information the administration had during Winter and Spring quarter last year, they were certain layoffs would not be necessary. Unfortunately, this was not the case,

as was discovered after Senior Vice President Craig Johnson came on board and conducted a scrupulous forensic investigation of the University's budget. This revealed a larger deficit, which in turn necessitated the layoffs in July, a fact that was deeply disappointing to both President Schapiro and Provost Holloway.

Thankfully, Provost Holloway said, the budget is now stable—the projections are matching the actuals. The Board has approved a two-year plan to be in the black, and the early trends are promising. Moving forward, the Provost said he is deeply committed to protecting the academic mission of the University. He also promised to return the university as quickly as possible to its aggressive pursuit of academic eminence with the appropriate fiscal checks in place that now alert the system when big spending is coming online.

After speaking with the deans, the Provost said he recognized the variable experiences this current fiscal climate imposes on the schools. Some schools are able to withstand financial restraint better than others based on a number of circumstances. He said that the Provost Office is very aware of these issues, and they are doing their best to support the deans without micromanaging the schools. Mostly, the Provost said, this interaction is tied to consistent communication from the schools about the financial situation. The Provost ended his overview by reiterating the importance of communication. He then opened the floor for questions.

Senator Bob Gordon from the Department of Economics asked for some clarification on the \$600 million from accumulated budget surpluses. Namely, were the surpluses invested into the endowment, which has a much lower payout, rather than a “rainy day fund”? The Provost said yes, but there is some nuance to consider. He said there is a traditional endowment, but there is also a quasi-endowment, from which funds are legally drawn each year, and it was the quasi-endowment, because of its name, that caused reluctance among some Board members to use it for deficit spending. That being said, the Provost agreed that a rainy day fund would have provided a larger safety net for the University. Senior Vice President Craig Johnson added that the timing of the fund balances somewhat skews the numbers.

The truth of the matter is revenue from surpluses three years ago were used to pay down some of the deficit this year.

Senator Claudia Swan from the Department of Art History asked if the ten percent cut in administration and five percent cut in academics was built into the three-year plan to reach the black. The Provost said those markers were put into FY2019 and the plan is for this to be the only year those cuts are administered. Senator Swan posed a follow-up question, wondering if a five percent cut in academics would halt projected hires in the faculty. Provost Holloway said those cuts depend on the school, which he mentioned before. In terms of hiring plans, the Provost said around 70 positions are sought each year in the faculty, and this year they approved 41. Senator Swan then thanked the Provost for his candor, especially given the amount of misinformation that had been swirling around the college. The Provost appreciated her thanks because he said that he is trying to move towards a more transparent environment regarding the budget.

Senator Venkat Chandrasekhar from the Department of Physics asked two questions: 1. If a facility goes to a private contractor, will the staff on hand at that facility currently be removed? Senior Vice President Johnson then stated that the University has an alliance director that provides facility services in the Chicago region. There is a director on that team who is filling in on an interim basis while Northwestern searches for a new director of facilities. He said there is no plan to completely outsource Northwestern's workforce. Core facilities functions will be kept in house. 2. Senator Chandrasekhar said in the Physics department, there are 37 faculty members and they admit only 12 graduate students per year, even if faculty members support students on research grants from day one. Thus, he asked if the issue of too few graduate students will be addressed. The Provost said that he has worked diligently with TGS Dean Teresa Woodruff and Weinberg Dean Adrian Randolph to examine this issue. For now, he said they are holding the number of students admitted at their current rate. This may feel like a decline, the Provost said. But the fact is, when Dean Woodruff was hired she realized graduate fellowship support was headed towards a steep decline if measures weren't taken to reduce the amount of spending. This is why they are keeping the admit rate for each department at its current rate for the next two years.

Taco Terpstra from the Department of Classics asked why the budget became such a sudden problem. The Provost said that was a very good question and he asked similar questions when he came on board. The Provost said he was confounded by some of the processes that hindered communication. In the last eight months, however, the Provost said he and Senior Vice President Johnson have cleared away those hindrances.

Senator Hao Zhang from the Department of Biomedical Engineering wished to clarify whether the roughly \$50 million deficit was mostly due to faculty members ordering very large and expensive pieces of equipment. Senior Vice President Johnson said that was not quite the case. In FY2017 there was roughly a \$12 million surplus, which included a \$75 million one-time draw from the endowment. For FY2018, that deficit has increased, and they are expecting a larger draw from the endowment this year. For FY2019, the target is to have only a \$50 million draw, and that was where that number originated.

Senator Karen Springen from Medill asked about the \$3 billion loan and how Northwestern plans to pay back such a large sum. Senior Vice President Craig Johnson said that debt is a financing tool that organizations use to cover capital and long-term expenses. He used the example of a building on campus to demonstrate how debt pays for upfront capital expenses and then spreads the cost over a period of time. Essentially, debt gives the University flexibility to fund buildings over a number of years based on a complicated financing structure—cash, donors, etc.

Senator Emmy Murphy from the Department of Mathematics recalled an earlier comment the Provost made about the extreme ends of transparency—no transparency at all versus being wholly transparent about everything. The Provost earlier said that he believes the right equilibrium lies somewhere in the middle of those two extremes. Senator Murphy then asked what is the negative of too much transparency. The Provost answered that radical transparency can, ironically, lead to a lack of understanding about nuances in the budget. People hone in on very specific parts of the budget, like salary or departmental budgets, and fail to contextualize the whole.

Senator Candy Lee from Medill said that individuals are proud of their departments or their school or their subject, but if one looks at the university as a whole there is a lot of duplication, in marketing units for example. Senator Lee wondered what the Provost thought about this overlap. The Provost said he has thought a lot about this topic and acknowledged that there was some redundancy in the system. However, he said this is not a unique phenomenon, especially in the Big Ten.

The meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Jared Spitz

Secretary to the Faculty Senate