

Northwestern University
Minutes of the Faculty Senate
Guild Lounge and Videoconference
April 3, 2024

The Northwestern University Faculty Senate held its standing monthly meeting on April 3, 2024 in Scott Hall's Guild Lounge and over Zoom videoconference. President Regan Thomson (Chemistry) called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. A quorum was present.

The president noted that the minutes from the March 6, 2024 meeting were approved electronically and entered into the record.

The president then introduced Chair of the Board of Trustees Peter Barris.

Mr. Barris thanked the Senate for the invitation. He said he wanted to share some reflections on where Northwestern is at, the work of the Board of Trustees over the past year, and shared governance.

Mr. Barris said he believes Northwestern continues to ascend and grow following President Schill's vision at his inauguration last year. He cited the investment in the biosciences, data science and AI, and sustainability research as examples of Northwestern's excellence. He also noted the efforts to promote access, opportunity, and diversity, furthering the outstanding undergraduate and graduate education programs, supporting student athletes, and free expression across differences.

Mr. Barris then acknowledged the challenges over the past year. He said he recognized the role many faculty, including the Faculty Senate, played in addressing those challenges. He said the athletics program has seen more than its fair share following the findings of hazing in the football program. He reiterated that Northwestern as an institution takes hazing in any form extremely seriously and that it has no place at the University. He said he appointed a special committee of Trustees on hazing in Athletics charged with monitoring the University's attentiveness to student safety and as well as management of the University's media inquiries and reputational fallout. He said that

committee meets less frequently now, but they continue to be engaged with President Schill, including monitoring the University's media footprint, ongoing litigation concerns, athletic department and student athlete concerns, and status updates from the review of the athletic department. He reminded the Senate about the focus of the investigation by Attorney General Loretta Lynch and her team at Paul, Weiss Law Firm. Namely, two components: assessing the culture both within athletics as it relates to the broader university and accountability, including reporting and response structures. He said the review process has included student athletes, students who are not athletes, all the head coaches, athletics leadership and staff, university administration and trustees. He said the reviewers have deliberately been engaging a range of faculty, including Faculty Senate leadership, Professor Wes Burghardt, the Faculty Athletics Representative to the Big Ten, and the Committee on Athletics and Recreation. He said, among its many considerations, the Paul, Weiss group is looking at ways to improve engagement between the athletics department and faculty. He added that the report remains on track to be delivered this spring with a commitment to making it public, and that the Faculty Senate's Athletics Ad Hoc Committee along with the Senate leadership will receive a briefing of the report ahead of its publication. He maintained that student athlete safety remains the principal priority as the University implements its new protocols following the report.

Mr. Barris said another unexpected challenge arose throughout higher education and Northwestern following Hamas' attack of Israel on October 7th and the subsequent violence in Gaza. He once again said students and their safety remain the top priority as the University navigates this difficult moment. He then mentioned the two presidential advisory committees appointed by President Schill—Committee on Preventing Antisemitism and Hate and the Advisory Committee on Free Expression and Institutional Speech—as an example of the University's efforts to grapple with these important and deeply nuanced topics. Mr. Barris also said the Board's Academic Affairs Committee met with the chairs from both of these committees recently.

Mr. Barris then updated the Senate on other important Board-related activities. He said the Board's Student Life Committee has advised the Student Affairs Office on the student code of conduct, with the intent to provide students with more clarity around things like demonstration policies and their obligations to the community. He said the Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee has had

discussions with Chief Operation Officer Luke Figora and Chief of Police Bruce Lewis as they consider strategies for responses to campus activism.

Mr. Barris then pivoted to the some of the strategic priorities for University and the Board of Trustees. He said the University is on strong footing, especially financially. This year, he said, the Board's Finance Committee has been actively discussing the seven-year financial plan as a roadmap for continued investment and growth in key areas, which will support Northwestern's ability to remain in a position of eminence. He said he believes this financial planning process presents a thoughtful budget that is tight, but continues to feed Northwestern's highest priorities. Most recently, the full Board discussed an update to the financial plan in March. He said a major component of the plan is current and future capital projects that align with institutional strategies, including reopening the Jacobs Center to serve as a hub for the social sciences, the School of Education and Social Policy, the Buffett Institute for Global Affairs, and the Institute for Policy Research. He said the Board looks forward to this fundamental improvement to Northwestern's campus and a major step forward in fostering interdisciplinary innovation among the social sciences and global studies, a key Presidential priority.

Mr. Barris said the student athlete experience will also be enhanced with new football and softball stadiums, thanks to donations from the Ryan family and the Kirkpatrick family respectively.

Mr. Barris said the east lawn of the Norris University Center will also be redeveloped, thanks to the support of Trustees and other donors. He said it will provide a high quality community space for students, faculty, and staff alike.

Mr. Barris said Kellogg's renowned Executive Education Program will soon be home to a new education center that will provide a premier student experience, innovative teaching and learning environments, and a more cohesive connection to the main Evanston campus and the Global Hub.

Mr. Barris said the Board has held several student panels this year related to the crisis in the Middle East, including discussing the climate on campus, the role of community spaces on campus, and other topics. He said he marvels at how intelligent and thoughtful Northwestern students are, and that gives him hope for the future. He also noted that the Board has likewise had panel discussions

with administrators related to these areas and others, like the fallout from the Supreme Court's decision on affirmative action or the recent changes intercollegiate athletics. On the latter, Mr. Barris said he appointed an ad hoc committee on athletics to better understand the overall athletics landscape as it continues to evolve in a number of ways from name, image, and likeness, player compensation, and monumental shifts in conferences and what this means for Northwestern.

Mr. Barris said the University continues to deepen its commitments to the Evanston community, most notably signing a new community benefits agreement with the city last fall. He said the disagreements between Evanston residents and the University on the Ryan Field proposal was difficult, but it led to a stronger bond between University leadership and Evanston leaders. In that regard, he said the Board invited the current Evanston Mayor Daniel Biss, which was the first time in recent memory the Board met with the Mayor of Evanston. He said the University and the city are intrinsically linked.

The Board, Mr. Barris said, continues to receive regular school-level reports from the deans. This year they have heard from Dean Osofsky on the strategy for Pritzker Law School and Dean Krady on the strategy for NU-Q. This year the Board also implemented spotlights between committee meetings to support Trustee engagement with programmatic efforts at the University. One example was Dean Charles Whitaker and several Medill faculty members speaking on the future of journalism. He said this is one example of the Board's attempts to increase connection between the Board and faculty, which he sees as very important to engagement and understanding.

Mr. Barris said the Board completed a recent program review. The outcome of that report consisted of four objectives for the Board: governance, philanthropy, advocacy, and calling on the expertise of the Board when it is needed. The Board's conclusion was, in order to meet these objectives, they would remain a relatively large Board. What they did instead was focus their efforts on their committee structure. Mr. Barris said they reduced the size of the committees and increased the use of ad hoc committees and task forces. Committee charters were also reviewed again and approved. He said the purpose of the Board's Executive Committee was carefully considered and right-sized from thirty members to less than fifteen, enabling it to be a more deliberative body and to better represent the Board in many ways. He said other key recommendations from the review's report included supporting the engagement of the trustees, continuing to monitor the skills and diversity

represented on the Board, and developing spotlight sessions that increase connections between the Board and the rest of the University.

Before he concluded his remarks, Mr. Barris took a moment to reflect on shared governance. He said the Board of Trustees values its partnership with faculty. He noted the commitment of the Faculty Senate and the common desire to make Northwestern an even greater institution. He said the President of the Faculty Senate has served as a liaison to the Board's Academic Affairs Committee since 2017. He said Senate President Regan Thomson and his predecessors have been valuable contributors there. He added that the Board Chair has met with the Faculty Senate annually for over ten years now and he personally found it incredibly educational. He said he welcomed feedback from the Senate on ways they can further work with the Board, and listed some potential examples, like faculty discussion and participation in Board committee meetings or during some of the extracurricular spotlights. At any rate, he said he looks forward to these continued engagements.

The president then opened the floor for questions.

Senator Luís Amaral (Chemical and Biological Engineering) said it was heartening to hear about the changes the Board is making, which, in his view, addressed some of the things the report he put together mentioned in terms of the Board being an outlier in size. He added that he would like more transparency, specifically knowing who occupies certain positions on the Board, like the Executive Committee or chairing certain committees, so that they can be the face for the decisions the Board makes. He asked if there is a plan for publicizing that information, and if so, what is the timeline. Mr. Barris said during the session he just had with the Senate's Executive Committee they discussed putting the chairs of the Faculty Senate's committees in touch with the relevant chairs from the Board's committees. He said the goal is to encourage dialogue between those groups. He said what they don't want to do is put a lot of names on websites and expose Trustees to uncontrolled input from people. He said he doesn't have a problem with people knowing who a committee chair is, but he also wants to prevent Trustees' being bombarded. He said the Board would work with the Senate to determine the best way to engage.

Senator Mark Johnson (Biomedical Engineering) said he was happy to hear the University finances are in good condition. However, he said he was concerned about some larger costs coming soon:

the cost of the football stadium, the settlement of the financial aid lawsuit, Pat Fitzgerald's lawsuit, the cost of the raise in stipends for graduate students after they unionized, among others. He asked how these costs might affect the University and faculty in particular over the next few years. Mr. Barris said there are a lot of upcoming costs. However, he said there is a major donor for the new football stadium who is taking on the lion's share, and the other costs were anticipated with regular upkeep of the old Ryan Field, so the net cost is nothing more than the status quo. Once the stadium is built, he said the operations will be within the purview of athletics and their budget. He said they have maintained from day one that the new football stadium would not come at the expense of academics. He said he could not comment specifically on the legal settlements. He said they do provide for some of that in their regular budget, but did acknowledge there are several very large lawsuits against the University. He said some of those costs will be covered by insurance, and they built in assumptions of legal costs into their seven-year budget. He said at this point in time he doesn't see an issue with the University's finances as he doesn't expect any of those to significantly impact the University's priorities.

Senator Jennifer Cole (Linguistics) said there are number of conversations—among different stakeholders—happening on campus right now regarding deep concern about sustainability. She asked how the Board is grappling with sustainability. Specifically, she asked if the Board considers in their seven-year plan the benefits of investments today towards sustainability goals that might be more readily appreciated and manifest in the future. Mr. Barris said sustainability touches on many areas in the University. He said there is the research side, considering sustainability with capital projects, as it relates to investments, and he cited progress in each of these areas. He said they pay close attention to all of these.

Senator Therese McGuire (Strategy) asked if Mr. Barris and his colleagues on the Board have spoken with their peers at other institutions about the relationship between faculty and the Boards on their campuses. Mr. Barris said that in some of the discussions they talked about that topic. He said there are a few trustee groups that have some academics serving on their Board. He said the Nominations and Governance Committee are trying to source, evaluate, and consider academics they might invite to Northwestern's Board.

The president thanked Mr. Barris for joining the Senate and for sharing his perspective on further interactions between the Senate and the Board.

The president then introduced Associate Vice President for Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance Emily Babb.

Associate Vice President Babb shared a [slide deck](#) with the Senate. She gave a quick overview of the Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance Office (OCR). She said that in March 2023, the Office of Equity switched to OCR and moved from the Provost's Office to the President's. She said there was significant turnover in staffing (all but four individuals). That transition allowed for a reset, she said. There are two main wings: Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct and Accommodations. During the reset, they focused on who's coming in the door. With that in mind, they hired two full-time case managers. Those two individuals are responsible for the entire timeline of a report once it comes in through the life of it, whether there is an investigation or not. She said she wants OCR to focus on three main principles: ensuring people have information about OCR's processes and supportive measures (focus on support), offer to meet with anyone who wants to meet with OCR (typically within a day or two), and ensure people understand their options. Associate Vice President Babb said they also added to the investigative staff (five full-time investigators). Likewise, they have also added on to ADA and accommodation staffing (three individuals).

Associate Vice President Babb said OCR publishes an [annual report](#) each year. She went through some of the data in the latest report from academic year 2022-2023. She said that reporting has gone up since the pandemic started, but noted a similar trend to pre-covid years. She noted that the majority of complaints come from students. She said they did receive an increase in reports in October and November (compared to the prior years) around national origin and religion. She said those numbers have gone down as time has passed since the attack on Israel on October 7th.

Associate Vice President Babb highlighted reporting obligations. She said when she started in May 2023 she wanted to make clear what reporting is required. Namely, all Northwestern employees (including student employees) and graduate students with teaching or supervisory authority are obligated to promptly report incidents of discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct of

which they become aware in the scope of their work for the University to the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance. She said her office has taken an intentional approach to training on reporting across the University. She also shared the protected categories, which are available in the current [Policy on Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct](#). OCR is also responsible for the [Interim Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment](#).

Associate Vice President Babb also shared information on how to report. There are online reporting forms on the OCR website, individuals can email at ocr@northwestern.edu, or call OCR office at 847-467-6165. She also shared a high level overview of what happens when a report is made, first sharing resource, outreach, and supportive measures, then having a conversation about OCR can offer, potentially leading to a formal complaint that has one of three outcomes, an educational conversation with the individual, an alternative resolution, or a formal resolution (formal investigation with written notice to see whether or not a policy was violated; assume non-responsibility, but also presume the report was made in good faith).

Lastly, Associate Vice President Babb shared a brief overview of what OCR is doing now: a campus climate survey on sexual misconduct (created by the state of Illinois and went to every student, undergrad and grad, who enrolled in a class at some point this year), education and training for students, faculty, and staff, policy revisions (Title IX regulations, Section 504, Title VI), and ADA and accessibility education and outreach.

The president then opened the floor for questions.

The president began by asking if there were any changes to policies after the graduate students unionized. Associate Vice President Babb said there are three protected statuses that will be amended in the current non-discrimination policy: creed, caste, and ethnicity. She noted that there is a grievance process in the grad worker's union's collective bargaining agreement. She said their office is responsible for that grievance process and will ensure it aligns with the final bargaining agreement.

Senator Barbara Newman (English) said the number of reports seemed high. She asked what proportion of complaints lead to formal investigations and what proportion of those complaints

have to do with a power imbalance between say a professor and a student or an employee and a boss. Associate Vice President Babb said in the 2022-23 annual report the majority of cases do not proceed to an investigation or informal resolution. Of the reports, she said 217 had not responded to OCR's outreach (both unknown complainants and those who chose not to proceed). 106 responded they did not want to move forward. OCR had 35 formal investigations. She said 13 were informal responses and 39 were insufficient informationally. 93 were referred to another unit. 86 were simply out of OCR's jurisdiction. She said the number of complaints is not an outlier compared to other institutions. She said, in terms of power dynamic, they disaggregate the data to protect the privacy of individuals, so she could not give a specific percentage.

Past President Ceci Rodgers (Medill) asked if OCR is on call. Associate Vice President Babb said yes, kind of. The administrator on call is generally within the Office of the Dean of Students. She said that she is on call if they have an issue that falls to OCR. She added that the reporting form is not 24/7 and they try to ensure individuals have access to offices that are.

Senator Greg Beitel (Molecular Biosciences) said he heard at a conference that other institutions have a system where individuals could submit information contingent on making a report if other individuals came forward. This meant that no one would have to go by themselves. He asked if Northwestern has done anything like that or plans to. Associate Vice President Babb said she is familiar with that program. She said they have not moved forward on that. She said internally they track through a case management system tied to an individual's identity. If multiple reports come through, they have the ability to move forward thanks to their careful tracking.

The president then thanked Associate Vice President Babb for such an informative presentation.

The president then began his [report](#).

The president said he met with the chairs from the Presidential Committees—Free Expression and Institutional Speech and Preventing Antisemitism and Hate—and plans for the Senate to engage with both. For the former, he said would circulate a document to solicit input from senators and also hold a closed Zoom meeting (May 14). For the latter, the plan is to seek active engagement with

their workgroups “curricular and teaching possibilities” and listening to students, staff, and faculty.” He said specific comments could be directed to presidentsadvisorycommittee@northwestern.edu.

The president reminded the Senate about two upcoming meetings:

- the Faculty Senate meeting on May 8th will be held *downtown* in the Simpson-Querry Auditorium with a reception in the Potocsnak Family Atrium to follow.
- The Spring Faculty Assembly will be held on the Evanston Campus in Scott Hall’s Guild Lounge on April 29th from 3-4:30 p.m.

The president asked if there were questions related to his report.

Senator Amaral said the updates from the Committee on Preventing Antisemitism and Hate don’t offer any information. He asked the president if he got more during his meeting with them. The president said he did not. He said his sense is they are doing a lot, but they are somewhat nervous about saying too much publicly. The president noted that the committees will ultimately make recommendations and the Senate will have a chance to respond to those.

With no further questions, the Senate moved on to talk about Senate representation on University committees. The president said this is a crucial part of shared governance, with faculty and senators serving on University-wide committees. He noted the effort to reimagine CTECs which now has a Senate representative on that committee (Senator Jacqueline Babb, Medill), Senator Rebecca Zorach (Art History) serving on a working group looking at policies regarding on-campus displays, and his own service on the Policy Review Committee, amongst several others.

Past President Rodgers, one of two faculty members on the Campus Safety and Wellness Committee, updated the Senate on their activities this year.

Past President Rodgers said Campus Safety and Wellness Committee was constituted in December 2022, charged with engaging the community on the ongoing safety and security reforms recommended by the Community Safety Advisory Board (CSAB). The committee is co-chaired by Chief of Police Bruce Lewis and Dean of Students Mona Dugo, with 25 members, including

administrators, faculty, students, and staff. She said it is significant the Dean of Students is the co-chair because there is the added emphasis on mental health resources.

Past President Rodgers shared the CSAB's four key proposals offered at the February 2023 Faculty Senate meeting:

- **CSAB Proposal #1: Alternative Responses to Mental Health Crises**
- **CSAB Proposal #2: Expand the Non-Armed Response to Low-Risk Events**
- CSAB Proposal #3: Re-route Any Complaints about Safety Team Members – enacted in 2022 (EthicsPoint, online, anonymous system)
- CSAB Proposal #4: Reduce Use of Racial Identifiers – enacted in 2022

The two items in bold are still being worked on. Past President Rodgers said they held a meeting on March 7th, and the focus of that meeting was on-call response and well-being checks. There are three “on-call partners”: NUPD, Resident directors, and an administrator on call (NUHelp). Responses, she said, and even definitions of concern levels, differed for each entity. The Campus Safety and Wellness Committee developed uniform levels of concern responses and documentation in the following ways:

- **Immediate – respond ASAP**
 - Emergency services such as EMTs or NUPD
- **Urgent – address within 24 hours**
 - Resident director, Administrator on call
- **Non-urgent – address within 24-48 hours**
 - Resident director, Administrator on call

She the committee has also been looking at the policing of low-risk, non-criminal situations. She said they placed “safety ambassadors” or otherwise known as Community Service Officers (CSOs) in the 22 residential halls and shifted them out of NUPD and into the Environmental Health Department. The University also enhanced training in de-escalation, first aid and substance abuse for CSOs and contract security, and is implementing advanced de-escalation training for mental health in April. They also got new uniforms (polo shirts and slacks). She also noted that Northwestern has received

6,000 fentanyl testing strips from a non-profit and is dispensing them at Searle and Norris. Past President Rodgers added that they are reviewing the amnesty policy on overdoses.

Past President Rodgers then went over alternative responses to mental health crises. She said the delay to rolling out a new response team was due to a lengthy search to find a director. The University ended up hiring David Young, who started in August 2023. The planned approach is to use a co-responder model, based on some of the best in the country, like at Johns Hopkins, University of Illinois, and University of Texas. She acknowledged there was a lot still to be done as the University must build infrastructure, staff the office, and launch the pilot.

Past President Rodgers said they received an update on the Alert NU Messaging System. She said their purpose is to reach as many people as possible. She said it reaches 54,000 people through email, text, phone (cell phone is the fastest). She said the timing on when the messages go out has been significantly reduced, thanks in part to first responders making the call. The messages are canned, she said, and are set to update every 15 minutes. If anyone would like to remove unwanted modes of communication, they can do so in myHR.

The president then opened the floor for questions.

Senator Newman said she is a dissenter to the emergency alert system. She said she doesn't believe that many people need the messages and that the messages themselves are useless. She said she wishes the administration would consider the mental health of people being messaged. Past President Rodgers said she did mention to the person who presented on the emergency alert system that some faculty thought it was too much. She said the administration plans to put together communication that better explains what they are trying to do with the messages and that also stresses how important those messages will be should a true emergency ever happen.

Senator Amaral asked about the appointment of Director David Young. He asked why it took so long to hire him and what his background is. Past President Rodgers said they started looking for a director at the end of 2022, and he was hired by August 2023. She wasn't sure if that was long or not. She noted that Director Young came from a local school system where he implemented the same co-responder model and that he also was a former member of the FBI. Senator Amaral said

the process for creating the co-responder model has been unimpressive at best, and that he was especially concerned with the hiring of someone with a law enforcement background to direct it.

Senator Zorach echoed Senator Amaral's statement and also said the original commitments of the CSAB seemed to have been wiped from the website. Thus, she wondered how this process was being communicated to the broader Northwestern community. Past President Rodgers said she was thankful for that information being brought to her attention as she was not aware of anything being taken down from websites.

Senator Babb then updated the Senate on Northwestern's 2025 institutional reaccreditation. She gave a brief background on reaccreditation, noting that Northwestern was first accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) in 1913. HLC recognizes educational quality and regulatory compliance and determines eligibility to participate in Federal Student Aid programs. She said Northwestern's previous 10-year review took place in 2014-2015, with a successful midpoint review taking place in 2019, all of which was supported by a core team in the Office of the Provost with broad stakeholder engagement—faculty, students, and staff.

Senator Babb said there are representatives from the schools, the libraries, and many other administrative offices. They meet twice a month to prepare for the reaccreditation process. She asked senators to please be responsive to outreach about reaccreditation. She also encouraged them to get involved in the process by generating ideas, providing evidence and data, and meeting with the Peer Review Team. More information about school representatives and reaccreditation can be found [here](#).

The president opened the floor for questions.

Senator McGuire asked about the specific timeframe. Senator Babb said they have about a year left. The report is due before the Higher Learning Commission comes.

The president thanked Senator Babb for the updates.

The president then asked if there was any new business.

Senator Johnson asked about new business during the last meeting related to doors being locked on campus. The president said the Social Responsibility Committee plans to meet with Chief Operating Officer Figora to discuss that and other items.

Senator Amaral reported that the Social Responsibility Committee has sent formal requests for information to the administration and received informal responses. He suggested speaking with the administration about this.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jared Spitz
Secretary to the Faculty Senate