

Spring Quarter Newsletter of the Faculty Senate

June 9, 2023

Dear Northwestern Faculty,

Greetings and congratulations on another successful academic year! Per usual, the Faculty Senate had a busy spring quarter with the dash to complete unfinished business before faculty leave campus for the summer and the Senate transitions to new leadership for the next academic year. Regan Thomson, Weinberg Professor of Chemistry, will assume the duties of Faculty Senate President and I will transition to Past President.

At its final meeting of the year this week, the Senate also chose Jill Hardin Wilson, McCormick Professor of Instruction in Industrial Engineering and Management Sciences, to become President-Elect. Regan and Jill will begin their terms on August 1.

As a reminder, the [Faculty Senate](#) is Northwestern's only elected representative body. We work through committees, which prepare proposals that express faculty values and interests, brought to us from senators, often through their faculty constituents. These proposals can take time, as the Senate works deliberatively and negotiates in a shared governance structure with university administration.

Additionally, your senators participate in important policy and academic discussions with senior leaders. They sit on university-wide committees that review academic policies, campus safety and wellness, resources and planning, and other critical areas. The Faculty Senate President participates in monthly senior leadership meetings that include department heads in central administration and deans of the university's schools.

I hope you'll take the time to read this newsletter, written to give you an overview of Senate activities, and to share your thoughts and suggestions with [your department's Senate representative](#) or by emailing me and the Faculty Senate leadership.

RECENT FACULTY SENATE MEETINGS

The full Faculty Senate meets monthly, as does the Senate Executive Committee, consisting of the chairs of the 12 standing committees and the Senate's President-Elect, President, and Past President. University leaders are frequently invited to monthly meetings to brief senators on new initiatives and pressing issues of importance to faculty and the broader University. The meetings are also where Senate committees bring formal resolutions that are then delivered to the University President and Provost, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and any other relevant units.

- ***April Faculty Senate meeting:*** New Chair of the Board of Trustees Peter Barris continued the Senate's annual tradition of appearing at the April meeting to speak and take questions. He updated the Senate on Northwestern's continued status as a top-tier university and expressed confidence in our future trajectory. He explained the role of the Board of Trustees at length, including how it is involved (or not) in various University functions, such as budgeting, capital projects and others. To read more of Mr. Barris's comments and his answers to faculty questions, see the [April meeting minutes](#). The Senate also approved a Social Responsibility Committee [resolution](#) to outfit buildings to reduce the death of migrating and non-migrating birds on the Evanston campus.

- **May Faculty Senate meeting:** New Vice President of Student Affairs Susan Davis met with the Faculty Senate just four weeks after arriving at Northwestern. She shared her priorities, which center on undergraduate and graduate student well-being. Faculty shared some of their experiences and observations about student stressors and Vice President Davis asked for ongoing feedback and collaboration. Also at the meeting, Senator Gina Petersen announced the launch of an internal survey of the Faculty Senate by the Secure Faculty Survey Committee. The committee committed to share the survey results at the June meeting. Senator Mark Witte introduced two amendments to the Faculty Senate bylaws from the Governance Committee. One amendment would provide a mechanism for senators to self-nominate to chair a Faculty Senate committee. The other would give senators more time to vote on a motion to remove a Faculty Senate President. Furthermore, Senator Jill Wilson, chair of the Educational Affairs Committee, briefed the Senate on her discussions with Registrar Jaci Casazza about changes underway for CTECs. The Senate also voted on nominations for 2024 honorary degrees and the Senate's Executive Committee nominated Senator Jill Wilson as a candidate for President-Elect for the 2023-24 academic year. You can read more in the [May meeting minutes](#).
- **June Faculty Senate meeting:** Senator Bob McDonald presented the Salary and Benefits Committee's annual faculty salary report, which is compiled with data from the American Association of University Professors, Northwestern's Provost's Office, and Institutional Research. The report can be accessed [here](#) and will be posted on the [Faculty Senate's website](#) in the committee's year-end report. Senator Gina Petersen presented the [findings](#) from the internal Faculty Senate survey, which sought feedback on senators' experience of Senate meetings, committees and their understanding of shared governance. Senators then broke into groups to discuss ideas for improvements next year and reported back to the full Senate. Nearly 2/3 of the Senate participated in the survey. Also at the meeting, the Senate voted on the two bylaws amendments introduced at the May meeting. The 2/3 majority of the full Senate was not reached by those in attendance (in person and on Zoom), so those absent will have two weeks (until June 21) to submit their votes by email. As previously mentioned, the Faculty Senate voted to approve Jill Wilson as President-Elect of the Faculty Senate. Her three-year term in senior leadership begins August 1. The [June meeting minutes](#) will be posted by the end of the month.

STANDING COMMITTEES

The Faculty Senate's standing committees continue their work on a variety of issues and projects, some of which came before the full Senate in the spring quarter:

- As detailed above, the Senate's Secure Faculty Survey Committee wrote and administered an internal survey of the Faculty Senate and presented its [findings](#) at the final meeting of the year. Among the survey's findings, senators would like to see more integration with the Chicago campus, including holding at least one Faculty Senate meeting in Chicago next year; they would like more interactive discussion at Senate meetings; and they support a more robust orientation for incoming Senators.
- The Social Responsibility Committee presented a [resolution](#) to reduce the number of migratory and non-migratory bird deaths on the Evanston campus by installing bird-friendly measures at Mudd Hall and the Allen Center and reevaluating best practices every five years. The resolution was approved at the Faculty Senate's April meeting.

For those not familiar with Northwestern's Faculty Senate standing committees, I'd like to provide a little background about their work. Before informing the Senate on an issue or writing a resolution, the committee collects information and data to determine what (or whether) action should be taken. The Senate's dedicated researcher, Tricia England, is frequently tasked with gathering data from peer institutions and within Northwestern, and unearthing the latest studies and articles that provide broader context on an issue. Committees or their chairs also meet with relevant unit heads and central administrators to flesh out the current state of the issue at Northwestern. Several standing committees held such meetings in the spring quarter, including:

- *Budget and Planning*: The committee met with President Michael Schill and Provost Kathleen Hagerty to discuss budgeting at Northwestern and how endowment-draw decisions are made. Next fall, the committee plans to examine the percentage of endowment funds peer institutions use for their annual budget.
- *Educational Affairs*: The committee met with Registrar Jaci Casazza to follow up on a 2018 Senate proposal to revise CTECs. The Committee to Reimagine CTECs was created as a result of that resolution, and, after a pause due to the pandemic, plans to launch a pilot course survey in select classes in fall 2023.
- *Non-Tenure Eligible*: Held their quarterly meeting with Associate Provost for Faculty Sumit Dhar, which included discussion of a NTE Salary Equity Study that will follow the Tenure-Track Salary Equity Study that is underway. The committee provided feedback on the data they believe most critical to an effective study.
- *Research Affairs*: Held their standing quarterly meeting with Vice President for Research Milan Mrksich and Vice Dean for Scientific Affairs and Graduate Education Rex Chisholm. Amy Weber, Senior Director for Export Controls and International Compliance also joined the committee to provide further information on NSPM33, a directive from President Biden's administration requiring all federal funding agencies to strengthen and standardize disclosure policies.
- *Salary and Benefits*: Produced their annual salary report with significant research done by Senate Researcher Tricia England and considerable help from the Office of Institutional Research. The committee continues to take faculty feedback into account as it updates its salary report methodology. This year, faculty input spurred ongoing collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research to substantively expand the type of salary data available to faculty.
- *Social Responsibility*: The committee met with Chief Investment Officer Amy Falls on May 9 to discuss a host of topics, including the status of the Advisory Committee on Investment Responsibility, the University's position on divestment, and being a potential resource for the Investment Office in the future.
- *Student Affairs*: The committee met with Student Affairs Vice President Susan Davis on May 3 to discuss her vision for the Office of Student Affairs and to provide faculty perspectives on student life. The committee also met with several representatives from Associated Student Government, including Co-Presidents Molly Whalen and Donovan Cusick. The committee reinstated standing meetings with student leadership this year and plans to continue the practice going forward.

ADDITIONAL EVENTS

- **Faculty Assembly:** The second Faculty Assembly of the academic year was held on May 22. The topic was "The Role of Athletics at a University Like Northwestern" with a particular focus on the impact of a 2021 ruling that allowed student athletes for the first time to profit from their Name, Image and Likeness. President Schill chaired the Assembly and I moderated a panel that included Athletic Director Derrick Gragg, two of his colleagues, along with faculty representatives for the Big Ten and the Committee on Athletics and Recreation. The discussion centered on the seismic changes taking place in collegiate athletics and their likely impact on Northwestern. Panelists answered questions from faculty on a range of topics, from how student athletes are advised on majors to the status of the new stadium. It was an enlightening 90 minutes. The [video](#) of the event is posted on the Faculty Assembly website.
- **Quarterly Summit:** On April 24, the Executive Committee met with President Mike Schill, Provost Kathleen Hagerty, Associate Provost Sumit Dhar and Vice Provost Jake Julia. Deputy General Counsel Priya Harjani and Dean of Undergraduate Enrollment Chris Watson also joined this quarter's meeting. Research Affairs Committee Chair Tom Hope briefed the group on the committee's quarterly meetings with Vice President for Research Milan Mrksich and Associate Vice President for Research Rex Chisolm. Senator Hope and the committee shared concerns around some changes in IT protocols that had caused problems, particularly at Feinberg. He said solid steps were subsequently taken towards better communication and transparency. The Executive Committee was then briefed on preparations for the Supreme Court's upcoming ruling on Affirmative Action that's expected to curtail the ability of schools to consider race in admissions. If the Supreme Court decision does indeed result in significant changes to or the end of Affirmative Action, General Counsel and the Provost's Office will work over the summer to provide training to those in schools and units involved in admissions.

As a reminder, any faculty member can attend [meetings of the full Senate](#) as a non-voting member. President Schill continues to come to Guild Lounge for the meetings as a non-voting member. The meetings are in person at Scott Hall's Guild Lounge or on Zoom. The meeting agenda, along with Zoom information, is posted in advance on the Senate's website.

[Your department has an elected Faculty Senate representative](#) who stands ready to field your questions and concerns. In addition to departmental representation, NTE faculty also have dedicated NTE representatives from each school. For more information or to learn more about the Senate, you can also visit our [website](#), contact us at faculty-senate@northwestern.edu, or feel free to reach out to me at c-rodgers@northwestern.edu

Whether you plan to teach, write, travel, or simply hang out, I hope you have a wonderful summer!

Best Regards,
Ceci Rodgers
Assistant Professor, Medill