

Report of the Committee on Northwestern University's COVID-19 Response

American Association of University Professors

Northwestern University Chapter

Endorsed by the Northwestern University - AAUP Executive Committee
and chapter membership on 12/7/2020

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"Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities"

Effective planning demands that the broadest possible exchange of information and opinion should be the rule for communication among the components of a college or university....The allocation of resources among competing demands is central in the formal responsibility of the governing board, in the administrative authority of the president, and in the educational function of the faculty. Each component should therefore have a voice in the determination of the short- and long-range priorities, and each should receive appropriate analyses of past budgetary experience, reports on current budgets and expenditures, and short- and long-range budgetary projections...

--Jointly formulated by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the American Council on Education, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (1966) [excerpt]

Preface

This Report was prepared by a committee of the NU-AAUP for review and vote by the NU-AAUP chapter membership, following which it will be circulated to our Northwestern colleagues for their endorsement, and then distributed to the Northwestern University administration for response. It also will be sent to the national AAUP body and made available publicly.

This report documents actions and omissions by Northwestern University (NU) officers that contravene bedrock principles and current standards of the AAUP. As faculty, we focus on our scholarship and teaching, not other matters tied to running a university, including financing and budgeting. However, when administrators make decisions that undermine our core mission of education, it is the responsibility of faculty to take their rightful place at the table of shared governance to ensure that our academic concerns are prioritized. Disregard of AAUP standards produces poor educational outcomes. The ongoing erosion at this university of professional

norms achieved by the AAUP over the last century has produced among our colleagues a widespread ignorance of the importance of AAUP principles and, in turn, a tacit acceptance of the administration's evasions of its obligations. Faculty have become accustomed to the lack of consultation or even information about University decisions that affect our students and ourselves, and to which we are entitled.

The purpose of this report is two-fold. First, we invite colleagues to educate themselves about substantial discrepancies between AAUP standards and principles on faculty governance and academic integrity, on the one hand, and respective NU policies and practices, on the other. In a time of a pandemic crisis these matters have become even more important, as unilateral and rushed decisions on the part of the administration set dangerous new precedents. Second, we further invite faculty to press NU's leadership to adhere to the University's stated mission of education and to fully implement AAUP principles and standards, especially those that are already official policies of the University. You may do so through joining the AAUP and working with our chapter, direct engagement, participation on university committees, and by ensuring that your colleagues and department representative to the Faculty Senate understand that these matters are a priority for you.

This report emerges in the wake of the chaos, lack of transparency, and exclusion of faculty from decisions that centrally affect fundamental faculty responsibilities. For example, we have experienced three changes in grading policy over the course of six months without the approval of our representatives to the Faculty Senate or even review by its committees.

The 2018 shortfall, supposedly somewhere between \$62.5 million to \$150 million, was accompanied by shifting math and vague, incoherent explanations. But the layoffs, salary freezes, benefit cuts, hiring cutbacks, and slashed operating budgets were vivid and demonstrably impaired the educational mission of the University. Current pandemic cuts have been accompanied by the same incoherent explanations, leading to a dissonance that could substantially hurt the university's national reputation for excellence. For example, less than three months after substantial cuts and dire warnings these would be insufficient to offset projected losses, the budget for the fiscal year that ended in August 2020 revealed a surplus.

We call upon our colleagues to first review this report and then consider an endorsement of its findings. The report and findings will be shared with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and university officers and trustees for response and a plan of action for remediation, as well as with the national AAUP office. The AAUP is compiling reports from chapter members on respective administrations' COVID-era actions.

If you find the oversight that the AAUP provides via reports like these crucial to the healthy functioning of a university and want to join like-minded colleagues, you can join our chapter today via the national [AAUP](https://www.aaup.org/membership/join)¹ website. Your name will be immediately forwarded to President Jorge Coranado and he will update you with the activities of our chapter. (Fees may be reimbursed from your discretionary account.)

¹ AAUP Website - <https://www.aaup.org/membership/join>

NU AAUP Findings - Overview

- (1) FAILURE OF THE PRESIDENT, PROVOST, AND SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF FINANCE TO CONSULT WITH FACULTY ABOUT OPERATIONAL REVENUES AND EXPENSES, AND OTHER ALLOCATIONS THAT AFFECT THE MISSION OF EDUCATION, INCLUDING THOSE BASED ON CLAIMS ABOUT THE ENDOWMENT
- (2) CHANGES IN GRADE AND CURRICULAR POLICIES ABSENT FACULTY CONSULTATION OR APPROVAL
- (3) REFUSAL TO CONSULT OR SHARE WITH FACULTY INFORMATION RELEVANT TO NU'S ACCREDITATION, INCLUDING BY THE HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION AND ACCREDITING COUNCIL ON EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS
- (4) FACULTY COMMITTEE SLATES SELECTED BY ADMINISTRATION, NOT NOMINATIONS BY THE FACULTY

FINDINGS

(1) FAILURE OF THE PRESIDENT, PROVOST, AND SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF BUSINESS AND FINANCE TO CONSULT WITH FACULTY ABOUT OPERATIONAL REVENUES AND EXPENSES, AND OTHER ALLOCATIONS THAT AFFECT THE MISSION OF EDUCATION, INCLUDING THOSE BASED ON CLAIMS ABOUT THE ENDOWMENT

THE ROLE OF THE FACULTY IN BUDGETARY AND SALARY MATTERS

Faculty Participation in Budgeting - The faculty should participate both in the preparation of the total institutional budget and (within the framework of the total budget) in decisions relevant to the further apportioning of its specific fiscal divisions (salaries, academic programs, tuition, physical plant, and grounds...). The soundness of resulting decisions should be enhanced if an elected representative committee of the faculty participates in deciding on the overall allocation of institutional resources and the proportion to be devoted directly to the academic program. This committee should be given access to all information that it requires to perform its task effectively, and it should have the opportunity to confer periodically with representatives of the administration and governing board.... AAUP - Committee on College and University Governance, adopted by the Council in 1972, and endorsed by the 58th meeting.

In violation of the AAUP policy and principles on budgetary and salary matters, NU has continued its longstanding practice of failing to share information and consult with the faculty, including the Faculty Senate (FS) Executive Committee and other FS committees, about a wide range of institutional budgeting, including: staff cuts, compensation reductions, and massive cuts to program and department operating budgets. FS representatives and NU-AAUP officials repeatedly have been rebuffed in their request for information from the President, the Provost, the Senior Vice President of Finance, the Dean of the McCormick School of Engineering, and the Dean of Weinberg College of Arts and Science. Instead, the administration has turned over

information to private consulting firms and then operationalized their priorities, regardless of the harm posed to the university's education mission.²

The cuts to our faculty, staff, programs, and compensation have occurred via protocols that disregard AAUP standards, including for financial exigencies:

Established AAUP policies therefore provide clear and unambiguous support for the position that faculty consultation and participation should be integral to the budget process, quite apart from any consideration of the financial status of the institution. Faculty consultation and participation in budget matters should simply be part of the ordinary course of business, in good times or in bad... Before any proposals for program discontinuance on financial grounds are made or entertained, the faculty must be afforded the opportunity to render an assessment in writing on the institution's financial condition.... AAUP - The Role of the Faculty in Conditions of Financial Exigency, Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure, adopted by the Council in June, 2013.

Moreover, publicly available financial information about stock indexes indicate that NU has no *bona fide* financial exigencies that would impact the endowment.³ Many peer institutions did not cut compensation, but responded to diminished revenues by borrowing against their smaller endowments or simply going into savings to support operational expenses. On this “rainy day” NU has failed to protect education and has extracted cash from employee compensation to fund operating expenses, while vigilantly sheltering its financial investments. As noted in a recent Crain's Chicago Business article:

Northwestern now expects to post a surplus in its \$2.5 billion budget for the fiscal year ended in August... [W]hile that would typically be good news, it may not sit well with employees after the university cut 7 percent of its workforce and slashed benefits, including contributions to retirement accounts. While a majority of furloughed employees, like dining hall workers, have returned, those who took buyouts won't. Salary freezes remain in place, and contributions to retirement accounts that were suspended will be restarted next year...⁴

The decisions above emblemize more long-standing practices. Faculty and staff in the School of Communication have received no basic cost of living raise for at least the last decade. For example, raises in non-promotion years for the Department of Radio, TV, Film, faculty and staff, even in good financial years, have hovered around 1.5%. What exactly is the university prioritizing with this budgeting? Due to lack of transparency, it's impossible for faculty to know. A sample of actions in violation of AAUP policies on budgeting include:

² “McKinsey's done a nice matrix we can unfold.” Statement by Senior Vice President of Business and Finance, Craig Johnson, Faculty Senate meeting, May 13, 2020.

³ On May 11, 2020, the date Morton Schapiro announced cuts to NU employee retirement funds, the Standard and Poor 500, a widely used index of capital availability and institutional holdings, was 11.64% higher than the index for May 11, 2019. On November 11, 2019, the index was at 3,120; on November 11, 2020 it was at 3,537.

⁴ Crain's Chicago Business “Why is Northwestern flunking 2020?” Nov 13, 2020, <https://www.chicagobusiness.com/education/why-northwestern-flunking-2020>.

(A) Refusals by administrators to respond to concerns about the distribution of resources.

AAUP policy requires the release of a detailed budget and consultation with the faculty over NU expenditures, including the funding of a police department, business networking buildings and their maintenance (the quarter billion dollar “Global Hub”), or branding, including through football and basketball programs, instead of academics. For instance, the University in 2015 reported to the Higher Learning Commission that since its 2004-5 assessment, NU increased its non-tenure eligible faculty appointments by **57.7%**, while increasing the tenure-eligible faculty by just **8.5%**.⁵

There is no evidence that many costly non-educational programs at NU, including the \$11.45 million policing expenses for the fiscal year 2020, contribute to the mission of education.⁶ Northwestern also has seen growth of mid-level management positions within the schools and Central administration incommensurate with peer institutions, even though many of these costly positions are for branding, communications, and other endeavors unrelated to the University’s core mission of education. Meanwhile vital department level employment needs, such as support for accounting and bookkeeping, go unmet and require additional uncompensated work by faculty and staff.

Also, students and faculty have been demanding input on NUPD budgeting since June of 2020. A report was finally released in November 2020, almost four months after Provost Hagerty stated at a town hall there would be “no problem” disclosing NUPD’s budget.⁷ In the wake of student protests, Schapiro also created a Community Safety Advisory Board and appointed as its chair Dr. Clyde Yancy, Vice Dean for Diversity and Inclusion at Feinberg. Although the *Daily Northwestern* had published several articles on students’ poor treatment by the NUPD in 2019,

⁵ NU Assurance Argument, Report to Higher Learning Commission, March 30, 2015, p. 57.

⁶ A slickly produced NU report issued on November 16, 2020 is one more expenditure on public relations and not education. It advertises the NUPD’s “diversity,” but omits mention of the NUPD surreptitiously operating on campus in plain clothes, the [alumni letter](#) to Schapiro from just one year ago stating that the NUPD “physically assaulted students” who were protesting a speech by former Attorney General Jeffrey Session, or the misdemeanor infractions the NUPD belatedly alleged NU students committed at the event, charges that the City of Evanston declined to prosecute. <https://news.northwestern.edu/stories/2020/11/university-police-report-budget/?linkId=104628672>; Marissa Martinez, “City charges dropped against Northwestern students for Sessions protests,” *Daily Northwestern*, January 9, 2020.

⁷ Isabelle Sarraf, “Northwestern releases long-awaited NUPD budget review, details \$11.2 million in expenses for FY 2020,” *Daily Northwestern*, November 17, 2020, <https://dailynorthwestern.com/2020/11/17/campus/northwestern-releases-long-awaited-nupd-budget-review-details-11-2-million-in-expenses-for-fy-2020/>

North by Northwestern, “Analyzing the NUPD report: racial profiling, police diversity and comparisons to CAPS” 10/18/20
<https://northbynorthwestern.com/northwestern-releases-report-on-nupd-role-and-budget-community-reacts-to-11-2-million-dollar-expenses-in-fiscal-year-2020/>

including “knocking students down”⁸ and issuing citations the City of Evanston declined to prosecute,⁹ Yancy on November 18, 2020 responded to a question about the motives for the protests by telling the Faculty Senate that he was unaware of any specific incidents that had prompted students to demand defunding the NUPD. Yancy conveyed the false impression that students were responding only to the national climate and not concerns specific to NU.

The administration’s cavalier handling of NU’s students, faculty, and resources may cause lasting damage, according to those interviewed for the recent *Crains*’ article:

“When there’s discord between a president and these kind of major stakeholders, that’s a red flag” says Tim Westerbeck, president of Chicago higher education consulting firm Eduvantis. Powerful university brands like Northwestern are difficult to damage, but risks arise if issues aren’t resolved, especially when they can be amplified on social media, he contends. “It can snowball,” Westerbeck says.¹⁰¹¹

The decision by the administration to use substantial non-profit resources for non-educational employees, including a private police department, is inconsistent with AAUP policies that require faculty participation in the setting of our priorities.

(B) Firing/furloughing employees critical to the university's academic mission and faculty self-governance. No searches for critical vacant positions.

It is self-evident that in a pandemic time-frame of remote learning, staff for information technologies (IT) are crucial. Yet employees of NUIT and WCAS report that NU has fired or furloughed staff responsible for [NUIT, Weinberg IT, and department IT](#).¹² A result is an adverse impact on education and research due to faculty unable to access Canvas and other program functions, databases, and Zoom meetings, thus substantially impairing our ability to fulfill our online teaching and professional commitments. We also are concerned that this continues a pattern of firing the most vulnerable with little or no advance warning, [as was done also in 2018](#)

⁸ One article noted that “University Police officers followed students into Lutkin, knocking some protesters to the ground and pushing others out.” Eva Herscovitz, “Students protest Jeff Sessions’ speech, police presence,” *Daily Northwestern*, November 6, 2019, <https://dailynorthwestern.com/2019/11/08/campus/schapiro-addresses-jeff-sessions-protest-praises-university-response-at-family-weekend-event/>.

⁹ See supra, note 5. Amy Li and Troy Closson, “University Police issuing citations to some students involved in Jeff Sessions protest” *Daily Northwestern*, December 13, 2019, <https://dailynorthwestern.com/2019/12/13/campus/university-police-issuing-citations-to-some-students-involved-in-jeff-sessions-protest/>; Letter to the Editor: Support Student Protesters January 9, 2020, *Daily Northwestern*, <https://dailynorthwestern.com/2020/01/09/opinion/letter-to-the-editor-support-student-protesters/>;

“Schapiro addresses Jeff Sessions protest, praises University response at Family Weekend event,”

¹⁰ Crain’s Chicago Business “Why is Northwestern flunking 2020?” Nov 13, 2020, <https://www.chicagobusiness.com/education/why-northwestern-flunking-2020>.

¹¹ Chronicle of Higher Education, “Academe’s Disturbing Indifference to Racism” Eddie R. Cole, 11/2/420 <https://www.chronicle.com/article/academes-disturbing-indifference-to-racism>

¹² Daily Northwestern, “NUIT fires over 30 student workers amid department reorganization” 8/11/20, <https://dailynorthwestern.com/2020/08/11/campus/nuit-fires-over-30-student-workers-amid-department-reorganization/>.

in response to Northwestern's self-inflicted financial crisis.¹³ Also, there has been little information provided to faculty about [layoffs and furloughs](#)¹⁴; a claim made on May 13 by Johnson to the Faculty Senate that these would target "those folks who really could not do their jobs in this environment" has been shown to be inaccurate.

(C) School Deans informed department chairs of up to 40% cutbacks to their operating budgets without consultation.

For example, various departments in WCAS report that Dean Adrian Randolph this fall ordered the administrative consolidation of the Departments of French and Italian, German, and Slavic as well as Classics and Art History. Further consolidations took place in Philosophy, Comparative Literature, and Critical Theory. Staff layoffs or reductions from full- to part-time positions also occurred in English, History, and Political Science. Chairs were told that the consolidation was a necessary belt-tightening tied to the pandemic. When pressed later on the apparent use of the pandemic as an excuse for cutting academic staff, Randolph claimed the cut-backs were in line with a general restructuring of support staff in WCAS, citing the advantages of a shared "pool" of administrators.

The upshot of the new arrangement is: staff unsure of their responsibilities, increase in shared responsibilities on already overburdened staff, increases in transaction costs for organizing work, and, ultimately, faculty unable to meet their teaching and research needs, being burdened by new administrative work themselves, depriving students and colleagues of time that should be used on education. Although Randolph was advised of the adverse impact on faculty, staff, and students, he has refused to rescind the ordered cuts and consolidation.

(D) Departments on notice of no new faculty searches and in some departments, all adjuncts dismissed, increasing student to teacher ratio and vital classes not being taught.

The Economics department, for example, has laid off all adjuncts for the academic year of 2020-21.

¹³ Daily Northwestern, "Northwestern reducing administrative staff to combat budget deficit" 7/19/18, <https://dailynorthwestern.com/2018/07/19/campus/northwestern-reducing-administrative-staff-to-combat-budget-deficit/>.

¹⁴ Daily Northwestern, "SOLR demands Northwestern and Compass Group support service workers laid off during the pandemic" 9/10/20 <https://dailynorthwestern.com/2020/09/10/campus/solr-demands-northwestern-and-compass-group-support-service-workers-laid-off-during-the-pandemic/>

(E) Departments on notice of choice between new graduate student admissions and funding current graduate students.

The Chair of one small department has stated that a decision to admit no new graduate students to the small department would be "devastating."

No consultations with faculty occurred prior to these announcements, in violation of AAUP standards.

(F) Compensation reduction through retirement fund cuts.

The faculty should participate in the selection of fringe-benefit programs and in the period review of those programs. It should be recognized that of these so-called fringe benefits, at least those included in the definition of total compensation set for by the Association's Committee on the Economic Status of the Profession, have the same standing as direct faculty salaries and are separated for tax purposes. They should be considered and dealt with in the same manner as direct payment and faculty salary. -- AAUP - The Role of the Faculty on Budgetary and Salary Matters, Committee on College and University Governance, May 1972, endorsed at 58th annual meeting

On May 11, 2020, President Schapiro unilaterally announced cuts to retirement funds.¹⁵ On Monday, October 19, 2020, Schapiro emailed the NU community attacking the character of community members who demonstrated outside his home to demand NU invest in education and not the NUPD. In response to Schapiro's peevish email, numerous faculty and student groups expressed their lack of confidence in Schapiro's leadership abilities.¹⁶ On Wednesday, October

¹⁵ Johnson, NU's VP for Business and Finances, did not respond to requests from the Chair of this committee to reveal the amount of money NU withheld from its employees, nor how he had acquired non-public information from competitor universities about their consideration of similar cuts. The Chair of the Faculty Senate Budget Committee indicated to the Chair of this committee that he also has not been informed of the amount NU withheld from retirement fund compensation. Email from Martin A. Lariviere to Stevens, November 19, 2020.

¹⁶ Responses came from faculty in the departments and programs of African American Studies, Anthropology, Asian American Studies, Latina and Latino Studies, Latin American & Caribbean Studies, Middle Eastern & North African Studies, Political Science, and a faculty coalition statement with over 500+ signatories from almost every school and department in the university.

Daily Northwestern "NU Community Not Cops calls on President Schapiro to resign following his condemnation of abolitionist protests" 10/20/20
<https://dailynorthwestern.com/2020/10/20/campus/nu-community-not-cops-calls-on-president-schapiro-to-resign-following-his-condemnation-of-abolitionist-protests/>

"Anti-Racism and Reconstruction in a Predominantly White University" 10/15/20
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfl7pMuGmqoVU5tGT11qM8ADH93BjBlzYMtcon4STjWNT6WiA/viewform?gxids=7628>

"Anthropology Faculty Statement on Racism at Northwestern" 10/23/20
<https://anthropology.northwestern.edu/about/news/2020/anthropology-faculty-statement-on-racist-policing.html>

21, Schapiro announced that beginning January 1, 2021, NU would resume its contributions to retirement accounts. Neither the suspension nor resumption of retirement compensation were tied to the release of data on changes in NU's revenues, expenses, or endowment.

(2) CHANGES IN GRADE AND CURRICULAR POLICIES ABSENT FACULTY CONSULTATION OR APPROVAL

The Association's *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities* places primary responsibility with the faculty 'for such fundamental areas of curriculum [and] subject matter and methods of instruction.' The assessment of student academic performance, it follows, including the assignment of particular grades, is a faculty responsibility[Appeals] Under no circumstances should administrative officers on their own authority substitute their judgment for that of the faculty concerning the assignment of a grade.

The Assignment of Course Grades and Student Appeals, approved by the Association's Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure in June 1997 and further revised by Committee A in June 1998.¹

(A) Provost Kathleen Hagerty on Friday, October 30, 2020 announced undergraduates may retroactively change their grades for one-third of the classes in 2020-21 to a new “Credit/No Credit” assessment that will override department criteria for “Pass/No Pass” options in a major. Hagerty has not responded to faculty queries about whether waivers were requested or received from any NU accrediting organizations.

Hagerty's announcement on October 30, 2020 appropriated to herself curricular and assessment decisions NU and AAUP policies clearly delegate to faculty. The decision was closely held and did not emerge from consultation with an elected faculty committee of the Faculty Senate, per AAUP standards.¹⁷

“LACS Statement in Support of AfAm and Student Protestors” 10/29/20

<https://lacs.northwestern.edu/about/news/lacs-statement-in-support-of-afam-and-student-protesters.html>

“Statement on Racism on the Northwestern Campus” n.d.

<https://mena.northwestern.edu/about/statement-on-racism-on-the-northwestern-campus.html>

Daily Northwestern “History, sociology faculty support student protesters, urge Schapiro to act” 8/26/20

<https://dailynorthwestern.com/2020/10/26/campus/history-sociology-faculty-support-student-protesters-urge-schapiro-to-act/>

Daily Northwestern “Anthropology department, Asian American Studies, Latina and Latino Studies programs condemn Schapiro email” 10/23/20

<https://dailynorthwestern.com/2020/10/23/campus/anthropology-department-asian-american-studies-latina-and-latino-studies-programs-condemn-schapiro-email/>

“Letter of Concern from Northwestern Faculty and Staff” 10/26/20

<https://gendersexuality.northwestern.edu/about/news/letter-of-concern.html>

¹⁷ Faculty Senate President Therese McGuire, who holds the ConAgra Brands Research Professorship at the Kellogg School, stated in an email to us that she and the President ex-officio as well as the one elected for 2021-22 met with Provost Hagerty, holds the Kellogg School First Chicago Professorship in Finance. McGuire stated they believed the grade change option was a “reasonable response to the

Brown University's Provost Richard Locke, also on October 30, conveyed a different message to Brown faculty: "Given the uncertainty and turbulence we have all faced this year, students may approach you or instructors in your department to share particular challenges that they are facing during this moment. We encourage as much flexibility as is feasible in these instances."

(B) Provost Jonathan Holloway in Winter 2020 announced students will receive letter grades based on work completed to date, regardless of course or weight of unsubmitted final assignments.

On Sunday, March 15, 2020 then Provost Holloway announced that all final assignments would be optional and faculty would issue final letters grades based only on the work completed to date, regardless of the nature of the final assessment and including final papers:

"[Undergraduates who opt not to (or cannot) take the final assessment will be assigned a grade based on the coursework they have completed to date." The announcement was made without consulting faculty, in violation of the stated policy of WCAS and the AAUP.

The WCAS website states: "According to long-standing tradition and the values of academic freedom, faculty members have the exclusive responsibility of grading academic work in their classes." In addition to Central administration, WCAS Dean Randolph broke with WCAS policy and principles of academic integrity by criticizing in the *Daily Northwestern* individual faculty who were providing letter grades and credit only for submitted work. We are aware of no other institution -- peer or otherwise -- that gave students letter grades for work that was never submitted.

Some faculty were aware that the Provost misunderstood the scope of his authority and informed students they still were obligated to submit assignments, with allowances of specific accommodations created by faculty based on their professional assessment of the limitations caused by the pandemic.

In an e-mail responding to one faculty member pointing out the Provost's error, the Provost confirmed that he made the grade policy announcement without knowledge of NU or AAUP policies: "I am not going to claim that I consulted all university policy in issuing the statement last night. That would not be true." He stated that the change occurred because the McCormick School of Engineering Dean Julio Ottino disregarded a commitment among the deans made just a few days earlier to provide faculty guidelines and discretion without a centralized grade change policy. "On Sunday afternoon I discovered that one school broke with the agreed-upon university approach to final exams (agreed upon in an emergency meeting of the council of deans this past Thursday)," Holloway stated in the same e-mail.

Holloway could have held Ottino accountable for his poor judgment. Instead, Holloway operationalized Ottino's flawed decision across the entire NU campus: "Once we in the Central Administration became aware of this unauthorized action we had to race to find a solution that was as close to equitable across all six undergraduate schools when it came to final exams and

concerns and stress that this extraordinary year has placed upon our undergraduate students." The meeting appears to have been kept secret from their colleagues on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

assessments." Copied by Holloway were President Schapiro, Jake Julia (Provost's Chief of Staff), Kathleen Hagerty (about to assume the role of Provost), and Lindsay Chase-Lansdale (then Associate Provost of the Faculty), that is, the University's highest ranking administrators. None of them, nor anyone with the Provost's ear, appear to have noted that Ottino's actions were impermissible.

(B) President on Friday, October 9, 2020, announced the reduction by one week of the winter quarter. Provost has not responded to faculty queries about whether waivers were requested or received from any NU accrediting organizations.

On Wednesday, October 14, Hagerty presented the final decision to the Faculty Senate. "Medill Prof. Judy Franks said she was concerned about the decision to reduce Winter Quarter down to a nine-week quarter and the implications on the student learning experience. 'We're basically going to have to take 10 percent of the curriculum for our courses out of the course, relative to the percentage of students who will benefit from the opportunity to return to campus,' Franks said," according to the *Daily Northwestern*.¹⁸

Decisions as impactful on education as modifying the length of a quarter must be decided by an elected faculty committee.

(C) WCAS grade change policy allows a single administrator to change a student's grade from that awarded by the faculty, in violation of AAUP standards.

The text on grading policy from the WCAS website reads:

If you can show, however, that the grade you received is in error or a result of capricious or prejudiced grading, you may petition the department chair for a change of grade. *If the department chair declines to recommend a change of grade, you may appeal the decision to the Weinberg College Associate Dean for Undergraduate Academic Affairs.*¹⁹ (Emphasis added.)

In 2018-19 WCAS stated exactly the opposite, that the Associate Dean did NOT have the authority to change a grade.

*Neither the department chair nor the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Academic Affairs has authority to change a grade assigned by an instructor; however, each department has a procedure whereby students can appeal a grade they think was determined in a prejudicial or capricious manner.*²⁰ (Emphasis added.)

The earlier WCAS grade change policy is in compliance with AAUP standards; the current one, implemented at some unknown date in the months before the pandemic, gives unilateral

¹⁸ "Provost Hagerty talks Winter Quarter plans at October Faculty Senate Meeting," *Daily Northwestern*, October 14, 2020, <https://dailynorthwestern.com/2020/10/14/campus/faculty/provost-hagerty-talks-winter-quarter-plans-at-october-faculty-senate-meeting/>

¹⁹

<https://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/courses-registration-grades/changing-grades.html>
²⁰ <https://web.archive.org/web/20181004172113/https://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/courses-registration-grades/changing-grades.html>

authority over a grade to a single administrator and thus violates the AAUP standard on grade changes.

NU-AAUP inquired of Randolph and Hagerty in the spring of 2020 as to who had changed the WCAS grade change policy and requested it be corrected so as to comply with AAUP standards. Hagerty also was informed that the School of Engineering did not post its grade change policy and that Dean Ottino had not replied to queries as to the policy. Hagerty stated that she would ask Randolph and Ottino to address the queries.

Subsequently, WCAS deans first disputed the existence of a discrepancy between the current and penultimate policies, and, when provided in an e-mail with the two paragraphs above, offered no response to concerns about the violation of AAUP standards.

Ottino disregarded Hagerty's request and provided no response.

The unilateral determination of grades by administrators as opposed to faculty clearly violates long held principles of academic freedom, namely the responsibility of professors to evaluate the academic performance of students in the classroom. Especially because of the new problems associated with remote teaching, this is a matter that deserves immediate attention.

(3) REFUSAL TO CONSULT OR SHARE WITH FACULTY INFORMATION RELEVANT TO NU'S ACCREDITATION, INCLUDING BY THE HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION AND ACCREDITING COUNCIL ON EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS

THE ROLE OF THE FACULTY IN THE ACCREDITING OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (1968)

The appraisal of the academic program should be largely the responsibility of faculty members. They should play a major role in the evaluation of the curriculum, the library, teaching loads and conditions, research, professional activities, laboratories and other academic facilities, and faculty welfare and compensation....Primary responsibility for the preparation of the academic aspects of the self-evaluation should rest with a committee composed largely of faculty members and responsible to the faculty as a whole....The completed self-evaluation should be made available to the entire faculty prior to its submission to the accrediting commission and should be subject to amendment in the light of faculty suggestions...The report of the visiting committee should be made available to the entire faculty...The faculty should be fully informed of the accrediting commission's actions after an evaluation and should be kept abreast of all significant developments and issues arising between the accrediting commission and the institution. --approved by the AAUP's Committee on Accrediting of Colleges and Universities, adopted by the Association's Council in April 1968, and endorsed by the Fifty-Fourth Annual Meeting

(A) NU refuses to consult with faculty about accrediting matters, including substantial discrepancies in data reported to different agencies; and has withdrawn from accreditation without faculty consultation.

(i) Faculty are provided only cursory and limited information about Higher Learning Commission accreditation visits and evaluations. The practice is

long-standing.²¹ Hagerty did not reply to NU-AAUP requests asking if any waivers of accreditation standards had been sought or received by NU or its units since she was interim provost, including for the decision to create a shortened, nine-week quarter.

(ii) NU in 2017 withdrew from decades-long accreditation by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) for the Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications²²

Then Medill School Dean Brad Hamm received permission from Central Administration to cease in 2017 the planned renewal of accreditation of the Medill School by AEJMC. Hamm also attempted to enlist deans from highly ranked competitors to withdraw from AEJMC accreditation, thus lowering the standards for education and the profession.²³ Medill faculty learned about the decision only after it had been made.²⁴

In response to an inquiry from the NU-AAUP, the current Dean of Medill, Charles Whitaker, has stated that he last spring indicated to the AEJMC an interest in renewing the School's accreditation. He did not state when he will follow up to formally request a review for reaccreditation, but indicated that it would occur after the pandemic.

(B) NU and WCAS disregard NU-AAUP requests for annual Grade Point Average information.

²¹ The NU-AAUP secretary was allowed to review a hard copy of the 2015 NU HLC self-report under the supervision of Faculty Senate staff, a requirement imposed by the Central Administration. Prior to the NU-AAUP request, the Faculty Senate did not possess this report. Most follow up questions about substantial discrepancies among NU data reported to the HLC, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Department of Education (<https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>), and requests for underlying documents were not answered, in violation of AAUP guidelines.

²² Poynter "Journalism accreditor fires back at Northwestern after university opts out of review" <https://www.poynter.org/business-work/2017/journalism-accreditor-fires-back-at-northwestern-after-university-opts-out-of-review/>

²³ Steve Coll, Dean of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, disregarded Hamm's entreaties and did not withdraw the School from accreditation

²⁴ Hamm resigned in 2018 after students circulated an open letter to him about his failure to respond to their complaints of harassment by Alec Klein, then director of the Medill Justice Project, complaints that might have been flagged in an on-site visit by AEJMC. The *Daily Northwestern* stated that "the University paid \$8,000 to a former employee to settle a complaint made against Klein in 2015," but Klein continued to run Medill until resigning in the wake of the open letter.

Daily Northwestern "Former Medill students, employees accuse Prof. Alec Klein of 'predatory' behavior" 2/7/18
<https://dailynorthwestern.com/2018/02/07/lateststories/former-medill-students-employees-accuse-prof-alec-klein-predatory-behavior/>

Daily Northwestern "Northwestern professor resigns after school probes misconduct allegations" 8/10/18
<https://chicago.suntimes.com/2018/8/10/18387565/northwestern-professor-resigns-after-school-probes-misconduct-allegations>

Faculty as well as students and the public need this information to assess the academic integrity of NU's assessments; this need is especially pressing in light of recent unilateral measures taken by NU officials, to assess the impact of these changes on grade inflation.

(4) FACULTY COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE SLATES ARE SELECTED BY ADMINISTRATION, NOT BY FACULTY NOMINATIONS, EXCLUDING FACULTY FROM CRUCIAL ROLE OF SHARED GOVERNANCE

Agencies for faculty participation in the government of the college or university should be established at each level where faculty responsibility is present. An agency should exist for the presentation of the views of the whole faculty. The structure and procedures for faculty participation should be designed, approved, and established by joint action of the components of the institution. Faculty representatives should be selected by the faculty according to procedures determined by the faculty. (Emphasis added.)

The means of communication among the faculty, administration, and governing board now in use include: (1) circulation of memoranda and reports by board committees, the administration, and faculty committees; (2) joint ad hoc committees; (3) standing liaison committees; (4) membership of faculty members on administrative bodies; and (5) membership of faculty members on governing boards. Whatever the channels of communication, they should be clearly understood and observed. --"Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities" --Jointly formulated by the American Association of University Professors, the American Council on Education, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (1966) [excerpt]

(A) WCAS faculty each year receive slates of faculty candidates selected by the WCAS administration. The only options for "elections" are generated by the administration. Winners are announced but vote totals are not reported. In 2019, in response to a request from an NU-AAUP officer, the Dean of Faculty, Edward Gibson, agreed to solicit nominations. However, no vote tallies were reported and this year WCAS returned to its prior practice of providing its own slate, in many cases one more candidate than the positions needed to be filled. An inquiry from the NU-AAUP to WCAS about the protocol for obtaining candidates in 2020 went unanswered.

(B) WCAS does not inform faculty of committee memberships and chairs. The WCAS website does not accurately state the WCAS committee memberships, terms of appointments, nor dates on which information is posted. Faculty therefore are unable to communicate with faculty committees. WCAS officials have stated limits on IT budgets are responsible for this. However, faculty were not consulted on committee elections or selection procedures, nor on whether faculty governance should be at the bottom of WCAS funding priorities.

(C) In the School of Communication, chairs and program heads were routinely selected by former Dean Babara O'Keefe, with only minimal comment solicited from the said department's faculty. Contracts for program heads routinely stated that these positions "served at the Dean's pleasure," and omitted any reference to the preferences of a program head's colleagues, in violation of AAUP standards.

Without a firm commitment on the part of the university to fully inclusive faculty shared governance, the university is in danger of stagnating in a top down system of patronage and cronyism that leaves the university unprepared for cutting-edge innovations or unexpected challenges, as has been revealed by the recent series of ill-fated decisions in the wake of the

pandemic. By refusing to incorporate the creativity and innovation of faculty, the university risks stagnation and decline.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the foregoing findings we recommend the following:

- (1) The immediate release to all members of the NU Faculty Senate Executive Committee of all documents and information relied upon for implementing cuts to NU's staff, programs, and compensation. This includes budget information about the assets in the NU endowment and all formulas on which the administration is relying for its claims about the alleged need to maintain a \$10 billion plus endowment.
- (2) The immediate retraction of all cuts based on plans and priorities implemented without faculty consultation, including but not limited to those itemized above. This includes rehiring laid-off staff, restoring academic support staff hours to those in place before March 2020, and restoring all funds withheld from NU retirement funds.
- (3) The immediate release to the NU-AAUP and other interested faculty of all communications with the Higher Learning Commission and other accrediting agencies, and commitment to defer to faculty in deliberations tied to accreditation.
- (4) The immediate creation by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee of a committee designated for reviewing and reporting to the Faculty Senate recommendations on all proposed grade policy changes and transcript statements for the remainder of the COVID pandemic period; no fewer than two faculty shall be from Weinberg.
- (5) The immediate commitment not to change the curriculum and related programming, including the classroom hours and grading policies, without faculty consultation and approval in accordance with AAUP standards on faculty governance.
- (6) The immediate standardization of grade change policies in WCAS and other schools to comport with AAUP standards, as enumerated above.
- (7) The immediate creation of temporary "committees on governance" for each school, including WCAS, for the purpose of creating faculty governance by-laws for each school in compliance with AAUP standards. These committees should be created by nomination from the faculty in each school and transparent elections. In addition, the review process for all funding opportunities must be transparent, include on committees a rotating group of faculty, and exclude from assessment and final award decisions anyone who is not a faculty member of the committee.
- (8) All NU and school survey results must be released to faculty, staff, and students who were surveyed.
- (9) The immediate release to the faculty of grade point averages since 2000 for each school and department.

ADDENDUM - SIGNATORIES (as of 12/18/20, in date order of signing)

Jorge Coronado - Professor, Spanish and Portuguese

Kyle Henry - Associate Professor, Radio/Television/Film

Jackie Stevens - Professor, Political Science

Mark Witte - Professor of Instruction, Director of Undergraduate Studies, Economics

Linda Gates - Senior Lecturer, Head of Voice, Theatre

Sylvie Romanowski - Emerita, French and Italian

Elizabeth Lenaghan - Associate Professor of Instruction, Cook Family Writing Program

Paola Zamperini, Associate Professor, ALC/GSS

Sean Hanretta - Associate Professor, History

Alessandra Visconti - Assistant Professor of Instruction, French and Italian

Emily Maguire - Associate Professor, Department Chair, Spanish and Portuguese

Hamid Naficy - Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani Professor Emeritus, Radio/Television/Film

Matthew Gilmore - Security Assistant Senior, Library

Becca Greenstein - STEM Librarian, University Libraries

Samuel Weber - Avalon Foundation Professor of Humanities, German

Helen Tilley - Associate Professor, History

Micaela di Leonardo - Professor, Anthropology

Noelle Sullivan - Associate Professor of Instruction, Global Health Studies

Peter Locke - Associate Professor of Instruction, Global Health Studies

Susan Pearson - Associate Professor, History

Cynthia Robin - Professor, Anthropology

Denise Bouras - Association Professor of Instruction, Spanish and Portuguese

Robert Launay - Professor, Anthropology

Eli Lichtenstein - PhD Candidate, Philosophy

Lina Britto - Associate Professor of History

Charlotte Rosen - PhD Candidate, History

Lauren Baker - PhD candidate, Political Science; Instructor, CFS

Benjamin Fromme - Associate Professor, History

Stephen F. Eisenman – Professor, Art History

Mauricio Maluff Masi, PhD Candidate, Philosophy

Leslie M. Harris - Professor, History

Tasha Seago-Ramaly - Assistant Professor of Instruction, Spanish and Portuguese

Audrey Nicolaides - PhD Candidate, Political Science

Sarah Peko-Spicer, PhD Candidate, Statistics

Laurence Marks - Professor, Materials Science

Samuel Weber - Avalon Foundation Professor of Humanities

Luis Amaral - Haven Professor, Chemical and Biological Engineering

Ana Rosado - Ph.D. Candidate, History

Ben Zucker - PhD Candidate, Music

Jill Waycie - Archival Processing Specialist, NU Libraries

Robert Orsi - Grace Craddock Nagle Chair in Catholic Studies

Kitty Yang - PhD, Mathematics

Marcia Grabowecky - Research Associate Professor, Psychology

Frank Petriello - Professor, Physics

Helen Thompson - Professor, English

Timothy Earle- Emeritus Professor, Anthropology

Lisa Del Torto - Associate Professor of Instruction, Cook Family Writing Program

Michael Rakowitz - Artist and Professor, Art Theory and Practice

Rebecca Seligman - Associate Professor, Anthropology

Mark Beeman - Professor, Psychology

Robert E. Lerner – Emeritus Ritzma Professor, History

Marcia Bosits - Associate Professor, Music Performance

John Alba Cutler - Associate Professor, English

Dassia Posner - Associate Professor, Theatre and Slavic

Michael S. Sherry - Richard W. Leopold Emeritus Professor, History

Betsy Erkkila - Henry Sanborn Noyes Professor of Literature, English

Ana C Thome Williams - Associate Professor of Instruction, Spanish and Portuguese

William D. Paden - Emeritus Professor, French

Barbara Newman - Professor, English

Tiffany Christian - PhD Candidate, Statistics

David Boyk - Assistant Professor of Instruction, Asian Languages and Cultures

Elisa Baena - Associate Professor of Instruction, Spanish and Portuguese

Lynn Spigel - Professor and Frances Willard Chair of Screen Cultures, Radio/Television/Film

Spencer Parsons - Associate Professor, Radio/Television/Film

Steven Epstein - Professor, Sociology

Laura Kipnis – Professor, Radio/Television/Film

AJ Christian - Associate Professor, Communication Studies

Ji-Yeon Yuh - Associate Professor, History and Asian American Studies

Frances Freeman Paden - Emerita Distinguished Senior Lecturer, Writing Program + Gender & Sexuality Studies

Ivan Albertson - Collections Coordinator, University Libraries

Patrick Noonan - Assistant Professor, Asian Languages and Cultures & Program in Comparative Literary Studies

Marco Williams - Professor, Radio/Television/Film

Zayd Dohrn - Professor, Radio/Television/Film

Northwestern University Graduate Workers

Stephen White - Associate Professor, Philosophy

JP Sniadecki - Associate Professor, Radio/Television/Film

Ariel Rogers - Associate Professor, Radio/Television/Film

Brent E. Huffman - Associate Professor, Medill School of Journalism

Amy Kristl - PhD Candidate, Neuroscience

Michael Fagen - Professor, Preventive Medicine

Christiane Rey - Professor of Instruction, French

Michelle N. Huang - Assistant Professor, English & Asian American Studies

Katharine Breen - Associate Professor, English

Nasrin Qader - Associate Professor, French and Comparative Literary Studies

Caitlin Willox - Administrator, Kellogg School of Business

Ipek K. Yosmaoglu - Associate Professor, History

Junye Ma - Research Study Coordinator, ISGMH

Corey Byrnes - Associate Professor, Comparative Literary Studies, Asian Languages and Cultures

Haydon Cherry - Assistant Professor, History

Thomas J Billard - Assistant Professor, Communication Studies

Hector Carrillo - Professor, Sociology and Gender & Sexuality Studies

Carl Smith - Franklyn Bliss Snyder Professor Emeritus, English, American Studies and History

Rachel Levy - PhD Candidate, Religious Studies

Erica Weitzman - Associate Professor, German

Averill Curdy - Associate Professor of Instruction, English

Jay Grossman - Associate Professor, English

Julia Stern – Professor, English

Patrick Noonan - Assistant Professor, Asian Languages and Cultures & Program in Comparative Literary Studies

Reginald Gibbons - Frances Hooper Professor of Arts & Humanities, English and Classics

Eric Patrick - Associate Professor, Radio/Television/Film

Michaela Kleber, College Fellow, History

Ava Thompson Greenwell, Professor, Medill School of Journalism

Jeffrey Masten, Professor, English and Gender & Sexuality Studies

Lauren Stokes, Assistant Professor, History

Robin Bates, Assistant Professor of Instruction, History

Thomas Gaubatz - Assistant Professor, Asian Languages and Cultures

Susan Mango Curtis, Clinical Professor, Medill School of Journalism

Cindy Gold - Professor, Theatre

Reem Ibrahim - PREP Scholar, Neuroscience

Torsten Menge - Assistant Professor in Residence, NU Qatar Liberal Arts

Aaron Shaw - Associate Professor, Communication Studies

Jennifer Alexander - Prog. Assoc., English Language Programs, TGS & Linguistics

Lydia Barnett - Associate Professor, History

Cynthia Nazarian - Associate Professor, French

Tessie Liu - Associate Professor of History and Gender and Sexuality Studies