

Northwestern University
Minutes of the Faculty Assembly
Guild Lounge and Zoom
April 21, 2025

The second meeting of the Northwestern University Faculty Assembly of the 2024–2025 academic year was held on April 21, 2025, at Guild Lounge in Evanston and over Zoom. A number of faculty members participated remotely. Faculty Senate President Jill Wilson and Provost Kathleen Hagerty, serving as University President Michael Schill's designate, called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. A quorum (10% of full-time regular faculty members) was present.

1. An Account of the University Budgeting Process from Provost Kathleen Hagerty and Chief Financial Officer and Vice President Mandy Distel

In lieu of the intended presentation on the general budgeting process, Provost Hagerty and Vice President Distel instead focused on the current federal funding freezes and how they are impacting the University. Their update (slides 6-14) can be accessed [here](#).

The floor was then opened for pre-submitted questions and questions from the floor.

2. Resolution from Northwestern's American Associated University Professors Chapter

Professor and NU AAUP President Jackie Stevens provided rationale for, and presented the following resolution:

Whereas, our campus and our country face existential threats to our educational institutions and our democracy; and,

whereas, the Northwestern University Board of Trustees, President, Provost, Deans, and Faculty Senate have failed to effectively defend academic freedom and protect the faculty, staff, and students of Northwestern University from unlawful federal actions; and

whereas, the Northwestern University Board of Trustees, President, Provost, and Deans have affirmatively instituted policies in compliance with unlawful demands of the federal government antithetical to core values of education and academic freedom; and

whereas, Title VI and Northwestern do not operationalize a definition of antidiscrimination for the vast majority of groups Title VI protects against discrimination, e.g., there are no definitions specific to anti-Chinese, anti-Black, or anti-Latino discrimination; and

whereas, Northwestern participates in a [discretionary program](#) obligating costly submissions of data allowing Immigration and Customs Enforcement to have direct access to immigrant student, staff, and faculty locations; and

whereas, Northwestern "reserves the right" to take whatever steps are necessary ... to investigate suspected violations of University regulations, or to assist appropriate authorities to investigate suspected illegal activities" and states that "files belonging to individuals and/or communications between individuals may be captured, logged, and examined"; and

whereas, Northwestern withheld \$23 million from faculty and staff retirement funds withheld during COVID, during the same time frame Northwestern accrued an [\\$83 million surplus](#); and

whereas, Northwestern has a \$14 billion endowment, the sole purpose of which is to promote education; and

whereas Northwestern is operating in violation of its Charter of 1851, by excluding education-focused visitors from oversight functions obligated by the Charter;

Be it resolved that,

- 1) **The Board of Trustees, President, Provost, Deans, and the Faculty Senate shall actively defend academic freedom, including by publicly and steadfastly opposing an organized campaign that is bent on restricting our scholarly and public dialogues, including on Israel and other governments in the Middle East and elsewhere. The university's legal resources shall be used to defend the rights of Northwestern University and its faculty, students, and staff from unlawful federal**

- actions, including from censorship of teaching and research on identities and diversity.
- 2) Northwestern shall retract any anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies referencing specific groups protected by Northwestern policies on Title VI. Northwestern shall not limit speech, scholarship or criticism of any nation or government.
 - 3) Northwestern shall rely on First Amendment standards in all policies for which speech and behavior, including demonstrations, may be reviewed for purposes of discipline.
 - 4) Northwestern shall abide by the [Illinois Worker Freedom of Speech Act](#), which protects employees "from mandatory participation in employer-sponsored meetings if the meeting is designed to communicate an employer's position on religious or political matters." Northwestern will extend this same protection to all students. This means that Northwestern shall not require anyone to view the video on antisemitism and Islam, "Building a Community of Respect and Breaking Down Bias."
 - 5) Northwestern shall allow all members of the community under investigation by the university to record all meetings with administrators and investigators and freely share all information obtained as a result of being placed under investigation, in compliance with local, state, and federal laws.
 - 6) Northwestern shall not release to any government body names and records unless obligated by court orders.
 - 7) Northwestern shall give 30 day notice to withdraw from its discretionary participation in United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, E-Verify.
 - 8) Northwestern shall not review any digital material created with the expectation of privacy without a subpoena, *or* without notice to the individual and an opportunity for the individual to appeal to a committee composed of community members outside of the administration constituted by students, staff, and faculty selected at random who agree to serve;
 - 9) Northwestern shall rescind preemptive and retroactive cuts and draw on the endowment to meet temporary shortfalls.
 - 10) The Northwestern Board of Trustees shall amend its by-laws to create eight positions of faculty visitors who will have the right to attend all board meetings and

review all records to which the trustees have access, the positions to be assumed based on election by those attending Faculty Assemblies, notwithstanding any Faculty Assembly By-laws requiring a quorum. Terms will be for two years, commencing no later than the Fall 2025, Faculty Assembly meeting, with the exception that four of the first eight positions will be replaced no later than the meeting of Fall 2026, based on a protocol relying on chance to which a majority of visitors assent, the objective being staggered two-year terms.

A motion was made to approve the resolution. That motion was seconded, and the floor was opened for discussion.

Assembly members spoke in favor of and against the resolution. During debate, the question was called. The Assembly voted to end discussion.

The motion to approve the resolution passed with a vote of 338 to 83, with 35 abstentions.

3. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jared Spitz
Secretary to the Faculty Senate