



## Northeastern University Faculty Senate

**TO:** The Faculty Senate  
**FROM:** Secretary of the Faculty Senate  
**SUBJECT:** Minutes, 17 September, 2025

Present: Professors Alexis, Auguste, Averett, Bai, Bhutta, Bloom, Bormann, Carr, Chiou, Daynard, Desnoyers, DiBattista, Di Credico, Eckelman, Godoy-Carter, Hamandi, Hand, Hill, Hinerman, Hodeghatta, Homan, Ingemi, Ivanova, Kevoe-Feldman, Lahr, Lamin, Lorette, Lykourinou, Maheswaran, McGivney, Musselman, Muzny, Orr-Skirvin, Parameswaran, Passas, Rawson, Rejtar, Shrivastava, Sivak, Sobral-Campos, Spencer, Stefanik, Tjiptowidjojo, Un, Walker J., Walker L., Young-Hong.

Administrators: Winkelstein, Alshawabkeh, Auclair, Dyal-Chand, Isaacs, Jackson, Tsai.

Absent: (Professors): Bloom, Eckelman, Parameswaran

Absent: (Administrators):

Call To Order: 11:45 a.m.

- I. The minutes for the 4-23-25 Senate meeting were approved
- II. **SAC REPORT** (The SAC report has been posted to the Senate website.)

Senate Chair Dee Spencer, DMSB, reviewed new Senate meeting procedures for the year ahead regarding the approval of minutes and the scheduling of committee presentations. SAC's goals for the year include crafting resolutions that are specific, actionable, and will be supported by the administration with respect to:

- Improving faculty and student support
- Making the Faculty Senate stronger and more productive
- Advancing shared governance partnerships
- Bringing about meaningful change in areas that need improvement

### III. **PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL ADDRESS:**

President Aoun thanked the NU community. President Aoun noted that the model that allowed higher education to flourish is changing dramatically. The university of the future is not going to be at all like the one we are seeing today, and we must position ourselves to be at the forefront. He warned of three challenges for higher education. First is the demographic cliff with less students choosing to attend college. Second is the lack of trust in higher education. Society at large is questioning the value of higher education at all levels. The third challenge is AI. AI is changing learning, research, and the value of knowledge. Part of NU's strategy is integrating AI in our learning, research, and operations. We must

position ourselves to be at the forefront of AI if we want to remain competitive. The universities and institutions that will move forward and thrive are the ones that have a value proposition, and a differentiation. President Aoun said we must look at our differentiation and proposition and ask ourselves if it's still relevant in the age of AI. At Northeastern, our global university system is providing resilience and diversity. Students are taking advantage of our different campuses and experiential opportunities. We call this experiential mobility, and we are at the very beginning of that movement. Faculty are also taking advantage of the mobility by spending a semester or a year on another campus.

The Global University system is providing us with resources we would not have otherwise. For example, Dublin will allow us to access the European Science Foundation Funding. Thus, the global university system allowed us to weather many challenges and take advantage of many opportunities. A second differentiation is that we are an AI first mover. Faculty are pushing to include AI and to support different aspects of research. We have the opportunity to redefine ourselves by working with the first AI generation. We are not only integrating AI, but we are well positioned because we are user-inspired, and we want our research to have impact in the real world.

President Aoun closed with reminding faculty that we are going to educate the future leaders of the nation and the world, and that our research has impact for society as a whole. President introduced Provost Winkelstein and closed his talk.

#### **IV. PROVOST REPORT.**

Provost Winkelstein thanked the members of the Senate Agenda Com. for their engagement and support. She noted that the voice of the faculty is important and she looks forward to hearing about the issues that are top of mind to faculty. She said the hallmark of a strong academic community is to respectfully engage in spirited debate about important issues.

By way of updates, she noted that the Senate's Administrator Evaluation Oversight Com. would be conducting reviews of two Deans – a fifth year review of Dean Abowd and a third year review of Dean DeCremer. She noted two key administrative changes in the Provost Office. David Luzzi was appointed Senior Vice Provost and Vice President for Business Development and Akram Alshawabkeh was appointed Interim Senior Vice Provost of Research.

#### **QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:**

Professor Godoy Carter, COS: The restrictions on discretionary accounts and start-up funds especially on junior faculty have had a terrible impact.

Provost Winkelstein said she has heard these concerns from others and she is working with deans to be creative and supportive. She is asking a lot of questions around this topic. It saddens her that junior faculty are feeling hopeless.

Professor Walters, Director of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies in CSSH: Recent cuts of 70-80% on our discretionary budget, without supporting data, have left faculty morale low. Faculty asking for specific reasons as why there are so many cuts.

Provost Winkelstein said she could only make promises going forward and she vowed to be direct and transparent with faculty.

Professor Homan, COS: Last year's equity process did not give faculty enough time for all faculty to submit requests within the time-period. She is asking the university give colleges more notice. Second question, there are no faculty development funds this year, but there are student lab fees. Are those student lab fees going to pay for the supplies?

Provost Winkelstein: First, Provost will check with the team about equity. Second, the lab fee funds are going to the colleges.

Professor Bai, DMSB: asked if a dean can really roll out his own tenure and promotion as well as full professor promotion rules? And these are very specific rules that don't line up with the faculty's existing handbook.

These are important evaluation criteria that are changing significantly relative to what's existing in the Faculty Handbook. And there's no voting procedure and no solicitation of faculty-wide inputs.

Provost Winkelstein: said she heard very clear governance questions there. She said this should be taken up both within his college and she will ask SAC for some partnership with this.

Professor Jean Charles, CSSH: Echoes what colleagues say about low morale. Specifically, how this is impacting black faculty and staff and faculty and staff of color. There is a sense our feelings of inclusion and belonging and safety have been impacted by many things. Also, throughout the network there have been about 7 black women who've had their positions terminated or have been asked to leave.

Provost Winkelstein said she worked hard on my prior institution's campus to ensure that everyone felt included and very specifically worked around supporting our people of color.

Overall, she said she hopes she can work with SAC to think about how we can bring folks here to have more robust conversations and updates. This is the beginning of our sharing information bilaterally.

## **V. PRESENTATION**

### **KHUSHAL SAFI, ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT GLOBAL SAFETY.**

#### **UPDATE ON GLOBAL SAFETY.**

*(The presentation is posted to the Senate website. – as of 9\_24 – we are waiting for Safi to forward presentation.)*

Vice President Safi reviewed the various levels of support his office offers faculty, staff and students while they're traveling the world for university sponsored activity and for their return to their home campuses.

The global security themes that they are observing in the Global Safety Office are clearly border conflicts and they anticipate that border conflicts will continue to rise. Other challenges the office deals with include resistance to immigration and tourism in places such as the UK and Spain, political violence and extreme weather events.

### **QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:**

Program Director Jennifer Cocio-Thompson: How can I get a security assessment done for the Fall River campus.

Vice President Safi: Will follow up with security to get you assistance.

Professor Bhutta: The federal government is thinking about limiting the student visa duration to four years. How will this impact PhD students and what is the university's plan to navigate that.

Vice President Safi: They are having a conference in November where they hope to obtain clarifying information from the government. He asked faculty to forward any information they may be hearing so that he can clarify with OGC and the immigration attorneys.

## **VI. RESOLUTION (PROFESSOR LOUISE WALKER)**

Professor Walker noted that the Senate bylaws provide a pathway for non-senators to have items added to the agenda of a Senate meeting. Professor Simon Rabinovitch took this route at the April 23, 2025, meeting and he proposed that this resolution be added as a formal agenda item for the next meeting.

Professor Ted Landsmark, who was a senator last year, moved the motion and Professor Walker seconded it and the senators voted in favor 29-1-0.

Professor Walker read the following:

Be it resolved that the University leadership, through the Office of the President, publicly commits to the following principles: to protect targeted members of the University community, especially but not exclusively noncitizens of the United States and transgender community members; to protect, by litigation, if necessary, academic freedom and institutional independence as core values of the University and its mission.

Professor Walker acknowledged Professor Simon Rabinovitch.

Professor Rabinovitch explained that the resolution is cosigned by his colleagues in the History Department, Gretchen Heefner and Heather Saul. He said his efforts for a resolution come from a concern about members of our university community who are directly being targeted by the federal government's policies and asking how our university would respond to protect academic freedom and institutional integrity.

The resolution is asking Northeastern to protect faculty and staff rights and not compromise its own integrity. President Aoun's signature on the AANCU letter of constructive agreements is a step in the right direction. The resolution is asking for university statement on our commitment to fight for our core values. Open to discussion and friendly amendments.

## **QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:**

Senate Chair, Professor Dee Spencer, DMSB, indicated that the Senate would discuss the resolution but that it had not yet been moved.

Professor Dick Daynard, SOL: In favor of the resolution. Specifically, to protect, by litigation, necessary academic freedom and institutional independence.

Professor John Bai, DMSB: Overall liked the spirit of the resolution. However, did not like that some groups would be protected, and others would not. Additionally, indicated that many of the terms in the resolution were not clear, or not defined: Who do we mean by the leadership? What counts as being targeted? What does it mean to protect someone or to commit to litigation? He was fearful that this might create more conflict.

Professor Anna Lamin, DMSB: Against this resolution. Felt that the focus was too narrow in terms of protections and excluded other groups, such as the Jewish population. Questioned the freedom of speech rights of foreign students, and was not clear how transgender students are being targeted.

Senate Chair, Professor Dee Spencer, DMSB, noted the meeting had reached its scheduled end time and moved to continue the discussion at the next Senate meeting. She recorded the names of members with hands raised, in order, and confirmed they would be recognized as the first speakers when the discussion resumed at the next meeting.

Professor Michelle Carr moved to extend discussion. Professor Jennifer Ingemi seconded the motion. Because there was no longer a required quorum, the vote did not take place and the meeting was adjourned.

Note: Some faculty remained for further discussion after the official meeting ended.

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Professor Heidi Kevoe-Feldman.