



Northeastern University Faculty Senate

Present: Professors Alexis, Auguste, Averett, Bai, Bhutta, Bloom, Bormann, Carr, Chiou, Daynard, Desnoyers, DiBattista, Di Credico, Godoy-Carter, Hamandi, Hand, Hill, Hinerman, Hodeghatta, Homan, Ingemi, Ivanova, Kevoe-Feldman, Lahr, Lamin, Lorette, Lykourinou, Maheswaran, McGivney, Musselman, Muzny, Orr-Skirvin, Parameswaran, Passas, 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): Eckelman, Rawson.

Absent: (Administrators):

Call To Order: 11:45 a.m.

- I. The minutes for the 10_8_25 Senate meeting were approved
- II. **SAC REPORT** (The SAC report has been posted to the Senate website.)
Senate Chair Dee Spencer, DMSB, reviewed the meeting agenda and speaking protocols.
 - Since the last senate meeting, SAC has met twice and facilitated one Elected Senators meeting.
 - Reminder to all senate committees, questions for the faculty survey are due by end of day today, Wed., Oct. 22nd.
- III. **PROVOST REPORT.**
Provost Winkelstein noted that last week on our Boston campus, Northeastern hosted the announcement of the AI Model Innovation Challenge winners. There were two Northeastern faculty members among those recipients. This work exemplifies our institution's leadership in AI research and our strategic partnership with the Commonwealth.

The week of November 3rd is Homecoming 2025. There's an annual week-long celebration uniting the Northeastern community and all sorts of different activities to showcase the Husky spirit at a variety of events. The full calendar can be found on the Alumni Homecoming page: [Calendar of Events](#).

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Prof. Homan followed up on continuing problems with the internet on campus. This makes it difficult and stressful to conduct class.

Provost Winkelstein said she knew this was impacting many people and has communicated these concerns to ITS.

Prof. Walters revisited the university's budget and requested a greater degree of transparency and accountability in the context of shared governance.

Provost Winkelstein reminded faculty that she and Tom Nedell, Sr. VP Finance and Treasurer, would be meeting with the Senate's Financial Affairs Committee (FAC). The provost also continues to hold monthly meetings with the Deans to work with them to make sure that their priorities are aligned with their budgets.

Prof. Walker asked when FAC would be able to report to the Senate?

Prof. Lahr, SAC liaison for FAC, said the committee was due to report to the senate in April 2026 but hopefully can provide an intermediary response based on the meeting with Tom Nedell's office.

Prof. Godoy Carter inquired about problems with Workday and the ability of junior faculty to hire personnel.

Provost Winkelstein said there has been progress with Workday made in the last two weeks and faculty should check with their deans and college leadership for more detail.

IV. CURRICULUM ITEM:

UNIVERSITY GRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE PROGRAM IN THE COLLEGE OF ARTS, MEDIA AND DESIGN.

Prof. Kevoe-Feldman read the following:

BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish the [Master of Fine Arts in Design](#) in the College of Arts, Media and Design as approved by the University Graduate Curriculum Committee 8 September 2025 (18-0-0)

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

There were no questions.

Prof. Homan made a motion on to approve.

Prof. Godoy Carter seconded.

The vote on the resolution is PASSED: 45-0-0.

VI. PRESENTATION:

SATYA DATTAGUPTA CHIEF ENROLLMENT OFFICER, EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR & SPECIAL ADVISOR TO THE PRESIDENT

ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT UPDATE FALL 2025

Chief Enrollment Officer Dattagupta noted that the national demographic cliff continues to result in enrollment issues for several institutions with some institutions responding in a way that might have given them short term gain but will hurt their brand long term.

This year Northeastern undergraduate enrollment with 6,600 students and about 6500 graduate students. Enrollment was overall strong compared to some peer institutions. There has been a reduction in international students but that has been less than expected due to the efforts and flexibility of the university.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Prof. DiBattista asked if there had been changes in the average SAT score or GPA? And has the proportion of transfers from community colleges increased or decreased over the past few years?

Enrollment Office Dattagupta said the GPA for us has been consistent. The average has been about 4.34 for the past 5 years. Regarding testing, Northeastern is optional. As a function of that, he thinks the tests automatically go up because if a student has a good score, then that's submitted. As a result, Northeastern has maintained at about 1470 to 1480. He doesn't put a lot of emphasis on that because you automatically have a self-selecting group that's submitting the test scores.

And community college transfers stayed consistent.

VII. CONTINUED BUSINESS:

Resolution for a Public Commitment to Defend Core Principles of Northeastern University

Prof. Walker noted that this resolution authored by Prof. Rabinovitch was originally presented at the 4_23_25 Senate meeting and brought forward to the 9_17_25 Senate meeting this fall, but that meeting ran out time for discussion. In the interim, the text had been re-written by Prof. Rabinovitch. This new text was presented:

WHEREAS the Northeastern University faculty supports the President, Provost, Office of General Counsel, and senior leadership in protecting and upholding the University's constitutional rights to academic freedom, institutional independence,

and its mission to advance human knowledge through research, undergraduate, graduate, and professional education;

WHEREAS universities in the United States face the potential conditioning of federal funds on their enforcement of unconstitutional restrictions on academic freedom, free speech, and free inquiry;^[1]

WHEREAS all members of the Northeastern University community have an equal right to freedom of speech and conscience and to participate in the life of the University;^[2]

WHEREAS Northeastern University faculty seek to support the University administration in defending the University's constitutional rights, core principles, and members of its community by litigation and with all legal means;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate calls on the University leadership, through the Office of the President, to publicly commit to adhere to the following principles:

To positively affirm the full rights of transgender employees of the University, the right of all University community members to self-determine their sex for purposes of all educational programs and activities, the University's commitment to prohibit discrimination based on sex, inclusive of gender identity, in all facets of university programming and services including sex-segregated spaces, and to disclaim unlawful restriction of speech, conscience, and human dignity on matters of sexual orientation or gender identity;

To use its legal resources as necessary to defend the freedom of speech, conscience, and academic freedom of citizen and non-citizen members of the Northeastern University community equally, and in all areas of scientific, legal, political, economic, social, artistic, and humanistic inquiry;

To use its legal resources and litigation as necessary to uphold academic freedom and institutional independence as core values of the University and its mission.

^[1] In addition to the arbitrary withholding of federal funds from several universities without due process, Executive Order 14168 ["Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government"](#) (January 20, 2025) directs federal agencies to stop funding institutions that do not adhere to a specified definition of sex and gender, and the ["Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education"](#) seeks to restrict federal funding to institutions of higher education that commit to the same specified

definition of sex and gender, in addition to restricting institutional and individual speech in a range of other ways.

[2] In deciding for the plaintiffs in [American Association of University Professors v. Rubio](#) (September 30, 2025), Judge William G. Young of the United States District Court of Massachusetts stated “This case—perhaps the most important ever to fall within the jurisdiction of this district court—squarely presents the issue whether non-citizens lawfully present here in [the] United States actually have the same free speech rights as the rest of us. The Court answers this Constitutional question unequivocally ‘yes, they do.’ ‘No law’ means ‘no law.’”

Prof. Desnoyers made a motion to discuss the resolution.

Prof. Carr seconded.

Prof. Desnoyers, Khoury, expressed support for the resolution in the context of free speech and referencing the current national political climate.

Prof. Lahr said she had a concern that this wording of the resolution highlights some subjugated identities but does not include other subjugated identities. She made a motion to amend this current motion on the floor.

She suggested the following text:

Resolution for a Public Commitment to Defend Core Principles of Northeastern University

WHEREAS the Northeastern University faculty supports the President, Provost, Office of General Counsel, and senior leadership in protecting and upholding the University’s constitutional rights to academic freedom, institutional independence, and its mission to advance human knowledge through research, undergraduate, graduate, and professional education;

WHEREAS universities in the United States face the potential conditioning of federal funds on their enforcement of unconstitutional restrictions on academic freedom, free speech, and free inquiry;¹

WHEREAS all members of the Northeastern University community have an equal right to freedom of speech and conscience and to participate in the life of the University;²

WHEREAS Northeastern University faculty seek to support the University administration in defending the University’s constitutional rights, core principles, and members of its community ~~by litigation and~~ with all legal means;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate calls on the University leadership, through the Office of the President, to publicly commit to adhere to the following principles:

To positively affirm the full rights of ~~transgender~~ employees of the University, ~~the right of all University community members to self-determine their sex for purposes of all educational programs and activities,~~ the University's commitment to prohibit discrimination **based on legally protected characteristics** ~~sex, inclusive of gender identity,~~ in all facets of university programming and services ~~including sex-segregated spaces,~~ and to disclaim unlawful restriction of speech, conscience, and human dignity ~~on matters of sexual orientation or gender identity;~~

To use its legal resources as necessary to defend the freedom of speech, conscience, and academic freedom ~~of citizen and non-citizen~~ members of the Northeastern University community equally, and in all areas of scientific, legal, political, economic, social, artistic, and humanistic inquiry;

To use its legal resources ~~and litigation~~ as necessary to uphold academic freedom and institutional independence as core values of the University and its mission.

¹ In addition to the arbitrary withholding of federal funds from several universities without due process, Executive Order 14168 [“Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government”](#) (January 20, 2025) directs federal agencies to stop funding institutions that do not adhere to a specified definition of sex and gender, and the [“Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education”](#) seeks to restrict federal funding to institutions of higher education that commit to the same specified definition of sex and gender, in addition to restricting institutional and individual speech in a range of other ways.

² In deciding for the plaintiffs in [American Association of University Professors v. Rubio](#) (September 30, 2025), Judge William G. Young of the United States District Court of Massachusetts stated “This case—perhaps the most important ever to fall within the jurisdiction of this district court—squarely presents the issue whether non-citizens lawfully present here in [the] United States actually have the same free speech rights as the rest of us. The Court answers this Constitutional question unequivocally ‘yes, they do.’ ‘No law’ means ‘no law.’”

Prof. Lahr said her reasoning was that this urges the university to uphold our legal rights for all individuals in the community using all appropriate legal measures available. It doesn't exclude any protected characteristics, and it doesn't call out any particular characteristics. It urges the

university to follow the law and do so properly for all individuals, regardless of their circumstance.

Prof. Kevoe Feldman seconded the motion on the amendment.

Discussion of the proposed amendment followed.

Prof. Walters thought the amendment was too vague and diluted the specificity of the current federal administration's attacks, which have been primarily around gender, race sexuality and national status.

Prof. Desnoyers said he would be more comfortable with this amendment if it referenced specific actions of the federal administration that we are asking Northeastern to fight against.

Prof. Kevoe-Feldman asked if we had a scope of what legal protection means and how that would be implemented? She was not clear on what the amendment was asking for action wise.

Prof. Walker echoed Prof. Walters' comments and said she would prefer add to the resolution.

Prof. Bormann said she wanted the senate to consider the kind of signaling they send in negotiating this resolution, adding she didn't think the core principles of the resolution were negotiable.

Prof. Lahr said once the resolution comes to the floor of the Senate, it becomes it belongs to the Senate as opposed to the original motion bringer. In terms of rules, it is appropriate for the Senate to have this conversation.

Prof. Carr made a motion to close debate on the amendment and move to vote.

Prof. Godoy Carter seconded the motion.

The vote was: 38-0-2.

The Senate then voted on the amendment.

The vote was: 16-19-4.

The amendment did not pass.

Prof. Kevoe-Feldman made a motion to move the original resolution to committee noting the resolution has come before multiple times starting in the spring 2025. There is overwhelming support for the resolution but uncertainty about what it means.

Prof. Kevoe-Feldman proposed a motion to have five members who are not authors of this resolution to work on a report and resolution to be presented to the Faculty Senate for a vote in January.

Prof. DiBattista seconded the motion.

Prof. Carr suggested adding an author of the original resolution to the proposed committee.

Prof. Kevoe Feldman agreed.

Prof. Desnoyers suggested that the proposed committee report to the Senate at an earlier date – Nov. 19, 2025.

Prof. Kevoe-Feldman agreed.

Prof. Lahr moved to close debate on this motion.

Prof. Bhutta seconded.

The vote was: 36-3-1.

The Senate then moved to vote on the motion to move the resolution to committee.

Motion to move the proposed resolution to a Senate committee (five members, with a presentation on November 19, and one author of this resolution to serve on this committee).

The vote was: 32-7-2.

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Professor Heidi Kevoe-Feldman