

## MINUTES

### FACULTY SENATE – SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, February 7, 2024, 3 p.m.

Altgeld Hall 125

Northern Illinois University

DeKalb, Illinois

**VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:** Arado, Atkins, Barrett, Books, English, Johnson, McGowan, Nyunt, Palese, Staikidis (for Scanlon), Vahabzadeh

**VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT:** Bohanon

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Creed, Elish-Piper, Valentiner

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

Faculty Senate (FS) President **B. Creed** called the meeting to order at 3 p.m.

#### II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was verified.

#### III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

**B. Palese** moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by **N. Johnson**. Motion passed.

#### IV. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 13, 2023, MINUTES

**T. Atkins** moved to approve the minutes, seconded by **T. Arado**. Motion passed.

#### V. PUBLIC COMMENT

#### VI. ITEMS FOR FS-SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

A. Sharing of relevant priorities of the Provost's Office  
Laurie Elish-Piper, Interim Executive Vice President and Provost

Current Office of the Provost priorities aligning with FS-Social Justice Committee (SJC) interests:

- Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Bárbara González focusing more broadly on faculty success.
- A diversity hiring plan now required for every approved position posting.
- Associate Vice Provost Janice Hamlet expanding faculty mentoring work.

- The Provost's Office continuing to support the work relative to the tenure/promotion proposal currently being considered by Faculty Senate.

Potential future Office of the Provost priorities aligning with FS-SJC interests:

- Tenure and promotion guidelines are critical, but they are built upon annual faculty reviews at the department level. If the tenure and promotion proposal is approved by FS, what is the impact on faculty annual reviews – to honor the work of the NIU faculty member, ensure a transparent process, and provide useful feedback, support, resources, direction to the faculty member?
- [Interfolio](#) is being considered as a potential tool to help NIU streamline and manage tenure and promotion, as well as the annual review process.

Discussion included the following feedback points:

- The need for specific training for faculty searches was discussed as implicit bias training is general in nature and doesn't necessarily apply to faculty hiring specifically. Feedback from those who have completed this training is welcome as stakeholders work to refine the training.
- Faculty search processes were discussed related to how to diversify applicant pools and ensure processes are fair and unbiased. Development of a way to learn from other departments and colleges was presented as a possible support. Discussed the impact of focusing on immediate, specific needs for current programs/courses has on diversifying the applicant pool.
- Cluster hiring was discussed as a way to go beyond current need driven hiring approach.
- Department personnel committees should have established and documented policies and procedures for annual reviews. Self-evaluations can be a valuable part of the process.
- Can we do a better job on policies and procedures before and after tenure? This is not just a pre-tenure issue. These conversations are potentially the next phase of the FS-SJC's work.
- Some NIU colleges are creating "director of diversity" positions. The person in such a position might play a key role in coordinating a diversity hiring plan at the college level, and such plans will be submitted to the Office of the Provost for university-level accountability. The Provost's office has samples/templates to help colleges understand the key components.

- How do we make NIU more attractive to potential employees? What do campus visits look like and what do candidates want to see and learn about NIU and DeKalb? The Provost’s Office is currently working with Human Resource Services (HRS) to create a more compelling NIU job posting website. What would appeal to diverse applicants? Ideas are welcome.
- Learning from faculty currently at NIU and those who have recently left (exit interviews) can provide valuable feedback on barriers, processes and areas for improvement.

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

## VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### A. Faculty Senate Bylaws, Article 3.5, Social Justice Committee

**T. Atkins** moved to approve this amendment proposal to go forward to Faculty Senate for consideration, seconded by **T. Arado**. Motion passed.

### B. Brief updates of ongoing work

DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) Fest – Parallels exist between the DEI Fest concept and [The Real Talk Conference](#), which was held in October 2023 and is anticipated to become an annual event. There might be opportunity to partner with the Division of Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI) and Student Affairs on upcoming Real Talk conferences.

### C. Overview of work within the domain of the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee Ben Creed, FS President

- [NIU Constitution, Article 7.3](#) provides that FS has the “power to establish the educational and academic policies of the university.” [FS Bylaws, Article 7](#) operationalizes these powers a bit more.
- FS can inform, elevate, act as a check on other bodies. FS is one body, but not a comprehensive body; other bodies do their respective work.
- [FS Bylaws, Article 3.5.2.1](#) describe the FS-SJC’s duties.

### D. Continued discussion of priorities

Discussion included these points:

- Other than a resolution, what mechanisms exist by which the FS-SJC can participate in administrative decision-making related to DEI training, or other priorities identified by the original ad hoc group?

- What is the status of the hiring statement created by DEI for HRS?
- Committee concerns can be elevated either to Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) Carol Sumner or to FS.
- Recent and ongoing transition in NIU administrative leadership, as well as FS-SJC membership, perhaps makes this an optimal time to revisit the original priorities before moving forward.
- Communicating in a positive tone and demonstrating that the FS-SJC is a willing collaborator interested in partnership, is key as the work continues.
- A matrix would be helpful in assessing the committee’s progress on each priority and to judge when a project is completed.
- Potential future FS-SJC topics:
  - Identify institutional structures, which systematically contribute to inequities, create plans or make recommendations to correct these systems and work with the right campus bodies to advocate for these changes.
    - Supporting the implementation of tenure and promotion
    - Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI)-related work
  - Provide guidance to the FS on relevant issues
    - Develop “curriculum” for FS
  - Coordination and communication with those outside of FS to:
    - Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) 2.0, including (HSI) work
    - Faculty Academy on Cultural Competence and Equity (FACCE), Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation efforts
    - ONE READ Round 2
  - Share original priorities with CDO Carol Sumner and request follow up.
  - Items brought forward by Interim Provost Laurie Elish-Piper today.
- This discussion can be prioritized for the March 6 FS-SJC meeting, with the goal of deciding on 2024-25 focus. Members are requested to come to the next meeting prepared to discuss. Can **B. Creed** provide a guiding document relative to how to think about institutional change?

## IX. ADJOURNMENT

**B. Palese** moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded and passed.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.