PUBLIC NOTICE AND AGENDA
FS FACULTY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES COMMITTEE

**Thursday, October 24, 2024, 12:30 p.m.**

**Altgeld Hall 125**

**Northern Illinois University**

**DeKalb, Illinois**

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Verification of Quorum**

**III. Adoption of the Agenda**

**IV. Approval of the November 6, 2023, Minutes –** Pages 2-4

**V. Public Comment**

**VI. Items for FS Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee Consideration**

A. NIU definition of academic freedom

B. Initial review of [FS Bylaws, Article 14](https://www.niu.edu/university-council/faculty-senate/bylaws/index.shtml#article14), Grievance Procedures for Violations of Academic Freedom

**VII. Unfinished Business**

**VIII. New Business**

**IX. Adjournment**

**MINUTES**

**Faculty Senate Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee**

**Monday, Nov. 6, 3:30 p.m.**

**Altgeld Hall 125**

**Northern Illinois University**

**DeKalb, Illinois**

**VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:** Brain, Campbell, Rajabi, Xie

**VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT:** Vaezi

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Creed, Garner, Reeves, Valentiner

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Faculty Senate (FS) President **B. Creed** called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

**II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM**

A quorum was verified.

**III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

**C. Campbell** moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by **D. Brain**. Motion passed.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comment offered by **T. Reeves.**

**V. ITEMS FOR FS FACULTY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION**

Per FS Bylaws, Article 3.2.2, the committee members are asked to advise on two topics in order to guide future conversations and efforts with FS and senior leadership; advise on potential policy development; and ensure faculty perspectives are included.

A. Sexual Misconduct: Policy and Training

Sarah Garner, Ethics and Compliance Officer

**S. Garner** presented an overview. Discussion included these points:

* NIU’s training is created in-house through the Office of Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
* Inviting training feedback via survey could provide better understanding for training improvements.
* How might training be tailored to specific NIU constituencies, such as a faculty-focused training?
* What data exists to support the positive impact of training on the university community? Reports show that NIU sees an increase in reporting immediately following the fall training, and again in spring during Sexual Assault Awareness Month.
* Most reports are of student-on-student incidents.
* Is there flexibility for a shorter training module in alternating years? Yes, although some topics are required to be included annually. Also, training could be redesigned to be more distinct topic-specific content areas over the course of the year in a professional development style.
* Most sexual assaults occur within the first six weeks of the academic year.
* NIU’s data collection is related to the Clery Report, though the parameters used to define the Clery Report data is more narrow.
* Complaints can take three to four months to resolve, due in part to built-in 10-day wait periods between process steps.

Areas for FRR Committee review include:

* Feedback on training – timing, content, delivery method.
* Reporting requirements – Should all NIU employees be mandated reporters or a subset?
* What is NIU’s current policy outside Title IX?
* Does/should NIU have a faculty policy?
* Should there be a faculty-focused training? Noted that the student residence hall experience is likely different from the faculty experience in the classroom. Provost’s Office hopes to review the current training with a faculty lens.
* Spring Campus Climate Survey – possible additions?

B. Academic Freedom policy at NIU, overview and ask

Ben Creed, Faculty Senate President

Academic freedom sits at the heart of the university. Conversations regarding the restriction of academic freedom are ongoing across the nation, and NIU is engaging in these conversations, as well. Distinctions exist among academic freedom, free speech and freedom of expression. Several resources have been shared with FRR Committee members.

Discussion included these points:

* Senior leadership is interested in hearing the faculty perspective on this topic before taking any action.
* NIU documents lack a tight definition of academic freedom. The Freedom of Expression Policy does not mention academic freedom; The United Faculty Alliance documents acknowledges academic freedom, but excludes instructors, clinical faculty, research faculty, adjunct faculty.
* The NIU ONE READ book study participants have reviewed the book, It’s Not Free Speech: Race, Democracy, and the Future of Academic Freedom, by Michael Bérubé and Jennifer Ruth, and have agreed to serve as a resource.

Areas for FRR Committee review include:

* Should NIU have a policy on academic freedom and what should that policy look like?
* What process or procedures could be used to ensure academic freedom is protected and/or adjudicate complaints?
* What sort of training should be provided?

C. Setting meeting dates for Spring 2024

Follow-up for FRR Committee members: Related to each of the two topics discussed today, members are asked to conduct research on an identified component and bring the information back to a future meeting for discussion and recommendations for next steps.

What are the committee members’ thoughts relative to committee rhythm, frequency of meetings? A poll could be shared to learn this information.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

**C. Campbell** moved to adjourn, seconded by **R. Rajabi**. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 4:36 p.m.