The meeting was called to order at 3:05 PM in Harris Hall by Dean Adrian Randolph

I. The minutes of the Faculty Meeting of May 16, 2017 were approved as submitted.

II. Associate Dean Mary Finn presented a report of the Committee on Report of the Committee on Undergraduate Academic Excellence. The committee considered recommendations from all Weinberg College departments and programs. It received recommendations of honors for 185 projects and approved all recommendations. This is an increase of 14 projects from the previous academic year 2015-16 when 171 projects received honors. Two students successfully completed the requirements for dual honors, that is, honors in two programs or departments. Ten students received Interdisciplinary Honors, double the amount of students of last year.

III. Associate Dean Mary Finn encouraged faculty to read the final report of the Weinberg College ad hoc Committee for Degree Requirements, submitted to Dean Adrian Randolph on September 25, 2017. She noted that some proposals would be evaluated and reviewed by faculty this year, while others would be put forward for the next academic year. They would be consulting with the Curricular Policy Committee on implementation.

IV. Associate Dean Mary Finn presented for discussion the Report to the Weinberg Faculty on Undergraduate Initiatives. She noted some of the highlights of the data trends, stating the College was at an 8.2% yield, a downward trend over the last 14 years; the College has an upward trend of international students at 10.9%, and admitted 18.5% PELL eligible students, close to the 20% goal for 2020. Finn mentioned there were 75 transfer students, and noted that increasingly, transfer students come in with intentions to major in STEM fields, a particularly complicated measure, which could initiate discussions with the departments over credit acceptance. Finn mentioned that occasionally, struggling students could be placed in a lower track (particularly in Chemistry).

Dean Finn spoke of the Bridge program, which brought 114 low-income or first generation students to campus the summer before matriculating at NU. Students earned two academic credits. New this year was a Bridge track in the social sciences and humanities. Thirty-five rising sophomores earned one credit in a two-week preparatory course for ECON 310 and Organic Chemistry. Finn urged faculty who might be interested in participating in the program to contact her directly.

Dean Finn spoke of the success of the Posner Fellows Program for rising sophomore. Twenty-six students spent eight weeks doing research across the Weinberg divisions under the supervision of a faculty mentor. Finn noted that among students who have participated in the program, one is a candidate for Rhodes, with another who overcame struggles early in the program now graduating successfully.

Dean Finn recognized the Office of Student Learning Advancement, which was a collaboration between the College and the Searle Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning. This office consolidated peer-tutoring resources under the auspices of the new Office of Student Learning
Advancement. She encouraged faculty to reach out to her with comments/requests about what the needs look like for the students in their department.

Dean Finn noted that the number of Weinberg College Advisers has grown from four to five advisers, due to the increased demand for advising due to changing demographics. Combined with the smaller 2021 class size, they hoped the increased capacity would make a difference in timely student access to advising.

Dean Finn reported that approximately 100 faculty members participated in a session on inclusive training facilitated by Bennett Goldberg, Director of the Searle Center for Teaching and Learning, and Rob Brown, Director of Social Justice Education in the Office for Campus Community and Inclusion. Sessions were held for the Weinberg College Advisers, faculty who attended New Faculty Orientation, and faculty members doing seminar linked advising this fall. She encouraged faculty to attend future sessions.

Dean Finn advised faculty about the Course Cost initiative. She noted that the Provost funded an initiative (“Books for Cats”) to loan text books in a set of introductory STEM (and Economics) classes in fall quarter to students identified as having a certain level of financial need. She identified that 131 students participated in this initiative. He also funded an initiative in Chemistry to provide lab coats, goggles and Lab Archive access to all students with identified need. She expressed the Dean’s request to faculty members that they include detailed information about course materials (including ISBN) in their CAESAR description in time for registration, and to submit their book order as early as possible, optimally by registration as well, with the goal of making courses more accessible to low-income students, noting that the family of a student who receives a PELL grant has a household income of less than $40,000. She thanked faculty who had previously participated and encouraged faculty to follow the initiative in the future.

Dean Finn noted that in 2016-2017 Weinberg College awarded 225 undergraduate research grants for a total of $425,00, and six faculty members were given funding to bring on teams of undergraduates to work on a research project, two of which were part of a course. NU Bioscientists, rising sophomores doing summer research after a year of preparation, were also supported by these funds. She expressed that the College would like to fund more faculty-driven research projects for undergraduates, and encouraged faculty to apply.

Dean Kelly Mayo noted that costs associated with bringing in undergraduates to the lab can be an obstacle that discourages faculty from doing so, despite personal enthusiasm for the program by faculty members. Professor Carole Labonne concurred, mentioning that the cost was upwards of $3,000 for one particular case, when quantified by a faculty member. Professor Laura Brueck added that for their department, there would be increased costs beyond consumables, for taking students abroad.

Professor Mira Balberg called for an event to increase the visibility of smaller departments, programs, and majors in the winter/spring quarter. She noted that the Academic direction fair occurred during a time when students were still getting acquainted with the university experience. Dean Randolph encouraged programs and departments to consider how they might have specific events to encourage student interest, and encouraged faculty to reach out with ideas.

V. Associate Dean Mónica Russel y Rodriguez stated that the non-tenure eligible faculty unionization continued to be unresolved, and directed faculty to the Provost website for updates.
VI. The Dean thanked the faculty in attendance, the meeting was adjourned at 4:25pm.

Respectfully submitted by Courtney Essenpreis, Assistant to the Dean.