

Peter Barris
Chair, Board of Trustees
Northwestern University

April 1, 2025

Concerned Northwestern Alumni
c/o Eva Jefferson Paterson

Dear Ms. Paterson and concerned alumni,

Thank you for reaching out to the Board of Trustees and for your thoughtful engagement on these critical issues. I have shared your note with all my fellow Board members, and we appreciate the time and effort you have taken to convey your perspectives. We will reflect on your message as we think about Northwestern's future through this unprecedented period.

For many months, the Board has been closely monitoring the potential and now unfolding federal actions that deeply impact higher education. These challenges, for Northwestern and all our peers, are significant, complex, and evolving. As you point out, we must preserve the University's values and protect our students, faculty, and staff, and I applaud the President and Provost's [recent message to the community](#), articulating our guiding principles amid the hard decisions we are facing. Among those principles are our fierce commitment to academic freedom and to the diversity of our University community, engagement across difference, and freedom for all our constituents from discrimination, hate and intimidation.

The Board is working with the administration to protect Northwestern's teaching and research mission and uphold its core values. Northwestern, across all disciplines and stakeholder groups, is greater as an institution than the sum of its parts. We are actively advocating publicly and privately. Topics that once seemed distinct and clear—for example, scientific research and diversity programming—are now intertwined in complicated ways. With the federal government providing hundreds of millions of dollars annually to Northwestern in student financial aid and research grants, each of our choices carries risk to our institution and to the people who make it great. We are meticulously considering all factors in making difficult decisions to ensure that Northwestern's ability to fulfill its mission continues for generations to come.

As I have heard President Schill and Provost Hagerty describe, Northwestern and other universities—indeed the institution of higher education itself—have survived existential pressures before, and I have every confidence in our ability to collectively navigate the current challenges, although our path in the short-term is not going to be easy. Please continue to advocate for and champion Northwestern in your communities in the ways that you can.

Sincerely,



Peter J. Barris
Chair, Board of Trustees
Northwestern University