

# February 4, 2004 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

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**Members In attendance:** Bruce Wessels, Thomas Bauman, Caroline Bledsoe, David Buchholz, Dennis Chong, Abe Haddad, Hamlin Jennings, Ilya Kutik, James Lindgren, Deborah Lucas, Martin Mueller, Eva Redei, Mario Ruggero, Michael Stein, Sigmund Weitzman

## 1. Approval of January minutes

Minutes were unanimously approved.

## 2. University Strategy- VPs Jake Julia and Mary Desler

VP Jake Julia from the Change Management department initiated discussion with the GFC members on behalf of the University administration for the sub-committee to update the university strategic plan. The discussion addressed ways in which the university administration can improve the life of faculty members and specifically ways in which it can aid in their professional growth.

The discussion began on what is working for faculty and what NU is doing right. GFC members responded positively on the Library. On-line resources are terrific and staff is very responsive. The Law school and Kellogg school were praised as having great teaching and technological resources especially in the classroom setting.

Faculty commented positively on the campus setting and physical grounds. Ground and buildings are kept up daily. Many GFC members agreed that the bottom line is money. If monetary resources are available, generally there are less issues and more satisfied faculty members.

Areas for improvement were subsequently discussed. University needs to exercise preventative maintenance instead of dealing with issues after the fact. Overall, class room support is less than satisfactory. Issues include no chalk, sound in smart rooms is often not good, poor classroom maintenance and no audio visual help in many classrooms. Classroom furniture desperately needs to be changed. There is a lack of consideration of faculty time and comfort during renovation, especially when faculty members get surprise visits from painters, movers, etc. Parking, or lack there of, and parking fees have remained an issue. There is also an information technology support crisis. There is a need for quality space for offices and research. There is

poor accounting for space. Space is a major issue for schools such as engineering and music. The university's lack of qualified support staff is a major issue. Staff members at the entry level are not paid enough to be motivated to strive for a higher level of professionalism. Staff are overworked and underpaid. When compared to other universities, NU does not offer competitive wages for staff members at the lower grades. There are job title discrepancies. An administrative assistant in one department gets paid differently than another, doing the same job. Research compliance and infrastructure remains a major issue. University rules regarding human subjects are too severe and often hinder the creativity of a researcher. The bureaucracy is often overwhelming. NU needs a more workable IRB system. In research compliance, for example, NU imposes regulations that are not even required by law. The rules do not protect the university but they limit ingenuity and academic advancement.

VP Julia asked the GFC members to email him within the next two weeks any additional thoughts, comments and suggestions.

### **3. Reports by the sub-committee chairs**

**Budget:** Meetings with senior university administration on the university budget were informative and very positive. Administrators were open to questions and information was given on budgetary rules and sources of funds. An objective of the Budget and Policy sub-committee is to understand NU budgetary process and serve as an informed resource for the GFC in matters regarding the budget. Another meeting with the university administration is scheduled for the end of February.

**Research:** The Research sub-committee's strategy is to focus on a few specific areas, such as IRB or animal research, and work to improve it. The sub-committee mission statement was given to all GFC members for review. The sub-committee proposes to serve as a conduit between faculty involved and the university administration on issues involving research. Chairperson Eva Redei, requested GFC endorsement of the handout. A motion was made to endorse the mission statement. The GFC voted in favor of moving forward with the Research sub-committee mission. The mission statement will now be discussed with the senior university administration.

**Faculty Development:** The sub-committee discussed topics such as mentoring programs for junior faculty, minority recruitment, leave policy and faculty career development. Hamlin Jennings indicated that the current leave policy is very good but poorly articulated. The committee is considering on focusing on diversity issues.

**Education:** The coalition COIA document for reform of intercollegiate athletics has much support nationwide and is gaining momentum. The GFC sub-committee is awaiting decisions from COIA regarding reform strategy.

**Benefits:** The sub-committee is looking into raising tuition benefits, parking- making it a graduated based fee, improving insurance (fire, life, etc) benefits, and introducing an HSA plan- pre-tax health care funds that roll over and are used for future medial expenses.

#### **4. Report on January meeting with GFC leadership and senior administrators**

Issues discussed included University budget, administrator searches, research infrastructure, faculty leave policy and consensual relations document. VP Moore presented GFC members with the Office of Research strategic plan.

#### **5. Old Business**

##### **a. Consensual Relations policy document**

The administration requested that the GFC to go forward with the document after some changes are made, but many GFC members remain opposed to the document. The document is too broad and should be classified as an issue of conflict of interest. Deans are in favor of the document so GFC members are requested to deal with the issue. A motion was made to move forward on the revised policy document. A motion to table was defeated. The motion to move forward on the revised document was defeated. The Budget and Policy Committee will review the issue. James Lindgren will draft a policy statement on behalf of the GFC.

#### **6. New business:**

##### **a: Senate agenda**

The winter quarter Senate meeting will not be held. The next meeting will be in the spring quarter.

##### **b: Nomination Committee**

The GFC committee on committee will name a committee to nominate the next GFC chair.

#### **Next meeting:**

a. The next GFC meeting will be held on March 3, 2004 at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room)

Minutes Submitted by:Diana Snyder