

January 5, 2005 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

Members In attendance: Eva Redei, Paul Arntson, David Buchholz, Sonny Cytrynbaum, Charles Geyer, Abraham Haddad, Ilya Kutik, James Lindgren, Deborah Lucas, Donald McCrimmon, Martin Mueller, Michael Stein, Allen Taflove

1. Approval of December minutes

The minutes of the December 1, 2004 meeting were approved with changes. Upon the suggestion of a GFC member, the draft date of the approved Consensual Relations document will be added to the minutes.

2. Report on the December 4th meeting with the Board of Trustees

At the conclusion of the meeting between the GFC and the Board of Trustees, Eva Redei was asked, by the Trustees, to submit a bullet point conclusion of the meeting. They will use this information as a tool to measure the actions resulting from the meeting discussions. Eva generated the document using the reports given by the GFC co-chairs of the meeting sessions the GFC members reviewed the interpretations of the action points for accuracy. GFC members discussed the draft document, addressing each bullet point and ensuring that the comments, conclusions and action terms were correctly interpreted. The suggested changes were agreed upon and decided that with them the document will be forwarded to the Board of Trustees via Marilyn McCoy, Vice President for Administration and Planning.

3. Sub-Committee Reports

The subcommittee chairs gave an update of where each sub-committee stands and discussed what they want to achieve this year. Eva suggested that it would be beneficial for sub-committees to invite specific administrators to discuss topics within the sub-committees.

Benefits sub-committee: Abraham Haddad remains proactive in benefits matters by continuing to meet with subcommittee members on a regular basis. At the last meeting, sub-committee members summarized the activities after looking at what they started with and what they ended

with at the close of the year (2004). One item they are concerned with is the lack of HR staff needed to support the benefits sub-committee initiatives. Benefits administrators are willing to move on issues, but they don't have the man power to achieve actual results. Currently, the sub-committee is working on the following items:

- Health savings account (HSA)
- Streamlining insurance premiums for health benefits – fees have gone up tremendously
- Working on inviting a NUSAC representative to speak with the sub-committee

The only other issue pending is the nonexistence of an HMO plan for retirees. Currently, there is only a PPO option that can be purchased as a Medicare supplement. There is no cost to the university since the Emeritus faculty pays the full amount, so the Benefits sub-committee will investigate why NU does not offer the HMO option and what can be done about it.

Faculty Development and Minority Issues: There have been no meeting held of this subcommittee yet. Martin Mueller reported that the issue of representation and more specifically, who should be represented by the GFC is currently on the table. Ideally, there should be a rule that applies across the institution, but this is not the case as schools vary in their practices. The Senate rules state that the member of the Senate is, by definition, tenured or tenure-track faculty and other line faculty proposed by the school and approved by the Senate. It was proposed that the schools should continue to deal with this issue.

A second issue relates to how the GFC communicates with the administration and with constituents. Senate meetings are not working, mainly for the lack of faculty participation. The first step toward increased faculty involvement is to cover issues that will peak interest and then to create interactive means by which faculty can give feedback on issues of importance. The sub-committee will investigate communication forms such as various forms of media, including weekly or monthly newsletters or the web. Martin Mueller will look into setting up a web group login network through the IT department.

First, the subcommittee needs to investigate how to join an existing IT infrastructure and how to realize an interactive feedback feature. Martin Mueller will explore the technical options and report at the next GFC meeting. It was proposed that there should be a systematic process of communication in which members take the initiative to write regularly, in some structured way to the faculty with a feedback mechanism. The content will consist of pieces of the GFC meeting

minutes and highlighted specific hot topics, such as IRB-related issues, and retiree benefits. Security issues were also discussed.

Budget and Policy sub-committee: The Budget and Policy sub-committee has not met yet, but Debbie Lucas anticipates that the sub-committee will reconvene soon. A minor set-back for the sub-committee is that James Elsass, who has had the conversation with the sub-committee about the budget, is retiring. An investment will need to be made with someone new to have a budget conversation with. On a more positive note, the other policy issue that seems very relevant to the replacement of the administrative systems is going forward. Jake Julia expressed an interest in coming to discuss this topic with the GFC and he will be invited to speak at an upcoming GFC meeting.

Research sub-committee: David Buchholz gave an update on the Research Affairs initiative and gave several examples of various types of comments and complaints that have come in. The administration is actively responding to forwarded comments in a timely matter. The research sub-committee is planning to meet with Brad Moore. David Buchholz would also like to invite him to speak at a GFC meeting in the springtime.

4. Request from Brad Moore, the VP for Research, to review proposed indirect cost recovery system

The document was discussed and suggested that more detailed explanation for the document is needed and also a purpose for its existence. Feedback should be provided to Brad Moore directly.

5. Strategies to increase faculty participation in governance

An extensive conversation related to the Faculty Development sub-committee touched on this topic (see section 3 above). A resolution was made to proceed with the specified communications initiative.

6. Election of a GFC vice-chair

The election of a GFC vice-chair has been postponed until the next GFC meeting. Not all nominees were present to introduce themselves and their goals.

The next GFC meeting will be held on February 2, 2005 at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room)

Minutes Submitted by:

Diana Snyder