

May 4, 2005 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

Members In attendance:

Eva Redei, Thomas Bauman, David Buchholz, Clarke Caywood, Sonny Cytrynbaum, Sudhakar Deshmukh, Charles Geyer, Deborah Lucas, Donald McCrimmon, Martin Mueller, Michael Stein, Allen Taflove, Bruce Wessels

1. Approval of April GFC minutes

The minutes of the April 6, 2005 meeting were approved with no changes.

2. Updates and Discussion of Previous Topics

At the recent Executive Meeting, administrators agreed to have the questionable legal statement removed from the ETES supervisory agreement form, but to this day no action has been taken. GFC members present were in agreement that a follow-up letter needs to be presented to the administration.

General Faculty members discussed the possibility of putting the EthicsPoint Hotline issue on the Faculty Senate agenda. The implementation of this mechanism is being protested by many members of the faculty body. However, there is no agreement among the GFC members regarding the Hotline. As a result of this dissension, the Hotline will not be on the agenda, but will instead be brought to the attention of the Faculty Senate as a point of concern, mentioning that members of the faculty body have expressed a number of misgivings. The GFC will ask for a one-year summary of the Hotline and determine the plan of action based on the information presented at that time.

3. Final agenda of the Faculty Senate Meeting

The approved Faculty Senate meeting agenda consists of the following items:

1. *Approval of the Minutes of the Nov 18, 2004, University Senate Meeting - Mr. Bienen*
2. *Report of the General Faculty Committee chair on progress in 2004-2005 - Ms. Redei*
3. *Arguments for establishing an Office of the Ombudsperson - Ms. Redei*
4. *Institutional Review Board (IRB) – censorship – academic freedom - Mr. Lindgren*
5. *The IRB and other relevant topics - Mr. Smith*

6. Remarks of the President - Mr. Bienen

Eva Redei is planning to present to the Faculty Senate the argument for establishing an Ombudsman office. One GFC member expressed concern that not enough preparation was done by the GFC as a group on the Ombudsman topic to be able to present a thorough argument before the Senate. Eva Redei assured everyone that the research has been done and a full argument can be presented.

James Lindgren will present the IRB issue as it relates to academic freedom. He researched it thoroughly and is very interested and passionate about the topic. A discussion, related to procedure, broke out after one GFC member expressed unease that the opinions of one person are going to represent the views of the group as a whole. As a result of this discussion, it was concluded that topics for discussion at the Faculty Senate meeting will be presented as concerns, and recommendations will only come from the GFC not from the individual making the presentation.

4. A message to the faculty

Eva Redei would like to put forth every effort to encourage as much faculty participation as possible in the next and final Faculty Senate meeting for this fiscal year. A reminder containing details of the GFC's stand on agenda topics will be sent via BULK mail to all faculty members.

5. Sub-committee reports: verbal and written for the GFC web site

Eva Redei received several, but not all sub-committee reports, so sub-committee chairs were asked to write and submit their summary by the end of this week. They were also reminded that this information would be posted on the web and is key in producing the GFC year-end chair summary.

6. Security issues of the Faculty Forum

It has recently been discovered that the Faculty Forum is not restricted to faculty only and anyone with a netid, including all staff and students, can access the blog and make comments. Secondly, there have been several requests from faculty to retract comments from the blog that were meant to be anonymous. As a result of these complaints, the blog setting was changed so that writers are anonymous from the public, but those who wish have the option to sign their

names within the comment itself. Until the Library upgrades to version three, this is the best option available. It is believed that the upgrade will take place sometime during the summer.

An alternative to the blog is a GFC listserv which could be restricted to faculty. No decision was made whether or not to pursue a listserv. The blog issue will be revisited next fiscal year after its success or failure is determined. A motion was made and approved for the default setting of the blog to be public, not allowing for anyone to post a comment anonymously, with an added statement, which says that if anyone has an issue they would like to discuss in confidence, they should write to the GFC chair directly.

7. Other issues

Due to rising cost of healthcare, a new Healthcare Insurance initiative is being currently explored by HR. One idea is that NU would provide an amount to the individuals to spend on healthcare however the individual decides it best for them. The monies could be used to pay for drugs and doctor bills directly or through the insurance company for costs related to healthcare. Anything beyond that amount would be covered by the individual and any cost in excess of some defined amount would be covered by a catastrophic insurance at 90% of billed amount. This is just an illustrative example and nothing has been decided yet. This information was given to the GFC as a warning of things that are developing. HR has met with Hewitt, an outside firm, to explore how the university should proceed on this matter. Three groups, school administrators and deans, central administration and people from the GFC and NUSAC benefits committees will be involved in the process. The goal is to change from a paternalistic philosophy providing healthcare possibilities, to one of individual responsibility. The feeling is that most faculty and staff are not equipped to do the necessary homework to handle such a shift successfully. The GFC benefits sub-committee will look into this matter immediately.

8. June Meeting will be held at Jacky's Bistro in Evanston

Eva Redei announced that the final GFC meeting will be held on June 1, 2005 at 7:00 pm at Jacky's Bistro in Evanston.

Minutes Submitted by: Diana Snyder