

January 10, 2007 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

Members in attendance:

Chairman Paul Arntson, Clarke Caywood, Dennis Chong, Jeanne Dunning, John Elson, Abraham Haddad, Donna Jurdy, Spyridon Konstantopoulos, Seth Lichter, Mark Seagraves, Teepu Siddique, Allen Taflove, Laurie Zoloth

Introduction: GFC Chair Paul Arntson called the meeting to order at 7:10pm. He welcomed everyone and introduced the newest GFC members. He announced the order of business.

1. Approval of November 8, 2006

Chairman Arntson asked all of the GFC members to look over the minutes of the November 8, 2006 meeting and email any changes to Diana Snyder. Once approved, the minutes will be posted to the GFC website.

2. Report of the Faculty Senate Meeting:

Chairman Arntson reported on the outcome of the Fall University Senate Meeting held on November 9, 2006. The three GFC proposed resolutions were all passed. They are the following:

- The Faculty Senate has the responsibility at appropriate occasions to respond to value, policy and or/factual statements by individuals both inside and outside of the Northwestern University community and, with very few exceptions, to support strongly their freedom to express these statements.
- The community of scholars present at this faculty senate meeting who value academic integrity and freedom, basic honesty, compassion, and freedom of expression strongly endorse President Bienen's statement of February 6, 2006 concerning Arthur Butz's views on the holocaust and his tenure at Northwestern University.
- The Faculty Senate requests that Provost Dumas appoint a faculty committee drawn from diverse research areas and methodologies to work with appropriate members of the Administration to develop procedures for reviewing IRB-related non-federally funded research at Northwestern University.

3. Report of the Board of Trustees/GFC Meeting:

Chairman Arntson reported on the Fall Board of Trustees meeting held on December 2, 2006. The discussion of the group handling diversity issues at NU proved positive and resulted in the likelihood of the administration appointing someone specifically to investigate the declining number of diverse students and faculty. There was also much concern over the results of surveys done on graduating seniors, which show that NU has one of the lowest ratings when students were asked whether they would recommend NU to friends and family. GFC vice Chair John Elson also reported that there is strong support for a long-range planning model similar to corporate style planning.

4. Faculty Governance (shared governance):

Chairman Arntson would like everyone to think about the future of the General Faculty Committee and more specifically whether or not there is a need for its existence. Currently the GFC does not have authority or power and can only present issues through the Faculty Senate. The biggest concern is that the University Senate meetings are attended more by administrators than by faculty members. Professor Allen Taflove presented information from peer institutions on similar faculty groups and the way they are structured. In looking forward at shared governance, the General Faculty Committee and the Faculty Senate need to be examined closely to determine future standing or to creatively look at faculty incentive programs geared towards increasing participation if one or both remain active.

5. Ombudsman Proposal:

The General Faculty Committee unanimously agreed to resurrect the Ombudsman issue initially presented in FY2003-04. At the time, the proposal was opposed by the administration and was dropped, but there is once again interest in bringing it back to life. Chairman Paul Arntson made available an Ombudsman model from a peer institution for everyone to review and comment on. The goal is to be able to present a strong argument for instituting an Ombudsman, to be presented at the next Executive Committee meeting scheduled for April 2007. The Faculty Rights and Responsibilities subcommittee has agreed to take on this issue.

6. Faculty Evaluation of Administrators:

Many peer institutions have mechanisms in place that allow faculty members to anonymously evaluate performance of administrators, such as the departmental chair, the dean, the president and the provost. The GFC would like to present a similar model to the NU administration, based on current models used at other universities. The Faculty Rights and Responsibilities subcommittee has been appointed to take on this issue.

7. GFC Subcommittee Reports:

Benefits Sub-committee: Abraham Haddad, Chair of the Benefits Sub-committee, plans to meet with the Benefits subcommittee in the next few weeks.

8. COIA (Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics) Participation:

The COIA was formed for the purposes of addressing athletic issues at various universities collectively. NU is currently a member of this organization, but the GFC would like to examine whether or not this membership should continue. If it is decided that NU remain a members, GFC members will appoint someone to attend the upcoming COIA meeting. The Educational Affairs subcommittee will pursue this topic.

9. Research Faculty Concerns (Teepu Siddique):

Research Affairs subcommittee chair Teepu Siddique reported on a currently escalating crisis in the animal testing structure. There is no clarity in basic processes and individuals affected are not informed properly. The research enterprise needs to be questioned since it does not currently serve researchers effectively. The IRB has improved but researchers are still having much difficulty finding someone to answer their questions. The Research Affairs subcommittee plans to pursue the issues related to various aspects of failing research processes.

10. New Business:

Vice Chair John Elson proposed that the GFC examine the current program review process. GFC members present were in favor of pursuing this initiative.

In Conclusion:

The next GFC meeting will be held on April 4, 2007 at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

Minutes Submitted by: Diana Snyder

Edited and Approved by: the General Faculty Committee