

# **June 6, 2007** Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

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## **Members In attendance:**

Vice Chair John Elson, David Abrahamson, Bala Balachandran, Dennis Chong, Jeanne Dunning, Abraham Haddad, Donna Jurdy, James Kjelland, Seth Lichter, Mark Segraves, Teepu Siddique, Laurie Zoloth

## **1. Approval of May 2, 2007 minutes**

The minutes of the May 2, 2007 GFC meeting were approved unanimously, with no changes.

## **2. Selection of a Vice Chair**

Laurie Zoloth accepted the nomination to serve as Vice Chair of the General Faculty Committee for FY2007-08. GFC members voted in favor of her appointment as well as the appointment of John Elson as chair.

## **3. Vote on the COIA resolution**

Donna Jurdy explained the COIA document and highlighted the items of importance. Overall, the report contains no red flags. After a brief discussion, GFC members present voted in favor of the COIA resolution, which will be presented at the Fall Senate Meeting for faculty body approval.

## **4. Vote on the CIC Provosts' Document**

The Provost asked that the GFC give a recommendation either to approve, reject or hold off on the CIC Provosts' Statement on Publishing Agreements. The statement would be an additional addendum applicable to all publishing contracts, which the publisher would have to agree upon and sign before a faculty member can proceed with publishing of materials. Building on the discussion of the CIC statement, Seth Lichter suggested that the university create a section on the NU website where all publications can be made available six months after the date of publication. The website will consist of a public searchable database. He also suggested that the CIC universities coordinate for all to have such a website, making available publications across the CIC institutions. The GFC plans to connect with the Library to seek their recommendation on the creation of the searchable site.

After a lengthy discussion on various aspects of the statement, the following was decided:

- a. GFC members voted in favor of announcing to the Provost that the GFC gives full support to the CIC Provosts' Statement on Publishing Agreements.
- b. The GFC also voted 6 to 4 (2 undecided) in favor of recommending that NU create a website (in a searchable database form) onto which faculty can post all of their publications and scholarships. As part of this vote, the GFC also supports the University's assistance to faculty who wish to attain a publisher's permission to place works on this website.

The current DRAFT of the Open Access Amendment to be sent to the Provost states the following: *We suggest that Northwestern establish, as part of the university website, a searchable site with the faculty's journal publications, posted six months after their date of publication. We further suggest that the CIC coordinate these postings among their member universities.*

## **5. Report on the meeting with Provost Dumas on suspension of faculty governance**

GFC members, who attended the meeting with Provost Larry Dumas regarding the suspension of faculty governance, were given an opportunity to present their observations of the meeting. After a discussion, it was clear that many on the GFC committee were not satisfied with the outcome of this meeting and felt that the explanations given by the administrators were insufficient and required more substantive and procedural justification. The GFC will respond to this by presenting the administration with a resolution that outlines why the issues raised in this case are important for consideration in establishing norms for suspension in the future. The major issue at hand is the process (or lack there of) used to suspend faculty governance.

A draft resolution was distributed to the members, a discussion of the resolution ensued and several changes to the wording of the draft were made. The GFC then voted unanimously to adopt the resolution, which stated the following:

*The GFC finds the Administration's suspension of faculty governance at the Medill School of Journalism to be unacceptable and in violation of the University's Statutes.*

*The GFC believes that significant curricular changes require full faculty deliberation and vote. The GFC further believes that the suspension of faculty governance is likely to have the following consequences:*

- i. Curricular changes that are ill considered.*
- ii. The demoralization and enmity of the faculty.*
- iii. Damage to the national reputation of the School.*

iv. *The loss of and the inability to hire faculty who believe that the faculty's role in governance is important for students, faculty and the public.*

*If the Administration in the future concludes that an emergency situation warrants the temporary suspension of a faculty's normal role in governing the curriculum, such suspension should be only for a set, limited period and only after formal approval by the Board of Trustees made after its consideration of the views of all concerned faculty.*

*The Administration and GFC should develop standards and procedures to limit any future abrogation by the Administration of the faculty's traditional and statutory powers and violations of statutes.*

A final version will be emailed to all GFC members for further comment prior to delivery to the administration.

## **6. Report on meeting with John Margolis on using the AAU faculty survey for evaluating administrators**

John Elson gave a brief overview of the meeting between Associate Provost Margolis, Paul Arntson and Elson. The meeting concerned the use of the AAU (American Association of Universities) faculty survey for evaluating administrators. John Margolis basically rejected this proposal, stating that this is not the appropriate vehicle for this type of initiative. With or without the administration support, the GFC plans to proceed with this issue in the FY2007-08 GFC year.

## **7. Faculty Senate Involvement – Target New Faculty**

A brief discussion was had on the fact that the current state of the NU Faculty Senate falls disappointingly short of its intended purposes. The GFC would like to change this and discussed ways to revive faculty interest. One idea was to target new faculty members. The GFC would send out a letter to all incoming faculty members introducing the Faculty Senate and detailing meeting information such as dates, times and locations.

## **8. Follow up discussion on electing faculty to the Senate**

GFC members discussed the outcome of a recent Faculty Senate meeting discussion on changing the Senate's structure. John Elson also presented Paul Arntson's ideas regarding how to proceed in the reorganization initiative. The key is to create a "blue ribbon" subcommittee to address this matter and to solicit experienced, esteemed faculty members to be at the forefront of the initiative. This group would develop consensus around a plan to reorganize the Senate into a

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more effective governing body and to contact each department personally to ask for more involvement in the Senate.

### **9. Follow up on a GFC Ombudsman program.**

In general, there seemed to be no firm opposition to the Ombudsman program from the administration, though various administrators had questions regarding the need for it and how it would operate. John Elson plans to proceed with planning for this initiative beginning in the summer.

### **10. New Business**

**a. BOT Meeting Agenda Items:** John Elson asked GFC members to begin thinking about agenda items for the December BOT meeting and to email ideas to him. GFC members discussed the following potential agenda items:

*New Accounting System Requirements:* A decision was made to implement a new accounting system, which requires more stringent documentation requirements for faculty. Some faculty members see this as a potential problem that needs to be monitored closely.

*Politically Minded Students:* GFC members discussed the idea of adding a class to the NU curriculum that would educate students in practical everyday political matters. More specifically, this course would teach students how to be politically minded and more aware of how to be politically active.

*Future Models in Faculty Governance:* Discussing faculty perspectives of future university governance.

### **In Conclusion:**

a. GFC members went on record to thank Paul Arntson for his excellent leadership as GFC chair of FY2006-07.

b. The first GFC meeting of FY2005-06 will be held on October 3, 2007 at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room).

Minutes Submitted by: Diana Snyder

Edited by: John Elson and Laurie Zoloth

Approved by: The General Faculty Committee