

# October 4, 2006 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

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**Members In attendance:** Chairman Paul Arntson, Bala Balachandran, Clarke Caywood, John Elson, James Kjelland, Spyridon Konstantopoulos, Seth Lichter, Teepu Siddique, Robin Steinhorn, Allen Taflove

## 1. Approval of June 7, 2006 Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the June 7, 2006 meeting were approved unanimously without changes.

## 2. Subcommittee structure and assignments

Chairman Paul Arntson discussed the current declining state of the GFC subcommittees and the improvements he would like to make. His primary plan of action will be to resurrect the practice of requiring all GFC members to serve on a subcommittee. He will email current GFC members asking for each to serve on a subcommittee.

Paul Arntson discussed each subcommittee as follows:

-Benefits Subcommittee: Must remain active in light of all of the current and forthcoming benefits changes. Abraham Haddad will continue to be the chair of this subcommittee.

-Research Subcommittee: Must remain active due, in part, to the continuous NU IRB process and procedural changes. The GFC should be a part of the decision making process from start to finish.

-Faculty Governance Subcommittee: This newly created subcommittee will be charged with handling issues of NU faculty governance. A major goal of this group will be to rethink the GFC structure and the currently lifeless Faculty Senate with the possibility of the GFC becoming the Faculty Senate.

-Budget Subcommittee: Must remain active. The GFC needs to continue building familiarization with the university budgetary process.

-Faculty Development/Diversity Subcommittee: The GFC will revisit the existence of this subcommittee.

-Educational Affairs Subcommittee: The GFC will revisit the existence of this subcommittee.

Members present discussed the subcommittees and the GFC as a whole, in terms of accomplishments, recognition, impact level, effectiveness and power. They also discussed the possibility of eliminating the General Faculty Committee or fusing the GFC and the Faculty Senate together.

### **3. Agenda items and format changes for December meeting with Board of Trustees**

Chairman Paul Arntson gave a brief history of how the Faculty/BOT meeting came about. It is significant in that it is the only time the Board of Trustees meet with faculty; unfortunately it is also under the supervision of the administration. Paul suggested a change in meeting format, but has been met with opposition by the administration. The agenda for this meeting comes solely from the General Faculty Committee. GFC member discussed each agenda item.

GFC members discussed the following preliminary agenda items:

- 1. The class (SES) diversity of the undergraduates given the increasing costs and the reduced loans.  
Housing*
- 2. The tension between the growing interdisciplinary research/PhD programs and undergraduate teaching from home departments*
- 3. The increasing reliance on non-tenure instructors to teach undergraduate courses, especially the required ones*
- 4. Connecting the professional schools with undergraduate courses*
- 5. The tension between the growing research emphasis in the professional schools and teaching their professionally oriented students*
- 6. What will NU look like in 20 years? Which areas should grow, which should be pruned or eliminated, and which ones should be combined?*
- 7. Public policy on Higher Education*
- 8. Academic tenure and freedom of expression: changes in progressive liberal bias at the university*

The discussion will continue via email to make agenda items concrete.

### **4. Butz resolution at November Senate meeting**

A revised Butz resolution will be presented at the November 9<sup>th</sup> Faculty Senate meeting. The resolution differs from the original in that it contains an endorsement of President Bienen's statement, which repudiated professor Butz's personal views on the Holocaust. The original document as is was going to be voted down, so it now states the following:

#### Resolution Regarding President Bienen's Statement of February 6, 2006

*"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."*

## **5. At-large membership selection**

There are three at-large GFC membership vacancies in FY06-07. The selection process is not well documented and very unclear, so Paul Arntson sent out a call to all faculty members asking for a self-nomination or nomination of a colleague. The response was very positive, with many individuals interested in serving on the GFC.

GFC members voted in favor of appointing Abraham Haddad as an at-large member and as the Benefits sub-committee chair for the next year. Abraham served on the GFC from FY2003-2006 and was the benefits subcommittee chair in FY2006. GFC members also agreed to Paul's proposal of appointing a 2<sup>nd</sup> at-large member to serve a 2 year term only. This staggering of at-large membership terms will prevent the current simultaneous turnover of all three slots.

In the next week, GFC members will establish criteria and examine the Committee on Committees list of at-large volunteers. Members will then nominate 3 at-large candidates via email.

### **Conclusion of meeting:**

Please note that the next GFC meeting will be held on November 8, 2006 (NOT November 1, 2006) at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room)

Minutes Submitted by: Diana Snyder

Minutes Edited by: Paul Arntson

Minutes Approved by: The General Faculty Committee members