

November 7, 2007 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

Members In attendance: Chairman John Elson, Alan Buchman, Jeanne Dunning, Susan Gapstur, Donna Jurdy, James Kjelland, Spyridon Konstantopoulos, Seth Lichter, Ferdinando Mussa-Ivaldi, Alan Sahakian

Introduction: Chairman John Elson called the meeting to order at 7:10pm and welcomed everyone. All members present introduced themselves to the group.

1. Approval of October 3, 2007 meeting minutes

The minutes of the October 3, 2007 meeting were approved unanimously and will be posted to the GFC website.

2. Provost meeting with GFC scheduled for our February 6, 2008 meeting

Provost Daniel Linzer will meet with the GFC at the February 6, 2008 meeting. John Elson suggested that members think of discussion items in advance of the meeting.

3. Vote on honorary degree candidates

After a brief discussion, GFC members voted to approve the honorary degree list, with a recommendation to add a candidate from medicine. John will also address several general inquiries with the administration, generated as a result of the discussion.

4. Report on October 16, 2007 GFC Executive Committee Meeting with President, Provost and Vice-Presidents

John Elson reported on the outcome of the recent Executive meeting with the administration leaders.

-Cancellation of Fall University Senate meeting: Due to a lack of strong agenda topics, it was decided by all that it would be best to cancel the Senate Meeting scheduled for November 15, 2007.

-Developments regarding ombudsperson program: The ombudsman pilot program that GFC members had thought the Administration had agreed to has met resistance from the administration, which expressed concerns that this initiative would generate litigation. The next step for the GFC is to work with the university General Counsel in structuring this program and in trying to relieve Administration concerns about provoking litigation.

-WCAS Membership Vacancies: The administration agreed to assist the GFC in filling the vacant WCAS membership slots. GFC members also plan to assist in speeding up the process by emailing the WCAS administrator membership nominations.

- Discussion on role of faculty governance: Discussion was had regarding the administration's view that the lack of faculty participation in faculty governance results from the fact that the faculty body is satisfied with the administration. There was discussion about whether the Administration's view in this respect is accurate and the concerns about its implications led to general agreement that the GFC should continue with the current plan to restructure and improve the Faculty Senate.

5. Report from John Elson on November 2-3, 2007 meeting of CIC faculty committee representative in Iowa City

John Elson gave a brief overview of the CIC meeting he recently attended, which included information on faculty governance at peer institutions. This meeting was attended by the chairs of faculty governance from 11 of the CIC schools. This report triggered an in-depth discussion on the effectiveness of the GFC and the NU Faculty Senate as a whole. Once major topic of discussion at the CIC meeting, led by Iowa faculty, concerns presidential searches. It was strongly suggested there that faculty at all institutions lobby for the right to be involved in this process and GFC members agreed. The CIC meeting also focused on athletics, various IRB issues, benefits, and accountability in higher education. John also discussed the other chairs' opinions on the issue of suspension of faculty governance.

6. Discussion of AAU faculty survey

The GFC members discussed various aspects of the AAU faculty survey, focusing on the purpose for having such an evaluation process and what the results should achieve. Although the Administration appeared to be opposed, there was consensus that a GFC subcommittee should be appointed to plan for an instrument by which faculty could regularly evaluate administrators.

7. Ideas about GFC role in University Presidential search process

There was discussion about what the GFC's role should be if there should be a university presidential search. As a first step, it was suggested that the chair make preliminary inquiries on this subject.

8. Volunteers for GFC subcommittees

John Elson announced that each GFC member will need to choose a subcommittee to serve on and possibly chair. He gave a brief overview of each subcommittee and asked for volunteers. Donna Jurdy agreed to chair the Benefits subcommittee and Susan Gapstur agreed to chair the Research subcommittee. Ferdinando Mussa-Ivaldi and James Kjelland agreed to serve on the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities subcommittee. All other GFC members will need to email John directly with their subcommittee participation choice.

9. Procedures for suspension of faculty governance

John Elson led a discussion on what the GFC's position should be on procedures for suspension of faculty governance, referencing two procedural protocol draft handouts. GFC members were asked to review the two drafts and be prepared to discuss the details at the December GFC meeting.

10. December 8, 2007 GFC meeting with Board of Trustees

GFC members were encouraged to attend the upcoming Board of Trustees Meeting scheduled for Saturday, December 8, 2007.

In Conclusion:

- John Elson will talk with Provost Dan Linzer about the One Northwestern research project and ask for a report on the results of the focus groups.
- The next GFC meeting will be held on December 5, 2007, at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room).

Minutes Submitted by: Diana Snyder

Minutes Edited by: John Elson and Laurie Zoloth

Minutes Approved by: General Faculty Committee members