

October 3, 2007 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

Members In attendance: Chairman John Elson, Vice Chair Laurie Zoloth, Bala Balachandran, Alan Buchman, Jack Doppelt, Jeanne Dunning, Susan Gapstur, Seth Lichter, Ferdinando Mussa-Ivaldi, Robin Steinhorn

Introduction: Chairman John Elson called the meeting to order at 7:05pm and welcomed everyone.

1. Introductions and a Special Thanks to Paul Arntson

Chairman John Elson publicly thanked previous chair Paul Arntson for a job well done in the 2006-07 year as GFC chair and for agreeing to continue serving on the committee for one more term. Paul Arntson continues to follow through on the initiatives that began under his leadership. John introduced himself, the GFC, the administrative assistant and asked each member present to introduce themselves.

2. Participation on Committees

John Elson gave a brief overview of the GFC subcommittees and explained the importance of participation, encouraging all members to think about which subcommittee to join. He talked about the Benefits Committee, the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee, Budget Committee, the Educational and Athletic Affairs Committee, the Research Affairs Committee and the Governance Committee. Most of the GFC initiatives begin as ideas presented at GFC meetings and are developed at the subcommittee level. John Elson explained in detail the following ongoing issues from last year:

~developing a pilot ombudsperson program;

~continuing the planning for the reorganization of the University Senate;

~exploring whether and/or how to develop a system for the faculty evaluation of administrators;

~as a result of the Administration's suspension of faculty governance at one of the University's Schools last year – creation of procedures and standards that will protect faculty governance rights from unilateral abrogation by the Administration;

GFC members discussed each issue at length.

3. Agenda items for December meeting with Board of Trustees

In the meeting the GFC Chair and Vice-Chair had with VP Marilyn McCoy on potential topics for the GFC meeting with the BOT, she suggested our consideration of an overarching theme of NU in a competitive world as it relates to attracting students, research support, faculty members, and resources. GFC members discussed this agenda topic and presented additional ideas.

GFC members discussed the following preliminary BOT agenda items:

1. Academic mission of the university from the viewpoint of an administration run on business principles.
Educating the Trustees on the academic vision conflicting with the currently trending business processes
2. Finding the academic vision
3. Differences in school units and how they treat faculty
4. One northwestern – how to connect the campuses - standardization of various items
5. How are students coming from a lower financial class being promoted
6. Making the case for diversity: Decline in minority students and faculty – how and should we promote racial diversity at NU?

Members will continue to communicate ideas for agenda items directly to John Elson.

4. Agenda for University Senate

GFC members were encouraged to think about agenda items for the upcoming University Senate meeting scheduled for November 15, 2007.

5. British boycott of Israeli scholars

John Elson gave some background information on the possible British boycott of Israeli scholars. After a brief discussion, General Faculty Committee members voted unanimously to back up President Henry Bienen's stand condemning the proposed boycott by the British Faculty Union. A resolution reflecting this support will be drafted.

6. Agenda for forthcoming year

Chairman John Elson challenged GFC members to think about issues for the upcoming year that can be pursued in addition to ongoing projects. He suggested and discussed the following as potential topics:

- nepotism policy
- workers compensation policies
- GFC by-laws-
- GFC communication and interaction with faculty constituency

7. Invite Provost to speak at GFC Meeting

The GFC will invite the newly appointed Provost, Daniel Linzer, to speak at an upcoming GFC meeting.

Conclusion of meeting:

The next GFC meeting will be held on November 7, 2007 at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room). The minutes of the June 6, 2007 meeting were approved unanimously without changes.

Minutes Submitted by: Diana Snyder

Minutes Edited by: John Elson and Laurie Zoloth

Minutes Approved by: General Faculty Committee members