

# February 04, 2009 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

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## **Members in attendance:**

Chair Laurie Zoloth, Vice Chair Stephen Eisenman, Paul Arntson, John Elson, Anupam Garg, Donna Jurdy, Andrew Koppelman, Seth Lichter, Ferdinando Mussa-Ivaldi, William Ocasio, Babette Sanders, Helen Thompson, Sylvia Wang

**Introduction:** GFC Chair Laurie Zoloth called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

## **1. Approval of January 7, 2009 meeting minutes**

The minutes of the January 7, 2009 meeting were approved with minor changes. The minutes will be posted once the specified revisions are made.

## **2. Facebook**

Laurie Zoloth announced the addition of the GFC Facebook, a communication tool that will help establish a virtual presence aimed at reaching out to the faculty body. The General Faculty Committee is committed to making every effort to utilize all available communication options.

## **3. Report on open houses and faculty meetings**

*Open Houses:* Laurie Zoloth gave a brief overview of the outcome of the Evanston open houses, which were attended by 19 faculty members the first night and 13 the second night. William Ocasio reported on the two major issues raised at the first Evanston campus open house: the issue of whether there should be two assemblies versus one, and the concern that the voting terms overriding a vote by ten percent is too low. There was also a big discussion about departmental representation and how that could be structured in light of the size differences in each department. Stephen Eisenman reported on the issue of proportional voting raised at the second open house on the Evanston campus. John Elson gave a brief overview of the Chicago campus open house, which was attended by six people, who were very supportive of the governance initiative. He reported on the question raised over how non-tenure track faculty would be selected.

*Departmental Meetings:* Laurie Zoloth, Donna Jurdy, Babette Sanders, Sandro Mussa-Ivaldi and Paul Arntson all attended separate departmental meetings and briefly discussed the outcomes. Stephen Eisenman attended meetings in the Sociology and History Departments and witnessed an overall general enthusiasm for the governance reform initiative. Additionally, faculty members in the History department discussed the topic of membership appointment by department. Seth Lichter passed along information from a concerned faculty member, who, among other concerns, thinks the GFC has traditional powers that are not being exercised and, regardless of the new initiative, members should think about ways to enforce these rights.

#### **4. Discussion of ideas emerging from meetings**

There is confusion about the difference between the Senate and the assembly. GFC members discussed in detail the current proposal and ways to alter it to bring clarity and transparency to the two-chamber governance structure. A motion was made, and seconded, that on matters which the university assembly votes on, that vote be made electronic and made available, and the opportunity to vote be given to all faculty. The floor was opened for discussion and a lengthy debate ensued. As a result, the following proposal was made: twice annually there would be a formal university assembly meeting as described in the bylaws and if there was an issue to be decided on or an issue brought forth by a faculty member to overturn the senate, there would be a full discussion and attending members may call for a vote, contingent on the quorum requirement being met. That vote will be announced to the faculty and held electronically. General Faculty Committee members voted and the proposal was passed.

A motion was made, and seconded, to change “University Assembly” to “University Town Hall.” The floor was open for discussion and a short debate ensued. General Faculty Committee members voted and the motion was not passed. However, General Faculty Committee members voted 8 to 5 in favor of changing the “University Assembly” title to a more appropriate title to be determined at a later date.

The following motion was made, and seconded, in response to the desire to have representation in every department. Since the department is the key unit of organization in the faculty body, elections will be held in every department and every department will get one representative to

send to be at the university senate. This ensures every department has two way communications, every department has a stake in the senate, and every department has a person coming back from the senate to report back. The suggestion to have a weighted representation from every department with weighted representatives was unanimously voted down. Instead of having a vague system of weighted representation per school, a new resolution was proposed which described having representatives from every department, with each person having one vote. The faculty body would be comprised of 86 to 100 representatives. The floor was open for discussion and a lengthy debate ensued.

A motion was made, and passed, which stated that Senate representatives will be elected by departments and each representative will have one, non-weighted, vote.

#### **5. Discussion of data collected about size of departments and numbers of faculty in each**

Laurie Zoloth explained the many challenges of attaining information on the size of departments and number of faculty in each, but will continue to work with the administration to attain this information.

#### **6. Discussion of Ombudsman**

After researching peer institutions, John Elson generated guidelines for the pilot Ombudsman program and asked GFC members to think about the following items. First, requesting a budget from the administration to cover training, secretarial assistance, and office supplies. Second, what access the Ombudsman should have to faculty information. Finally, to determine what the Ombudsman's role is in mediation.

A motion was, and unanimously approved, to send the current Ombudsman proposal to the next step in the implementation process, forwarding it to the University Counsel.

#### **7. Discussion of next meeting**

The General Faculty Committee will hold the first reading of the Faculty Governance Reform proposal on Wednesday February 23<sup>rd</sup> from 4-6:00pm in the Ver Steeg Faculty Lounge.

## **8. Reclamation Project for faculty lounge**

The Ver Steeg faculty lounge located in the Library is not currently being utilized for its intended purpose of giving faculty members a place to congregate. The General Faculty Committee would like to put in motion a plan to reclaim the space.

## **9. Discussion of faculty survey**

The discussion of the faculty survey initiative was postponed for a future General Faculty Committee meeting.

## **In Conclusion:**

- The next GFC meeting will be held on March 11, 2009, at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room).

***The meeting was adjourned at 9:10pm***

Minutes Submitted by: Diana Snyder

Minutes Edited by: Diana Snyder

Minutes Approved by: General Faculty Committee members