

March 11, 2009 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

Members in attendance:

Chair Laurie Zoloth, Vice Chair Stephen Eisenman, Paul Arntson, Francesca Bordogna, Jack Doppelt, John Elson, Anupam Garg, Joshua Hauser, Seth Lichter, Ferdinando Mussa-Ivaldi, William Ocasio, Aryeh Routtenberg, Alan Sahakian, Babette Sanders, Sylvia Wang

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

1. Welcome and review of our meetings—next steps

Report from first reading: Laurie Zoloth gave a brief overview of the first reading gathering held on February 23rd in the Ver Steeg Faculty Lounge at the Library. Surprisingly fewer lecturers attended, who stand to gain the most from the new governance structure. There was robust participation and candid discussion about the difficulty of representation. There was divided support for departmental voting. The second reading will be scheduled to take place at the May 5th University Senate Meeting.

Report from finance meeting: Sandro Mussa-Ivaldi reported on the budget meeting with university leaders. The goal of the meeting was to highlight the need for greater participation of the faculty senate in the planning of the budget and specifically the access to knowledge and information on budget planning. Although the general atmosphere of the meeting was relaxed and friendly, it fell short of answering most questions the GFC representatives presented. The administration did, however, agree to provide the GFC information on priorities for spending and the projected fiscal year budget at the beginning of each fiscal year.

Report from GFC Executive Meeting: Laurie Zoloth gave brief highlights of the Winter GFC Executive meeting discussion. The dialogue began with a general review of the budget and economy, the faculty governance process, and then progressing to issues from faculty such as the faculty lounge, shuttle service expansion, childcare and housing registries, and participation in the green campus. There was also a critical discussion about the AAU survey and whether the administration plans to share the results of the survey with the General Faculty Committee.

2. Faculty survey for evaluating administrators

The General Faculty Committee will pursue a faculty survey for evaluating administrators. Anupam Garg will lead the initiative, which will be discussed at length at the April GFC meeting.

3. GFC Involvement in the University Budget Process

General Faculty Committee Members discussed, in detail, the responsibility of the GFC to the faculty body as it relates to the university budget, and also what the level of GFC involvement should be in the budgetary process. As chair of the Budget and Policy subcommittee, Sandro Mussa-Ivaldi proposed, as a first step, implementing an ongoing formal process beginning next Fall, and onward, that when administration leaders discuss the budget and economic condition, a detailed description and parameters of the budget forecast be presented for GFC review. GFC members had varying opinions of this proposal, presenting arguments and alternative suggestions. The suggestion to have a GFC representative permanently involved in the actual central administration budget planning meetings was supported, but also countered by concern over an unclear vision of this individual's role and purpose for being a part of this process. Several GFC members were concerned about the confidentiality issues surrounding this level of involvement as it related to information sharing.

Sandro Mussa-Ivaldi wrapped up the discussion by restating the overarching goal to create budgetary flow of information. He will send a memo through Laurie Zoloth affirming the understood commitment made by the administration that at the beginning of each fiscal year they will send information on priorities for spending and the projected fiscal year budget for GFC review. He also warned that the GFC Budget and Policy subcommittee must be committed and sufficiently prepared to extract information given by the administration.

Vice Chair Stephen Eisenman asked John Elson to draft a formal letter affirming statements made by Provost Linzer about GFC representatives' role as insiders or outsiders to future budgetary discussions. He also asked Sandro Mussa-Ivaldi to make an overall statement of where he thinks the GFC stands in terms of budgetary involvement.

4. Turning toward the faculty handbook

Laurie Zoloth stressed the importance of being involved in the updating of the current faculty handbook and asked each GFC member to look over the document carefully and give input on ways to improve it. One noticeable area of improvement is faculty leave and the absence of a coherent policy, but there are

many other areas that need to be given full attention. The GFC will work with the administration to assemble a suitable final version.

5. May 5th vote on the governance proposal – departmental representative amendment

John Elson raised the issue that currently there is an amendment pending about changing the governance proposal to have departmental representation for which there is total dissent. There is great concern since there is only one more GFC meeting left to discuss and resolve this point. As a starting point, for finding a final resolution, Vice Chair Stephen Eisenman asked Paul Arntson to prepare a memo about this issue to be distributed to the GFC body.

In Conclusion:

- The next GFC meeting will be held on April 1, 2009, at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room).
- Laurie Zoloth asked GFC members to attend President Bienen's March 18th talk.
- Laurie Zoloth asked members to consider GFC participation in the green campus movement.
- Paul Arntson reminded everyone that a decision needs to be made about the process by which the GFC wants to move the governance issue next year.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm

Minutes Submitted by: Diana Snyder

Minutes Approved by: General Faculty Committee members