

Northwestern University  
Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting  
Tech L-251 - Evanston, Wieboldt 421 - Chicago  
January 12, 2011

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Stephen Eisenman, Interim Chair of the Faculty Senate, called to order this historic first meeting of the Faculty Senate governing body at 5:10 pm. There were 74 of 87 members in attendance, with 56 attendees in Evanston and 18 in Chicago.

**1. Welcome by Stephen F. Eisenman, interim chair. "Shared University Governance in a National Perspective"**

Stephen Eisenman, interim Chair of the Faculty Senate, began the meeting with the following remarks:

*Let me begin by welcoming you, and thanking you – on behalf of the entire faculty – for agreeing to serve in the Northwestern University Faculty Senate. I am confident you will find your terms as senators engaging and rewarding, and less time consuming than you may fear.*

*The first order of business is to recognize the work of our Administrative Coordinator, Diana Snyder, whom you probably met on your way in. She made the arrangements for this meeting, and I want to state at once that everything good about them – the email notices to deans and department chairs, meeting reminders, the sign-ins today, the link to the Chicago campus, the webs-site, and the refreshments – are the result of her fine work; responsibility for any oversights or screw-ups is mine alone. I also want to acknowledge the work of the former GFC governance committee – Paul Arntson, Babette Sanders, Helen Thompson, Jack Doppelt and Sylvia Wang; they established the plan for the transition from one governance regime to the other, and did so quickly and efficiently.*

*We have a full agenda today, but before we get to it, I must observe the significance of this meeting, and try to put it in a broader context. As you may know, the proposal to change from the former governance system to the new one was made by successive GFC chairs – especially John Elson and Laurie Zoloth -- and GFC committees, including the Governance committee chaired by Paul Arntson. They felt that the Northwestern faculty had relatively little decision making, or even advisory responsibility, and that major decisions affecting the entire university were being made by a small cohort of administrators – chiefly the president, provost and vice provosts, seconded by the deans, associate deans, and assistant deans of the schools, and an assortment of department chairs. (In this governance structure, I am reminded of Right Honorable Sir Joseph Porter from HMS Pinafore, whose decisions were seconded by: " His sisters and his cousins, Whom he reckons up by dozens, And his aunts!") When I joined the GFC three years ago, I formed the same conclusion. Compared to many colleges and universities, Northwestern was very well run, but was not as open, experimental, dynamic, or progressive as it could be. It was an amalgam of Princeton and Price Waterhouse Coopers, but with better football.*

*Be that as it may, enough of the faculty agreed that changes should be made that the proposed reforms gained increasing traction. But it wasn't until the appointment of a new president that the changes were enacted, and I am grateful to Morty Schapiro for his strong support for the principle of shared governance, and his endorsement of the changes to the Board of Trustees. For the first time in a hundred years, the statutes of the University were amended: not to give greater power to the Board of Trustees or Central Administration, but to the faculty. This meeting is thus an historic event in the history of Northwestern and U.S. Universities in general.*

*For this is a challenging time, to say the least, for American universities and the principal of faculty, or shared governance. Drastic budget cuts, especially at state universities – most notably in Illinois, California and New York, but in many other states as well – have slashed faculty numbers and salaries, threatened the tenure system, and endangered pensions and other benefits. In that context, faculty have been vulnerable to the unchecked power of governors, state legislators, boards of*

trustees, presidents and provosts. They have responded in some cases with protests and lawsuits, but in most cases by simply seeking shelter from the storm – keeping their heads low, staying silent, and hoping that the business cycle will restore prosperity and their own security. In some cases, faculty have either unionized, or tried to gain a firmer grasp on the economic and political exigencies of the moment by increased participation in University governance – the former has been the path at the University of Illinois, the latter at Northwestern. We at NU are now de-facto national leaders in the shared governance movement, and lots of eyes are trained on us. In November, I attended a conference on shared governance organized by the AAUP. They expected some 75 campus leaders to show up – instead, they had nearly 250. Nearly all of them however were in a defensive posture – Northwestern was in the process of augmenting faculty prerogatives.

But only if we actually do it. According to the statutes, the faculty at Northwestern has primary responsibility for the educational and research programs, hiring, tenure and promotion, standards for admission and graduation, and those aspects of student and campus life that relate to the educational process. And I believe it is only by exercising these legal and customary prerogatives that we can ensure the university continues to grow – not in the sense of attracting more students with higher test scores, raising our position in the US News and World Reports annual ranking, having a newer infrastructure, or growing the endowment, fine as those things are. Rather, I mean growth in the sense of an augmented educational and research mission: innovations in medicine, science and technology, advancement and experimentation in the arts and humanities, critical work in law, economics, the social sciences and all the rest. This is work that faculty and students alone perform. It has been delegated to them by the University President, who in turn has been entrusted by the Board of Trustees with the day to day administration of the university.

None of us wants to become administrators – at least not while we have full-time jobs as faculty members. But with even a modest effort, we can help ensure that resources are equitably distributed, that all faculty and students are treated fairly, that each of the schools has the autonomy it needs to devise its own curriculum, and that major decisions affecting the university as a whole – for example the establishment of major new programs or campuses, the restructuring of benefits, or changes to the university calendar – are only made after consultation with and agreement of the faculty. In order for us to be effective at this work, it seems to me, the Senate needs to do four things:

1. Take the lead – Decide what issues are the most important and set them before the faculty and administration. The latter may actually be glad that the people in the best position to implement pedagogical and research reforms are actually initiating them.
2. Establish priorities. Many issues will arise in the course of a year, but it is nevertheless important that a Senate remain focused on a few initiatives that it thinks most important.
3. Have an effective committee system. The Senate is too large to act as a single body – issues have to be delegated to the responsible committees, and the committees have to present proposals to the Senate for approval. The Senate Chair's main job therefore, with the assistance of the Executive committee, is to keep track of all the committees.
4. Make haste slowly, but also act in a timely fashion. The administration may ask us to do something tomorrow that we think needs deliberation. We should take the time we need. On the other hand, it is important to establish deadlines and end points, so that actions are not put off for so long that we become irrelevant.

If we can follow these basic principles – and they are considered by the AAUP and other to be best practices – we have a reasonable chance of being effective, and justifying the efforts that went into constituting this body.

Now, with your agreement, let us move to the other items on the agenda. If there are points I have made that members wish to discuss, there will be ample time at the end of the meeting, or in the course of consideration of our other agenda items.

Welcoming remarks will be posted on the Faculty Senate website to facilitate continued discussion of major point and topics amongst Faculty Senators, peers and colleagues.

Stephen Eisenman continued with the formal agenda. He explained that the general Robert's Rules of Order will be in effect for all Faculty Senate meetings, as it states in the Faculty Senate bylaws,

which means that most business will be conducted through motions of one kind or another and discussions and debates about those motions.

**2. Discussion and approval of procedures for elections: In accordance with the bylaws, the Senate must elect a Chair and Vice Chair who will also fulfill the role of the Secretary.**

A motion was made, and seconded, to approve the following procedures for election of Chair and Vice Chair proposed by the Governance committee of the former GFC: *Upon conclusion of tonight's meeting, members will, between Jan. 13 and Jan. 26, submit to Diana (d-snyder@northwestern.edu) nominations and self-nominations for the two positions. The names must be accompanied by a brief statement indicating the nominee's ability and willingness to serve. (The statement will be posted on-line for review by members.) At the beginning of the February meeting, nominees will be given five minutes each to address the Senate and answer questions. Following the statements, senators will vote on site. The person with the highest number of votes will be the Chair. The candidate who receives the second largest number of votes will be elected Vice Chair. The committee also proposes that the terms for each office end on September 1, 2012, upon which time, the Vice Chair will become the Chair, and a new election will be held for the Vice Chair.*

The floor was open for a 30 minute discussion. A question was raised concerning who the Chair reports to. Stephen Eisenman explained that the Faculty Senate Chair reports to Faculty only and has a shared governance association with the President, Provost and Board of Trustees, where each share ideas and prerogatives, and report from their perspectives. The President and Provost do not have authority over the Chair, but instead share power within the new governance structure. One Senator asked what gives the Faculty Senate body this power and authority. Chair Eisenman replied that this power was established through the newly established statutes that were presented to, and passed by, the University Senate, the Administration and the Board of Trustees.

It was brought to everyone's attention that the motion at hand incorrectly makes the assumption that there will be two elections, one for Chair and one for Vice Chair, when in fact the election is only for the position of Chair, with the runner up automatically becoming Vice Chair. The original motion was amended to read as follows: *Faculty Senate Members will, between Jan. 13 and Jan. 26, submit to the Faculty Senate coordinator, Diana Snyder, nominations and self-nominations for the position of Chair. The names must be accompanied by a brief statement indicating the nominee's ability and willingness to serve. (The statement will be posted on-line for review by members.) . At the beginning of the February meeting, nominees will be given five minutes each to address the Senate and answer questions. Following the statements, senators will vote on site. The person with the highest number of votes will be the Chair. The candidate who receives the second largest number of votes will be elected Vice Chair. The committee also proposes that the terms for each office end on September 1, 2012, upon which time, the Vice Chair will become the Chair, and a new election will be held for the Vice Chair.*

Questions were raised about the length of the Chair's term, election procedures beyond this current election and what happens on September 1, 2012. Stephen Eisenman explained that the

length of this first term is unique since the Faculty Senate is in the beginning stages of its existence and critical systems need to be in place before moving on to another election and a new chair. On September 1, 2012, the Vice Chair becomes the Chair and an election will be held for the position of Vice Chair. All future elections will be handled in the same manner and the duration of the Chair's term will be one academic year. The Faculty Senate body may revisit this matter in the future and make changes to the bylaws.

A suggestion was made to consider having people vote with ranking if there are a sizeable number of nominees. A member of the Governance committee of the former GFC responded by saying that a similar voting option was discussed in the initial planning stages, but it was determined that for this first election the focus should be on electing someone quickly. Additionally, other Senators voiced their concern that they would be ill-equipped at this point to vote in this a manner, but would consider pursuing such a voting strategy in the future.

Several Senators raised concerns over the term length for the Chair position. Some felt the term of one year was too short and suggested increasing it to three years. The argument was that a shorter term would hinder the progress of strengthening the currently weak Faculty governance structure and the continuity of critical issues and initiatives may fall to the wayside. Others did not agree and felt it would be difficult for someone to serve for such an extended period of time in light of heavy teaching loads, research demands, and other professional involvements. It was recommended that if anyone had a proposal regarding the issue of the length of the Chair's term that it is brought before the Governance committee once it is constituted.

Stephen Eisenman called the vote on the motion. Faculty Senate members voted and the motion passed unanimously.

### **3. Discussion and approval of procedures for establishment of committees**

A motion was made, and seconded, to approve the following procedures for establishment of committees, proposed by the Governance committee of the former GFC in accordance with the Faculty Senate bylaws: *During the three weeks between the January and February meetings, members indicate to Faculty Senate coordinator, Diana Snyder, their first three preferences for committee assignments. Following the February meeting, the new Chair and Vice Chair will appoint senators to the committees. Each committee will be instructed to meet as soon as possible but no later than the March meeting and elect its chair. Committees: -*

- *Benefits Committee – sample issues: salaries, health, education and other benefits including childcare*
- *Governance Committee – sample issues: establishing and revising senate rules, proposing changes to bylaws, seeking release time for Senate Chair and establishing the Senate budget*
- *Research Affairs – sample issues: concerns about IRB, relations with other educational and research institutions.*
- *Social Responsibility – sample issues: Living Wage proposals, investment ethics*

- *Budget -- sample issues: overall allocation of resources, performance of endowment, payout from endowment*
- *Faculty Rights and Responsibilities – sample issues: faculty authority over teaching program and curricula, faculty and student teaching loads and schedules, oversight responsibilities for our new Ombudsperson program*
- *Executive Committee (consists of Senate Chair and Vice Chair and all chairs of standing committees) – sample duties: staff committees, periodically meet with central administration, approve substitute members and substitute chairs (in cases of illness or faculty leaves of absence), function as a rapid-reaction Senate*
- *Committee on Cause (membership created only when needed) – sample issues: academic integrity, disciplinary issues, resolve disputes between and among faculty and administrators*

Stephen Eisenman began the discussion by giving a brief overview of the charge given to all committees and committee members, including engaging in detailed discussions of major issues and initiatives, and reporting progress by bringing those issues and initiative before the Faculty Senate. One Faculty Senate member asked if all Senators should serve on a committee and another member asked if Senators are limited to only serving on one committee. Stephen Eisenman explained that all Senators are expected to serve on at least one committee, but have the option to change committee membership any time.

In response to concerns that there is no teaching committee, an amendment was made adding an Educational Affairs committee to the list of standing committees. This new committee will handle the broad scope of education, resources for undergraduate and graduate education, research training, and intercollegiate athletics and its role in education.

Stephen Eisenman called the vote on the motion. Faculty Senate members voted and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **4. Creation of Ad-Hoc Committee to Revise Faculty Handbook: A Call for Volunteers**

Stephen Eisenman gave a brief overview and background information related to the history of the Faculty Handbook initiative. The administration first came to the General Faculty Committee to ask for assistance in updating the Faculty Handbook and now, in the absence of the GFC, the responsibility has been given to the Faculty Senate. In preparation for tackling this critical document, Stephen will provide information about how revisions of handbooks should proceed and, additionally, the Administration has provided a current working document showing markups of changes that have been made to the document thus far.

The Faculty Handbook revision needs to be given immediate attention, so Stephen Eisenman requested approval from the Faculty Senate to create an ad hoc committee that will handle this initiative. He also asked for approval to invite past GFC Chair, John Elson to serve on the ad hoc committee, possibly as Chair. John is very familiar with the Faculty Handbook document since he was previously involved in making revisions.

A motion was made, and seconded, to support the immediate creation of an ad hoc committee to revise the handbook, and secondarily the approval to ask John Elson to serve on this committee. Additionally, the procedure for volunteers willing to serve on this committee is for them to submit their names to Diana Snyder.

Senators discussed taking the matter into serious consideration, scrutinizing every part carefully, since under the law the Faculty Handbook is an extension of a faculty member's legal contract. A suggestion was given to make the Faculty Handbook working document available to all Senators on a secure Blackboard site. Diana Snyder will ensure this is set up as soon as possible.

This ad hoc committee will have no power other than to report back to the Faculty Senate, and it is the Faculty Senate that will vote to approve or reject revisions. The document will require two reads by the Faculty Senate body. In the future, the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities standing committee will handle all matters related to Faculty Handbook initiatives.

Stephen Eisenman called the vote on the motion. Faculty Senate members voted and the motion passed unanimously.

## **5. Faculty Club**

Stephen Eisenman received news from the Administration that they are considering allocating space in The Great Room in Seabury, 610 Haven Street, for a Faculty Club during lunchtime hours. At this time there are no plans to allocate space on the Chicago campus. Diana Snyder will send an email asking for volunteers to serve on the Faculty Club ad hoc committee, which will work with the administration to ensure the Faculty Club plans come to fruition.

A motion was made, and seconded, to support the idea of a Faculty Club with lunch services. Stephen Eisenman called the vote on the motion. Faculty Senate members voted and the motion passed unanimously.

## **6. New Business:**

A Senator voiced concern over how a unique retirement package is currently being administered and would like the Faculty Senate to consider pursuing the matter. The Benefits committee will handle this issue once it is a fully functioning body.

## **7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:13 pm.