

Northwestern University
Minutes of the University Senate Meeting
November 9, 2006

The University Senate held its first meeting of the 2006–2007 year on November 9 in Hardin Hall on the Evanston Campus. President Henry Bienen called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM. *Meeting called to Order*

I. The minutes of the May 4, 2006 meeting were approved unanimously without changes. *Minutes approved*

II. Following the excuse of observers, Associate Provost John Margolis presented the names of nominees for honorary degrees with brief biographical sketches of each. *Honorary Degree Nominees*

III. After the readmission of observers, General Faculty Committee Chair Paul Arntson presented the following Resolution on Senate Statements for discussion and approval by the senate: “The Faculty Senate has the responsibility at appropriate occasions to respond to value, policy, and/or factual statements by individuals both inside and outside of the Northwestern University community and, with very few exceptions, to support strongly their freedom to express these statements.” He reported that in reading through Senate minutes from the 1940s to the present he was able to see two such actions by the Faculty Senate. These were concerned with people outside the University. One, on May 5, 1970, was about Kent State and the Vietnam War in general; another, at the same meeting, which passed 223 to 113, opposed continuation and expansion of the Vietnam war. In 1972, a motion was passed expressing anguish and anger at the action of the U.S. President regarding Vietnam. The motion on the floor was then seconded. In response to a question, Arntson stated his belief that if the present motion were defeated the Senate would be on record opposing the responsibility to speak out on statements of value, policy, or fact on appropriate occasions, and another vote reaffirming this responsibility would have to be taken. A friendly amendment to the present amendment was ruled possible. President Bienen suggested that as an alternative to passage or defeat, the motion could be tabled. Carol Simpson Stern spoke in favor of tabling the resolution. The University has a strong commitment to academic freedom, she said; bylaws govern the business of the Senate, the way it is to handle matters brought before it, and how matters can be brought before it. The present resolution is tailored to the wish of a group who want to get rid of a particular faculty member; their zeal comes from deeply felt values, but their proposal invites a conflict between communitarian values and those of academic freedom. Cristina Traina spoke in favor of the resolution, which she argued is in harmony with the AAUP guidelines. Its emphasis on responsibility and freedom reflects the balance struck in the AAUP documents and uses similar language. Stern responded that the language of the resolution on the floor is muddy with regard to the long-standing values of the AAUP. Arntson argued that the resolution did not come out of any political agenda so much as from values shared by a community of scholars. Stern’s motion to table the resolution received a second but failed to pass. A friendly amendment to substitute “may have the responsibility” for “has the responsibility” in the beginning of the resolution was accepted, but an additional amendment deleting “and, with very few exceptions, to support strongly their freedom to express these statements” failed to carry. A vote on the resolution with the friendly amendment was then taken, and the resolution carried. *Resolution on Senate Statements*

IV. Arntson next presented for Senate approval President Bienen’s statement of February 6, 2006 regarding Associate Professor Arthur Butz’s statement commending Iranian president Ahmadinejad’s denial of the Holocaust. Bienen’s statement affirmed the right of Butz to express his personal views provided he did not represent such opinions as those of the University. In response to an objection that Senate approval of his statement simply called attention to the Butz affair, President Bienen predicted that few would take note of his February 2006 statement. Arntson noted, however, that in his 33 years at Northwestern there has never been a faculty statement of the kind proposed. President Weber once made a statement similar to Bienen’s, but never the faculty, whose students need to know about our values in a positive way. In a show of hands, the resolution was approved. *Resolution on Pres. Bienen’s Statement of Feb. 3, 2006*

V. Mr. Arntson presented for Senate approval a third resolution, for appointment of a committee regarding IRB review of non-federally funded research. “The Faculty Senate requests that Provost Dumas appoint a faculty committee drawn from diverse research areas and methodologies to work with appropriate members of the Administration to develop procedures for reviewing IRB-related non-federally funded research at Northwestern University.” He explained that this resolution proceeds from Dumas’ action at the beginning of this year to separate federally funded from non-federally funded research. The GFC wants the faculty to be proactive in determining these procedures rather than reactive after the fact. Provost Dumas asked whether there is already a faculty committee with this purpose. There are in fact two faculty committees: a faculty advisory committee for the Office of Research which generally addresses larger issues, and another advisory committee for the office of protection of research subjects and the IRB. The latter had a subcommittee called the FWA subcommittee. Arntson reported that FWA members viewed their subcommittee as no longer in existence. The two other committees meet about quarterly; at more than one meeting, it was remarked that a biomedical model is inappropriate for much of the research in social and behavioral sciences on the Evanston campus and for some on the Chicago campus. Subsequent discussions sought ways of dealing with this discrepancy; one of the suggestions from the committee was to separate the two kinds of research and establish a specific subcommittee. To continue its work, this FWA subcommittee needs to be re-named and address several other issues related to social and behavioral research. The result would be an appropriate level of protection for research subjects, for the institution, and for the faculty when they do research on human subjects. We thus minimize the administrative burden required to accomplish those goals. The Office of Research proposed that a core group from Evanston who are on the IRB committee develop an expanded committee with additional representation from the Evanston campus to address several specific issues including student research. Dumas suggested that a date be set when the proposed committee would report to the Senate. It was agreed that the May 2007 meeting would be a good time for this report. With this understanding, the GFC withdrew its resolution as prospectively fulfilled. A report structure has been drafted, and the faculty advisory committee has been sent an executive summary with recommendations. Remaining issues to be decided include quality of review, timeliness, and related matters of student research. A lengthy paper on questions of research oversight will be published in the Northwestern Law Review. This matter was closed with the understanding that a report will be presented at the May 2007 Senate meeting.

*Committee for IRB
review of non-
federally funded
research*

VI. Paul Arntson presented the report of the Chair of the General Faculty Committee. On behalf of the GFC and the Senate, he congratulated President Bienen on being elected chair of the Association of American Universities. The importance of this post is highlighted by Secretary Spellings’ Report on the Future of American Higher Education, the recent passing of Michigan’s Proposition 2 banning affirmative action, and the need to increase funding for research and loans for low-income students. GFC has re-established its faculty governance committee; at the recent conference of the CIC on faculty governance, he learned that Northwestern is perhaps the only university that does not have an elected senate. The GFC will consider its options in this matter. In other GFC committee work, Benefits is important as we go through changes in health insurance; another committee on faculty rights and responsibilities has been established. Subcommittees on education and research are especially active, and a report from the Coalition On Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA) has put a number of questions back on the table for the Athletics Subcommittee.

*Report of the General
Faculty Committee*

VII. President Bienen remarked that he is looking forward to his chairmanship of the AAU, coming as it does at a crucial time for higher education with respect to educational funding and affirmative action. The executive president of the AAU will be at Northwestern next week to talk about agendas, and Dr. Elias Zerhouni, director of the National Institutes of Health, will come to the Medical School to talk about issues of federal funding for research. For the University as a whole, the financial numbers are in a healthy state, thanks in part to an investment portfolio that has done very well. We have been in the top quartile in recent years with an average 17½% for the past three years. Final reports are not yet in on applications for admission, but early decision applications are

*Remarks of the
President*

well up by an increment of 20%. Other applications will likely have increased in the high single digit, and are of very high quality. With these indicators, he looks forward to a very good academic year.

VIII. Voting was then taken on honorary degree nominees. Associate Provost John Margolis counted the votes and reported that all nominees had been approved. *Honorary Degrees*

IX. There being no new business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 PM. *Adjournment*

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel H. Garrison
Secretary to the University Senate