

Northwestern University

Minutes of the University Senate Meeting

October 29, 2009

The University Senate held its first meeting of the 2009–10 year on October 29 in the Pancoe Auditorium on the Evanston campus, with an audio connection to Wieboldt 421 on the Chicago Campus. The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM by GFC Chair Stephen F. Eisenman.

1. The Senate was briefly greeted by Eisenman and by President Morton Schapiro.
2. The minutes of the May 5, 2009 meeting were approved.
3. Morton Schapiro presented his comments in his seventh week as President of the University. He was most excited, he said, to be present as a member of the Faculty. He began his career on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania before moving to Williams. Following a period at the University of Southern California, he returned to Williams as president before coming to Northwestern. His home department is Economics, with joint appointments in the School of Education and Social Policy and the Kellogg School of Management. This quarter, he is teaching an undergraduate Economics course; in the winter quarter he will teach another on the economics of education; next year he will teach an MBA course at Kellogg and a course in the School of Education.

He said he would like to be thought of as a faculty colleague. He considered it premature to give a lecture about Northwestern, but took the opportunity to comment on the budget as an economist of higher education and on shared governance, where he feels progress has been made with the help of Provost Dan Linzer and other colleagues.

On the economy, he noted that friends on the faculties of other universities have struggled in the economic debacle of the past year.

The rain at other institutions can be compared to a drizzle at Northwestern: low salary increases and pressure on the number of faculty lines have affected McCormick and the other schools of Northwestern. The big difference here compared to other institutions is in the use of endowment. Everybody wants to have a large endowment for students; the goal everywhere is not to be driven by tuition, philanthropy, indirect cost recovery, or state appropriations. We want to have an endowment large enough that not more than 5% can be spent to significantly offset tuition costs. If there is an enormous endowment proportionally to the operating budget, 5% can cover a large part of that budget; at Yale, for example, it covers 47% of operating costs; it covers 48% of operations at Harvard overall, or 52% of the cost of the Faculty of Arts & Sciences. At Williams, 5% of endowment revenue covered 46% of operating costs. But institutions became so dependent on the value of endowment that a crash in that value has brought crisis. Northwestern, by contrast, has a relatively small endowment. Of our \$1.6 B operating budget, only 18% comes from endowment income. The richest Eastern private universities lost more heavily in the current recession: Yale lost 27% of its endowment; Princeton lost 26%, Harvard 25%. Northwestern lost only 23.1%. In absolute terms we therefore outperformed a number of our peers, but more importantly we were taking only 18% of our spending from endowment income, not 48%. That is why we are now able to do a number of things that our sister institutions cannot afford. The fact that we have a more diversified revenue stream has played to our advantage. Moreover, the pain felt at other institutions is small compared to what they can expect in the future, because the great majority look at the last twelve quarters and take an average of the endowment over those three years: they then apply something close to 5% of that figure to operating costs. When FY '07 is removed from the average and FY '10 is added in the next round, available operating costs at those institutions may be further depleted. For Northwestern, our comparative economic advantage creates opportunities that may be even greater next year than at present. The brain drain at UCLA, Berkeley, and

other public universities where the calamity is in state budgets, offers similar opportunities for Northwestern.

Regarding shared governance, President Schapiro noted that it is important to him personally; he has been involved with it at every institution where he has been. He has enjoyed working with the senior administrators at Northwestern and has seen real progress. The present draft of our shared governance statement is promising.

Stephen Eisenman asked what the practical effect would be of the fiscal advantages we now have in comparison with institutions like Yale and Princeton. Schapiro estimated the effect upon us of the current recession would be a 15% cut. But there are several other revenue sources that are not changing or may be increasing, Schapiro said. Annual giving is slightly lower but still an important source. Linzer estimated a decline of 3–4% in the FY '11 endowment payout compared to the FY '10 rate. Schapiro estimated the next budget as putting us in a stable state rather than a decline. Institutions that had predicated their growth plans and recurrent costs on rapid endowment growth, such as Harvard, have had to make the most drastic budget changes.

A professor from the Chicago campus asked that the HMO enrollment window be extended. Eugene Sunshine, Senior Vice President for Business and Finance, said he had discovered the previous day that enrollment had been interrupted. The University has had a policy with HMOs of trying to ensure that there is at least one that would allow employees to go to doctors downtown who are members of the Northwestern Medical Faculty Foundation, and that there would be at least one other HMO on the North Shore that would allow the use of physicians formerly affiliated with Evanston Northwestern Health Care. We have about 900 individuals enrolled from the Chicago campus who use the NMFF, and are searching for another HMO with whom we can negotiate an agreement. If necessary, the enrollment period will be extended. Schapiro agreed that this would be desirable.

Sandro Mussa-Ivaldi, chair of the GFC budget subcommittee, remarked from the Chicago campus that the salary freeze in the Medical School is inconsistent with 2% raises elsewhere in the University, and raises some issues of transparency in the budgeting process. President Schapiro acknowledged that small raises elsewhere in the University were not applied throughout the faculties. This raises an important issue, he said. When budgetary stringencies last more than a year, it becomes necessary to reward the people who have made the greatest sacrifices in the interest of solvency.

4. Professor Eisenman reported on the activities of the General Faculty Committee so far in the present year. Depending on what happens at the January 28 Senate meeting, this could be the final year under the current governance structure. President Schapiro's enthusiasm for such a structure has been seen in recent meetings. An important duty of the GFC as a subcommittee of the Senate is to think about issues that the University as a whole seems not to be addressing. He is also mindful that the GFC as a body may have a relatively tenure into the future. As the present year may be a period of transition, much of GFC business is to finish matters that started in the past three years and to open up some issues that will emerge in the expectation of handing them off to the new Senate. Sandro Mussa-Ivaldi is chair of this year's Budget and Policy Subcommittee which it is hoped will be involved with decisions and will be apprised of conditions arising from the present Great Recession. President Schapiro has acknowledged that there was a 2% raise for some, but none for the Medical School. Eisenman personally got the ½% raise which he understands was the rule for the Weinberg College. But with different schools and endowments, different information was coming out. Questions of salaries, benefits, and all other matters of support for individual schools and the Central Administration suggest that the faculty should have a voice in budget discussions. Big decisions are made through the medium of money. The GFC has met a number of times with Provost Linzer and others in the Administration to discuss this need for involvement, and there was general agreement that it was worth pursuing.

The GFC has debated whether they want to be in the immediate details of budget allocation; members of the Administration have not felt it to be worth GFC time. It has been proposed that we start off with quarterly macro meetings between members of the GFC subcommittee and the Administration at which the larger features of the budget would be communicated. That could in turn be passed on to the Senate through e-mails and other means. Details unfit for distribution could be ironed out privately. Eisenman expressed his appreciation to Provost Linzer, President Schapiro, and Vice President Sunshine for helping to bring more openness into the budget process.

The GFC has also made rapid progress on the ombudsman issue raised two years ago by John Elston of the Law School and Laurie Zoloth of Weinberg. A document posted on the GFC website sets forth guidelines for an ombudsman program. There are certain kinds of issues that cannot be easily resolved at the department level, with a dean, or even with the Provost, but are appropriate for an ombudsman. The legal language of the program has received approval from General Counsel Thomas Cline. John Elston reported from the Chicago Campus that the guidelines have legal approval. These set forth eight different purposes, the two most important of which are to help faculty informally resolve grievances, avoid more formal kinds of dispute resolution, and serve as a source of information and assistance for all faculty concerning rules, regulations, and practices. Ombudsman programs at many universities have been found effective. With the help of Laurie Zoloth we have recruited three very experienced, highly regarded faculty members to serve as our first ombudspersons: Nina Schwartz, Irwin Weil, and Albert Farbman.

Since the guidelines have only recently been approved, a number of operational details remain to be worked out: how to publicize the program to the faculty, what support the ombudsperson will need, and what support is available. No specific date has yet been set for activation of the program, but it will soon be started.

Plans for a University program of child care are being developed under the eye of GFC member Andrew Koppelman who has had conversations about it with President Schapiro. Williams College developed an excellent program under Schapiro's administration, compared to which the one planned for Northwestern is rudimentary. The Administration is now willing to see that faculty on both campuses have quality child care.

Options available through the YMCA and other sources in Evanston now have openings available at certain age levels, but there are long waiting lists at other ages. The GFC feels that a program on the Evanston campus would be an opportunity for people in education and early child development and serve a pedagogical function for our own students and faculty. Progress on this initiative will be reported at the spring Senate meeting.

The January 28 Senate meeting is scheduled for discussion of the governance proposal. Turning to that subject, Eisenman recalled that before coming to Northwestern ten years ago, he taught fourteen years at Occidental College, which had a robust shared governance system. The faculty there felt completely invested in every initiative the college took. It had a very strong affirmative action program for faculty and student recruitment and a powerful bridge program to make the college available to students with unconventional backgrounds in black, Asian, and working class communities. Northwestern has made similar steps in that direction and hopes to go still further. Shared governance allowed the faculty to be involved in those programs and many more. When President Schapiro speaks today about making progress at this university he speaks as a member of the faculty and not only an administrator. The positive value of a more robust shared governance structure is that we will all be generating ideas and not be mere recipients of ideas handed down from the provost, deans, and president. We will therefore be more engaged in their implementation and more enthusiastic about what many have called a workplace democracy. Whatever inspires an extra bit of engagement beyond our personal teaching and research promotes our higher stature as a university. The governance initiative has been ongoing for about three years. At a lively, sometimes contentious meeting last spring, a shared governance document was discussed which has been reviewed by Provost Linzer, President Schapiro, and others in the Administration. Following additional discussion at this meeting and future GFC meetings in November and December, the revised proposal will be put to the January 28 Senate meeting.

Paul Arntson took the floor to comment on the present state of the shared governance proposal. It has been under development since he was GFC Chair four years ago. The document of the GFC website is about 85% identical to the one seen last spring; revisions made in consultation with the Provost and others in the Administration are fairly minor, in his view. The most important decision to be made in January by the Senate, an Administrative committee, and the Trustees regards the articles of authorization that establish a new University Faculty Assembly and a new Faculty Senate. The Bylaws are provisional recommendations to the new Faculty Senate and the new University Faculty Assembly as their basis of operation to be amended as they see fit.

Arntson expressed his satisfaction at the progress that has been made and thanked the Provost and the President for their constructive engagement. Implementation remains a daunting task for the future; in many ways, this can be still more challenging. The transition between the old governance structure and the new is fraught with ambiguity as it has been at other institutions that have changed. He had five points to stress at present. With regard to the proposed University Faculty Assembly, the proposed articles of authorization are almost identical to the existing statutes of the University regarding the present University Senate in terms of its membership and presiding officer. One important change is that non-tenured faculty can now be members of the University Faculty Assembly. The other important change is that we are shifting approval of honorary doctorates to the new Faculty Senate. It is hard to see any other substantive change. If there is a quorum, the resolutions and recommendations passed by the Assembly carry weight for the Faculty Senate. Failing a quorum, the Assembly can still meet and pass resolutions that must be addressed by the Faculty Senate. If the Assembly disapproves of what the new Faculty Senate has done as the elected representative body of the faculty, and if there is a quorum, they can rescind what the new Faculty Senate has done. This check-and-balance system is not unusual among universities that have a shared governance system. There are at least four other universities like us that have both an assembly and a faculty senate. A second point to stress is that we are proposing a new Faculty Senate that is somewhat similar to the GFC that resides only in the minutes of the University Senate, either in 1939, when it was first established, or in 1975. In the new governance proposal, we are no longer making it a standing subcommittee of the University Senate. Currently, it is the representative body of the faculty to the Administration and to the Board of Trustees. Another important change is that the new Senate can have non-tenure track faculty members who are full time teachers. The third point was the relationship between the two new faculty bodies, which has already been explained. Fourth, the bylaws of the University Senate stipulate that we are going to elect people by departments; this would require about 76 people in the new Faculty Senate, six of whom would be non-tenured. If in the bylaws this way of electing faculty does not work, another method could be substituted. Fifth, the reason for expanding the Faculty Senate is that we need to re-establish a strong standing committee system. Unless we have such a committee system, the real work of shared governance cannot go forward. That is where the expertise is, and where we invite people who are not Senate members and people in the Administration to come and share their expertise.

Provost Linzer added that the lively discussion at the May 5 meeting of the Senate about governance changes and whether a vote should be taken, led to the decision to wait until Present Schapiro is in place.

Subsequently, a productive, cooperative set of meetings early this fall created important revisions. There are still some tweaks that the GFC and members of the Administration will probably want to make; there is still plenty of time for comment that will let us get this as right as possible. The proposal is still a theoretical document; if and when we have a working, new representative body, we will make better decisions.

It is always the case that the role of the President, Provost, and others in the Central Administration is to exercise judgement on ideas that come up throughout the University. The Administration does not push down many initiatives; we react to proposals, so the more people we have involved in talking those through and finding the best interests of the University, the better. There are practical challenges in getting such a large group elected, assembled, and participating. As you read through the shared governance document

you are urged to think about its practical workability. What are the motivations for the faculty? Will they show up for meetings and participate?

GFC Chair-Elect William Ocasio remarked that the September 8 meeting of President Schapiro and the GFC Executive Committee was historic for him because it inaugurated a new era of collaboration. The shared governance document, he said, reflects more of the past than the future. Part of the history was the initiative of Paul Arntson, then of John Elston, and of the situation with Medill. The document represents something of the GFC wanting to get respect. Now we have respect. Schapiro stated in his meeting with the GFC Executive Committee that he wanted the best shared governance for the University. That opened up a new vision of one Northwestern. Mavis Sotnick, an office assistant at Kellogg from eastern Britain, said yesterday that the quantity of life here is really good but there are some problems with the quality of life. The night before she had been hit by a car and is in intensive care. Ocasio took from that the thought that we need one Northwestern and to improve the quality of life, slow down a little in the process of renewal and do everything we can to have a faculty that feels included in decision making. The process of completing the shared governance document, he said, entails more than tweaking but in some respects major and essential changes. He will make some proposals at the next GFC meeting, and he is not sure the proposal can be completed in time for the January 28 meeting. But he hopes to bring something to the faculty to gain the needed inclusivity. He thanked Provost Linzer and President Schapiro for letting him be part of the process.

A professor from the Chicago campus asked what powers and responsibilities the Faculty Assembly will have. It is strictly a sounding board for the faculty, or will it have actual authority and power? Eisenman responded that the University Statutes mention the powers of the faculty, such as the power to grant degrees and determine the educational program. The translation of those powers into the governance document is more complicated. We are envisioning that the Senate will be the body that does the bulk of the investigation of various initiatives, handles faculty concerns, recommends improvements in programs, and uses powers vested in it by the Statutes to improve the overall program. The issues it would take on should be germane to all the schools as distinct from individual schools, because the University is organized on the basis of separate schools. Within that limit, the Assembly wields the power of resolutions, which is a powerful thing. If the Senate speaks about the need for initiatives regarding governance, child care, or a University faculty club, that is forwarded to the Administration, which is required to pass it along as appropriate to the Trustees. As a body of 77–78 people, the Senate faces the difficulty mentioned by Linzer of inducing a sufficient number to come to its meetings and participate in subcommittees. The benefit of its composition from the departments is its direct contact with the most faculty. At present, the GFC is constituted from the schools and is less directly in contact with the faculty. The Assembly is the larger body, a kind of town hall assemblage where people come together to hear reports directly from the Senate. It will also have the opportunity to make resolutions on its own if it is able to have a quorum. This is harder to achieve, but the Assembly's function as a sounding board remains unimpeded and it can serve as a check upon Senate actions.

Carol Simpson Stern expressed her reservations concerning the viability of having a representation at the level of the department. Her own department has six people; at the other end of the scale is some departments in the Medical School that have hundreds. She said that Christine Froula in the English Department had asked her to express the same reservation. Over time, there is the danger the system will become non-operational as the novelty wears off. Stern's more serious reservations grow out of her belief that the interests of tenured faculty are not the same as non-tenured. There is another distinction between full-time and part-time or adjunct faculty. She would like to know more about the thinking and discussion in the GFC surrounding the interests of tenured and non-tenured faculty. Eisenman responded that the goal had been to have a body that would be as representative of those varied interests as possible. The existing GFC and Senate did not have adequate representation of untenured faculty; the new Senate will have that representation: one non-tenure track member from each of the schools would be given a Senate seat. Those who are the most vulnerable economically and professionally will thus have a seat at the table.

Moreover, because representatives come from each of the departments, each department with non-tenure faculty will also be able to represent that perspective. That said, we cannot be certain this will be the best arrangement, which grew out of discussions with the departments. If experience does not vindicate this form of representation, the bylaws can be changed. Sandro Mussa-Ivaldi commented that Stern's point is important and difficult. Her contrary view was in fact expressed during meetings of the GFC. The best system will be one where different points of view are represented, especially those held by different ranks. In this matter, the perfect may be the enemy of the good. The issue of representation will remain open.

A lecturer in the WSAC International Studies Program asked if the GFC had considered a Senate seat for faculty in the programs. Eisenman responded that the school would elect one of its non-tenured faculty as representative. A non-tenured faculty member working in a program but without a departmental post would be able to run for that position in the Senate to represent the school. The question of program representation was considered, but the numbers it would add to the Senate were daunting. This is a question that can be returned to for future amendment of the bylaws.

Another questioner remarked that the Faculty Senate membership is clearly laid out. The Assembly, on the other hand, seems less clearly defined. If enough members meet in the Assembly, it can veto a Senate action. Where do they come from? Eisenman replied that the Assembly is the committee of the whole, including tenured, non-tenured, and non-tenure track faculty, as well as administrators with faculty appointments. By republican logic, the committee of the whole has presumptive jurisdiction over a committee of the parts. It is more difficult for such a large body to reach a quorum, but it is right and proper that it should have that potential. In a more ideal bicameral order, both bodies would have committees, but that seemed impractical for faculty governance.

In response to a further comment favoring program representation, Dan Linzer commented that the absence of departmental appointments for some faculty presents a special challenge.

Eisenman thanked everyone for their contribution to the discussion and reminded all that the next scheduled meeting of the Senate is set for January 28. The GFC anticipates that the shared governance document will be sufficiently complete to be brought to a vote.

5. Jake Julia, Associate Vice President and Associate Provost for Academic Initiatives, introduced Janice Eberly, Chair of the Committee for Honorary Degrees, to present the Committee's ten recommendations for Senate approval. Ballots were distributed on both campuses and the vote was taken.

6. There being no new business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel H. Garrison

Secretary to the Senate