

## Message From the General Faculty Committee to All WCAS Faculty

After our second monthly meeting last week, the General Faculty Committee still has filled only two of the six positions reserved for WCAS faculty members. We have been told by the WCAS Administrator in charge of the process for filling these positions that, although calls have been made for volunteers, no WCAS faculty members willing to fill these open positions have come forward. How and why we have come to this state of affairs deserves exploration, but our immediate need is to have WCAS faculty elected to the GFC so that we can proceed with our business. To that end, I would like to respond to what has been suggested as reasons for the reported disinterest that you, as WCAS faculty members, have in GFC participation.

First, if, as the Administration has suggested to us, most faculty see no need to serve on the GFC because they are satisfied with the Administration's leadership, we suggest that a diminished GFC will be able neither to resist changes in the *status quo* you may not like nor work for improvements you may not have recognized as attainable. Second, to the extent WCAS faculty members believe their time spent on research and teaching is intrinsically more valuable than time spent on GFC service, we suggest that the working conditions that make your research and teaching rewarding are not a given; they need to be watched over by fellow faculty members. A free ride cannot go on indefinitely. Finally, to the extent you and your WCAS colleagues perceive the GFC as a rather ineffective organization not worth your efforts, we suggest that your participation can change whatever reality there is in that perception. Further, the GFC does have on its agenda this year several projects that offer potential for effecting substantial improvements in conditions at Northwestern, including reorganizing the University Senate into an actual decision-making body, constraining the Administration's discretion to suspend Schools' faculty governance, improving the IRB process, especially for non-federally funded research, and developing both an ombudsperson program and a program for on-line faculty evaluation of administrators. Of course, the GFC is also open to any new agenda items you or other faculty members may suggest.

We hope you will respond to our call for participation by calling or e-mailing Marie Jones, Associate Dean for Faculty Processes and Governance, ("m-jones@northwestern.edu" (847) 491-2209), and offering your name as a WCAS candidate for election to the GFC.

Thank you,  
John S. Elson  
Professor of Law and Chair,  
General Faculty Committee