

March 5, 2003 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

Revised April 2, 2003

Members In attendance: Al Hunter, Alice Eagly, Dan Garrison, Bill Gradishar, Hamlin Jennings, Ilya Kutik, Sigmund Weitzman

Members not present: Sonny Cyrtynbaum, Jack Doppelt, Al Farbman, Bill Halperin, James Lindgren, Deborah Lucas, Clayton Peimer, Eva Redei, Robert Ten Eick, Mario Ruggero, Bruce Wessels

1. Minutes

The minutes from the February meeting were tentatively approved by all GFC members. Members will email more specific changes to Al Hunter.

2. Admissions Discussion

Carol Lunkenheimer, Dean of Admissions, and Associate Provost Rebecca Dixon gave a brief presentation on the undergraduate admissions process. The GFC's two main topics of interest in this area include the criteria of admissions (how or what is taken into consideration) and affirmative action. Carol and Rebecca touch on both issues.

Admission Selection Criteria

The criterion for admissions is the same in all NU schools, with the exception of the Music school. The following is the order in which each area of every application is looked at (based on order of importance):

1. High School Transcript:

Admissions representatives first look at the courses a student has taken and specifically looks for honors classes, college preparatory classes or any other higher academic level classes.

2. High School Profile:

The High School's profile is referenced in order for Admissions to see how many honors or other higher level classes it offers. A comparison is then made between the number of these types of courses offered by the High School and the number taken by the student.

3. Transcript:

Admissions grades applicants based on student transcript using a scale between one and five, with five being a poor rating. The student's rank, test scores and grades (grade trends) are carefully examined. Whether a specific subject area is analyzed depends greatly on the school the student is applying to. If, for example, the student is applying for the School of Engineering

then the math scores and grade trends are examined. If the student is applying to the School of Journalism then the English scores and grade trends are looked at.

4. Extra Curricular Activities:

Awards received and time spent outside of class (in the applicant's free time) is looked at closely. When examining extra curricular activities the key is in finding consistency not necessarily quantity. Seriousness in one activity is more beneficial than mediocrity in several activities. Having leadership skills and experience is extremely advantageous to the applicant.

5. Communication Skills:

In this section, admissions representatives look at the applicant socially. Student talents are examined as well as applicant writing essays.

6. Motivation:

In this section, applicants are asked to explain why they are interested in attending Northwestern University. Although this section does not make or break the decision to admit, motivation is looked at closely.

Finally:

Admissions representatives rate each section and then give an overall rating. Two people read each folder application, but if there is a disagreement a third or fourth person reads as well.

Affirmative Action:

Currently, minority status is taken into consideration towards acceptance. This consideration is not to be mistaken for reverse discrimination because minority applicants still go through the standard admission selection criterion. NU is actively pursuing applicants through a recruitment staff currently visiting minority schools.

President Bienen made it clear that Northwestern University wants a diverse student body. The problem facing the University is that there is not a large enough pool of minority applicants, which results in low numbers for admission. Cost is a big factor in low minority applicants. Tuition to attend Northwestern is very high and many simply cannot afford it. GFC member pointed out that the application at NU is much more complicated than at other competing Universities and this could be a discriminator. Based on previous student feedback Admissions representatives felt that this was not the case and that the application is straightforward.

Athletics and Admissions:

Before applying to NU, prospective athletic students first go through the "Yellow Sheet Process." Potential students are prescreened and interviewed through the office of the Assistant Director of the Athletic Department. Once a scholarship is offered and a recommendation is made, the student will then fill out the application. NU may retract the offer at any time if athletic student grades at the University decline.

GFC is concerned with error in the admissions process. Great students could fall through the cracks because they don't fit into the "box." Representatives assured us that admissions looks at the person as a "whole," not just for perfect grades or scores. Admissions looks for a varied student body. A recommendation was made to incorporate student interviews before admitting or rejecting applicants. Although ideal, there is not enough staff to support student interviews and many students are not able to come for the interview due to long distance constraints. There is currently a process in place by which alumni do interviews with prospective students and report back to the Admissions staff. This is advantageous because NU alumni reside throughout the United States and are able to more easily connect with potential students, giving admissions a more complete representation of the applicant.

GFC member questioned the role of faculty in the admissions process. Currently there is an oversight committee, made up of faculty, which brings up issues related to admissions. Very few faculty members are involved in looking at and reading applications; they simply do not have time for such a big job. Some schools, such as ISP and Music, do get involved but most colleges do not.

3. Committee Reports

Members were asked to submit names for the Committee on Committees if they did not do so already. GFC is to establish a contact person, other than the chair, in each department in hopes of making communication more effective.

4. Status of Adjuncts, Lecturers

This topic will be discussed at the next GFC meeting.

5. Impediments to Cross College and School Enrollment

It was unanimously decided that GFC should definitely pursue this issue.

6. Fees for Athletic Facility

The Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council will be asked to exclude GFC from the Athletic proposal since members have not yet discussed this topic fully. GFC is not taking action at this time.

7. Resolution on War with Iraq

The general consensus of all GFC Members was that the Resolution on War with Iraq is not faculty related and GFC members do not wish to make any political statements, therefore it was deemed an inappropriate topic to comment on.

8. Senate Meeting on Tuesday March 11th

The location of the bus stop for meeting pick-up is unclear so clarification will be sent sometime before the meeting.

9. Other New Business

No new business was discussed at this time.

Conclusion of meeting:

The next GFC meeting will be held on April 2, 2003 at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room).

Minutes Submitted By:

Diana Snyder