

# February 2, 2005 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

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**Members In attendance:** Eva Redei, Paul Arntson, Thomas Bauman, David Buchholz, Clarke Caywood, Dennis Chong, Sonny Cytrynbaum, Abraham Haddad, James Lindgren, Deborah Lucas, Martin Mueller, Michael Stein, Allen Taflove, Bruce Wessels

## **1. Approval of the January minutes**

The minutes of the January 5, 2005 meeting were approved with one minor correction.

## **2. Election of the GFC vice-chair**

Eva Redei introduced GFC chair-elect nominees Abraham Haddad and Thomas Bauman. Each candidate gave a brief synopsis of the direction in which they would like to lead the committee and specific goals they would like to see accomplished. GFC members present voted for Thomas Bauman as the GFC vice chair, 7 to 5 votes.

## **3. Board of Trustees Meeting Conclusion Document**

Eva Redei reported on the status of the GFC's conclusion statement of the December 2004 Board of Trustees Meeting with the GFC. The GFC approved document was submitted to Marilyn McCoy, who suggested that the GFC and school administration meet to discuss its content further. Apparently, some of the items in the report are not in agreement with decisions that have already been made by the administration. There is no precedent how to handle this situation, as the GFC has not generated such a report until now.

As Eva Redei made a commitment to the Chair of the Board, in the name of GFC, that a report will be prepared for the Board, all GFC members present were in agreement and voted in favor of continuing to put pressure on the administration that the document be forwarded on as is.

## **4. Sub-Committee Reports**

***Budget and Policy sub-committee:*** Debbie Lucas reported that the subcommittee met and discussed several issues of interest. They discussed getting more information on staff salary levels compared to peer groups. The administration has already done some studies on this and is willing to present the group with some of the findings. Periodic meetings with the administration

have proved to be very informative, and the group is discussing ways to share this information with faculty.

The university is replacing their administrative systems in research, accounting, and data warehouse. Faculty and staff are involved in the development stages. Currently, the administration is reexamining information needs, how data is organized now, and how data should be structured and disseminated. Jake Julia has been invited to speak at the March GFC meeting, where he will present more details related to the new systems.

***Faculty Development and Minority Issues:*** Martin Mueller reported success on finding an interactive means for the GFC to communicate information to faculty. Library officials are willing to host the GFC through their BLOG communications system, which is customizable. GFC members have been given the task of setting up guidelines (e.g. editor, moderator, structure of content, collecting data, response, transparency, security, etc) for administering this initiative. Already established guidelines include making content transparent only to faculty and access protected by NU netid and password, but other issues such as structure and content will be discussed on an on-going basis. One major concern is the potential for the GFC to be put in a risky or liable position due to an irresponsible posting. Since content will vary from editor to editor, and it is inevitable that editors will change, it is highly possible for this to occur. Adding a safeguard disclaimer such as “*GFC reserves the right...*” could offer some protection and will be considered.

The general agreement among the GFC members is as follows, communication will piggyback on the library’s current interactive system, which the library will host completely. Communication will consist of a newsletter and a BLOG. Access to both will be restricted to faculty only. The newsletter will contain portions of the GFC minutes that are relevant and other important items, to be decided by the chair or vice-chair. Items to be posted on the BLOG will be provided by GFC members and will consist of hot topics or comments that will hopefully spark faculty interest and interaction. To start, advertisement for this initiative will include a possible link on the NU home page, a link on the Library home page and information in the Observer.

***Research sub-committee:*** Debbie Lucas confirmed that the Dean of Kellogg will allow the social sciences database to be sent to David Buchholz. The research sub-committee is planning to meet next week to discuss and set priorities. David Buchholz gave an update on the continuing Research Affairs initiative and talked about specific issues that have come through as a result of

the most recent bulk mailing. Administrators such as Lew Smith and Brad Moore have been very responsive to the comments and remain proactive in issues that need to be resolved. IRB issues remain as a serious lead issue for the Research Affairs discussions. A current standing issue has to do with the study abroad program and the limitations set by the IRB in approving projects.

Eva Redei would like for the Research Affairs Committee to send out another bulk mailing reminding faculty that this option is available to them and stress the process will maintain the author's confidentiality. She feels that Research Affairs should be on the agenda of the next Faculty Senate meeting.

***Benefits sub-committee:*** Abraham Haddad reported on the main topics of discussion at the recent Benefits sub-committee meeting with administrators. The first item discussed at the meeting has to do with the committee pushing towards a smoother curve for computing premiums for the PPO plan. The second item relates to bids that are to be updated for other voluntary insurance programs such as auto, home, legal, pet, etc, and the GFC needs to find out the level of faculty interest in such programs before proceeding.

GFC members discussed the current NU portable tuition discount and how it is not competitive when compared to peer institutions. Abraham Haddad and the Benefits sub-committee will look into this topic further. He also reported that there is no word yet on why the HMO companies are not offering medical coverage to retirees. This continues to be an ongoing issue.

***Athletic Sub-committee: COIA Vote***

Bruce Wessels spoke about the recent meeting he attended at Vanderbilt University where 26 peer universities were represented. There are currently 44 schools in the coalition, so interest is growing. The meeting discussions focused on several items having to do with NCAA rules. Coalition recommendations resulting from the meeting are outlined in the COIA executive summary on academic integrity.

Bruce Wessels summarized some of the recommendations of the coalition. There is a necessity to tighten admissions guidelines since schools have unique individualized procedures they follow. Coalition members recommend that athletics scholarships be extended up to five years and for schools to turn towards a need basis rather than a merit basis in the future. Pay for play, which means paying your players to play, was strongly opposed. The COIA group called for a unification of schools in the area of curricular integrity and academic advising.

Bruce Wessels asked for a vote from the GFC in support of the current COIA executive summary. GFC members discussed several recommendations in detail and voted in favor of the executive summary.

**5. Discussion of the University Space Planning Committee's report and Henry Bienen's response**

Discussion of this topic has been postponed until the March GFC meeting.

**Conclusion:**

The next GFC meeting will be held on March 2, 2005 at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room)

Minutes Submitted by:

Diana Snyder