

March 7, 2007 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

Members in attendance:

Chairman Paul Arntson, Bala Balachandran, Clarke Caywood, Dennis Chong, Jeanne Dunning, John Elson, Abraham Haddad, Donna Jurdy, Mark Segraves, Allen Taflove, Laurie Zoloth

Introduction: GFC Chairman Paul Arntson called the meeting to order at 7:05pm. He welcomed everyone and proceeded to announce the order of business.

1. Approval of January 10, 2007

The minutes of the January 10, 2007 meeting were approved unanimously, pending any changes to be given to Diana Snyder.

2. Faculty charges on Discretionary Accounts: Professor Abraham Haddad

Chairman Paul Arntson and Abraham Haddad decided to table this agenda item until additional information can be reported.

3. Benefits Subcommittee Report: Professor Abraham Haddad

Abraham Haddad, Chair of the Benefits Subcommittee, gave a brief overview and update of the topics being undertaken by the committee. Benefits Subcommittee member Dennis Chong discussed his findings when comparing the HMO medical insurance premium cost tier between the old program in FY06 and the new program that began in FY07. The numbers show that potentially the administration is soaking up the cost savings, without passing the cost benefits on to the NU employees. In fact, the employee contribution has actually increased and the HMO provider options have decreased. The administration contribution, however, has not increased and in the case of HMO Illinois the contribution percentage amounts have actually decreased. Paul Arntson will invite Guy Miller from the Benefits Department to the April GFC meeting to address this finding and other concerns over the future of medical benefits.

4. Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Subcommittee Report: Professor John Elson

John Elson, Chair of the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Subcommittee, gave a brief overview of the topics being undertaken by this committee. The subcommittee has unanimously decided to pursue the Ombudsman issue. Although a specific plan of action has not yet been established, the goal is to solidify this issue sometime next year. Two major stumbling blocks to overcome are a lack of funding and a lack of support from the administration. The subcommittee also plans to discuss ways to pursue the creation of a faculty evaluation program.

5. Faculty Governance Subcommittee Report: Professor Allen Taflove

Allen Taflove, Chair of the Faculty Governance Subcommittee, gave a brief overview of the topics being undertaken by this committee. The subcommittee has begun the process of examining the currently ineffective NU Senate and recommending ways in which to successfully restructure it. One major change proposed is the institution of elected senate positions, with major representation from each school. The second major proposal would allow the senate direct access to the Board of Trustees concurrent to the administration. The third major proposal would command the authority to proactively evaluate current administration processes and decisions. After GFC members discussed the issue in detail, Paul Arntson announced that he will open up dialogue with the administration by first presenting to them the idea of instituting an elected Senate, where members are asked to serve a three year term. Paul Arntson would like the GFC to work on a proposal that outlines the need for altering the Senate from its current state, which can be presented at the May 17th University Senate meeting. He strongly recommended all members to visit the AAUP website at <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/issued/governance/effectsen.htm> where the article, "Traits of Effective Senates," is located.

6. Possible Invitation to Dean John Lavine from Medill: Professor Clarke Caywood

Medill Professor and GFC member Clarke Caywood briefly talked about the current issues facing the Medill School of Journalism. One major issue of interest to the GFC is the current discouragement of and failure of faculty governance at the school. The goal of the GFC is not to get involved in this matter, but instead to use Medill as a case study to push the GFC issue of

faculty governance reform. At this time, GFC members decided not to extend an invitation to Medill Dean John Lavine to speak at the next GFC meeting.

7. “One” Initiative: Professor Laurie Zoloth

GFC member Laurie Zoloth briefly talked about the “ONE” initiative.

8. GFC Chair’s Report

Research faculty positions (too early for Provost report): Paul Arntson would like the GFC to get involved and begin the dialogue with the administration about the proposed changes to research faculty positions. The current proposal recommends that assistant professors be treated as staff until they are promoted to an associate professor position.

Possible AAU faculty survey in the Fall: Regardless of the current administrative plan to rollout an AAU faculty survey this fall, the GFC will proceed with the current plan to institute a faculty evaluation survey that would allow faculty members to evaluate administration leaders and department heads. Paul Arntson will invite a PRC representative to talk at an upcoming GFC meeting.

IRB update: The administration is currently looking at whether non-federally funded research proposals should meet the same standards as federally funded grants.

COIA participation: Donna Jurdy has agreed to attend the upcoming May COIA meeting at Stanford as a representative of the NU GFC.

Conclusion

The next GFC meeting will be held on April 4, 2007, at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10pm.

Minutes Submitted by: Diana Snyder

Edited and Approved by: The General Faculty Committee