

November 8, 2006 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

Members In attendance: Chairman Paul Arntson, Bala Balachandran, Jeanne Dunning, John Elson, Donna Jurdy, Seth Lichter, Allen Taflove

Introduction: GFC Chairman Paul Arntson called the meeting to order, welcoming everyone and introducing the new General Faculty Committee members.

1. Senate Meeting: November 9th

Chairman Paul Arntson introduced three resolutions to be presented to the Faculty Senate body. The first resolution supports freedom of expression and academic freedom, creating a balance between civil libertarian and communitarian values. As a result, a community of scholars can make a judgment about someone being dishonest about history while at the same time strongly affirming his/her ability to state those remarks. This resolution came about as a result of the second resolution, which endorses President Bienen's statement of February 6, 2006 concerning Arthur Butz's views on the holocaust and his tenure at Northwestern University. The third resolution requests that Provost Dumas involve the faculty body when developing procedures for reviewing IRB related and non-federally funded research at Northwestern University, by appointing a faculty committee to work with the administration.

Chairman Paul Arntson made a motion to implement an organized way to present and discuss Faculty Senate resolutions. He proposed the allocation of one half hour for each resolution, in which time faculty would be allowed to make positive and negative comments no longer than three minutes per person, and speakers would be able to alternate. The discussion would close at the end of the half hour or the Faculty Senate could vote to extend the discussion. GFC members voted unanimously in favor of both incorporating this decision making structure for topics presented at future Faculty Senate meetings and to present this procedure to Henry Bienen.

2. Board of Trustees Meeting Topics: December 2nd

Chairman Paul Arntson presented the following as topics for the upcoming BOT meeting scheduled for December 2nd:

1. The challenges facing higher education at Northwestern University

The external challenges:

A. What should NU look like in 15-20 years? Which areas should grow? Which areas should be pruned or eliminated? Which areas should be combined? What new areas in research and teaching should be developed?

Allen Taflove and Bala Balachandran will attend this session.

2. How should NU respond to the Department of Education's commission on the future of Higher Education? (Controversial Margaret Spellings report)

One issue that will be looked at most is the strong recommendation that federal funding push the stem disciplines. The stem disciplines are: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

Another issue surrounds the requirement that there needs to be outcome measures and accountability.

Jeanne Dunning, John Elson and Seth Lichter will attend this session.

3. The current status of SES diversity on campus and future plans to enhance that diversity given the increasing cost of higher education and the reductions in loans relative to the high cost.

Paul Arntson and Donna Jurdy will attend this session.

4. Challenges to do collaborative cross-sectional research with other institutions and public sector entities.

5. If Civil Rights initiative (Race preference referendum - Michigan) passes vote, then the topic will also be included in the agenda.

GFC members were asked to nominate various faculty members who may be interested in attending the Board of Trustees Meeting and willing to discuss the topics mentioned above with the board of trustees.

4. COIA Report: Should we continue to be involved?

Chairman Paul Arntson gave a brief overview of the recently attended COIA meeting of the Big Ten. He reported that there is real shared Faculty Governance at all of the peer institutions, that is also fully supported financially and administratively. At the January GFC meeting Paul will revisit the question of whether the GFC will continue to be involved in the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA).

5. Revisiting Faculty Governance at NU

Chairman Paul Arntson plans to start the process of formally establishing a permanent set of General Faculty Committee by-laws.

6. Organizing Subcommittees for GFC

In an attempt to establish continuity of GFC initiatives from year to year, a stronger emphasis will be placed on the subcommittees and their structures. On the recommendation of GFC member Allen Taflove, the GFC will establish the Faculty Governance subcommittee with a required multi-year mandate. Allen has agreed to serve as chair of this newly created standing subcommittee. GFC committee members decided to morph the currently unproductive Faculty Development subcommittee into the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities standing subcommittee, with John Elson serving as chair. Clarke Caywood will serve as the Educational Affairs subcommittee chair. Abraham Haddad will continue to serve as chair of the Benefits subcommittee. Teepu Siddique will serve as chair of the Research subcommittee. The Budget and Policy subcommittee will be re-evaluated and a decision will be made as to whether it will remain a standing subcommittee.

7. New Business

Chairman Paul Arntson plans to resurrect the Ombudsman initiative, which will be discussed at the next GFC meeting in more detail.

In Conclusion:

Chairman Paul Arntson will propose via email for the next GFC meeting, currently scheduled for December 6, 2006, to be cancelled. The next GFC meeting will be held on January 10, 2007, at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room)

Minutes Submitted by: Diana Snyder

Minutes Edited by: Paul Arntson

Minutes Approved by: General Faculty Committee members