

April 30, 2008 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

Members in attendance: Chairman John Elson, Vice Chair Laurie Zoloth, Paul Arntson, Alan Buchman, Jack Doppelt, Jeanne Dunning, Stephen Eisenman, Susan Gapstur, Anupam Garg, Donna Jurdy, James Kjelland, Seth Lichter, Martin Mueller, Alan Sahakian, Robin Steinhorn

Introduction: GFC Chair John Elson called the meeting to order at 7:12pm.

1. Approval of Minutes of April 2, 2008 meeting

The minutes of the April 2, 2008 meeting were approved unanimously with no changes and will be posted to the GFC website.

2. Faculty governance reforms to be presented at May 6 Senate meeting

Paul Arntson presented a summary of the proposal for improving shared governance at Northwestern University, to be presented at the upcoming Faculty Senate meeting. After conducting extensive research at peer institutions and looking into NU's current structure, the following possibilities were presented:

First, make no changes to the present system as it works well enough when critical issues arise.

Second, significantly improve the GFC to make it a representative decision making group with serious issues to consider for the good of the faculty and the university while leaving the University Senate alone.

Third, transform the GFC into the University Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate would have the President and Provost as ex officio members along with other key senior administrators. The Faculty Senate would also include 9 non-tenure track faculty members. There would be an Executive Committee consisting of the immediate past chair, current chair, and chair-elect plus the subcommittee chairs. The University Senate would be replaced with a Northwestern University Town Hall Meeting that would meet twice a year. This option would require that the Board of Trustees be involved in changing the statues of the university.

Fourth, change the University Senate to a representative body with elected faculty, plus elected student, staff, and non-tenured faculty members, as well as senior administrators as ex officio members.

GFC members discussed these potential structural changes and content of an ideal Faculty Senate and decided in favor of the third option, which would be presented to the Senate at its May 6, 2008 meeting. A proposal setting forth the recommended changes drafted by Paul will be distributed at the Senate meeting.

3. Possible response to Board of Trustees regarding the composition of the presidential search committee

John Elson, Paul Arntson and other GFC members expressed strong disapproval of the process for selecting the faculty representatives for the presidential search committee. Although the GFC submitted 13 faculty nominations after a thorough nomination process, only one of the six faculty members were selected from the GFC's nominations. This was a departure both from the last presidential search where the faculty search committee members were all nominated by the GFC and from the one before that where the faculty representatives on the committee were directly elected by the faculty. The GFC unanimously agreed to have the GFC Chair send a letter to William Osborn, the Chair of the Presidential Search Committee and member of the Board of Trustees, expressing its opposition to the fact that the GFC, the Northwestern Faculty's only representative body, was not allowed to choose the faculty representatives on the faculty search committee. The GFC Chair will try to schedule a meeting with the faculty representatives on the presidential search committee to discuss search criteria. The GFC will continue to seek a role in the Presidential search process.

4. Proposed GFC Resolution regarding suspension of faculty governance processes

John Elson led a discussion about what, if anything, the GFC should do in regard to the issue of the suspension of faculty governance rights arising from the denial of the Medill Faculty's right to vote on the rewriting of its curriculum for a period of six to seven quarters. The Chair distributed to members a draft second GFC resolution condemning the process used to impose the new curriculum on the Medill Faculty and calling on the Administration to work with the GFC to develop some constraints on the Administration's freedom to act in a similar fashion in the future. Although there was consensus in opposition to the manner in which the Administration imposed the new curriculum, there was a division of opinion on what the GFC should do about it that is in addition to its Resolution from June, 2007 condemning the process. The main areas of disagreement concerned whether or not the GFC should ask for the assistance of The American Association of University Professors and/or the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications since the Administration's actions in regard to the Medill curriculum appear to violate the standards of both organizations. After vigorous discussion, it was decided by a vote of 12 to 2, with one member outside the room during the vote, that the Chair should poll the voting members of the Medill Faculty to find out whether or not a majority of them favored having the GFC seek the assistance of the AAUP and AECJMC. The matter of whether the GFC should pass a second resolution on the suspension of faculty governance issue will be taken up at the GFC's final meeting of the year on June 4.

5. Reminder regarding need to elect a chair-elect at our final June meeting

John Elson asked for nominations of first year GFC members for the position of chair-elect of the GFC for the 2008-09 academic year. John will collect names and present them at the June GFC meeting, at which time a vote will take place to fill this position. GFC members discussed establishing and implementing a bylaw which would require a GFC vice chair election to take place each year.

6. June Meeting will be held at Jacky's Bistro in Evanston

The next and final FY07-08 GFC meeting will be held on June 4, 2008, at 7:00 pm at Jacky's Bistro in Evanston. Directions will be given prior to the meeting.

In Conclusion:

A. Laurie Zoloth, GFC Chair elect, led a discussion centered on increasing the attendance at the upcoming faculty Senate meeting. The GFC will attempt to accomplish this goal by sending an email to the faculty body, personally inviting them to attend.

B. Laurie Zoloth suggested the inclusion of the salary increase issue as an agenda item at the Faculty Senate meeting, making available, as a handout, the AAUP's report on faculty salaries.

C. GFC members discussed the Faculty Senate Agenda items, which will be finalized by John Elson.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10pm

Minutes Submitted by: Diana Snyder

Minutes Edited by: John Elson

Minutes Approved by: General Faculty Committee members