

December 5, 2007 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

Members In attendance: Chairman John Elson, Vice Chair Laurie Zoloth, Paul Arntson, Jack Doppelt, Jeanne Dunning, Susan Gapstur, Joan Guitart, Donna Jurdy, James Kjelland, Spyridon Konstantopoulos, Seth Lichter, Ferdinando Mussa-Ivaldi, Alan Sahakian, Robin Steinhorn

Introduction: Chairman John Elson called the meeting to order at 7:10pm and welcomed everyone. He announced that the January GFC meeting will move from January 2nd to January 9th 2008.

1. Approval of November 7, 2007 meeting minutes

The minutes of the November 7, 2007 meeting were approved unanimously and will be posted to the GFC website.

2. Participation of GFC members in December 8, 2007 GFC meeting with Board of Trustees

GFC members who have not yet responded to the invitation to attend the Board of Trustees meeting scheduled for December 8th must contact BOT administrator Colleen White as soon as possible. If attending, members should also indicate the discussion group of choice. One GFC member suggested that, going forward, the individuals who are chairing the BOT discussion groups should be chosen by the General Faculty Committee.

3. Discussion of GFC membership qualifications, especially in regard to membership of faculty with non-tenure-accruing status

John Elson led the discussion on whether or not a revision of the current GFC membership qualification policy is needed, referencing the official NU document which outlines the authorization and duties of the GFC. To continue the dialogue, John will circulate draft language for altering and improving the policy, incorporating ideas resulting from the discussion. One suggested approach was not to have categorical eligibility rules for non-tenured and non-tenure track faculty, but to allow discretionary exceptions to be made in certain cases.

4. GFC subcommittee reports and agendas, including potential issues for the budget committee

Benefits Subcommittee Report – Chair Donna Jurdy: Benefits subcommittee members met with Pamela S Beemer, the Head of the Human Resources Department. They discussed various HR issues and topics, including the need for revising the enrollment confirmation system, the lengthy lag time for benefit reimbursements, updating the long term disability policy as it relates to retirement and offering fitness facilities for faculty and staff at no cost. After a brief discussion on the positives of having this fitness facility benefit, John Elson asked Donna to push forward with this initiative by generating a draft proposal.

Budget Subcommittee: Among matters suggested for investigation by the Budget subcommittee were the current arrangements for sharing of costs and revenues between the Central Administration and the different Schools.

5. Discussion of issues arising from Chair's November 13, 2007 email to WCAS faculty

A discussion was had regarding the Administration's adverse reaction to John Elson's e-mail to the WCASE faculty trying to recruit faculty members for the vacant WCAS GFC positions. There was consensus that John and Laurie should talk to the President and the Provost in order to resolve any misunderstandings.

6. Report on past role of GFC in presidential searches

As a result of his discussion with a faculty member on the last presidential search committee, John Elson reported that the Board of Trustees search committee chair had asked the GFC to select faculty representatives who would serve on the presidential search committee. This information was viewed very positively by GFC members. It was recommended that whenever the time becomes appropriate, GFC leadership follow-up with the Administration and BOT leadership in order to assure appropriate GFC participation in the search process.

7. Discussion of agendas for future University Senate meetings

GFC members agreed that the first step, before setting the agenda, is to solidify the University Senate meeting dates.

8. Discussion of proposals for procedures for suspension of faculty governance

There was consensus that it is the GFC's representative role to ensure that there are safeguards in place that will place substantive and procedural limitations on any futures suspensions of faculty governance. Members briefly discussed the role of program review and how it affects decisions on faculty governance suspension. There are currently two working draft procedural proposals the GFC will continue to discuss until a final version is voted on.

9. Report on procedures for honorary degrees

John Elson gave a brief overview of the honorary degrees selection process.

10. Report on status of blue ribbon faculty committee to propose reforms of University Senate and GFC

Paul Arntson talked about the goals of the blue ribbon faculty committee and what it hopes to accomplish in reforming the University Senate and the GFC. The first step will be to look at peer institutions and survey faculty. Using this information, Paul and the committee will put together a report to be presented at the spring Faculty Senate meeting.

GFC members discussed the GFC membership election process and how it is currently not being followed. This will be investigated further and a revision may become essential.

11. Round-table on GFC members' ideas for GFC's agenda for the rest of the year

John Elson asked GFC members to email him agenda ideas for the remainder of the year.

In Conclusion:

- The next GFC meeting will be held on January 9, 2008, at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room).

Minutes Submitted by: Diana Snyder

Minutes Edited by: John Elson and Laurie Zoloth

Minutes Approved by: General Faculty Committee members