

January 09, 2008 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

Members in attendance:

Chairman John Elson, Vice Chair Laurie Zoloth, Paul Arntson, Francesca Bordogna, Alan Buchman, Jack Doppelt, Jeanne Dunning, Anupam Garg, Donna Jurdy, James Kjelland, Seth Lichter, Ferdinando Mussa-Ivaldi, Aryeh Routtenberg, Robin Steinhorn

Introduction: GFC Chair John Elson called the meeting to order at 7:10pm. He welcomed everyone and introduced the newest members of the GFC.

1. Approval of December 5, 2007

The minutes of the December 5, 2007 meeting were approved unanimously with no changes and will be posted to the GFC website.

2. Feedback on December 8, 2007 GFC meeting with Board of Trustees and suggestions regarding these meetings in the future

John Elson and several other GFC members reported on the Board of Trustees meeting held December 8, 2007. The report led to a discussion on a number of issues for possible subjects of future Board of Trustee meetings, including both findings as to the comparatively low school appreciation rating by NU graduates and the One Northwestern initiative. Although the alumni school appreciation issue has not to anyone's knowledge been brought to the Board of Trustees by the GFC, it was reported that several trustees have shown concern over this finding, and, therefore, might be a good subject for a future GFC-BOT meeting. The One Northwestern initiative is of great interest to the GFC and key in bridging the gap especially between the Medical School and the Evanston campus. There was agreement that this topic should be pursued further.

3. Discussion of whether to change GFC membership qualifications to include faculty with non-tenure-accruing status and, if so, how to do so

There was consensus that the current GFC membership selection process, done mainly by each schools (all but the 3 at-large slots), has over the years proven to be less than successful and the feedback from school administrators points to a challenge in finding interested and available faculty members. There was consensus that the GFC should explore several ideas and alternatives regarding its membership selection process, including the shifting of election responsibility from the schools to the GFC and/or selectively opening the membership up to non-tenure track faculty positions. John Elson asked the Faculty Governance sub-committee to explore these and other options further and to devise a plan for how the GFC can prepare for running an election for its membership.

4. Update on attempts to resolve Administration's objections to GFC's Chair's November 13, 2007 e-mail to WCAS faculty

John Elson reported that after amicable conversations with the President and Provost, there was agreement that possible misunderstandings have been resolved and that the matter should, and will, be put behind us.

5. Discussion of proposals for procedures for constraining suspension of faculty governance

A lengthy discussion was had on the Administration's seemingly new position on this issue and appropriate GFC responses. There was unanimous agreement that the GFC should pursue this issue further with the hope that agreement can be reached with the Administration and any unilateral action can be avoided.

6. Potential discussion topics for meeting with Provost Dan Linzer in February

GFC members brainstormed about potential topics to discuss with Provost Dan Linzer at the February meeting. Topics suggested for discussion included: i. integration plans (One Northwestern) – results and timetable; setting permanent dates for University Faculty Senate and Executive meetings; faculty Governance; major changes in the administration since the Provost's appointment; what has and will become of the Faculty Survey to evaluate administrators – AAU Survey; faculty role in Budget committee and possibility of resurrecting BRAC; and, the ombudsman proposal. The February GFC meeting will be devoted primarily, if not, entirely, to the discussion with the Provost. The GFC will communicate, via email, to solidify discussion topics and to determine the most effective ways to utilize the meeting time. Once decided, John Elson and Paul Arntson will also send a memo to the Provost suggesting the discussion items.

7. Discussion of agendas for future University Senate meetings and status of blue ribbon faculty committee on reforms of University Senate and GFC

Paul Arntson is preparing the agenda items for the upcoming May University Faculty Senate Meeting. He would like to have the new University Senate and GFC reform proposal ready for discussion at the April and May GFC meetings. The goal is to be able to introduce and ultimately vote on a finalized version at the May Faculty Senate meeting.

8. Discussion of the existence and role of faculty governance committees in the individual Schools of the University

GFC members were uncertain as to the existence and role of faculty governance committees in the individual Schools of the University. This is a question that was recommended for exploration and report by the faculty governance subcommittee that is addressing reforms to the structure of faculty governance at the University, as discussed above.

9. Update on search for Director of Athletics

John Elson announced that Donna Jurdy will be the GFC representative on the search for a Director of Athletics.

10. Round-table on GFC members' ideas for GFC's agenda for the rest of the year and other comments and suggestions

John Elson asked GFC members to send, via email, agenda items for future GFC discussions and initiatives. GFC members briefly discussed several topics dealing with benefits issues, including poor medical insurance benefits and problems in the confirmation process. Paul Arntson would like the GFC to invite the Program Review Committee chair to attend a future GFC meeting to discuss the PRC process, including the nature of the process for evaluating administrators.

In Conclusion:

- The next GFC meeting will be held on February 6, 2008, at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room).

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20pm

Minutes Submitted by: Diana Snyder

Minutes Edited by: John Elson and Laurie Zoloth and ?

Minutes Approved by: General Faculty Committee members