

# **June 4, 2008 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting**

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## **Members In attendance:**

Chairman John Elson, Paul Arntson, Bala Balachandran, Alan Buchman, Jack Doppelt, Stephen Eisenman, Susan Gapstur, Anupam Garg, Donna Jurdy, James Kjelland, Seth Lichter, Ferdinando Mussa-Ivaldi, Aryeh Routtenberg

**Introduction:** GFC Chair John Elson called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

## **1. Approval of minutes of April 30, 2008 meeting**

The approval vote of the April 30, 2008 GFC minutes was temporarily suspended until it could be determined whether information was left out of the draft minutes regarding whether the GFC should send a letter to all faculty informing them of the Administration's disregard of almost all of the GFC's recommendations for faculty representatives on the presidential search committee. After a brief discussion, it was determined that, regardless of whether such information was omitted, a letter should be sent to the administration, (to Presidential Search Committee Chair Osborn, Provost Linzer and Vice President McCoy), reflecting the GFC's strong disagreement with the administration's refusal to select faculty search committee representatives from the GFC recommendations. It was further recommended that a similar communication should be made to all faculty. No vote was taken on the approval of the April 30, 2008 minutes.

## **2. Election of GFC chair-elect**

Stephen Eisenman accepted the nomination to serve as Chair-elect of the General Faculty Committee for FY2008-09. GFC members unanimously voted in favor of his appointment and his subsequent position as chair during the 2008-09 school year. Asked what he hopes to accomplish during his term, Stephen referenced the plans to reform the structure and operating procedures of faculty governance. He noted in addition that he would seek to identify issues that the faculty as a whole will care about and act on.

## **3. Discussion of May 6 Senate meeting and needed follow-up, in particular regarding proposal for reform of structure of faculty governance**

GFC members continued the on-going discussion of the deficiencies in Northwestern's faculty governance structure. The GFC decided to move forward with its project to reform what was agreed to be the current ineffective faculty governance system. It was decided that a subcommittee would be formed this summer to work with Paul Arntson in developing by-laws for the proposed elected faculty senate. Volunteers for this committee included: Paul Arntson, John Elson, Susan Gapstur, James Kjelland,

Anupam Garg, and Ferdinando (Sandro) Mussa-Ivaldi. It was suggested that a letter should be sent to the Board of Trustees both informing them of this action plan to restructure the Faculty Senate and to request to have a BOT liaison.

#### **4. Discussion of what, if anything, further should be done by the GFC in regard to the presidential search process**

As yet, there has been no response from Presidential Search Committee Chair Osborn, Provost Linzer or Vice President McCoy to a recent letter from the GFC Chair addressing the GFC's strong objections to the refusal to appoint most of the faculty members recommended by the GFC for the presidential search committee. Due to this unresponsiveness, the GFC will consider a subsequent letter to tenure and tenure-line faculty members.. The purpose would be to keep faculty informed of this disregard for their right to decide the future of the university.

It was agreed that the GFC should continue to try to become involved in various parts of the selection process and should consider suggesting to the administration that the final candidates meet with the GFC. After a brief discussion, GFC members voted in favor of meeting with the faculty representatives serving on the Presidential Search Committee in the Fall to discuss appropriate criteria for a new president.

#### **5. Discussion of Medill Issue:**

The Medill faculty members were asked to vote on whether the GFC should seek the assistance of the AAUP and AECJMC (The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication). John Elson reported that the confidential e-mail vote resulted in an almost even division among the voting Medill faculty members on whether to ask for these organizations' assistance. After a lengthy discussion and many varied opinions, it was decided that the GFC would neither invite the assistance of the AAUP and AECJMC nor pass a second resolution condemning the continued suspension of faculty governance. The majority opinion was that because the Medill Faculty would be the most directly affected by the contemplated GFC action, the GFC should take no further action without a higher proportion of Medill faculty support. On the recommendation of GFC members, John Elson will notify the Medill faculty that because the vote was so evenly divided, the GFC has decided not to seek assistance from the AAUP and the AECJMC.

#### **6. Prof. Zaslow's proposal for a GFC resolution on gun control legislation**

At the Spring University Senate Meeting, attendee Professor Zaslow proposed that the Senate pass a resolution supporting more effective gun control legislation. There was agreement that this was an important issue and that Professor Zaslow should be contacted to see if he would be willing to spearhead the groundwork for further action that would culminate in a vote at the Fall or Spring Faculty Senate meeting.

## **7. Open discussion on the business of the GFC next year**

**a. AAUP Invitation:** GFC members agreed that AAUP representatives should be asked to meet with GFC members in order to go over various shared governance issues at NU and get recommendations on establishing a permanent set of bylaws.

**b. Soliciting Faculty Interest and participation:** There was agreement that the GFC should try to increase faculty collaboration with the GFC by encouraging faculty members to suggest topics for GFC action that they would be willing to spearhead. It was suggested that the first step should be to solicit participation from the faculty body through a mass e-mailing, similar to the one that had been done previously in regard to the Committee on Committees solicitation.

**c. GFC Next year:** John Elson suggested that the following topics should be considered by the GFC for its agenda next year:

1. Reform of Faculty Governance
2. Ombudsman Program
3. Evaluation of Administrators
4. Program Review Reform

Paul Arntson added that the GFC should also pursue the results of the recent AAU faculty survey and find out what the administration will do with the data.

### **In Conclusion:**

- a. GFC members thanked John Elson for his service and success as the FY2007-08 GFC chair.
- a. The first GFC meeting of FY2007-08 will be held on September 24, 2008 at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room).

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*The meeting was adjourned at 9:25pm*

Minutes Submitted by: Diana Snyder

Minutes Edited by: John Elson

Minutes Approved by: General Faculty Committee member