

January 07, 2009 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

Members in attendance:

Chair Laurie Zoloth, Vice Chair Stephen Eisenman, Paul Arntson, Alan Buchman, Jian Cao, Jack Doppelt, John Elson, Anupam Garg, Joshua Hauser, Donna Jurdy, Andrew Koppelman, Seth Lichter, Ferdinando Mussa-Ivaldi, William Ocasio, Babette Sanders, Helen Thompson

Introduction: GFC Chair Laurie Zoloth called the meeting to order at 7:05pm and introduced the newest members of the group.

1. Approval of December 3, 2008 meeting minutes

The minutes of the December 3, 2008 meeting were approved with one change. There will be an addendum to the conclusion section, clarifying point number one, which details the GFC's plan to implement new communication strategies designed to facilitate more faculty involvement in specific initiatives.

2. Review of New President: What are our goals?

General Faculty Members discussed, in detail, president-elect Morton Schapiro's qualifications and vision for Northwestern University. Laurie Zoloth then led a discussion on what the GFC should expect from the new NU president given his background in dealing with faculty governance and also based on remarks he made personally regarding this topic. Laurie Zoloth encouraged members to think about and submit a wish list of expectations as well as questions they would like to present to the new president. Several such items were discussed in detail.

Regardless of the change in administration leadership, the General Faculty Committee plans to continue furthering the faculty governance reform initiative. It is also very important to send a clear message that the GFC is a serious group that is interested in working effectively with the new president.

3. Completion of the discussion of the ombudsman project

John Elson gave a brief update on where the ombudsman project is in terms of administration approval and eventual implementation. The university general counsel approved the initiative but recommended setting up rules that would address the exclusion of handling certain situations, such as sexual harassment. John Elson will continue to be the lead on the project and additionally will pursue getting a budget set up

to be used for ombudsman training, administrative assistance and secretarial support. He will draw up a budget for GFC review. John was asked to collaborate with the university general counsel to draw up a joint approval letter to be presented to the administration.

4. Review and discussion of comments on our website

There was one comment made on the General Faculty Committee BLOG, which indicates that the BLOG is being overlooked and needs to become more visible. The GFC will send out more Bulkmail messages highlighting this communication tool and inviting faculty members to participate in topic discussions.

5. Discussion of BRAC

The secretive nature of the budgetary decision making process used by the administration, salary of the president for example, has raised concerns over issues of transparency. In light of this, Sandro Mussa-Ivaldi has resurrected the Budget and Policy subcommittee and will be following the model of the Budget and Resource Allocation Committee (BRAC) active in the seventies and eighties, which served as an advisory committee to the president and senate. Sandro has agreed to serve as the chair of this subcommittee.

The Budget and Policy subcommittee will be evaluating the inner working of the university budget, what the budget looks like and how decisions are made. A major priority will be to investigate how the current economy will fair as it relates to Northwestern. Sandro will also look into setting up a budget to be used specifically for organizing and promoting governance.

6. Discussion of revision of Faculty Handbook

The administration has asked the General Faculty Committee to assist in revising the current Faculty Handbook. Laurie Zoloth asked members to read the document through all the way and think about the most efficient way to proceed. She also asked everyone to visit peer institution websites and compare faculty handbooks, bringing attention to any that stand out as excellently written or ideal.

7. New Business

Open houses on both campuses are set. On the Evanston Campus one will be held on Monday, January 26th and the other on Tuesday, January 27th, and both at 5:00pm in the Ripton Room of Scott Hall. On the Chicago Campus, only one open house will be held and that will be on Monday January 26th at 5:00pm in the Law School. Laurie challenged GFC members to make it a priority to attend the open houses.

In Conclusion:

- The next GFC meeting will be held on February 4, 2009, at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room).
- Going forward, each GFC mailing will contain a paragraph at the top of every announcement stating what the GFC is and does.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm

Minutes Submitted by: Diana Snyder

Minutes Approved by: General Faculty Committee members