

September 24, 2008 Minutes of the General Faculty Committee Meeting

Members in attendance:

Chair Laurie Zoloth, Vice Chair Stephen Eisenman, Paul Arntson, Francesca Bordogna, Jack Doppelt, John Elson, Anupam Garg, Donna Jurdy, Andrew Koppelman, Ferdinando Mussa-Ivaldi, Aryeh Routtenberg, Alan Sahakian, Sylvia Wang

Guests: Jake Julia and Janice Eberly, Honorary Degree Committee representatives

Introduction: Welcome to new and old members GFC Chair Laurie Zoloth called the meeting to order at 7:10pm. She welcomed everyone and had everyone introduce themselves to the group. There are still several membership vacancies that the Deans of specific schools have not yet filled, so Laurie would like the GFC to be proactive in the matter by submitting names of potential members to be presented to the respective Deans.

1. Approval of April 30th and June 4th meeting minutes

The minutes of the April 30th and June 4th meeting were approved unanimously with no changes and will be posted to the GFC website.

2. Who do we need to be a part of our discussions?

Each year the GFC invites university administrators to discuss issues that affect the faculty body and/or major university changes coming down the pipeline. One potential guest for this year is James Young, Associate Provost of Faculty Initiatives.

3. Review of Honorary Degrees (by courtesy)

Laurie Zoloth gave a brief overview of the recent past history of the Honorary Degree process and outcome, including details surrounding the recent candidates who were recommended and rejected.

4. Approval for Honorary Degree nomination

Laurie Zoloth presented the name and accomplishments of the individual recommended to receive the Honorary Degree for FY2009. GFC members presented varying opinions, in support and in opposition of the nomination.

Laurie Zoloth made a motion for approval of the current June 2009 Honorary Degree nominee. Nine voted in favor of the motion, one opposed and three abstained from the vote. The motion was passed.

Reflection on process:

GFC Members discussed the issues involved in the selection process for the Honorary Degree and extended the conversation to the recent controversy surrounding Jeremy Wright. Several members expressed disapproval of GFC involvement in this process, while others would like continued involvement. A motion was made whether the GFC should or should not deliberate on Honorary Degree nominees going forward, but due to a lack of sufficient group

discussion, a vote was not taken at this time. This topic will be researched further and discussion will resume once full details can be presented.

Guest GFC meeting participants, Jake Julia and Janice Eberly, Honorary Degree Committee representatives, joined the discussion and presented information on the committee structure and membership roster and also described in detail the process and criterion currently used in choosing the finalists. Anyone can nominate individuals for Honorary Degree, but typically they come from one or one group of faculty and specific information needs to be submitted in addition to the actual name. Each year there are 20 to 30 nominations that are narrowed down to 5 or 6 and all names are kept confidential. Full details of nomination process and criteria can be found on the Provost website at: <http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/awards/honorary/>.

Recommendations

Going forward, the GFC would like to be given a bigger window to reflect on nominees and also to receive materials well in advance of the expected decision making deadline. Laurie Zoloth also suggested that at the May 6th Faculty Senate Meeting the GFC recommend a rethinking of the honorary degree and commencement speaker committee and allow the GFC to have a preemptive advisory role in the process. This would result in the GFC taking responsibility and having full authority and say in the Honorary Degree nominee selection process and the president can choose a speaker he/she wants.

A motion was made for the GFC to no longer be involved in the discussion of the actual nomination names, but instead to discuss whatever issues surround the Honorary Degree process. Five voted in favor of the motion, five opposed and three abstained from the vote. The motion was not passed at this time, but will be revisited in May.

5. Review of GFC Executive Committee agenda and response (as below)

Laurie Zoloth presented the details and outcome of the GFC Executive Committee meeting with the administration. Highlights and action plans resulting from the meeting are as follows:

What are our goals for the year: Ongoing goal to drastically increase faculty member attendance at the Faculty Senate meetings and a long term goal of having two permanently set Faculty Senate meetings each year.

Two University Discourses: October 28, 2008, and May 6, 2009

Discussion topic:

How to be University that leads the way in civic engagement: sustainability and global engagement

The University For the World (Pericles as example): How does this goal fit into two critical other goals: One Northwestern and Residential College

Reflections on the faculty governance issues: Listening to faculty

A suggestion was made by one of the administrators to conduct a faculty survey using the Monkey Survey system asking faculty simple questions about the GFC and other important faculty centered issues. The raw data will show how informed the faculty body is about the Faculty Senate and also how satisfied they are with specific items of interest such as salary, raises, resources, etc. It was also suggested that the GFC have personal one on one interviews with faculty members asking them the important questions. Laurie Zoloth liked this idea very much and asked GFC members to volunteer to interview at least four people each and report back at the November GFC meeting.

One GFC member suggested taking the faculty body number as a whole, dividing it by the number of schools and then appointing one GFC member to represent that part. This system of representation has worked very well in the past for one particular faculty group and generated an increase in Faculty Senate participation.

6. President's last year in office

Laurie Zoloth would like to involve the faculty broadly, and to complete the process of considering faculty governance by passing the new bylaws of suggested by the GFC. She would also like to advance the process of "One Northwestern" by considering how shared faculty governance can have an effect on the social obligation of the University to lead the way in the creation of research on issue of importance to America, such as energy policy.

7. Volunteers for GFC subcommittees

Laurie Zoloth asked GFC members to decide which subcommittee they would like to join or chair. More details on each subcommittee will be made available at the October meeting.

8. GFC membership vacancies

GFC members discussed possible candidates to fill the current membership vacancies. In addition to the names presented at the meeting, Laurie Zoloth asked everyone to email her more suggestions. Once a final list is generated, an email will be sent to the Dean of each school asking for that particular person to be appointed.

9. Discussion of draft university assembly bylaws

In continuing the faculty governance reform initiative, current GFC member and past GFC chair Paul Arntson drafted a detailed document introducing a new set of standards and bylaws for the university assembly. Now on the 3rd draft of the document, Paul requested additional comments and suggestions from the GFC body. Laurie Zoloth made several revisions to the document and based on those revisions opened the floor up for discussion. Members went back and forth on various details of the draft asking for clarification and making suggestions for changes. Laurie Zoloth asked GFC members to build on her revised version, making changes as needed and then continue the discussion via email.

In Conclusion:

- Reminder: GFC meeting with Board of Trustees, December 13, 2008
- Next GFC Meeting: October 15, 2008 at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room).

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm

Minutes Submitted by: Diana Snyder

Minutes Edited by: Laurie Zoloth

Minutes Approved by: General Faculty Committee members