

GENERAL FACULTY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

March 3, 2010

Members In attendance:

Paul Arntson, Jack Doppelt, Scott Durham, Anupam Garg, Eva Lam, Ferdinando Mussa-Ivaldi, Babette Sanders, Sylvia Wang, Laurie Zoloth

1. Greetings and Introduction: Standing in for GFC Chair Stephen Eisenman, General Faculty Committee member and immediate Past Chair, Laurie Zoloth called the meeting to order at 7:12 pm and presided over all discussions.

2. Approval of minutes of February 3, 2010 Meeting

The minutes of the February 3, 2010 meeting were approved unanimously and will be posted to the GFC website.

3. Reports of the Subcommittees

Budget Subcommittee Report: Sandro Mussa-Ivaldi, Budget Subcommittee Chair, gave an overview of the recent Budget meeting with the administration where he addressed the following: 1) Particular budget topics that are under discussion in the current cycle and that would have an impact on the Faculty, 2) In light of the recent freeze of salary increases, having an estimate on the dollar amount that would be required to generate a Faculty salary increase of 1% across the University, 3) A recent report of the NY Times that suggested NU was not among the best performers in the management of the endowment investments. The administration spoke to each topic and explained their position.

General Faculty Committee members have reason to believe that the current GFC has very little influence on the budgetary process and NU financial matters, but the Budget subcommittee will continue to meet with the administration in the hope of setting the basis for the new Faculty Senate.

Benefits Subcommittee: Anupam Garg, Benefits Subcommittee Chair, gave an overview of the recent Benefits subcommittee meeting with leaders of Human Resources where the following was discussed:

1) Improving health plans for retirees, 2) Benefits for same-sex domestic partners and possible remedies for taxation issues. Currently, the university's contribution to the cost of a same-sex partner's benefits is treated as taxable income to the employee, which is not the case for an opposite-sex spouse. 3) Increase of SPAC (Sports Pavilion and Aquatic Center) benefits, including decreasing or eliminating faculty and staff fees, and increasing wellness programs. After a brief discussion, the Benefits subcommittee was asked to investigate the decrease in dependent tuition benefits for courses taken over the summer. GFC members also discussed the rising parking fees, which is becoming a huge issue for everyone.

Governance Subcommittee: Paul Arntson, Governance Subcommittee Chair, gave a brief synopsis of the outcome at the last GFC meeting and then talked about the proposed implementation plan for the new governance structure.

Election Process: Elections will take place within each department. The process will be headed by the faculty senate and facilitated through the department chairs. Additionally, the GFC will detail the election process for non-tenured faculty members.

Infrastructure Support: The new system will require an increase in infrastructure support, including more staff support and executive committee release time.

Timetable: The GFC will work on the implementation strategy during the Spring quarter. All plans are contingent on Board of Trustee approval, which will not take place until June. Ideally, the election process will be established by early Fall quarter, elections will take place shortly after, and the new Faculty Governance structure will be fully functioning by January 2011.

Role of the GFC: The GFC will continue to operate until the new structure is in place. Current members will be responsible for three to five departments in their school, finding a contact person within each who will be in charge of the election process for their respective department. GFC Members will attend departmental meetings and pass along important information about the new structure.

The Governance subcommittee will draft a document outlining the implementation plan to be presented to the administration.

4. E-verify

Paul Arntson was approached by several faculty members who are concerned about the university-wide e-verify initiative. GFC members discussed the issue in detail and will determine whether to pursue the matter after further investigation.

5. New Business

Faculty Survey: General Faculty Committee members discussed sending out a survey to the faculty body asking them what topics are of concern or of interest to them. There was not enough support from GFC members present to proceed with the survey and it was determined that this be left to the new Senate.

Conclusion

- The next GFC Meeting will be held on April 7, 2010 at 7:00 pm in Scott Hall room 201 (the Ripton Room).

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Minutes Submitted by: Diana Snyder

Minutes Approved by: General Faculty Committee members