

Northwestern University
Minutes of the University Senate Meeting
May 4, 2006

The University Senate held its second meeting of the 2005–2006 year on May 4 in Hardin Hall on the Evanston Campus. In the absence of President Bienen, Provost Lawrence B. Dumas called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM.

I. The minutes of the May 9, 2005 meeting were approved unanimously without changes.

II. General Faculty Committee Chair Thomas Bauman reported on the work of the Committee during the present year. He began by thanking outgoing members of the Committee, and announced that Paul Arntson of Communication Studies was elected GFC Chair for 2006–2007. Some discussion of the structure of the GFC has developed the wish to have some non-Committee participation in the subcommittees, which would be constituted more on an ad hoc basis to deal with specific issues. The Committee also held discussions with various interested groups concerning changes to Martin Luther King Day and will make recommendations for improvements in how that important holiday is observed. In two of its meetings, the Committee invited Ken Alder and other persons involved with drafting a copyright policy which it endorsed for discussion at today's Senate meeting. Two other issues have been considered on which a vote will be taken with GFC endorsement: assessment of student learning outcomes and changes in the way CTEC evaluations are published. Bauman then asked David Buchholz to report on the activities of the Research Affairs Subcommittee.

Buchholz reported that there were three main issues this year before the subcommittee: Institution Review Boards, limited submission proposals, and computer-related privacy. Human subject research has been a contentious subject for some time; an important question this year has been whether Northwestern signs on to federal insurance for all research including non-federal research. It now appears that Northwestern will not take that action. The question remains of how oversight of non-federal research is to be conducted. The second concern with limited submission proposals is that funding agencies will reduce their costs by placing the onus on the University to limit the number of proposals. The concern is that Northwestern properly review proposals with a reasonable system to decide which research will go forward. This system of review has been improved, and the subcommittee is pressing for more openness therein. The last question considered was University policy regarding privacy of computer and e-mail files. Information Technology has welcomed GFC participation in considering revisions to the current rules in an ongoing process.

Abraham Haddad reported on the work of the Benefits Subcommittee. Their main focus was the Health care program for the next five years. They participated in the recent survey of desired options, discussed alternatives, and made recommendations that were accepted by the benefits division of Human Resources. More recently, they held a meeting on the recommendation that will be carried out. There will be only two HMO plans offered, each one based on minimizing dislocation from present health plan arrangements such as primary care physicians. The Preferred Provider Organization will offer three options: one with very high deductibles and no premium carried to the health savings account; one that is similar to the current plan with very low deductibles and very high premium, and a third

plan somewhere between the two. These will have important features similar to those in the past, with maximum expenses tied to salaries. In addition, there will be a greater range of persons covered: single, single plus spouse, single plus children, or married couple plus children. There will be an on-line module to help clients decide which features they would like to have. Ample communication with faculty and their families is also to be provided. Premiums will be collected in the month of coverage instead of a month in advance, as is now the practice. The new plans will begin in January 2007.

Finally, Bauman reported on the resolution brought to the GFC by Allen Taflove for presentation to the Senate at this meeting. After discussion and emendation by members of the GFC, it was voted on as provided under the terms of the Committee's 1939 charter. This resolution disavowing the views of Professor Arthur Butz denying the reality of the Holocaust was passed unanimously by Committee members in attendance at the April 5, 2006 GFC meeting. John Elson of the Law faculty found that such a resolution was an unprecedented GFC action, and there are therefore no precedents to guide the Committee. Subsequent discussion found this to be a vexed issue, and Bauman therefore decided to present the matter as part of the Committee's report of its activities, leaving it to the Senate to decide what further action to take. Carol Simpson Stern argued as a long time member of the Department of Performance Studies and a past president of the American Association of University Professors, well acquainted with the 1940 statement of the AAUP of academic freedom and tenure. She argued that the faculty should be sensitive to the appropriate role of the faculty in deliberating the political opinions or extracurricular utterances of fellow faculty members. She commended President Bienen for his statement on the Butz controversy, and the restraint of GFC in not trying to speak as a governance organization representing the faculty or the institution on a matter regarding the politics, the thinking, or the person of a colleague. The most appropriate way to counter Professor Butz's Holocaust denial would be to have the most thoughtful papers written by members of this faculty refuting his views published or presented in an appropriate venue. It is unprecedented, she argued, for a body of faculty governance to pass a moral, ethical, judgement when it has not demonstrated its unique right to judge the thought of a colleague. Such an act of censure, she argued, is a risky collective action, incompatible with an institution of learning. In addition, it calls attention to views that should not have the benefit of additional exposure. The appropriate Senate action would be to let the GFC report stand and to table the proposal for a Senate resolution. Provost Dumas remarked as chair of the meeting that he understood the GFC had decided not to introduce its resolution for a Senate vote at this meeting. Bauman confirmed this, but Taflove objected that the GFC had voted unanimously to present its resolution formally before the Senate with the intention that it be voted upon. Bauman replied that subsequent e-mail correspondence by GFC members has expressed some of the concerns articulated at the present meeting by Professor Stern and pointed out that they might be shared by a significant number of faculty members. To have the resolution incorporated into the GFC report without further action was not in his determination out of harmony with the requirements of the Senate agenda. The GFC resolution did not, he added, carry the specific stipulation that it be put up for a Senate vote, and he did not believe an agenda item is automatically entitled to a Senate vote. Charles Thompson remarked that the GFC resolution called for including the Butz matter in the Senate agenda, but that was not done. Because it is not a published agenda item, he argued, it would be out of order to bring it to a vote. He further recalled that in 1970, then-Chancellor Rocky Miller had called an emergency meeting of the Senate to propose a closure of the University in recognition of

the Kent State massacre as an alternative to a strike. The meeting was packed, he recalled, and a long debate ensued whether the Senate should condemn the National Guard for killing the protestors at Kent State. The proposal was voted down on the grounds that this was not an academic matter. By the same token, Thompson argued, the matter of Holocaust denial is an inappropriate matter for a Senate. Paul Arntson remarked that he was one of the fourteen GFC members who voted on the Butz resolution and expected it to be on the Senate agenda at the present meeting. Based upon the shared values of the academic community, it is important to express the importance of the GFC resolution. Failing that, he would support an endorsement of President Bienen's statement on the subject, which includes everything in the GFC resolution. Bauman commented that none of his correspondence from GFC members had opposed the resolution on the floor and that he personally favors its discussion. Dumas proposed that since other items on the agenda needed Senate action, the record show that the Senate heard the report of the GFC and went on to other items on the agenda. If there is a member of the Senate with something more to say about the Taflove resolution, it can be taken up as the seventh item of the agenda.

III. Associate Provost Steve Fisher introduced discussion of the resolution to require publication of the quantitative portion of the CTEC evaluations. This was the primary matter of discussion with the CTEC Advisory Committee this year, he reported; the Committee voted in favor of this motion. It was endorsed by the GFC and now comes before the Senate for its approval. At present, 90–95% of faculty evaluations are published. Their two components are a quantitative portion and a comment portion in which students may comment on the course being evaluated. Only the former, quantitative portion would be published for every course if this motion is approved. The reason for this is that there is at present missing information which students might find valuable in selecting courses. Publication under this proposal is limited, as access to CTEC is open only to people with Northwestern e-mail addresses. This information is used administratively in evaluating the teaching of the faculty as well as by students. Whether students rely excessively on CTEC evaluations is a hard question to answer, he added. In response to a question by Bruce Wessels, Fisher said a statement could be added to the CTEC website limiting the right to publish the information therein anywhere else. Only the quantitative information would be published, and only the 5–10% currently omitted would be added. Once a subject of Senate controversy, the availability of such information is now a commonplace and the accepted norm. Online collection of the data has proven to be highly successful, with a response rate of about 80%. Fisher could not vouch for the thoughtfulness with which students complete the evaluations, but he judged that by and large students take this role seriously. Responding to a question about the small percentage that remain unpublished, Fisher said there are several pockets where most of this unpublished portion are found. The Department of Spanish and Portuguese, for example, has a policy against publishing CTEC figures for its 100–200 level language courses to prevent overenrollment in a favored instructor's classes at the expense of the less popular instructors. Carol Simpson Stern added that when this system originated, faculty would never agree to publication of data had it not contained the two elements of quantitative and verbal evaluation. Student evaluation is anonymous; it does not correlate satisfaction with the grade received, and is purely a measurement of perception. To be balanced with peer evaluation, it became difficult to implement and peer evaluation fell away. It is unclear whether the consequent monopoly of student input has contributed to grade inflation. Untenured faculty become

extremely vulnerable under this system, and they bear a corresponding hardship. For these reasons, she said, CTEC evaluations are not particularly sound unless linked with information about the grades of students doing the evaluation. Why, she asked, should the faculty member be compelled to be evaluated anonymously? Michael Dacey suggested that student evaluations should be verified in faculty legislation as based solely upon information available to students; department chairs and the offices of dean and provost have access to all the information submitted. This motion, therefore has no impact upon university processes; it only sends a message to students that all of the data or 95% of it may be seen. Ron Braeutigam observed that this is a day and age when information can be made available in a fairly large sample. Recent changes in CTECs have eliminated one of the problems, which was the smallness of the sample. With widespread responses and non-publication of verbal comments, students find access to CTECs very important in selecting classes. This view comes from the Associated Student Government, student advisory boards, and many large classes that he teaches. There is no reason to hide this information, he said; if there are problems, large samples should subsume any small pockets of bias that might exist with one or two irate students. As sunlight is the best disinfectant, this peer advice is considered highly valuable. Charles Thompson added that while no untenured faculty are present to air their views, there are also no students present to state their viewpoint. Fisher responded that the proposal on the floor is a response to student demand via the CTEC advisory Committee. After further discussion, the motion carried with one dissenting vote.

IV. The recently approved University copyright policy, which was endorsed by the GFC, was then presented for discussion. [55:19] Thomas Bauman remarked that this had been an extremely complex issue. Kenneth Alder met twice with the GFC because after his initial presentation the Committee decided to post both the full document and a useful summary of the proposed policy on the GFC website. E-mail responses to that posting led to the decision to discuss it in the Senate so that those who might still have concerns would have the opportunity to discuss them with persons involved in writing the policy. Compared with policies at peer institutions, the policy now adopted by Northwestern is extremely generous to faculty. Most of the concerns raised in communications to the GFC involved software rather than traditional forms of copyright-protected publications. Provost Dumas added that the process by which the policy was developed included a panel of four faculty members working with the Administration over a period of years. The panel included Ken Alder, who is present to represent their views, Mark Ratner of Chemistry, Daniel Edelson of the school of Education and Social Policy, and Annette Barbier from the School of Communication. In response to a question about distribution of royalties when a faculty member is a member of two academic units, Dumas explained that an appropriate parsing of the specifics would need to take place. John Margolis stated that like other policies of the kind, this would be referenced in the Faculty Handbook but not printed there in its entirety.

V. Associate Provost Stephen Fisher led a discussion of the resolution on the structure of the assessment of learning outcomes. This issue had been brought into focus in the course of the most recent University re-accreditation in the year 2004 by the Higher Learning Commission. The guidelines for our accreditation call for the University to be assessed every ten years by an outside panel with the submission of a significant quantity of written documents, culminating in an on-campus visit by a team of 12 to 15 examiners. A principle of the standards by which the University accreditation stands or falls is the

assessment of student learning outcomes. This has been brought more sharply to our attention by a new set of criteria established in January 2005. The University needs to develop a framework in which this assessment of student learning outcomes will take place. Five guiding principles of assessment, provided by a committee called together by the Provost for this purpose, would form the structure within which each individual school would create its own learning outcomes assessment plan. Those assessment plans would be coordinated in turn by the Provost-appointed Assessment Council. The structure will depend to a large extent on the educational goals of each school. Almost all professional accrediting agencies have moved in recent years to student learning outcomes assessments. This is a standard within professional organizations. What the University needs now to do is create a structure in which this can operate on a University-wide scale, allowing latitude for each of the schools to craft their own plans that fit their educational goals. By endorsing this statement, the Senate would set a procedure in place that would begin in earnest next year with the Provost's Assessment Council working with the schools, the Searle Center for Teaching Excellence, and outside experts to meet the five basic guiding principles. The resolution establishing the five guiding principles of assessment was passed unanimously.

VI. In the absence of President Bienen, Provost Dumas offered some brief remarks. As Northwestern improves itself over time, recruitment of new students who will arrive next fall is under way. Though admission results are not yet complete, a freshman class of sufficient size and capability can be predicted with confidence, with the expectation that the usual measures of excellence will continue to improve. In new faculty recruitment, a larger than usual number of searches are under way; moreover, the quality of scholars identified for recruitment is extremely strong. Northwestern is an ever more attractive place to teach and conduct research. In budgeting, the University remains financially solvent. The budget for the next fiscal year has just been approved, and allocations to the schools are about to go out. Capital resources in hand are sufficient to maintain operational and physical improvements. Capital commitments to improve University facilities include renovation and expansion of the Searle student health building on the Evanston campus and a complete renovation of the Annie Mae Swift building, also on the Evanston campus, to be completed by the end of the summer of 2007. The information infrastructure will benefit from a new financial system and a new grants administration system. The financial system will come on line a year from September 2005. In research, the University is challenged by flat funding in the National Institutes of Health, and the general prospect for research funding is not altogether bright. Lyrica royalties have been coming in from Pfizer for about a year, and demand for the medication is growing. These royalties are distributed into four funds, three of them endowments supporting a) renewal and replacement of physical facilities, b) the office of the Vice President for Research to support the research enterprise, and c) funding of graduate students. The fourth fund will support underfunded programs and projects that the Administration hopes to bring to completion in the foreseeable future.

VII. In additional business, Allen Taflove, urged that the draft resolution condemning the views of Arthur Butz denying the Holocaust, which had been passed unanimously by the General Faculty Committee, receive the formal attention of the Senate as an agenda item subject to a vote. An alternative proposal, that the Senate endorse President Bienen's statement of February 6, 2006 on the same subject, was moved and seconded. Bienen's statement links condemnation of Butz's views on the Holocaust with acknowledgment of

Butz's tenure, and it articulates the importance of academic freedom. Provost Dumas accepted this motion with the understanding that it would be voted upon no earlier than the next formal meeting of the Faculty Senate. There being no additional business, a motion for adjournment was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel H. Garrison
Secretary to the University Senate