

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL FACULTY COUNCIL

March 9, 2004

Bryant Hall

Members present: Mary Abouzeid, Elaine Attridge, Jann Balmer, Jennifer Bauerle, Jean Collier, Donal Day, Nancy Gansneder, Phil Gates, Bill Keene, Robin Kuzen, Lotta Lofgren, Chris Milner, Greg Strickland, Prue Thorner, Lynda White

Absent: Robbie Greenlee, George Hashisaki, Derry Wade

Visitors: two faculty members from the hospital and medical center

Chair's report. Lotta welcomed the two visitors to the meeting. Next she informed the group that House Bill 525, granting benefits to part-time employees, has passed both houses unanimously and is waiting for the Governor's signature. The Bill stipulates that part-time employees working between 20-32 hours can participate in health care if they pick up the entire insurance premium. A discussion ensued about the "real" cost of this insurance for those wishing to adopt it. One member suggested that the range could be from \$400-\$800/month. Next, the Chair informed the group that the General Faculty Forum has been rescheduled for 3-5 p.m. on April 23rd (instead of 2-4 p.m.). We do not yet have a moderator, so that has to be decided. Prue Thorner distributed an advertising flyer that she will be sending to members to post in their schools. Finally, Lotta reminded us that we need to begin planning for the last meeting of the semester, on which day we have an outdoor reception. Prue agreed to find a date and location for the event.

Update on elections process.

Jean Collier reported on elections. The election ballots will be sent this week, with a two-week window for voting

Complete review of old minutes.

Lotta continued the discussion we began in our last meeting regarding her review of the minutes of the past ten years' meetings. She reported that she has identified some recurring themes in the Council's history: (1) There is a general lack of support on the part of the University's central administration toward issues brought forward to them by the Council. The administration exhibits a willingness to attend meetings when invited and look interested at the time, but results are minimal. At times, the administration has asked us to take on projects that are too huge or not appropriate, such as surveying the entire faculty on various concerns. (2) The lengthy process of revising the general faculty policy document has caused us to table several issues of concern to us, such as grievance issues. We may need to revise this strategy. (3) The Council itself has often been too cautious in taking stands on crucial issues.

Lotta asked for us to decide our role: some things we can do something about, some things we cannot. How do we move forward? We have to review what we take on and how and why. We have to decide what we want to commit to and avoid burning

ourselves out on too many issues. We have to understand also that we are not a one-issue organization, as is the current group seeking benefits for domestic partners.

Report on meeting of committee chairs.

The committee chairs met before this meeting to brainstorm ways to deal with these huge questions. They suggested that we should decide how to best exercise our power using a three-pronged approach. In the past, we tended to go directly to articulating goals but bypass how to implement those goals. Here are three things we CAN do: improve recruiting methods, invigorate our outreach, revisit the entire structure of council to achieve goals.

Start brainstorming process

How do we move forward? Nancy Gansneder suggested that we all read “Who Moved My Cheese” to think about “change”. She also suggested that if it is true that form follows function, we should decide our function FIRST, then we could redesign our form (from a restructuring management approach). Part of our lack of focus may have to do with the different needs and goals of the administrative/professional, research, and teaching general faculty. Lotta suggested that the new faculty policy, for example, affects all of us but some other issues don’t affect all of us.

Lotta’s evaluation is that the current committee structure does not work, that many of our committees aren’t functioning, that some members are not involved in anything ongoing.

It was suggested that we inform the Board of Visitors of our concerns and objectives as a way to strengthen our voice and visibility. A further suggestion was made that we could make a Decade Report to the BOV to discuss where we are and who we are. We could report our current numbers, this review of the past ten years’ concerns and the solutions that have been arrived at, as well as the five-year plan for the Council. In addition, we need to work on better communication among various constituent groups within the University and to achieve a better understanding of University governance.

We decided to develop a set of issues first and then write goals for the next five years of the Council. We went around the group to articulate each person’s top concerns. After the general brainstorming, we “voted” on most important issues (indicated in bold print).

- Orientation information about what General Faculty means when someone is hired.
- **Policy document**
- Integration into departments (professional standing)
- **Benefits for research faculty (draconian policies at this University compared to others on temporary disability)**
- **Professional Development for General Faculty**
- **Communication with faculty senate**

- Standardized evaluation and promotion procedures
- Diversity issues

- **Pay discrepancy**
- Can we make General Faculty feel like a unified group?
- The issue of chartered school status

Lotta suggested that we need to look at this list and distinguish between issues and implementation measures.

Toward the end of the meeting, individuals began to discuss how important it is for General Faculty Council members to be vocal in other venues, explaining the General Faculty to others, and networking. Another suggestion before we finished was that we should pick the three top goals and marshal our resources for those next year.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00.

The next General Faculty Council meeting will take place on April 13th, 12:30 p.m. in the Engineering School.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Abouzeid
Secretary