The minutes of the June 14 meeting were approved as distributed.

President's Remarks

Dr. Patton reminded members of the Administrative Council of the Results Campaign convocation scheduled for 12:00 noon, Friday, November 17, in Speaker’s Auditorium.

Student Recruitment & Retention

Dr. Henry introduced the topic of discussion, student recruitment and retention, with reference to the University Strategic Plan. He pointed to the dual objectives of increasing numbers and caliber of students. He outlined the reorganization of Enrollment Services with Dr. Crimmins over the Registrar and Dr. Fritz over the Student Advisement Center, the Undergraduate Studies Office, Admissions and Financial Aid.

Dr. Crimmins presented an overview of enrollment management noting every element of the university is involved in some way. He reviewed new programs implemented since semester conversion: (1) interdisciplinary perspective courses; (2) Freshmen Learning Communities on campus and at the residence halls; (3) GSU 1010-Orientation; (4) Writing Across the Curriculum; (5) library training through perspective courses and GSU 1010; (6) Student Advisement Center; (7) Academic Improvement Program, and GSU 1050 and 1060; (8) unified marketing to high quality prospective students; (9) re-programming of new student orientation to include academic advisement and placement testing; and (10) international student recruitment and retention initiatives.

Dr. Moore described the role to be played by Institutional Research, to support development of a culture of evidence, which leads to data-driven, informed decisions. He noted information in this setting needs to be open and accessible with uniform metrics. He pointed to (1) decision-makers being directly involved with information (diddling with data) and (2) the need to improve data quality. He commented on construction underway of the data warehouse and the forthcoming move to a production environment with the web as the medium. He characterized the data warehouse as a less formal, ad hoc, just-in-time, and interactive approach to a broader data domain. He observed that Institutional Research in this context is moving away from reporter-analyst to information broker.

Dr. Fritz distributed handouts concerning (1) composition of the enrollment management group and (2) retention and graduation rates. He called attention to the Year 1-to-Year 2 retention rate of 70%, which is low nationally. He commented on efforts to help faculty unaccustomed to teaching large numbers of 18-year old freshmen (e.g., faculty teaching college algebra which has had a high failure/withdrawal rate). Dr. Patton asked about the range of improvement for
retention rates. Dr. Fritz replied that approximately 15% of new freshmen indicate upon arrival they do not intend to graduate from Georgia State. He added that efforts to encourage some of these students to change their minds should be a part of retention strategy. Dr. Henry cited Year 1-to-Year 2 retention rates of 90% for other Urban 13 universities.

Dr. Abdelal reported on discussions with the Mathematics & Statistics Department about the college algebra situation and a resulting proposal to offer a mathematical modeling course as an alternative course to satisfy the core mathematics requirement. He commented that the proposed course would be better suited to the objectives of general education. He noted other colleges would have to decide if this was an appropriate option for their core requirement, and that the Arts and Sciences faculty would vote November 28. He added that college algebra had a 26% withdrawal rate plus D’s and F’s, and the department was looking to supplemental instruction as an intervention. He stated the English Department would also be examining its courses which have high failure/withdrawal rates.

Dr. Henry spoke to the breadth of the problem with high failure/withdrawal rates. He pointed out that of 29 courses enrolling over 300 students, 7 courses had failure/withdrawal rates exceeding 40% and three quarters of the courses had failure/withdrawal rates over 25%. He mentioned courses in accounting, biology, mathematics and Spanish in this group.

Dr. Abdelal cautioned some faculty will view such efforts to improve retention in terms of lowering academic standards. Dr. Fritz responded that the University of Georgia had initiated a similar mathematical modeling course and had eventually dropped the college algebra course. He added the University of Georgia found mathematical modeling students were better prepared for pre-calculus. Dr. Crimmins recommended deans and department chairs look at the grade distribution information currently available on StatWare.

Dr. Fritz emphasized that retention was an across-the-university issue, not just for colleges and academic departments. He noted the importance of being a friendly campus. Dr. Abdelal advised not to forget non-traditional students who are still a significant part of the undergraduate population.

Dr. Patton commented that behavior of students was increasingly an issue for faculty. Dr. Fritz replied that GSU 1010 addresses appropriate classroom behavior. Dr. Patton noted the importance of mentoring in this regard. Dr. Crimmins related that faculty complain about students no longer looking them in the eye. Dr. Patton agreed that this was a change also reported by high school counselors, along with an increased tendency to turn violent. Dr. Griffith characterized this as part of the Generation X-Millennium factor. Dr. Fritz indicated faculty teaching GSU 1010 and Freshmen Learning Communities were meeting to share ideas of how to approach these problems.

Dr. Abdelal spoke in favor of all students enrolling in GSU 1010. Dr. Fritz stated current enrollments in GSU 1010 amounted to about one third of all freshmen. Dr. Scott added that data for such orientation courses show they help with retention and raise expectations for academics and behavior. Dr. Bahl cautioned retention rates for students taking orientation courses also reflected selectivity relative to the subset of students electing to take the courses.

Dr. Harris asked about the content of GSU 1010. Dr. Fritz responded that GSU 1010 dealt with
study skills, college survival, classroom behavior, and how-to-succeed topics. Dr. Henry added GSU 1010 was credit bearing, but did not count toward the degree.

Dr. Bahl voiced concern about preparation of faculty to teach GSU 1010. Dr. Henry replied that faculty were not required to teach the course, but instead volunteered. He noted faculty development programs for these instructors. He also noted studies showing orientation courses were not as successful if students were required to take them. Dr. Louis commented that the University of Minnesota had freshmen seminars on academic themes, and that the success of these had been dependent upon a university investment to train faculty. Dr. Fritz indicated summer faculty development funds had been dedicated to this purpose.

Dr. Abdelal suggested the term, orientation, understated the nature of GSU 1010 and Freshmen Learning Communities. He cited an example of a section taught by faculty from Business Law and Philosophy which was directed toward pre-law students and was interdisciplinary.

Dr. Bahl questioned claims about the effectiveness of Freshmen Learning Communities. Dr. Abdelal replied that data showed the program to be successful. Dr. Bahl countered that the data did not control for student selectivity. Dr. Crimmins pointed out that Freshmen Learning Communities was an off-the-shelf program for which other universities had experienced benefits.

Dr. Fritz indicated recruitment would be more sharply focused on prospects with freshman indices in the range of 2,700-2,900 (e.g., B average with 1200 SAT). Dr. Crimmins noted the University of Georgia was drawing the bulk of its metro area students from the same schools as Georgia State. Dr. Fritz stated the joint enrollment program in key local high schools was being expanded by modifying the eligibility requirements. He also commented on the 60% graduation rate of Georgia Perimeter College transfers coming to Georgia State.

Dr. Abdelal stated advisement continued to be an issue throughout the university relative to faculty involvement. He also pointed to services for international students in comparison with those offered by other universities. He noted development of an action plan regarding recruitment and admission of international students.

Dr. Patton reported efforts to develop student housing on Edgewood for graduate, married and international students were back on track.

Dr. Crimmins commented on the importance of the establishment of Student Advisement Center. He emphasized the need to structure faculty one-on-one advisement for majors within the colleges and departments. Dr. Harris asked about the feasibility of on-line advisement such as FAQs. Dr. Fritz responded that the Student Advisement Center would be developing a web site for this purpose. Dr. Crimmins added that department web pages could also be helpful in this regard. Dr. Patton called for improvements to the university web page as a source for answering basic questions.

Dr. Henry asked that comments about StatWare and the other topics discussed be forwarded to Drs. Crimmins, Fritz and Moore. He noted challenges ahead with the higher Freshman Index cutoff and the recruitment of transfers. He also noted issues relating to maintenance of the 30% graduate student share of overall enrollment.
Announcement

Dr. Patton announced the death of Dr. Manners, first dean of what is now the J. Mack Robinson College of Business.