ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL
Minutes of
November 5, 2003

Attendees: Lauren Adamson, Roy Bahl, Shelia Bradley, Bill Fritz, Janice Griffith, Connie Hawkins, Ron Henry, Charlene Hurt, Fenwick Huss, Fred Jacobs, Susan Kelley, Tom Lewis, Carl Patton, Jerry Rackliffe, Sterling Roth, Hazel Scott, Edgar Torbert, Sally Wallace, Carol Winkler

Minutes of October 8 were approved.

President’s Remarks

Dr. Patton stated expectations for transfer of the former Atlanta Police Department headquarters/jail property to the University System in December. He thanked Mr. Lewis and Mr. Sheheane for their work on this matter.

Activity-Based Budgeting

Dr. Henry handed out a document, “Centrality of programs, centers, and activities, November 5, 2003.” He advised the word “centrality” had replaced “core (non-core)” in earlier versions because of potential confusion with the core curriculum of the University System. Dr. Henry indicated the scope was more than centrality and should be considered “centrality, viability and quality.” He stated programs would be judged on centrality relative to program clusters, which characterize Georgia State; viability relative to Board of Regents guidelines; and quality relative to a variety of benchmarks and how to attain them in 5-10 years. Dr. Wallace asked about the difference between centers and activities. Dr. Henry responded that activities referred to support.

Dr. Henry handed out a second document, “Activity-based budgeting,” a list of activities by major administrative and support units. He suggested this list could be used to look at structures across the university and find ways to work together.

Dr. Patton asked about the extent of under-productive programs. Dr. Henry replied that there were 8-10 departments, some with a mix of viable and not viable programs. He added that one concern about very small programs was lack of student interaction, but noted in some cases students from related programs in the same department may interact.

Dr. Adamson asked about inclusion of PhD programs. Dr. Henry responded that PhD programs were not included in the scheme as presented. Dr. Adamson asked about determination of the number of graduates for viability. Dr. Henry replied that the Board of Regents guidelines had been used. He added that the Board of Regents guidelines produced a trigger list for review, not automatic termination. He cautioned that the numbers for some master’s programs were low because of splits between MA and MS for same majors. Dr. Henry noted that PhD programs might be included with the Board of Regents criterion of 10 graduates over 3 years (rather than per year). He indicated that 12-13 PhD programs out of 35-plus fell short of this mark. Dr. Adamson suggested adding a statement about PhD programs.

Dr. Griffith asked for clarification of the concept of centrality. Dr. Henry responded the focus
would be on what Georgia State is well known for now and aspires in 5-10 years. He cited the example of CHARA.

Dr. Winkler asked about protecting staff and tenure-track faculty in the event of cuts to lower-quality programs. Dr. Henry replied that tenured faculty might be reassigned as was done previously when programs or departments were terminated. He indicated that tenure-track faculty who had not attained tenure might be terminated. Dr. Patton added that providing opportunities for faculty to retrain would be an option. Dr. Henry emphasized that program terminations would have to be staged in such a way to allow students in the pipeline a reasonable chance to complete their degree programs. He cited the example of Psychology reducing its number of concentrations from 9 to 5.

Ms. Hurt urged language that did not convey a message of staff layoffs, and reassuring of efforts to relocate staff within the university. Dr. Henry commented that large turnover generally accommodates this purpose. Dr. Adamson added that Human Resources makes a good effort to relocate staff and suggested a general statement that staff would be reassigned. Dr. Henry suggested use of “given preference.” Dr. Patton noted very few staff had been laid off in previous budget reductions.

Dr. Huss addressed the difficulty of measuring quality. He noted program reviews, performance on exit examinations, and other benchmarks.

Dr. Winkler asked about repetition of the activity-based budgeting process. Dr. Henry replied it would not be annual, and reminded the last such review had occurred in 1996-97 under Governor Miller’s redirection. He added that the task forces had looked at several major areas and given some good insight on the budgets for those areas. Dr. Winkler recommended communicating this to staff. Dr. Patton cautioned that in the current economic world, such reviews might occur more frequently. He expressed concern about the future of higher education funding given competing forces for prisons, roads, etc. Dr. Patton added that further cuts may be stemmed by acting responsibly now. Dr. Winkler reiterated faculty and staff concerns given happenings in other states.

Dr. Bahl suggested the message should be “improving quality of the university.” He stated this should be occurring whether there is a downturn or an upturn. He commented that after years of incremental budgeting, it was time to focus on getting better.

Dr. Adamson asked for a sketch of the process. Dr. Henry replied that the budgeting approach would be reviewed by Administrative Council, FACP, and the Senate Executive Committee and then launched. He added that FACP would be discussing specifics at its next meeting. Dr. Adamson asked about types of information to be requested. Dr. Henry responded that initially information to identify program clusters, which characterize Georgia State. Dr. Adamson asked if FACP would look at every program. Dr. Henry responded that would not be the case.

Dr. Henry commented on the parallel review of activities. He noted that all of the activities submitted by the vice presidents and deans were needed to run the university, but many were being duplicated and might benefit from more coordination. He mentioned in particular, fundraising, public relations, and event planning. He indicated unit heads would be asked to assess the value added by doing so many activities and to identify what would be done if there was less
money.

Dr. Henry handed out a third document, “RFP – Potential areas of focus, November 2003.” He stated this document had been discussed with the strategic planning subcommittee and revised as a result of their input. He emphasized the goal of develop synergies within and across colleges. He noted proposals were due January 23 [see change later].

Dr. Winkler commented that the plan seemed to call for cuts in December and add-ons in January. Dr. Henry clarified that the process of cuts and investments would occur over a number of years as new sources of funds materialize and redirection within the university is accomplished. Dr. Adamson objected to the timeline given exams, the semester break, and time-consuming involvement with promotion and tenure. Dr. Henry agreed to change the due date to February 13.

Dr. Bahl asked about the involvement of faculty in the process. Dr. Henry responded that faculty would help develop the areas of focus. Dr. Bahl asked about cut backs as well. Dr. Henry replied that the task forces would come up with the questions and do the work. Dr. Adamson observed the faster the better for the task forces in order to relieve concern among faculty and staff. She also noted the advantage of more time for reflection on synergies.

Dr. Jacobs asked how programs were defined. Dr. Henry replied that the Board of Regents official list of approved programs defined programs in this case. He added that the Board of Regents list of programs not meeting the viability requirements would be the starting point for reviews. He emphasized that looking at a program should not be construed as equating with elimination. Dr. Jacobs asked about administrative prerogatives versus faculty prerogatives in such reviews. Dr. Henry responded that FACP, the Deans’ Group, the Senate, and others would all be involved with interlacing, but that it was important to move forward and not just talk. Dr. Kelley asked if movement of programs from one college to another might be considered. Dr. Henry indicated this had not been discussed, but was a possibility.

Dr. Griffith asked about the number of program clusters. Dr. Henry answered there would probably be 5 or 6. He reiterated the clusters would reflect for what the university is known. Dr. Adamson commented this was exciting to think about and mentioned the biomedical area in particular. She asked if the proposals would be executive summaries or detailed. Dr. Henry replied executive summaries would be appropriate for starters.

Announcements

Dr. Fritz reported on early registration for spring semester with approximately 50% of anticipated spring enrollments recorded. He pointed out that early registration has a positive impact on retention. He added that the goal was to have early registration for fall semester in April. Dr. Fritz explained that GoSOLAR allowed early registration whereas the legacy system had not. Dr. Kelley observed the benefit for staffing courses. Dr. Patton commended the early registration initiative and noted the university was judged on retention rates. Dr. Henry noted that the early registrants do not have to pay tuition immediately.