Minutes of November 2 were approved.

President’s remarks

Dr. Patton spoke briefly concerning efforts to secure funding for the science teaching lab building during the upcoming legislative session. He noted private support from the Woodruff Foundation as a leveraging tool to encourage the Governor to recommend funding the capital projects list at least through this project. He voiced hope that the new Chancellor would have success in convincing the Governor to fund more capital projects.

Emergency Notification System

Dr. Morris provided some background for the implementation of the emergency notification system. He noted the need to notify the right individuals after hazardous spills in labs. He indicated test runs of the system would begin shortly and encouraged feedback.

Dr. Curry presented an overview of the system. He pointed out that implementation would be building based, but that most buildings at Georgia State involved more than one college or vice presidential area. He stressed the importance of having reliable building coordinators for the system, who would be responsible for maintaining the contact lists on a building-by-building basis. He stated that the initial list of contacts exceeded 500 names campuswide.

Dr. Adamson cautioned that using office phones as contact points could be risky since some were answered by students or staff members rather than the person intended to be contacted. Dr. Curry replied that for this reason it was hoped contacts would register cell phones in the system.

Dr. Curry explained that the system protocol called for the police to be contacted about emergencies and in turn the campus safety and compliance officers for determination of the need to broadcast an emergency notification and to whom it should go.

Dr. Henry asked how the system would work for Kell Hall as an example. Dr. Curry responded that all the department chairs and deans having operations in Kell Hall, the President, the Provost and the Vice President for Finance and Administration would be contacted.

Dr. Henry noted that cell phone users may not answer if the caller is unknown. Dr. Curry stated he would obtain the identifier for the system caller [caller ID will show 615-514-9289].

Dr. Adamson pointed out that General Classroom Building classrooms were used by many departments outside the College of Arts and Sciences. She also noted the need to communicate when an emergency was concluded.

Dr. Huss asked about the safety and compliance officers, who would be making the decisions about notifying building contacts. Dr. Morris responded that Jeff Owens was the biological safety officer, Peter Farina the radiation safety officer, and Boone Brothers the environmental safety officer.

Dr. Adamson cited events such as bomb threats, which did not seem to fit the scheme. Dr. Morris answered that the system was set up for research-related incidents, but could be modified to include all kinds of emergencies.

Dr. Patton commented that while such systems were helpful, the key was to have top-level administrators making good decisions about incidents. He noted the case of the courthouse shootings and the confusion which ensued.
Dr. Marshall asked whom vice presidents or deans should contact in the event they spotted a problem requiring notifications. Dr. Curry answered that the police would activate the emergency notification system.

Dr. Curry acknowledged that the name of the system did not convey that it was primarily focused on research-related emergencies and that another name could be considered. He reiterated that keeping the database of contacts current would be an on-going challenge, and that he would be having regular meetings with building coordinators to work toward that objective.

Dr. Henry cautioned that any name change should reflect that other situations were included, not only research-related emergencies. Dr. Morris cited as an example that if there were a flooding emergency in the J. Mack Robinson College of Business, the police would activate the emergency notification system.

Ms. Hurt asked about non-business hours coverage by the three safety and compliance officers. Dr. Morris answered that the three officers were on-call 24/7.

Dr. Curry noted that the emergency notification system extended to Indian Creek, Alpharetta Center and Grady Hospital (Georgia State labs only) properties. Dr. Marshall asked about inclusion of student housing. Dr. Scott responded that discussions were underway.

**Alternative Work Life and Location Program**

Ms. Nelson presented the Alternative Work Life Program (AWLP) including two handouts: an executive summary and a more detailed description. She noted that AWLP had received attention following an executive order from the Governor in the midst of the post-Hurricane Katrina gasoline shortage. She pointed out that the Georgia Merit System had piloted such a program.

Ms. Nelson emphasized that AWLP should not have negative impact on mission or services and should be manager friendly. She outlined four versions of AWLP including: the 9/80 plan, the 10/40 plan, flex time, and telecommuting (home or telecenter). She stated that managers would not be put in a position of deciding on individuals for AWLP, but rather for positions/titles. She added that AWLP depended on specifying definable work products, which would be a major task for which managers would be trained.

Ms. Nelson indicated the Finance and Administration directors, the College Administrative Officers group and Staff Advisory Council had reviewed the proposed program and had similar concerns about quality of service. She observed that a performance evaluation document was crucial to successful implementation of AWLP. She reiterated that managers would have the opportunity to terminate AWLP participation at any time and that AWLP was not an employee right. Ms. Nelson cited findings that requirements of final work products increased productivity in many cases.

Dr. Kaminshine commented that expectations would arise as AWLP was implemented and that it was vital to communicate that managers would be assessing eligibility by position rather than by individual. He cautioned that departments might not be able to absorb AWLP participation for all who wanted to participate and that those who do not participate may perceive that their in-office workloads increase. Ms. Nelson responded that workload ramifications must be considered in decisions to offer participation in AWLP. She added that third party involvement in the process to make these decisions would be helpful to managers.

Ms. Hurt questioned how AWLP participation could be exempted from grievance proceedings. Ms. Nelson replied that AWLP was being approached as a benefit.

Dr. Patton expressed serious concerns about AWLP and recommended further study and discussion before making a final decision.

Ms. Hurt asked about progress toward new performance evaluation instruments for use in March 2006. Dr. Carson responded that the ad hoc grievance group had been engaged in development of performance evaluations as a result of findings by Legal Affairs that performance evaluations were frequently inadequate in settling termination-related grievances.
Dr. Adamson commented that flex time was already in use, in particular for offices which had to be open beyond normal business hours. Ms. Nelson responded that AWLP would give better control over existing arrangements, but would not replace what was already in place. Dr. Henry added that AWLP would also need to be compatible with 24/7 operations such as Information Systems & Technology, Police, Facilities, etc.

Dr. Huss asked how differences would be resolved if the AWLP coordinator and a unit head differed over a participation issue. Ms. Nelson answered that the unit head would have the final say.

Ms. Nelson asked for comment from Mr. Lewis regarding on-going interest from the Governor for such plans. Mr. Lewis responded that the Governor had initially spoken in the context of the gasoline shortage following Hurricane Katrina, and that it did not appear to be a hot issue now.

Progress Toward Degrees and Graduation Rates

Dr. Patton invited discussion of progress toward degrees and graduation rates as follow-up to discussions with the Deans Group. He emphasized that these matters did not pertain exclusively to the Provost and deans, but also to others across the university. He summarized the issue as a throughput problem with students entering with high SAT scores, an excellent faculty, and state-of-art facilities, yet graduation rates were near the bottom among peer institutions. He noted in particular that student engagement rates were low, which suggested the university was not student-oriented enough. Dr. Patton distributed a discussion document, “Some Thoughts About Addressing Our Low Graduation and Student Involvement Rates”.

Dr. Patton noted the need to increase accountability to students. He pointed out that while fewer students were first-generation college students, there were still many students who were first generation with respect to research university enrollment. He observed that many students do not have a clue as to what is required to succeed in college. He applauded the MILE project, which had changed introductory mathematics courses from gatekeeper to gateway courses. He urged increased faculty advising and attention to the problem of students opting to work longer hours rather than take loans for their education. He reiterated that it was an institutional problem, not just a college-level problem.

Dr. Moore asked about the graduation rates cited in the handout. Dr. Henry replied these were six-year rates. He added that 7% of the losses were recovered as graduates elsewhere in the University System, but there was no data for students who transferred to institutions outside the University System.

Dr. Adamson pointed out that Georgia State was also low for student-related expenditures per FTE. Dr. Patton responded that this was a focus of external fund-raising. Dr. Henry noted that IPEDS data used for these comparisons focused on state funds only. Dr. Adamson suggested it would be very helpful to see similar expenditure data for Georgia, Georgia Tech and Kennesaw while acknowledging the issue was not solely funding. Dr. Patton cautioned that many legislators liked the idea of the cheapest approach.

Ms. Hurt asked for a copy of the IPEDS definitions. Dr. Henry replied that the IPEDS definitions would be sent to the Deans Group.

Dr. Tai asked about the column headed “UR Min”. Dr. Torbert responded this was undergraduate retention for minority students.

Dr. Kaminshine called attention to the number of students within a few credit hours of graduating who had dropped out. Dr. Henry stated that Institutional Research was conducting follow-ups with 700-800 students who were within one semester of graduating. He cited financial aid issues as a major factor, in particular the counting of courses from which these students withdrew against the number of courses taken with financial aid.

Dr. Huss voiced concern about the effect of low student engagement on future fundraising campaigns. He noted no sense of connection even for very good students. Dr. Patton added that many of these students were highly alienated, not just neutral. He observed that financial aid and advisement seemed to be the most frequently mentioned complaints. Dr. Henry commented that the advisement complaints were mainly related to career advisement. Dr. Huss added that students were impeded from casually dropping by faculty officers because of their locations.
Mr. Lewis commented that the vast majority of alumni today did not have the advantages of the student center, recreation center, competitive intercollegiate athletics, student housing, etc. He added that these improvements should result in more student engagement in the future. Dr. Marshall cautioned that some faculty and staff still view students in the old model of non-traditional commuters.

Dr. Patton recommended taking students to lunch or inviting them to come for a conversation in the office. He warned that administrators may not like what they hear, but strongly advocated talking more with students about their experiences at Georgia State.

Dr. Adamson suggested compiling best practices and highlighting successes. She noted examples of departmental listservs for majors, which have been big hits with the students.

Dr. Patton encouraged more interaction with prospective students in high schools. He urged taking advantage of opportunities to speak to groups of high school students, in particular at the feeder schools.

Dr. Henry reported action plans were targeting retention and departmental awards for progress toward establishing learning outcomes would be going to Psychology in the departments with no external accreditation category and Nursing and Kinesiology & Health in the departments with external accreditation category.