Minutes of November 8 were approved.

President’s remarks

Dr. Patton commented on the opportunities afforded by the acquisition of the SunTrust property, including the reduced need for rented space, the relocation of the Welcome Center, and the possible re-programming of the proposed Humanities Building without Enrollment Services offices. He noted that the date for occupancy of the SunTrust property by Georgia State was dependent on relocation decisions by SunTrust.

Dr. Kaminshine asked about steps toward Board of Regents approval of the proposed J. Mack Robinson College of Business/College of Law professional center. Dr. Henry replied that the first step was to gain approval of the tuition differential earmarked for this project. Dr. Patton added that discussion of the project with Chancellor Davis had been encouraging. Dr. Rackliffe indicated the same reaction from Mr. Hickey.

Football feasibility study

Dr. Patton introduced discussion of the football feasibility study by noting frequent mention of football by students at Panther Roundtables and emotional support shown by alumni on various occasions. He added that admission to the Colonial Athletic Association had presented the opportunity to take a look at the possibility of starting football at Georgia State in the context of Division I-AA, which was more reasonable for the academic environment.

Ms. McElroy presented an overview of the football feasibility study completed by C.H. Johnson Consulting.

Ms. McElroy emphasized that the decision on starting football at Georgia State would be a university-wide strategic decision. She pointed out that the projected costs ranged from $6 million to $24 million depending upon decisions about location of playing and practice fields. She added that the addition of football would not be accomplished by sacrificing the current sports, and the addition of football would require gender-balancing additions in women’s sports to meet Title IX requirements. She stated that Division I-AA football would attract athletes who were focused more on academics than professional football careers. She noted competitiveness of Georgia State in the Colonial Athletic Association and the rising national awareness of the CAA. She reiterated that football would not be attempted without adequate financial support.

Ms. Hurt asked about student reactions to the athletic fee increases projected in the feasibility study. Ms. McElroy replied that she had received approximately 30 e-mails from students about the fee increases with some for and some against. Dr. Adamson commented that most graduate students were opposed to the fee increases, and that student participation in the on-line survey conducted for the feasibility study was low. Dr. Marshall noted approximately 5,000 students participated in the survey. Dr. Adamson countered that for an issue of this magnitude of interest to students, the participation rate was low. Ms. McElroy pointed out that students would have ample opportunities to comment on the fee increases and the addition of football at a series of town meetings and Panther Talks.

Dr. Huss observed that while it was important to collect data from current students and alumni, it was more important to analyze what Georgia State will be like 20-25 years from now, especially if the on-campus residential population grows substantially and to determine how football would fit with the Georgia State of the future. Dr. Patton added that the same could be said with respect to what Atlanta will be like 20-25 years from now.

Dr. Carson asked about the probable impact of fund-raising for football and athletics overall on fund-raising for the rest of the university. Ms. Peterman responded that at most institutions there was little conflict because persons interested in giving to academics were a different group from those interested in athletics. Ms. McElroy stated that the time was
approaching for those supportive of football “to put their money where their mouth is.”

Mr. Lewis commended Ms. McElroy for her leadership of the athletic program and echoed the remarks made by Dr. Huss concerning the focus on vision for the university in making the decision to start or not to start football. He acknowledged that football would not be a moneymaker, but that it would create a passion for the university which was lacking without football.

Dr. Fritz reported that many prospective students with very strong academic credentials were citing the lack of football as a factor in their decisions to enroll elsewhere. He noted this was consistent with the importance of football in high schools in the South. He added that retention studies showed lack of school spirit as a significant contributor to undergraduate attrition at Georgia State.

Dr. Morris asked if infusion of additional funding for basketball could accomplish the same effect as adding football. Ms. McElroy responded that while successful basketball would attract more attention to Georgia State, football is clearly the bigger draw in the South.

Dr. Kaminshine urged follow-up analysis of the question raised by Dr. Morris about developing basketball to a higher level. He pointed out that Georgia State would be playing football in the shadow of the University of Georgia and Georgia Tech with little chance of attaining a nationally recognized program, whereas basketball might do so. Dr. Henry added that the acid test for student interest in basketball and athletics in general would come with the opening of residence halls closer to campus.

Dr. Adamson, admitting to being a former high school cheerleader for football and basketball, commented that Georgia State was very close to having its basketball programs on a high level. She urged attention to expanding the types of activities for undergraduates in order to enhance their college experiences.

Dr. Dixon cautioned against moving too quickly to a decision on starting football without adequate data. She reiterated the point made by Dr. Henry regarding the response to athletics once University Commons opens.

Dr. Torbert commented that the absence of a rallying activity between August 15 and November 15 resulted in a lost opportunity to take advantage of the enthusiasm of first-time freshmen at the start of the academic year. He noted that basketball starts at the same time these students are preparing for their first round of final examinations and then spans winter break.

Dr. Bahl, admitting to being a University of Kentucky fan, noted the tie-ins between basketball and fund-raising at the University of Kentucky, and asked how Georgia State would approach external funding for football. Ms. McElroy answered that increased private giving would be sought, but pointed out that Division I-AA universities typically relied on student fee funding for 90% or more of their athletic budgets. She noted this as one distinction between Division I-A and I-AA. She added that Georgia State was covering approximately one-half as much of its athletic budget with non-student fee funding as compared to other universities in the CAA and projected a need for at least $1 million per year in such funding if football were started.

Dr. Covey pointed to the benefit, which football provides, by integrating students early in the fall into campus life, in particular on weekends as a deterrent to the “suitcase college” phenomenon. He added that homecomings for rallying student and alumni support are more customarily associated with football than basketball, and noted the marching band as another related aspect of football, which attracts additional students.

Dr. Huss commented that the decision on football was part of the strategy for overall transformation of the university, not just in athletics. He asked about other universities which had undergone similar transformations from commuter universities to Division I-AA and I-A. Ms. McElroy and others named University of Connecticut, University of South Florida, University of Central Florida, Florida Atlantic University, and University of Alabama at Birmingham as examples.

Dr. Patton commented on his experience of events surrounding a recent football weekend at the University of California and the fund-raising efforts across the university associated with those events and football. He characterized the decision to be made at Georgia State as a math problem with three parts: how much are students willing to pay, how much can alumni and other supporters raise for capital costs, and how much can be raised annually for athletics. He reiterated that no decision has been made already.
New telephone numbers

Dr. Henry reported discussion at the vice presidents’ meeting on guidelines for the new campus-wide telephone numbers had led to only one recommendation that major offices be assigned numbers of the form xxx/xxx-xx00. Dr. Torbert added that an initial publication of carry-overs from the old to new numbers of the last four digits for a number of key offices had been changed so that the only numbers being retained were xxx/xxx-2000 for general information and xxx/xxx-3333 for university police. Dr. Marshall urged publication of a paper telephone directory one time for the conversion. Dr. Torbert reminded that 2007-2008 catalog copy would need to be updated with the new telephone numbers.

Enrollment target efforts

Dr. Fritz reported very positive indicators for Spring 2007 and Fall 2007 enrollments.

Announcements

Dr. Adamson announced the annual holiday iron pour and silent auction on 2:00-9:00 p.m., Saturday, December 16, at the Edgewood Sculpture Studio.

Mr. Lewis announced the annual legislative event at the Georgia Freight Depot on Tuesday, January 9.

Ms. Hurt announced Library North floors one and two would reopen February 7.