ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL
Minutes of
September 8, 2010

Attendees: Lauren Adamson, Paul Alberto, Amber Amari, Mark Becker, Chandler Brown, Doug Covey, Jim Flowers, Kerry Heyward, John Hicks, DeAnna Hines, Fenwick Huss, Andrea Jones, Steve Kamshine, Susan Kelley, Cheryl Levick, Tom Lewis, Courtney Lovely, Peter Lyons, Joyce Many, Walter Massey, Robin Morris, Risa Palm, Jerry Rackliffe, Tim Renick, Sterling Roth, Nancy Seamans, Bruce Spratt, Edgar Torbert, Mary Beth Walker

Minutes of August 11, 2010 were approved as distributed.

Internal Controls

Mr. Roth gave a presentation on internal controls with emphasis on (1) top and mid-level administrator engagement and (2) documentation. He reported use of the campus hotline for reporting employee malfeasance was light, with most accusations from these hotline calls determined to be unfounded. He cited as areas of current concern: (1) unauthorized off-campus use of university equipment and (2) disregard for bidding requirements.

Relocation Expense Policy

Dr. Heyward presented a draft relocation expense policy for consideration at the next Administrative Council meeting. She pointed out that state funds could be used for relocation expenses provided that a policy in compliance with IRS guidelines was adopted. She added that procedures for relocation expenses were being developed concurrently. Dr. Heyward and Mr. Spratt noted house-hunting trips qualified as recruiting expenses, but had IRS implications if the job offer were accepted. Dr. Becker added that IRS regulations dealt with distance moved, length of stay, etc. Dr. Heyward explained that the tax preparers for the relocation expense payees would deal with the IRS details rather than Georgia State.

Enrollment Report

Dr. Renick distributed “pre-census” enrollment figures for Fall Semester 2010. He noted all fee drops had passed, so any changes until census would be positive. He noted record numbers of students (31,361) and credit hours (377,310) and an increase of 47 freshman index points in the average for first-time freshmen over the last two years. He pointed to additional scholarship funds designated by Dr. Becker as the key to increasing quality at this rate.

Dr. Renick indicated benchmarking data from other USG institutions was not yet available. Dr. Becker commented that the pilot program of open admissions at some system institutions was a topic at the last meeting of the Board of Regents, and that discretion to continue that experiment had now been left to the individual institutions.

Dr. Rackliffe commented on the growth line in the numbers of juniors and seniors and the need to re-examine transfer recruitment strategies. Dr. Huss cautioned the number of seniors included many long-term seniors. Dr. Renick pointed out that some students with over 150 credit hours were benefiting from postponement of start-up of payments on student loans. Dr. Palm called on the deans to address the issue of students with more credit hours than needed to graduate, but cumulative grade point averages below college-set graduation requirements. Dr. Palm also noted the on-going problem of courses with significant percentages of grades of “D”, “F” and “W”.

Dr. Renick indicated recruitment targets for Fall Semester 2011 will be set shortly, with retention figures available after the October census date. He predicted retention rates will be up. He noted the size of the freshman class had increased by 60% over ten years.
Dr. Becker commended Dr. Renick and the Enrollment Services team for the successful recruitment campaign.

Budget Report

Dr. Rackliffe announced the vice presidents and deans would continue to hold back 1.6% of their budgets in keeping with the budget plan adopted after the initial round of FY2011 budget cuts. He pointed out that Fall Semester 2010 tuition revenue figures had not been finalized.

Athletics Report

Ms. Levick presented a video recap of the very successful inaugural football game and surrounding activities. She emphasized the importance of sustaining the momentum gained from the first game attendance, publicity, etc.

President’s Remarks

Dr. Becker reported the latest, scaled-down conceptualization of the downtown streetcar project would have streetcars going through the GSU housing corridor. He also called attention to concurrent GRTA proposed changes to bus routes, the possible conversion of Peachtree Center Avenue to two-way traffic, and the anticipated sale of the Equitable Building.

Dr. Becker invited comments from Drs. Renick and Alberto on the presentations by the strategic planning speakers, Mr. Howe and Dr. Petsko.

Dr. Renick observed that the ideas about students and their views of structure/authority presented by Mr. Howe were increasingly evident, for example, with tension developing as new students and parents are separated during the class registration phase of orientation. He also noted the importance of awards and rituals as observed by Mr. Howe.

Dr. Becker pointed out that starting football was in sync with the “belonger” tendencies of the current generation. He also noted the points made by Mr. Howe about expectations of feedback early and often and the transition from “helicopter” parents to “stealth bomber” parents. Dr. Becker reiterated concern about courses with high percentages of students making grades of “D”, “F” or “W” and the importance of meeting students where they are. He noted students are balancing studying and life in different ways from previous generations.

Dr. Adamson commented that from a developmental psychology perspective individual students will not all reflect the same trends of their generation and that there will be differences for international students. She added that the impact of social networking on stereotyping was uncertain and might weaken generational trends. Dr. Becker responded that the generational studies were clearly at the macro level, but valuable for example in preparing to deal with changing parental involvement in student matters.

Dr. Walker raised the issue of more engaged parents and FERPA. Dr. Becker remarked students could waive FERPA rights, but very few do. Dr. Heyward added that FERPA was being weakened slightly, but not yet noticeably.

Dr. Alberto commented on the presentation by Dr. Petsko noting his observations were in line with the emphases of the strategic plan under development. He noted in particular the emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches to cutting edge research, the cross-links between social sciences and humanities with the natural and physical sciences, the opportunities in the field of public health, the effectiveness of centers in advancing the research profile, the Honors College, the importance of who hires faculty, the disjoint between budget cuts and success, and retention of key people because they like being here.
Dr. Becker pointed to common themes in the presentations by Mr. Howe and Dr. Petsko, for example, culture trumps strategy; and demographics are destiny. Dr. Becker also noted the issue of infrastructure to support research as researchers are increasingly spending too much of their time on administrative duties that could be performed by staff funded with indirect cost dollars.

Dr. Palm called attention to the very successful inaugural freshman reading experience as another component of an excellent kickoff to the academic year in addition to the presentations by Mr. Howe and Dr. Petsko. Dr. Palm also commented on the observations by Dr. Petsko about middle managers who stay in positions for very long periods rather than rotating on a four-year basis as in the case of department chairs at some successful research universities. Dr. Palm pointed to the benefits of bringing in many new ideas over a shorter period of time.

Dr. Becker stated it was critical to the future of the university to sustain the excitement of the first football game. He pointed out Georgia State was a different university after the first game with heightened recognition by the community and heightened attachments to the university for alumni and students. He noted the Fox 5 News feature on the impact of Georgia State on downtown. He added that the new face of Georgia State conveyed change and going-places.

Dr. Becker stressed the need to create a can-do attitude across the university. He urged the members of the Administrative Council as campus leaders to be publicly supportive of the Strategic Planning Committee and to work with Dr. Alberto privately if there is an issue.