Hugh Hudson opened the meeting at 3:00 and asked Bill Downs to present the report on the Human Resources (attached).

Dr. Downs recognized and thanked the subcommittee for its work on the report. He reviewed the process for obtaining data for the report and the process for creating the recommendations. Dr. Downs reviewed the positive and negative findings contained in the report with the conclusion that a number of serious problems had emerged. He reviewed the 10 recommendations:

1. **Resolve competing visions of HR’s role by creating an organizational culture of problem-solving.** HR professionals wish to be seen as “consultants,” yet they are overwhelmingly viewed by the groups they serve as “gatekeepers.” An aggressive reconceptualization from consultant/gatekeeper to problem-solver should dramatically reduce the adversarial tensions that undeniably exist. The change must entail more than mere semantics; indeed, it demands a renewed and real commitment to customer friendliness, support, service and achievement. It requires a shift from a reactive to a proactive model of service. HR needs to take ownership in fixing its share of the problems and in energetically seeking to assist its University clientele.

2. **Focus on training and continuing professional development.** We recommend that future training of HR staff place considerably greater emphasis on understanding the nature of the competitive hiring market. For Georgia State University to consistently succeed in recruiting and retaining the best faculty and staff, HR must share the same sense of urgency with which hiring units pursue job candidates. This may require an increase in the number of staff positions devoted to processing hiring packets, enhanced automation to more easily and quickly move hiring processes forward, and/or procedural changes in workflow to ensure that approvals never sit idle on desks. We also recommend that HR provide greater clarity to departments and other University units as to precisely what training (upon entry and on a continuing basis) their respective staff persons should receive. A simple checklist, accompanied by a schedule of upcoming training sessions, would achieve this purpose. In turn, we recommend that consideration be given to creating incentives for departmental and unit staff to attend HR-sponsored training sessions and informational workshops (such as making measures of participation a factor in annual merit evaluations).

3. **Take bold and creative steps to enhance communication.** The simple reality is that more effective communication will reduce the likelihood of problems and transform adversarial relationships into more productive ones.

   • We recommend creation of a staff position (an HR generalist) dedicated to communicating policies, procedures, and changes to relevant users across campus. This position would be one part *de facto* information liaison (not to supplant HRAC, but to supplement it) and one part PR office for Human Resources. This person would have responsibility for improving the HR website, producing a regular HR newsletter, distributing e-mail alerts, and convening periodic open meetings at which various user groups can
voice concerns and receive feedback from HR.

- We recommend that HR consider doing what other units often do, that is initiating follow-up calls after service to confirm user satisfaction. It is not unusual, for example, to receive a call or e-mail from IS&T following a work order. This provides an immediate check on the quality and completeness of service. Implementation of such a system would allow problems to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis rather than allowing them to fester into a general sense of dissatisfaction with HR.

- We recommend creation and implementation of an online help request/problem tracking system for HR. Such a mechanism will both enhance and expedite communication, and it will provide a reliable method for reporting and tracking problems and requests for information.

- We recommend reform of HRAC. HRAC has the potential (as yet unrealized) to serve as an effective liaison between HR and the University’s various colleges and schools. HRAC must better communicate to University faculty, staff, and administrators the rules that bind HR. If the input we have received is correct, then the selection of persons to sit on the HRAC needs review to better ensure regular attendance, active participation, and full use of meetings as opportunities to dialogue with HR about ongoing issues and problems.

4. Better serve the particular needs of faculty researchers hiring staff under externally funded grants and contracts. We strongly recommend creation of a staff position dedicated exclusively to assisting the HR needs of faculty working on externally funded projects.

- We also recommend the immediate creation of a committee (to include representatives of HR, the faculty research community, and the University Research Services and Administration office) to assist in resolving issues particular to principal investigators (e.g., discrepancies in minimum job requirements and the variable terms of limited-term professionals).

5. Increase clarity in leadership structure of HR. We recommend clarity and stability in HR leadership. This should correct for existing concerns that the unit has been in a phase of extended transition and that a changing organizational structure has blurred the lines of accountability. HR leadership should be in a position to spearhead the charge for better processes and resources; however, to some faculty and staff HR has appeared balkanized, and groups across campus are eagerly looking for stable and authoritative leadership.

- A unified and clarified leadership should also be a more visible and accountable leadership. We recommend increased inclusion of HR at University leadership decision-making tables where relevant. In turn, we recommend the creation of regular opportunities for HR leaders to attend meetings of such institutionalized groups as chairs’ councils for the express purpose of answering questions and responding to concerns.

6. Increase speed and integrity of workflow and paperwork through enhanced automation and clarified forms. We recommend that ongoing efforts to construct online PAFs and an electronic pathway to track hiring be supported. In this regard, developments such as the Panther Prowl Recruiting and Tracking System for staff/classified employee positions should be supported. We further recommend

- that the number of action codes on PAFs be reduced to improve clarity and that those remaining codes be fully explained in supporting documentation.
• that HR work decisively toward ameliorating campuswide concerns about PeopleSoft, ideally through further customization.

7. Overhaul of HR website. We recommend that HR develop a professionally designed HR website that allows faculty, staff, and, especially, unit heads to navigate seamlessly to locate the right forms, codes, job specifications, and hiring requirements. The HR website should be fundamentally overhauled to support more effective provision of information and the above-mentioned automation. Hiring forms, for example, should be more readily available via the website. So, too, should situational FAQs, dealing with themes such as “how to hire a PTI,” “how to hire a GRA,” and the like.

8. Codify policies. We recommend that efforts be devoted to a clear and comprehensive writing/distribution of HR policies and procedures. This should both increase understanding for user groups on campus and minimize risk to the University in the event of audit.

9. Have College/Departmental HR personnel accept their share of responsibility for improving performance and relations with University HR. We recommend that College Deans and department/unit heads aggressively require personnel in their units to be diligent and responsible for completing forms as required, on time and in full. There needs to be widespread acceptance that deadlines exist for a purpose (e.g., to meet payroll) and that requests to University HR for exceptions be limited to genuinely exceptional situations. All college-level HR officers should have minimum qualifications in all HR areas (i.e., they should qualify as “HR generalists”). Colleges and departments should certify that their own HR officers have attended and satisfactorily completed orientation session held at the University HR office in each of HR’s functional areas. We further recommend annual HR skills-update/upgrade for all College-level HR staff.

10. Prioritize Collegiality. Implementing the suggestions outlined above can help bring about “best practices” in Human Resources at Georgia State University. Along with adequate systems support and utilization, staff training, continuous quality monitoring and improvement, and better communication skills, there must also be a willingness—from within HR as well as from across the entire campus—to help each other for the greater good of the university community. Moving forward from this report, acrimony and defensiveness need to be abandoned in favor of shared commitment and professional collegiality.

Discussion followed. Beth Jones and Linda Nelson reported on progress already made on addressing the recommendations which HR had received in draft form. Questions were raised regarding the special needs of Primary Investigators in grant hires.

A recommendation was made for a follow up study. Discussion followed. It was recommended that provision be made for regular reporting back to the Budget Committee and for the use of an automated random survey of satisfaction as used by IS&T.

The following additional recommendation was moved and approved:

11. Reporting. We recommend that Human Resources, utilizing for example the IS&T client feedback system and other sources of information, provide updates on progress once a semester to the Senate Budget Committee.

Hugh Hudson reported on the work of FACP.
A request was made to investigate why keys for a number of classroom buildings were not working. Beth Jones agreed to investigate the problem for the Committee.

With no further business, the meeting was adjoined.