Committee of Chairs
Minutes
January 31, 2007

Present: Paul Alberto, Missy Cody, Dean Dabney, Christine Gallant, Cecelia Grindel, Hugh Hudson, George Pullman, George Rainbolt, Don Reitzes, Tim Renick, Debbie Rupp, Marti Singer, and Laurie Tis.
Absent: Dabney Dixon, Bill Fritz, Valerie Miller, Siva Nathan, and P. C. Tai.

The meeting was called to order by the chair, Paul Alberto, at 12:03 p.m. The first item of business was the approval of the May 3, 2006 minutes. The minutes were approved with no changes.

The next item of business was the proposal to amend Senate committee composition brought forward by the Univ. Statutes and Senate Bylaws Committee. Dr. Alberto turned the floor over to Dean Dabney to lead the discussion. Dr. Dabney raised two concerns: there doesn’t seem to be an overarching logic to the committees’ compositions and term limits for committee chairs. Discussion began on the first item. Don Reitzes stated that the structure of a committee reflects the culture and history of that particular committee, and in that respect, there is a logic to the composition. Dr. Dabney stated that there are some committees using the representative model that haven’t changed in many years and that should be addressed because the representation of faculty on the Senate by college/unit has changed. After some discussion, Dr. Alberto suggested that the committees that use proportionality as the criteria for composition be identified. Next, calculate what the proportions are currently for each college/unit and then what that committee would look like if we updated the proportions based on the current Senate composition. Dean Dabney agreed to pull this information together and it will be distributed to this committee. This will then be an agenda item for the next Committee of Chairs meeting on Wednesday, February 28 at 11:00 a.m. in room 718-GCB.

The other concern raised was term limits for committee chairs. Dr. Dabney stated that chair positions should be a route for Senators to learn leadership skills. A suggestion was made to have revolving chairs. Christine Gallant stated that some committees have a difficult time identifying Senators who would like to serve as chair. Don Reitzes stated that term limits on chairs would be anti-democratic. The current system allows the Senators on a particular committee to elect the person who would serve the committee best. If someone did a poor job, then that person would not be re-elected. Dr. Hudson stated that effective committee chairs must be assertive and willing to take a stand against the administration if necessary. Dr. Dabney stated that committees are at a disadvantage when long-term chairs leave their positions. Dr. Alberto stated that on most committees, long-term chairs could identify Senators that could move into the leadership position if it became available. It was agreed that the Committee of Chairs should think of ways to develop leadership skills in Senators.

Dr. Alberto turned the floor over to Hugh Hudson to introduce the next agenda item: background checks for all new hires. It makes sense to check the background of employees who will be serving in a security function (keys), handling money (cash), and taking care of children (kids). Dr. Hudson stated that it would be a waste of time and resources to check the background of all new employees. The Academic Council at UGA is looking into this issue and Dr. Hudson feels that our Senate should discuss this issue as well. Discussion continued. Cece Grindel suggested that several things need to be investigated: 1) what is the rationale for this policy? 2) what are the current trends in education regarding this issue?, and 3) what would be the cost of implementing such a policy? It was agreed that Faculty Affairs should tackle this issue. A suggestion was made that a sub-committee be formed that will include people with expertise in law, criminal justice, and other related subjects.

Laurie Tis announced that Athletics will be holding open hearings on football in February and March. Dates have not yet been set. Since there was no further business, the committee adjourned at 12:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Nell Stone
Committee assistant