FISCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE PRESIDENT

Minutes of September 15, 2000

Members present:Ron Henry (chair), John de Castro, Jerry Edwards, Sid Harris, Fenwick Huss, Fred Jacobs, Katherine Johnston, Leslie Williams

Members absent:Ahmed Abdelal, Tom Lewis

Others present:Lisa Beck, Reid Christenberry, Ron Colarusso, Bill Evans, Susan Kelley, Scott Owen, Edgar Torbert

Minutes of July 14 were approved as distributed.

Student Technology Fee

Dr. Henry introduced Drs. Evans and Owen and Mr. Christenberry as presenters of the proposed uses of FY2001 revenues from the new $75 Student Technology Fee. Dr. Evans chairs the Senate ISAT Committee, and Dr. Owen chaired the ISAT extended subcommittee of faculty and students which reviewed the proposals for the Student Technology Fee.

Dr. Owen outlined the review process followed by the ISAT subcommittee. He noted compliance with the Board of Regents guideline that at least half of the committee making recommendations for use of fee revenues be students. He explained that the subcommittee placed the proposals in three categories based on 2/3 votes for or against funding--Category 1 with at least 2/3s in favor of funding, Category 3 with at least 2/3s against funding, and the remainder in Category 2. Dr. Owen pointed out cashflow from the fee would limit fall semester payouts to Category 1 proposals only, with payouts for Category 2 proposals to follow in the spring semester. He observed the Category 2 proposals would have to be revisited in order to establish funding priorities as revenues allow. Mr. Christenberry added partial funding options had been discussed with proposal authors, and partial funding had been recommended for some proposals in Category 2.

Dr. Huss reported concern in the Senate Budget Committee about the proposal process, in particular the lack of information about priorities, guidelines, funding criteria, etc. at the time departments were putting together proposals. Dr. Owen replied that the subcommittee as well, had only the Board of Regents guidelines at the outset of its deliberations. He contrasted the situation to NSF requests for proposals where the criteria are stated up front for proposal authors and readers. Dr. Owen stated the subcommittee, with only a short time to act, developed decision criteria including such obvious criteria as the number of students to be served and magnitude of need as well as criteria championed by the student members of the subcommittee such as Abiggest-bang-for-the-buck@ and new opportunities. He added the process would be significantly improved prior to the next funding cycle.

Dr. Huss voiced another concern of the Senate Budget Committee that the subcommittee recommendations did not devote enough attention to classroom technology as part of the University Strategic Plan. He pointed to funding of departmental labs rather than classrooms. Dr.
Owen responded that classes are taught in these labs. Dr. Evans added the University Strategic Plan had figured in the decisions of the subcommittee.

Mr. Christenberry called attention to another concern, funding for access to technology for disabled persons. Dr. Owen cited the Board of Regents guidelines which initially excluded funding for such projects by the Student Technology Fee but were later modified. Mr. Edwards elaborated that the Board of Regents guidelines gave low priority to disabled access funding under the premise ADA projects should be funded through other sources.

Dr. de Castro expressed objection to the 2/3s vote approach to categorizing proposals on the basis that it penalizes proposals which benefit relatively few students but are of merit. Dr. Henry noted that funding Category 2 included proposals with support between 1/3 and 2/3.

Dr. de Castro questioned funding the proposal entitled, AFree printing for students in UETS labs, Pullen & Law Libraries, College of Ed ITC@. He remarked that this proposal did not contribute to the technological development of the campus and might result in more printing. Mr. Christenberry responded that the proposal did not grant unlimited free printing privileges. Dr. de Castro stated the materials distributed to FACP did not contain any details about the proposals and that more information was needed in order for FACP to review the subcommittee recommendations. He used as an example the recommended proposal for a ADigital Aquarium@ for which the title did not give any description of what was being proposed. Dr. Henry replied that the information was available on the web. Dr. de Castro reacted that he had discovered this the previous day, but it was difficult and time-consuming to track down the URLs.

Dr. de Castro stated concern that a very large amount of funds was being allocated without benefit of a more reasoned process. Ms. Williams replied that the subcommittee had spent a lot of time reviewing the proposals, and their efforts should not be discounted. Dr. de Castro reiterated FACP had responsibility for reviewing the recommendations made by the subcommittee. Mr. Edwards voiced concern over the message sent to students by slowing the process in order for faculty and administrators to extend review of the proposals. Dr. de Castro responded it was also important not to obviate the role of FACP. Dr. Henry noted there had already been input from Deans= Group, and they had been aware since June that the proposals were available on the web.

Dr. Evans stated the proposal format in the future should specifically call for a summary statement. Drs. de Castro and Huss reiterated availability of proposals on the web was unpublicized. Dr. Huss presented a motion passed by the Senate Budget Committee to collect and post summaries of the proposals and allow for comments on the recommendations. Dr. Henry asked Mr. Christenberry about consequences of postponing action until October. Mr. Christenberry indicated most of the proposals could wait a month for funding, although Alpharetta Center support was immediately needed. He noted one item had already been postponed until spring semester.

Dr. Harris asked about student involvement in any subsequent reviews. Dr. Henry replied the Board of Regents guidelines for student participation had been met through the subcommittee which made the funding recommendations.

Dr. de Castro asked if the ISAT budget had been reduced in anticipation of replacement funds from the Student Technology Fee. Dr. Henry replied this was not the case and in fact prohibited by the
Board of Regents guidelines.

Mr. Christenberry urged refining the proposal process for the next budget cycle, and this year relying on the recommendations of the widely representative subcommittee. He suggested the review of the proposals be only for the few proposals for which there were questions, rather than an extensive examination of all. Dr. de Castro responded he was only requesting summaries of the proposals. Mr. Edwards asked how these deliberations would affect the process next year. Dr. Henry replied the process would be improved and streamlined, and would start earlier. Ms. Williams reminded about the issue of funding for access to technology for disabled persons.

Dr. Harris asked about flexibility in amount of Student Technology Fee dollars allocated. Dr. Henry responded that some projects had already been partially funded with additional funds to come from other sources. He added that leveraging was consistent with the Board of Regents guidelines. Dr. Owen noted a 75% funding rate in many cases.

Dr. Henry asked what FACP would like to have in hand for discussion of the funding recommendations at the next meeting. Mr. Christenberry suggested the project description sections of the proposals, which would be about one page per proposal. Dr. de Castro suggested a single paragraph for each proposal. Dr. Henry commented the paragraphs should come from the proposal authors rather than having Mr. Christenberry extract them from the full proposals. Dr. de Castro asked for the funding criteria used by the subcommittee as well as the proposal summaries.

Mr. Edwards expressed concern again about maintaining the student stake in the process, in particular for the Digital Aquarium and free printing proposals. Dr. Jacobs asked about the virus protection proposal. Mr. Christenberry explained the idea was to provide virus protection software for students to lessen the chances of spreading viruses as files are routinely exchanged among students and faculty.

Fall Enrollment

Dr. Henry commented briefly on fall semester enrollments. He noted the significant increases in numbers of freshmen and sophomores and the decrease in the number of seniors. He also noted the continuing rise in credit hours taken per student, to 10.33 overall and 12.5 for freshmen.

Quality Improvement Fund and Instructional Technology

Dr. Henry announced the Quality Improvement Fund and Instructional Technology grant programs would be postponed until spring semester due to the budget/enrollment shortfall and pending supplemental funding by the legislature for health care.

Recreation Fee Payroll Deduction

Dr. Henry called attention to a question about authorization of payroll deductions for recreation center employee-usage fees. Ms. Johnston stated a part of the issue was the discounts given for using payroll deduction and the resulting lost revenues.