FISCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE PRESIDENT
Minutes of February 28, 2007

Members Attending: Paul Alberto, Joan Collier, Paul Farnham, Ron Henry, Hugh Hudson, Fenwick Huss, Susan Kelley, Phillip Mitchem, Jerry Rackliffe

Others Attending: Lauren Adamson, Bill Fritz, Beth Jones, Robert Moore, Edgar Torbert

The minutes of January 24 were approved.

Dr. Henry reported spring enrollments at 25,345 students and 297K SCHs. He pointed out that the tuition revenues over the budgeted amounts had been designated to go toward the proposed purchase of an office building on Piedmont Avenue to enable IS&T to vacate two floors of Classroom South for conversion back to classrooms and to accommodate other expansions and relocations consistent with the University Strategic Plan and the Master Plan.

Dr. Henry suggested a three-prong consideration of new funding: (1) new tuition revenues attributed to an increase in the size of the freshman class; (2) new workload funds; and (3) new revenues attributed to the tuition rate increase. He urged investing the new revenues from the additional freshmen and transfers to provide the course sections, services, etc., which would be needed for them.

Dr. Hudson asked about reversing the $4M cut from the FY2007 unit budgets. Dr. Rackliffe replied that making these cuts permanent would reduce the structural deficit from $7M to a more manageable $3M. Dr. Henry added there would be further discussion of how to pace the elimination of the structural deficit.

Dr. Rackliffe distributed an updated version of “Strategic Undergraduate Enrollment Plan – Draft for Discussion Purposes Only, Fiscal Years 2008-2017” showing additional transfers and additional lecturer positions. He noted that the tuition rate increase was not yet known, but that UGA and GT were pushing for 17% increases, which were unlikely to be approved. He also noted a proposal to change the tuition plateau from 12-or-more SCHs to 13-or-more SCHs, which would increase tuition revenues by $750K per semester. Dr. Henry commented that the change in the tuition plateau would help lessen the negative impact of the “fixed rate for four years” tuition plan.

Dr. Farnham asked for clarification of the numbers cited as increments in new freshmen each year. Dr. Henry responded that the numbers were cumulative.

Dr. Henry projected new funds in FY2008 in the range of $4M from workload funds and the tuition rate increase, plus $1.8M in tuition revenues from the additional new freshmen and transfers. He noted that March 1 was the deadline for fall freshman applications so that the freshman figures would soon be firmer. He added that a new transfer articulation with Georgia Perimeter College would encourage students denied admission to Georgia State as freshmen to complete two years at GPC and then transfer to Georgia State.

Dr. Alberto asked about the identity of the institution, labeled “GC”, sharing the Henry County campus. Dr. Rackliffe replied that “GC” stood for Gordon College. Dr. Henry explained that the
Board of Regents was in the process of defining service areas for the two-year institutions.

Dr. Farnham noted Creative Thinking and Writing requirements would affect future budgets given 25-student class sizes, etc. Dr. Alberto added that there would be additional costs to provide faculty with graduate assistants to help with the grading workload. Dr. Henry noted SACS would expect a plan to pay for the initiative.

Dr. Huss asked about the typical number of new freshmen who leave after the first year. Dr. Henry responded that the anticipated increases in freshmen and transfers were not offsetting these losses. Dr. Huss commented that quality of student life issues impacted the number leaving as well as academic issues. Dr. Fritz confirmed that surveys of these students found community issues as major factors. Dr. Huss suggested closer examination of academic records to determine how many of these were actually not academically eligible to return. Dr. Henry cited typical numbers of 50 academic casualties out of 450 first-year losses from a class of 2,250.

Dr. Fritz commented on efforts to grow the Freshman Learning Communities program. Dr. Alberto asked about reports from the projects funded through the RPG initiative. Dr. Henry replied that the reports were due March 15.

Ms. Collier asked about specific efforts to improve retention. Dr. Henry cited departmental initiatives to increase involvement with majors and connections among students with common majors. He also noted improvements in advisement, including the academic guides for all majors and the “academic maps” developed for majors in the College of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Adamson described the “Major Matters” programs initiated by the College of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Henry also pointed to expansion of supplemental instruction opportunities for courses which had historically proven difficult.

Dr. Huss asked about surveys of departed students. Dr. Fritz stated that the Office of Institutional Research had conducted such surveys, and results were posted on the IR web site. He commented that advisement was one of the areas which scored low on such surveys, but that it was unclear what all was included by students as “advisement”. Dr. Huss suggested focus groups of departed students to tease out more information. Dr. Fritz replied that students are likely to cite personal reasons rather than make comments, which they would perceive as burning bridges. He added that students do comment frequently that campus life does not offer them anything. Dr. Alberto recommended surveying current students as well.

Ms. Collier urged development of student peer advising as a means of addressing 6-8 week waits for appointments with staff academic advisers. Dr. Henry noted some pilot projects utilizing student peer advisers in the College of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Adamson cautioned that some aspects of advising can only be done by staff academic advisers. Ms. Collier also urged selling of tee shirts for the colleges as well as the university in order to strengthen student identity with the colleges.

Prepared by Edgar Torbert
Approved March 14, 2007