The minutes of the previous meeting (12 January 1999) were approved without change. The main topic of business for the current meeting was the University's conflict of interest policy. Discussion was led by Juane Heflin, who distributed copies of a document by Governor Barnes that describes the prohibitions for state employees regarding the receipt of gifts, and copies of "The University of Georgia Conflicts of Interest Policy." The actual document under discussion at the meeting was the latest draft of the "Georgia State University Conflict of Interest Policy." Changes reflected in this draft include a simplification of the language used and a resultant clarification of the policies described.

The first part of the discussion centered around section 2.2I of the draft of the Georgia State University Conflict of Interest Policy, which lists "Receiving more remuneration from outside activities than from University salary" as a potential conflict of interest. Committee members pointed out that problems presented by a University salary lower than remuneration from outside funding were more perceptual than actual, and that lower salary in itself does not suggest the presence of a conflict. As a part of the discussion on this item, Committee members suggested that the source of the outside funding needed to be specified, that "remuneration" should be clearly defined in the document as "earned income", and that the document should state specifically that passive income is excluded as a potential source of conflict. Dr. Heflin explained John Marshall's concern that a larger salary from outside sources may compromise an individual's loyalty to the University; she explained further Dr. Marshall's worry about the perception of individuals outside the University regarding compromised faculty loyalty, in particular the news media. After discussion, a motion was passed unanimously to delete section 2.2I entirely from the GSU Conflict of Interest document.

The next section of the document discussed was 2.2C, which lists "Consulting activities which interfere with teaching, service or scholarly research" as a potential conflict of interest. The group felt that "interfere" needs to be defined, as the policy could be triggered depending on the definition of that word, and that perhaps this item could be tied to faculty evaluations.

One Committee member asked for clarification on section 2.1D, which lists "Assigning students, postdoctoral fellows, or other trainees to University projects sponsored by a for-profit or not-for-profit business in which the individual or a member of his or her family has a significant financial interest" as an actual conflict of interest. The question was as follows: "What does it mean when 'non-profit' is involved?" Clarification was also requested for section 2.2A, which lists "Using University resources, including letterhead, other than the library, when engaging in outside activities other than those which constitute an uncompensated service to the employee's profession", as a potential conflict of interest. The questions were: "Where do computers enter here? What problems are posed by a web-page that states the political views of an individual faculty member?" The group agreed that the topic of computers should be addressed.

Finally, several Committee members stated that it may be sometimes difficult for faculty to know with certainty that activities in which they are engaged constitute a conflict of interest with the entire University, as one is not always aware of the varied aspects of the University.

Committee members were asked to send any further comments on the conflict of interest document to Dr. Heflin.

Minutes prepared by Mary Robbins