Minutes
Faculty Affairs Committee Meeting
November 14, 2002

Members present: Glenn Abney, Barbara Baumstark, Joan Carson, Gayle Christian, Bonnie Fritz, Gerald Gay, Lynn Hart, Hugh Hudson, Charles Marvin, Mona Matthews, Marian Meyers, H. Richard Miller, Jean Miller and John Peterson

Members absent: Pauline Clance, Ron Henry, Katherine Johnson, Linda McGehee, Linda Nelson, Ted Poister, Jim Senn, Cherian Thachenkary, and Marta White

Guests: Barbara Carroll, AVP, Human Resources and Mary Ann Romski, Professor, Communication

The meeting was called to order by Bonnie Fritz. Hugh Hudson moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. John Peterson seconded the motion, which the group approved.

Advancement of Women
Fritz gave a history of the Advancement of Women Policy. In 1999, the President appointed a committee, which did not come through the Senate. This committee, on which Marsha Clarkson, Dick Miller and Bonnie Fritz served, issued a report. Many of the concerns have since been addressed, and GSU has taken a leadership role in this area. Mary Ann’s Romski’s committee has drafted the Advancement of Women Policy (page 8 of the handout) in order to maintain this leadership role and to continue the advancement of women.

The policy stresses that GSU must address the areas of university policies and procedures and training and mentoring in enabling women to undertake senior administrative roles, both by recruitment and by enlarging the pool of eligible women in all areas. The policy is going to Research on Monday. From there it will move to the Executive Committee and then on to the full Senate. The Senior Faculty Associate for the Advancement of Women, Pauline Clance, will be retiring at the end of Spring. Her prompt replacement is needed to continue Pauline’s efforts and to ensure continuation of recent advancements (female hires in the positions of VP, Finance and Administration and Dean of Students, for example). Hugh Hudson moved to approve the policy as written. Gayle Christian seconded the motion, and the committee voted to approve the policy.

Domestic Partner Benefits
John Peterson brought the issue of domestic partner benefits to the group. The Council (like GSU’s Senate) of the University of Georgia has approved a policy offering domestic partner benefits (see pages 19 to 25 of the handout). UGA’s President forwarded the policy to the Board of Regents for approval. In an attempt to gain passage of the policy, UGA has asked GSU and Tech to lend support by formulating their own policies and submitting them to the Board. John, in the absence of Cherian, is seeking approval for the Benefits Subcommittee to begin work on drafting a GSU policy.

When this issue was considered in the past, two issues surfaced: 1.) cost, and 2.) how to identify domestic partners. Page 16 of the gives the Senate’s definition of domestic partners. John, referring to pages 22 and 23 of the handout, pointed out that where domestic partner benefits have been adopted, costs rose between one and two percent in roughly the same size as the increase in enrollment. It is important to point out that the term domestic partner does not pertain to sexual preference. In fact, a domestic partner would include common law spouses, which are no longer recognized in Georgia. The group felt that any policy we would draft regarding domestic partner benefits would need a statement of policy on sexual orientation.
Hugh Hudson was able to shed some light on the history of this issue. Perhaps four years ago, the previous Chancellor was in favor of adding domestic partner benefits, but was unwilling to bring the issue before the Board of Regents. Barb Carroll remembered that approximately three years ago, the Benefits Subcommittee recommended to the Senate that domestic partner benefits be extended to campus benefits (100% paid by the employee), and this was approved.

GSU was the first institution to do this. Human Resources has data on the costs of this change, which could be added to our draft. Dick Miller, who served on the Benefits Subcommittee previously, still has the proposal from three years ago in electronic format.

On a motion by Hugh Hudson, the group approved that the Benefits Subcommittee draft a domestic partner Benefits policy. Since Cherian will not be back in the country until December 6th, please send your comments to John Peterson or Bonnie Fritz. Barb Carroll pointed out that under federal law, domestic partner benefits are not available on a pre-tax basis.

Disruptive Students Policy
This policy was passed by the Senate, but the Executive Committee saw the need for three revisions: 1.) chairs should be given more response time, 2.) the policy should be more specific about how students are notified, and 3.) a disruptive student could be removed from all classes taught by the instructor. Upon review of the policy, it appeared that there were different levels of the seriousness of the infraction. The Faculty Development Committee tried to distinguish between these levels of infractions in assigning punishment. Faculty Development saw two types of disruptions; one involving safety concerns and one without safety concerns. If safety is not an issue, faculty should attempt to work things out with the student. If safety is an issue, however, the student may be dismissed from class, and a security officer may be summoned.

Section 2 of the handout on page 14 details the revised student notification process. Ten days turnaround time (Section 3 on page 14), rather than five, was added for the chair’s response. Initially it was felt that five days would foster a student’s timely return to class, but the time of even five days away from class would make it difficult for the student to succeed in the class. Lastly, the handout is missing the revision to allow a disruptive student to be removed from all classes taught by the instructor. This was a clerical error, and this section will be in the final draft of the policy. Charles Marvin suggested that the word withdrawal might be confusing. Stating that a student is to be withdrawn usually means formally taken out of the class by the Office of the Registrar. It would be cumbersome for the Office of the Registrar to disenroll a student who might later have to be re-enrolled as a result of appeal. The word “removed” from class was suggested as an alternative to withdrawn. Glenn Abney suggested that there needed to be a final outcome, expulsion. That would mean, however, that the student would run the risk of the chairman expelling him or her if he or she appealed. Other suggestions to the policy were made: clarifying the sequence of events with a flow chart or graphic, and putting sanctions in the policy in a separate section. Glenn suggested that the group the make the modifications suggested by the group and allow more time for thought before bringing the policy back for a vote. The group was asked to email Bonnie Fritz with any other suggestions.

Benefits and Auxiliary Services
FASA
The Committee asked that if any changes to FASA (Faculty and Staff Assistance Program) were contemplated, that it would like to be part of the discussion. Barb Carroll reported that FASA was not being discontinued. She agreed that the current counselor was a temporary employee, but that the status of the person did not imply that the service provided was temporary. Barb went on discuss the fact that there are various models for such services in the community. Tech has an off-campus provider, and there are also outside providers who offer services in a network, similar to an HMO.

FASA provides counseling for personal issues and is used as a resource for faculty and staff to refer employees. FASA is located on the 3rd floor of Sparks Hall. It operates during normal university hours, and the FASA coordinator has a beeper. Typically, job-related issues are handled by the Ombudsperson, not FASA.

Having an off-campus provider fosters the confidentiality of the visit, but it also makes it more difficult and time-consuming to leave work during business hours. Marian Meyers suggested that a combination of on and off campus hours might be a solution. Jean Miller had a concern from the point of view of a staff member. She felt that it would be impractical to tell a supervisor that you had to leave campus to speak with a counselor. Jean asked if a non-exempt staff member should be paid for time spent at FASA. Barb Carroll indicated that, since issues covered by FASA are personal and not work-related, non-exempt employees should debit vacation or sick accruals. Bonnie Fritz felt that the interaction between FASA and the Counseling Center might be lost if FASA were to move off campus.

The group inquired if HR knew if FASA’s clients were self-referred or other-referred. Barb reported that approximately
2/3 of the clients are self-referred, and 1/3 are supervisor referred. Marian Meyers suggested that if it were possible to analyze the type of help most commonly requested, perhaps FASA might employ two people at half time, each with a different area of expertise.

Barb said that Human Resources is not yet ready to decide on a final model for FASA, and will continue to collect feedback. Bonnie Fritz reiterated that Faculty Affairs would like to play an ongoing role in this process. Bonnie invited Barb to the January meeting of this group to provide an update. Barb asked to be invited any time that human resources issues were being discussed.

**ORP**

ORP is being looked at again by a subcommittee of the Board of Regents. Bonnie suggested that it would be helpful to have Cherian Thachenkary on that committee, since this is his area of expertise. Bonnie sent information she had regarding the legislature looking at state benefits to Tom Lewis, but he has not responded as yet with an update. When she hears, Bonnie will pass it on to the group.

Participants have asked for more than three vendors for ORP’s. Barb Carroll explained that at the time that ORP was put into place ten years ago, it was put in as a conceptual model, with many unanswered questions. Under the Teachers’ Retirement plan, a member can retire with 30 years of service at any age and at 60 years of age with ten years of service. Under TRS, a TRS board can review the case of a member who becomes disabled with at least 9.5 years of service. There are no comparable options with ORP. The Board of Regents has recognized that the USG needs to come up with its own definition of a retiree. In the past, the only definition of a retiree was based on TRS definitions. Criteria need to be established that are not linked to the plan the faculty or staff member is in.

**Bookstore**

Please send your concerns regarding the bookstore to Jim Senn. Wayne Reed, AVP of Auxiliary Services, is constructing a large committee to review issues in all areas of Auxiliary Services.

As Hugh Hudson and Glenn Abney had to leave, the following subcommittee reports were not heard and will be postponed until the next meeting:

- Evaluation of Administrators
- Strategic Plan
- Non-tenure Track
- Classroom Facilities
- On-line Evaluation

**Childcare**

Barbara Baumstark volunteered to help Marian Meyers (chair) to look at situations, identify issues and make a report. Mona Matthews suggested that a representative of Early Childhood Education or the Child Development Center ought to be included on the committee to provide input, and she volunteered to give Marian the name of someone to serve as a resource.

a. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:30.