Minutes
Faculty Affairs Subcommittee of the Senate
Meeting of December 11, 2003

Members present: Glenn Abney, Ben Baez, Pam Barr, Gayle Christian, Harry Dangel, Nancy Floyd, Gerald Gay, Hugh Hudson, Ralph LaRossa, Dick Miller, Charlotte Petrek, Ted Poister, Jerry Rackliffe, Jim Senn, Debra Snell, and Cherian Thachenkary

Members absent: Margo Brinton, Barb Carroll, Shelby Frost, Emanuela Guano, Charles Marvin, Mona Matthews, Marian Meyers, Linda Nelson, Lloyd Nigro, Marta White and Armenia Williams

Guest: Ann Emanuel

Cherian began the meeting by stating that the Executive Committee of the Senate had approved the evaluation for the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies, which was proceeding to the Senate today. There is still an issue involving the summary report, however. According to the Faculty Affairs recommendation, all copies, including the copy sent to the Senate Office, are to be destroyed. The Executive Committee sent the recommendation back to Faculty Affairs for further review. Since the person being reviewed can make copies of the document, it was suggested that Legal Affairs be consulted for appropriate wording regarding copy retention.

Also, the Senior Lecturer Policy has been returned to Faculty Affairs from the Executive Committee. Cherian offered a brief history of this topic. The Senior Lecturer Policy was tabled at last year’s Senate because Hugh felt that a directive from the Chancellor would be forthcoming. When the directive was received, the subcommittee amended the Senior Lecturer Policy to reflect the spirit of the Chancellor's directive. The Executive Committee was concerned with retaining flexibility in discontinuing senior lecturer appointments.

John Marshall had been invited to this meeting, but he was unable to attend. Presently, there is a policy on conducting a hearing for tenured and non-tenured faculty terminated during their contract periods. This cumbersome hearing policy can involve up to four attorneys. John felt that using the same hearing policy for senior lecturers might be taking due process to excess. In addition, the existing hearing policy recognizes the ongoing contractual obligation between the University and tenured and non-tenured faculty. He felt that there should be some distinction between those with whom the University has a contractual relationship and those without such a relationship. This would avoid a quasi-tenure situation. Also, with respect to notification, there needs to be a balance between the need for due process and collegiality.

Jim asked Hugh why the focus was now on the removal process, when the discussion of a senior lecturer policy was initially a promotion issue. Hugh responded that the Chancellor's directive mandated a removal process as well as a promotion process.

Cherian called for a motion on the approval of the minutes of the last meeting. Ben moved to approve the minutes of the November meeting. Debra seconded the motion, and the group voted to approve the minutes.

At the last meeting, Cherian asked for volunteers to attend Bill Fritz’s committee focusing on student retention. Ben volunteered to represent Faculty Affairs. Cherian reported that some concerns of this committee are: 1.) our six year graduation rate of approximately one third and 2.) our first year retention rate of only 80%. Ben said that this committee has met twice, and it is focusing on why students stay and why students leave. There is concern that some of our best students, those with GPA’s in excess of 3.0, are transferring to other System schools such as Kennesaw and West Georgia. Also, the NSSE Survey shows that graduating seniors have a lower overall impression of Georgia State than our freshmen do.

The group wondered if the Executive Committee had the right to veto the Senior Lecturer Policy and thus prevent it from being presented to the full Senate. Hugh responded that they did not, and any group may present an item to the Senate. The question on the Senior Lecturer Policy seems to be whether a hearing process or an appeal process would be appropriate in removal of a senior lecturer. Hugh stressed that this policy needs to go before the Senate this academic year. Hugh believes that lecturers should never have less due process than instructors. The job of the subcommittee in reconsidering this policy is to define the rights of the senior lecturer in a dismissal action.

Planning and Development approved a motion by Tim Crimmins to clarify the complaint process and dispute resolution process in the university resulting from the ASUR report on the Office of Legal Affairs, the Office of the Ombudsperson, and the Office of Opportunity Development and Diversity Education/Planning (formerly Affirmative Action). P&D forwarded the motion to Faculty Affairs for study. It is clear that there is confusion on campus about which department handles which types of complaints. Nancy
Floyd volunteered to chair the committee, with Charlotte Petrek and Harry Dangel also volunteering. The charge of this committee is to define where to go for what and to ensure due process.

The Education Policy Studies resolution was discussed. This resolution seems to mirror the concern of most of the faculty that the Provost has failed to clarify how his plan differs from other evaluation methods currently in use, such as Academic Program Review. The resolution suggests that the Provost is "steamrolling" over the University's faculty and staff. There was also frustration with the extremely short period of time given, two to three day’s notice, to justify programs. The group moved to have Cherian present the resolution at today's senate meeting. Dick Miller made a friendly amendment that Cherian should summarize the resolution rather than read it, and the group agreed.

The Education Policy Studies resolution raised a question about Dean's Group. Apparently, the Deans had been told well in advance that such scrutiny of programs was coming, but failed to communicate either the issue or the urgency of the project. Per Hugh, the Dean's Group, which is not defined in the Bylaws, is an ad hoc group used by the Provost.

Hugh said that the Strategic Plan Committee decides what needs to be done to achieve the Strategic Action Plan. FACP is the group that allocates funds. Two processes are moving simultaneously, 1.) looking at programs, and 2.) redirection. What is in question is whether or not there is adequate time to review and redirect dollars.

Cherian encouraged the group to come to the Senate meeting and to support Faculty Affairs’ recommendation that the University implement an employee funded long term care program.

Dick Miller reported that once a person reaches 65, the Board of Regents medical insurance becomes supplemental to Medicare and is no longer the primary carrier. It was unclear whether or not this was a new change. It was felt that the fact that this occurs should be made known to faculty and staff, and, if it was a recent change, it should have been communicated. Jerry Rackliffe volunteered to find out from Barbara Carroll when this change occurred. We also need to look into the effect of the new Medicare prescription drug benefit on USG plans.

We have learned that retirement incentives do not have to be System-wide. The Board of Regents approved such a plan for the Medical College of Georgia, as long as there was no cost to the BOR. In the Medical College of GA plan, a participant could, if close enough to age sixty or 30 yrs of service, add five years to their age or their service to qualify to retire without a penalty. The money saved by not filling the vacated positions was used to fund the additional TRS obligations. The Benefits subcommittee had some concerns as to whether or not the timing is right to consider such a plan at Georgia State. If we were to adopt such a plan, we would have to address a benefit for faculty and staff participating in the Optional Retirement Plan. Dick did not believe that the vacant positions would be enough to fund the benefits, and that we would need to look at this in greater detail. Also, would this be a one-time incentive or an ongoing plan? The group agreed that a retirement incentive should be further pursued.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:10.