Minutes
Meeting of Faculty Affairs Subcommittee of the University Senate
August 28, 2003

Members present: Ben Baez, Pam Barr, Margo Brinton, Barbara Carroll, Harry Dangel, Nancy Floyd, Gerald Gay, Emanuela Guano, Hugh Hudson, Ralph LaRossa, Charles Marvin, Marian Meyers, Charlotte Petrek, Jerry Rackliffe, and Cherian Thachenkary

Members absent: Glenn Abney, Gayle Christian, Shelby Frost, Ron Henry, Mona Matthews, Richard Miller, Linda Nelson, Lloyd Nigro, Ted Poister, Jim Senn, Debra Snell, Marta White, and Armenia Williams

The meeting began with a motion to approve the minutes of the June meeting from Hugh Hudson. Marian Meyers seconded the motion, which the group then approved. The group then confirmed Cherian Thachenkary’s election as Chair of Faculty Affairs.

Cherian brought up the fact that last year’s Faculty Affairs made a recommendation to the Senate to consider expanding the Child Development Center, which was also integrated into the Strategic Plan. There is a long waiting list for a place in the Center, and faculty and staff are not able to get slots. This hinders attracting and retaining quality faculty and staff. The Executive Committee of the Senate favors the recommendation for expansion of the Center, but has asked that a Joint Task Force of Faculty Affairs, Budget, and Planning and Development, examine the budget and space implications of the proposal. Once the details are finalized by this joint task force, the recommendation will be voted on by each of the member committees before re-submitting to the Executive Committee of the Senate. Marian agreed to continue to serve in this subcommittee, and she would welcome any volunteers to join this subcommittee.

This year, the President, the Vice President of External Affairs, and the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies will be receiving their three-year evaluations. Hugh pointed out that this is the first time that the Associate Provost has been evaluated, and he has been trying to get with Bill Fritz for the incumbent’s recommendations on the evaluation in order to create the evaluation instrument. Hugh will continue to chair this subcommittee, which will have to move quickly to create this instrument. Each college will elect one member to serve on each of the three evaluation subcommittees.

Gayle Christian wishes to volunteer for the Admissions and Standards Subcommittee of the Senate.

There had been a question from the faculty as to the continued funding for FASA (the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program). Continued funding has been arranged, and there is a new FASA Coordinator, Cheryl Johnson Rainbow. The current priority of this office is to create a wellness library. FASA can help with personal issues that may or may not affect the workplace, and which may involve family members. All services are free and confidential.

BJ Yergens will send out a list of the existing Faculty Affairs subcommittees. Please let her know if you would like to continue your participation on the subcommittee this year, if you wish to be added to a particular subcommittee, or if you would be willing to chair a subcommittee.

Auxiliary Services would like a representative of Faculty Affairs to participate in the contract renewal process. Kevin Kelley had informed Cherian that a contract was being finalized to retain AAA Travel as our on-campus Travel Agency. For problems with the Post Office, contact Wayne Reed at extension 2150. Charlotte Petrek, a new member, volunteered to replace Jean E. Miller on the Parking Subcommittee of Auxiliary Services. Cherian will contact Jim Senn to see if he would be willing to continue on the Bookstore Subcommittee.

Faculty Affairs’ On-line Evaluation subcommittee, chaired by Glenn Abney, is to report to Faculty Affairs with its recommendation regarding continuing on-line student evaluations. Glenn’s subcommittee has been waiting for Summer session data. His subcommittee will attempt to prepare the recommendation for the Fall Senate meeting.

There are concerns about the response rate and the quality and nature of student responses. Nancy Floyd asked that the subcommittee look at the differences in the rate of return between classes equipped with computers and those without computers in the classroom. Nancy would also like to see if there is a difference in response rate between upper level and lower level courses. Charles Marvin wonders what the purpose of the student review really is, now that there is a website like www.ratemyprofessor.com. He wonders what weight should be given to student evaluations, especially if other modes of evaluations, such as peer review, are formally used, as in the College of Law.

Hugh reported on the Senior Lecturer position. In the Chancellor’s meeting with the academic heads of the USG
schools, he requested that each school must develop a dismissal policy in order to establish the Senior Lecturer position. Hugh has modified the draft policy created by this subcommittee last year, and he will present it at the first subcommittee meeting of this year. The policy is to clearly spell out what due process a Senior Lecturer would have for dismissal.

Nancy had requested that the Benefits subcommittee look into the possibility of waiving Rec Center membership fees for faculty and staff, or possibly charging a sliding fee. Nancy also asked if the Benefits subcommittee could come up with a formal sabbatical policy for faculty. Apparently, there is no such policy because, as public servants, faculty cannot be paid “when not working.” There is an informal policy for professional leave, which is the professional leave policy. There is inequity on campus as to how the “research term” (not assigned to teach classes) is handled by the various colleges. In one college, the chair has absolute discretion in granting leave, and in other colleges, the dean has final discretion. Cherian believes that this might be an area of interest for other USG schools as well.

Barb Carroll reported that negotiations between Promina and Blue Cross have collapsed. GSU’s Blue Choice members with Promina providers will need to select new network providers. Piedmont and Dekalb General providers broke off with Promina and made their own deal with Blue Choice, so these providers will continue to participate in the Blue Choice plan. The contract dispute may affect as many as one third of GSU’s 900 Blue Choice participants. Barb asked the group to remind employees not to discard correspondence from Blue Choice. If the employee does not select a new provider, the company will assign one. Oct. 14th through Nov. 14th will be open enrollment. We can definitely expect premiums to rise, but we won’t know the new rates until Oct. 13th. The increase for State employees was 18%. HR has been supporting the President’s focus on early cancer detection and prevention by sponsoring mammograms on campus for three days. Barb was asked if GSU could possibly add a long-term care benefit. Yes, we can, but it would have to be 100% employee paid, and long-term care does not qualify for pre-tax payment of premiums. Cherian pointed out that the Benefits subcommittee will take up this matter in its next meeting.

In closing, the group confirmed Dick Miller’s election to Vice Chair of Faculty Affairs.