Minutes  
Faculty Affairs Subcommittee of the Senate  
Meeting of January 15, 2004

Members present: Glenn Abney, Ben Baez, Pam Barr, Barb Carroll, Gayle Christian, Harry Dangle, Gerald Gay, Emanuela Guano, Ralph LaRossa, Charles Marvin, Mona Matthews, Marian Meyers, Charlotte Petrek, Jerry Rackliffe, Jim Senn, Cherian Thachenkary, and Wayne Reed.

Members absent: Margo Brinton, Nancy Floyd, Shelby Frost, Hugh Hudson, Dick Miller, Linda Nelson, Lloyd Nigro, Ted Poister, Debra Snell, Marta White, and Armenia Williams.

Cherian began the meeting by introducing Wayne Reed, AVP Auxiliary and Support Services, as a new ex-officio guest member.

Ben made a correction to the minutes of the last meeting, and the group approved the minutes as amended.

Cherian asked Barb to discuss the integration of the Board of Regents’ medical plan and Medicare at retirement. Barb pointed out that participation in Medicare Part A is mandatory. Employees who are retired and are age 65 are eligible to join Medicare Part B. Georgia State’s Benefits office encourages such retirees to sign up for Medicare Part B when they are eligible because to go back and join the plan later is prohibitively expensive. The Board of Regents plan will then be secondary to Medicare, and this has always been the case. Human Resources believes that the Board of Regents may make participation in Medicare Part B mandatory some time in the future, so it is in the best interest of the retiree to sign up for it when eligible.

At a meeting of the Council of Chairs this week, the issue of whether or not electronic voting (via email) is legal was discussed. The Statutes and Bylaws subcommittee of the Senate has sent a motion to the full Senate recommending approval of electronic voting.

Cherian asked the group to make note of the fact that the Senate meeting schedule has been changed, and the next meeting has been moved up to Friday, February 13th. Ben asked who or what group is authorized to change the Senate’s meeting schedule. BJ volunteered to ask Mary Nell.

The Senate Budget Committee formed a subcommittee to put together a statement of budget priorities. Faculty Affairs drafted its section, which was approved at the last Faculty Affairs meeting. All of the sections have been consolidated by the Budget subcommittee and presented to FACP. The Provost commented that this subcommittee had done a great job.

Valerie Fennell, the University Ombudsperson, has asked to join this group. Marian pointed out that, in the past, the Ombudsperson had been a member of Faculty Affairs. Charles mentioned that a faculty member had just recently asked him about how to get concerns about dispute resolution heard. Apparently, Faculty Affairs had, at one time, been asked to add a dispute resolution subcommittee, but nothing ever happened. At the last Faculty Affairs meeting, Nancy Floyd volunteered to chair a subcommittee to review the Administrative and Support Unit Assessment of the Office of the Ombudsperson, Legal Affairs, and what was formerly called Affirmative Action. This was requested as there seems to be a great deal of confusion as to what types of complaints are handled by each of these departments. In light of this confusion, the group agreed that having the Ombudsperson attend Faculty Affairs meetings would be desirable. The group moved to approve the inclusion of the Ombudsperson as a regular member.

Cherian urged attendance at today’s Town Hall Meeting at the Rialto.

Subcommittee Reports
Senior Lecturers
The policy on Senior Lecturers was sent back from the Senate. Hugh has called a meeting of this subcommittee next week, and it is hoped that Faculty Affairs will be able to forward its recommendation to the Senate by the end of Spring semester.

On-line Evaluation
This subcommittee is awaiting the results from the Fall semester. It is hoped that the response rate will parallel that of the Summer session. The subcommittee will review the Fall results and present a recommendation to Faculty Affairs, which will, in turn, make a recommendation to the Senate. Marian reported that faculty in her department felt very strongly that faculty members are put in a very difficult position when they cannot give a student his or her grade prior to grades being posted by the Registrar, to avoid prejudicing the evaluation. Glenn suggested that the faculty member ask the student if he or she has completed the student evaluation. If the student has completed the evaluation, the faculty member may release the grade. Marian also stated that the extremely long period of evaluation also caused faculty ill will in her department. The last day to complete an evaluation from Fall semester is January 17th. Glenn agreed that the subcommittee needs to review the length of the evaluation period.

Revisiting the inclusion of the final exam in the evaluation also needs to be looked at again in Marian’s opinion. Initially faculty agreed that the final ought to be thought of as part of the course. Now, however, many faculty feel that students who did not do well on the final will not say that they should have studied harder, but will blame the instructor. Glenn pointed out that if the University converts to on-line evaluations, everyone will be in the same boat. Marian had concerns that the on-line evaluation system could lead to instructors giving easier finals, and Glenn responded that the evaluation process itself may have already done this. Cherian pointed out that requiring students to turn in an evaluation in order to see their grades did raise the response rate. Ralph asked if students can modify an evaluation once it has been turned in. Glenn responded that students cannot modify the evaluations. Glenn also told the group that once a student has made the decision not to complete an evaluation, he or she cannot go back and complete an evaluation later.

The fact that some students can see their grades before they are posted by the Registrar (such as WebCT courses) brought up the issue of fairness. Glenn pointed out that the decision as to whether or not to release grades via WebCT is at the discretion of the faculty. Mona asked if we still have an option to use paper evaluations for Spring, and the answer is yes. Jerry suggested that now that we are wireless, perhaps we can administer evaluations on-line during class time.

Glenn invited all interested faculty to participate in the subcommittee meetings. He will send the meeting information to BJ, who will distribute it to the members of Faculty Affairs.

Benefits
Barb reported that Human Resources has begun some preliminary investigation of long-term care vendors. There has been some interest at the Board of Regents level in various types of employee paid benefits programs, so HR is waiting to see if the Board might be negotiating some type of long-term care program System-wide. The administrative costs associated with implementing such a plan have been noted and communicated to FACP. Glenn asked Barb if she could check to see if, under TRS, retiree deductions for medical expenses could not be reported as a pre-tax item.
Auxiliary Services
Wayne thanked everyone for their assistance with the recent parking re-registration. The proximity cards and hang tags have been successful and will help Auxiliary Services capture better usage data. The ten year parking plan that was in place when Wayne came has been revised, and, instead of building new decks, we have been able to refurbish some decks instead. It appears that we will be able to go into fy 05 without parking rate increases.

Reducing the lines in Auxiliary Services is a priority. Pre-purchase of MARTA cards is being considered. This would reduce the over 8000 in-person transactions currently being processed. Alternate service locations have been established in Student Accounts and at the Rialto. Another goal is to improve the timeliness and participation in the text book adoption program.

The Aderhold Building has a new retail tenant, Landmark Diner, which is open 24 hours a day. Cherian asked if there has been any consideration for a faculty/staff dining room. Wayne was not aware of any discussions on this topic. Wood Dining Services has been replaced by a new company, Sydexo Campus Services, which is much more involved with GSU as a customer. We are questioning whether the three deli sandwich outlets we operate might be too many, and the Plaza Café has been targeted for modest renovation.

Cross-functional Retention
This committee is looking into a way of getting more information regarding students who leave GSU. There is a worry that we are losing high GPA students transferring to non-research System schools.

Child Development Center
Expansion of the Center is not likely during this period of budget constraints.

Miscellaneous Issues
Ben encountered difficulties with entering grades. For students who had withdrawn prior to the midpoint, he left the grade blank. In fact, a grade must be entered for every student, and the Registrar’s Office leaves it to the instructor to determine whether the student should be given a W or a WF.

There was some discussion about the policy on “sabbaticals.” Mona believes that the policy is not clear, and that it is not administered the same way in all colleges. There are not set criteria to be met to be awarded a professional leave of absence, and the granting of a leave is discretionary. Mona believes that there needs to be more substance to this discretion. Cherian said that discussion of professional leaves of absence needs to be part of the annual review process, and a culture that fosters taking them needs to be created. It was agreed that the Benefits subcommittee needs to continue to look into this issue.

Charlotte believes that the prices charged by the food service outlets on campus are too high. Wayne said that the previous dining leadership did a market survey of pricing in the campus area, but, in the change of management, the survey disappeared. The new manager has adjusted prices down at both Burger King and Chick fil A. Auxiliary Services will continue to focus on quantity, quality and price. The group also felt that prices in the vending machines are also too high. Wayne pointed out that prices have gone up in response to a three year period without increases. He also pointed out that if you use a Pantercard with PantherCash, you would realize an 8% discount.

The issue of free access to the Recreation Center was discussed. The feeling is that salaries for both faculty and staff are not competitive, and any break on price would be helpful in attracting and retaining personnel. The University administration has been reluctant to act on this issue, feeling that if students pay for rec center use, then faculty and staff should also pay. Glenn suggested that perhaps the old gym could be used for faculty and staff, but Jerry said that this space has already been configured for Athletics. Jerry pointed out that we are already using about a million dollars per year of fund code 10 money to maintain the Recreation Center, and perhaps we could use fund code 10 dollars to subsidize the faculty and staff utilization. For the next meeting, Jerry will
provide numbers on how many faculty and staff are using the Recreation Center and the Health Services and how much money is being paid by these users. Clearly, if we got more faculty and staff to use the Recreation Center, we might potentially save money on health care costs by promoting better employee wellness? At the next meeting, we will look at the numbers and determine if we wish to make a recommendation to the Senate.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:40