Georgia State University
Senate Research Committee Meeting
November 17, 2003
Minutes

Present: Don Reitzes (Chair), Jeff Ashby, Albertha Barrett, Tim Bartness, Al Baumstark, Dan Benardot, Roberta Byrum, Chuck Derby, Crawford Elliott, Anne Emanuel, Michael Galchinsky, Sandra Garber, Amy Lederberg, Steve Manson, Bala Ramesh, Mary Ann Romski, P. C. Tai, Susan Talburt, Vijay Vaishnavi,

Dr. Reitzes called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm. The first order of business was the review and approval of the minutes from the previous meeting which was held on October 20, 2003. No member present at the meeting asked that changes be made to these minutes. Dr. Bartness made a motion for approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved by those members present at the meeting.

Dr. Reitzes then announced that the second order of business was to review description of the Research Committee contained in the University’s Bylaw as requested by the Senate Executive Committee. Dr. Reitzes stated there are two primary issues to be considered when evaluating the description of the Committee.

The first issue discussed was the statement of duties of the Committee (Item B). Dr. Reitzes noted the current definition of the Committee’s duties is inappropriately narrow because it states that recommendations only are to be made to University administrators. There was discussion among members in favor of expanding the definition of the Committee’s duties to reflect the Committee’s actual responsibilities. Dr. Benardot remarked that the Committee does more than make recommendations, it has decision making power, but sometimes it is a body that simply apprises and informs. Dr. Lederberg noted the Committee’s duties should also include a statement about responsibility for oversight of the Internal Grants program. Dr. Reitzes responded that handling Internal Grants is a part of the Committee’s charge, but need not be declared separately in the statement of duties. Dr. Derby agreed that oversight of the Internal Grants program is an obvious function of the Committee.

Several members made proposals for a revised description of duties to be adopted by the Committee. The final language that was adopted by the Committee is as follows:

The duties of the committee shall be to review, revise and propose research policies, programs and services.

Dr. Reitzes moved on to discussion of the appropriate size and composition of the Committee’s membership, which is the second part of the self-review. He proposed the membership be expanded from the current size of 18, as stated in the bylaws, to at least 26. He stated that a size of 26 members is appropriate given the complexity of the duties of the Committee. Dr. Lederberg remarked she would prefer to specify a maximum size rather than a specific number of members. Dr. Emanuel stated that University faculty are required to spend too much time doing Committee work, suggesting the size of the Senate Research Committee needs to be reduced, not increased. Dr. Reitzes countered that the University currently places a greater emphasis on research issues than it has in the past, so more members are needed to carry out the duties of the Committee, not fewer members. Another member observed that Committee work at GSU is a heavy burden for faculty, but given where GSU is on the research learning curve, it is necessary. There was much additional discussion about the number of members that should comprise the Committee.

Dr. Reitzes then brought up the issue of the composition of Senate Research Committee membership (i.e.,
representation by faculty from the different colleges in the University). He noted this issue was not necessarily one the Committee must vote on at the meeting, but recommended the composition be modified to reflect the same proportional distribution of faculty members from the different colleges as is currently represented in the University Senate. Ms. Byrum asked how the composition of members of the University Senate is derived. Dr. Reitzes answered that it is based upon the overall composition of faculty in colleges across the University. Dr. Manson stated that modifying the composition may lead to rancor on the University Senate Nominations Committee. Dr. Lederberg noted that two-thirds of the Senate must approve any proposal the Senate Research Committee makes, so the proposal will need broad based support.

Dr. Lederberg further commented that the current Senate representation is overweight toward the natural sciences. Dr. Galchinsky noted the Senate Research Committee does not do a good job of representing the needs of Fine Arts or Humanities. Dr. Reitzes responded that University Senate faculty members from these departments don’t tend to volunteer to be on the Committee.

A vote was finally taken on specifying the number of senators on the Committee as being specified in the bylaws as a minimum of 26 and a maximum of 30 faculty senators, and increasing the number specified as being from the college of Arts and Sciences from 3 to 6. The vote was approved by those members present, with one abstention. Dr. Reitzes will modify the proposed language as specified, circulate to the Committee members, and submit to the Executive Committee for approval. He asked Dr. Lederberg to provide support for this change when the proposal is introduced at the next Executive Committee meeting.

Dr. Reitzes moved to the third order of business, a problem with University Computing that was raised during the last meeting by Dr. Netzel. Dr. Reitzes announced that an Ad Hoc Committee is being formed between the Senate Research Committee and IS&T to resolve these problems. The members from the Committee that will serve on the Ad Hoc Committee with IS&T are Dr. Elliott, Dr. Vaishnavi and Dr. Manson. Dr. Manson suggested asking Dr. Louis to be involved.

Dr. Reitzes brought up the fourth order of business, the review and revision of the new University policy defining a Principal Investigator. Dr. Reitzes noted the Executive Committee had requested the policy be modified to be more inclusive regarding Project Directors. He had provided a copy of the new language to incorporate this change to members, and asked that a vote be taken to approve the new language. There was some concern expressed by Committee members about what the term “Project Director” means, as it can imply different levels of responsibility in different organizational structures. Dr. Baumstark also expressed concern about the responsibility of the Department Chair in this context. Dr. Romski explained to Dr. Baumstark this refers to a specific circumstance where special needs are requested; and the Department Chair has responsibility to agree to provide resources to meet such special needs. A vote was taken on accepting the modified language as proposed in the document provided by Dr. Reitzes. The vote was approved by those Committee members present.

The fifth order of business brought up by Dr. Reitzes was the issue of recruitment and retention of minority faculty. He had provided members a copy of the 2003 Progress Report that was prepared by Dr. John Peterson on this topic. Dr. Romski noted it has been rumored that GSU has no minority faculty supplements, but she disagrees with this assertion. She recommended the Committee gather data on the number of minority supplements awarded to faculty at GSU. Ms. Barrett remarked she believes most of the minority supplements that have been received at GSU have been for students, not faculty. She indicated the Office of Research would be able to pull the data since the minority supplement award is maintained in a separate account. Dr. Reitzes proposed the Committee write a memo to Dr. Peterson to inform him that data on minority supplements will be gathered and provided to him, and to request that it be added to the Progress Report for 2003 and each year thereafter. A vote was taken on this proposal and unanimously approved by those Committee members present. The content of the memo to Dr. Peterson is as follows:
The Recruitment and Retention of Ethnic Minority Faculty 2003 Progress Report was distributed to the Senate Research Committee at our November 17th meeting. We applaud efforts to implement the policy on recruitment and retention of ethnic minority faculty. Therefore, we would like to see the report extended to cover the research activities of minority faculty.

We believe that a section should be added to the report specifically devoted to research accomplishments of minority faculty. This section should report the number of minority faculty and students who have received minority supplements grants and comparable funding from other sources. Further, it is appropriate to annually present data that summarized the number of ethnic minority faculty who have received internal and external support for their research. We believe that the research successes and accomplishments of minority faculty would be a valuable and important addition to the report.

The sixth order of business was presentation of the FY03 financial results of the GSU Research Foundation (GSURF) by Ms. Byrum. Ms. Byrum handed out a summary of the financial results to members. She noted there has been tremendous growth in GSURF revenue over the last several years because of the decision by the University administration to have all grant awards deposited into GSURF accounts. She stated there was about $43 million in grant revenues for FY03, in addition to a $2 million endowment from the Ron Brown Institute. She indicated there was positive investment income for FY03, which is good since the prior year GSURF experienced a net investment loss. She noted the new expense for a lobbyist, Van Scyoc Associates, engaged to help GSU get additional research funding from the federal government. Dr. Reitzes remarked that this has been a very good investment of funds for the University, since GSU has received approximately $2.4 million in grants as a direct result of the efforts of the lobbyist. Ms. Byrum indicated GSURF’s net assets increased by about $3.5 million for FY03, with $2 million of that attributable to the endowment from the Ron Brown Institute.

Ms. Byrum then reviewed the FY04 budget figures approved by the GSURF Board at its meeting in November. She noted an expense of $750,000 for the Dr. Binghe Wang chair, which was matched by the state. Dr. Lederberg reported the GSURF Board just approved another $750,000 to fund an additional endowed chair for FY05. There was concern expressed by some members whether this has been a good investment for the University. Dr. Baumstark noted that for the Wang chair, $200,000 has already been paid back by the researcher. It was generally agreed that this has been a sound investment, and funding an additional endowed chair should be positive for the University. Ms. Byrum reviewed the remaining expenses in the budget, and summed up by stating the GSURF Board approved a total of about $1.5 million in expenditures for FY04.

She then reviewed the balance sheet for GSURF, noting about $21 million in assets which includes $4.2 million in cash, $4.2 million in investments and $4 million in net fixed assets. She noted the net worth of GSURF is about $4 million and is split about 50/50 between unallocated and the colleges. Dr. Reitzes thanked Ms. Byrum for her presentation and recommended she do a similar presentation annually to the Committee each year going forward.

Dr. Reitzes then adjourned the meeting, but stated one item of business that had not been covered would be deferred until the next meeting on December 15, 2003 at 3:00pm. The deferred item is secrecy and the openness of research.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Brennaman