Opening Business
David Caudill called the meeting to order at 3:00. After minor changes were presented to the March 18 minutes, they were approved.

Procedural Question
David Caudill explained that there was a procedural question to be solved before staff senators could be elected. Would outgoing staff senators who were not elected Staff Council representatives be allowed to vote in the election? The council voted yes, at least in regards to this year’s election, and Caudill asked the Administrative Committee to look into the issue before next year’s election.

Senate Elections
There were 13 candidates, each of whom either introduced themselves to the council, or was introduced by David Caudill if they could not be present: Shealynn Allman, Joe Amador, Yvonne Chrimes, Susan Coleman (in absentia), Sandra Garber, Mary Anne Gaunt, Charles Gilbreath, Jodie Harper, Miriam Jackson, John Medlock, Carmela Patillo, Bill Prigge, Regina Speights, and Elisa Tate (in absentia).
The candidates elected to the four open positions were: Sandra Garber, MaryAnne Gaunt, Bill Prigge and John Medlock.

Introductions of Committee Chairs and New Members
Two new members, Kristal Perkins and Katina Akins, were introduced to the council. The new chairs of all committees were also introduced to the group:

Administrative Committee: Joe Amador
Campus Sustainability: Nigel Harris
Community Relations: Kimberly Moore and Anita Webb
Communications: Gretchen Cannon
Staff Development and Advancement: Jowanna Tillman
Staff Recognition: Amanda Brown
Work-Life: Mike Raderstorf

FACP Report
John Medlock reported on the progress of budget work by the Fiscal Advisory Committee to the President.

Decisions had been made by the Board of Regents on April 14 that clarified the university’s financial picture. First, the BOR had voted not to continue the Fixed for Four program, which kept entering students’ tuition rates the same for four years. Second, the Board had made changes in the number of credit-hours students must pay for before getting further hours for free; specifically, undergraduates now have to pay for the first 15 hours taken in each semester. Both changes will benefit Georgia State.

FACP is still making decisions, however, Medlock said. Specifically, they were waiting for a final decision from the BOR, due by the end of the day, on how much funding each university in the system will receive.

Early indications from the Provost were that Georgia State may be facing a 4 percent across-the-board cut, and that 3.7 percent of the remaining budget will come from federal stimulus funds, meaning they will no longer be available after two years.

President Mark Becker was to give a State of the University address on April 16, and Medlock encouraged everyone to attend. He was echoed by David Caudill. Caudill went on to point out that the Staff Council president is a member of FACP, but that membership normally lags behind the election cycle to coincide with the fiscal year. Caudill will replace Medlock on the committee after the end of the fiscal year on June 30.

Staff Council Retreat
There was a brief update on planning for the May 15 staff council retreat. This year’s retreat will be kept on campus out of respect for the public’s heightened awareness of the appearance of wastefulness, and in order to make it easier to bring in guest speakers. The location has not yet been finalized. John Medlock asked SC members to donate items that could be given out as prizes during the retreat, and David Caudill reminded the members
that they needed to treat it as a working retreat and not succumb to the temptation to return to their offices during the day.

Committee Reports

Campus Sustainability: Nigel Harris reported that the committee had chosen a regular time to meet, and that Kevin Chappell had been elected secretary. He also displayed a poster that the committee had displayed at the university Earth Day event. Attendees were encouraged to write their “go green” ideas on leaf-shaped pieces of paper, which were then glued to a poster representing a tree. Harris also passed around bookmarks with “go green” tips on them.

Staff Recognition: LaRose Raston reported that the committee was planning to get in touch with staff members in the Tuition Assistance Program to encourage them to apply to the staff scholarship. The committee also plans to assemble information on all awards available to staff and to encourage nominations.

Communications: Gretchen Cannon reported that the committee was continuing the monthly Staff Spotlight feature, and encouraged other committees to submit information for the SC web site.

Staff Development: Jowanna Tillman reported that the committee had brainstormed to produce a list of ideas for the coming year, and was still working to refine it.

Administrative: Joe Amador reported that the committee had been able to find new council members to fill two empty seats: Kristal Perkins and Katina Akins. The next thing on the committee’s agenda is to straighten out the voting rules for next year’s senate elections.

Community Relations: Kimberly Moore reported that the committee was already brainstorming ideas for the fall Benefits Fair, and also working to identify the appropriate person in Human Relations to work with to arrange this year’s event.

Work-Life: Mike Raderstorf asked the other committees to share ideas, and also warned the whole council that the combination of a Braves game and tax-day protests was going to make traffic unusually bad that day.

Senate committees
Many Senate committees have not yet met for this session, but several were able to report.

ISAC – Randall Alberts reported that the committee had awarded the technology fee funds for the year, and that a final report on the recipients would go to FACP and the provost next month.
Athletics – San Miller reported the Athletics committee hasn’t met yet. She also gave an update on the new plans for this year’s commencement ceremonies.

Budget: Bill Prigge reported the budget committee has recommended that the university’s strategic plan be taken into account as the university makes budget cuts.

Diversity: Kenee Stephens reported that the 2008-09 diversity plan will be posted online soon. She also said that the African American Male Mentoring Initiative has asked for funds from the university and the BOR.

Academic: Shelly Williams reported that the committee approved several concentrations and minors, and that a “repeat and replace” policy will come to a vote soon. “Repeat and replace” would allow students to re-take a course and replace their earlier grade with their new one.

Faculty Affairs: MaryAnne Gaunt reported that the university has acquired a second child-care center, and that a serious reconsideration of child care fees and other issues will be coming up soon.

New Business
John Medlock spoke on the university’s new social networking site, Panther Access to Web Services (PAWS). A Staff Council group has been created within the site, as well as committee subgroups. Relevant documents have also been posted to the site’s folders, including the staff council bylaws and the PowerPoint presentation given at new staff orientation.

There was also a reminder of the upcoming Walk at Lunch day on April 29. Those who are interested should meet in front of the recreation center at 11:45 a.m. for a walk to the capital and back.

Council members were also reminded of the upcoming Sparks Awards, to be held at 2 p.m. on April 28 in Speakers Auditorium. Staff Council Member Angela Turk is among those to be honored.