

Comments made to the University Council on April 25, 2006 by Nancy Felson, Chair, Executive Committee:

President Adams will see to the implementation of the Council-passed proposals for the inclusion of sexual orientation in the University's Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy and for Domestic Partnership Soft Benefits!

As Chair of the Executive Committee of University Council, I want to congratulate everyone whose hard work brought us to this decisive moment--first of all, you, President Adams, for courageously choosing to implement these two policies passed by UC in April 2004 and 2005, respectively. These measures will help our recruitment and retention of faculty, strengthen faculty and staff families, and place the University within the 21st century. I also would like to thank your advisers and staff in particular Provost Arnett Mace, VPs Hank Huckaby and Steve Wrigley, Legal Advisor Steve Shewmaker, and Administrative Assistant Meg Amstutz for their contributions to the resolution of this matter; members of Globes' Executive Board and Lambda Alliance who researched the issues and advocated for the implementation of these policies; faculty leaders who met with President Adams-Janet Frick, Irwin Bernstein, Susan Mattern-Parks, Sarajane Love, and me; and finally the members of Executive Council and University Council. All of you helped us build bridges of understanding regarding the two resolutions that are soon to become university policy.

This is a victory not for any individual but for UGA as a cohesive and egalitarian community. It is a victory for human rights and for civil rights. It is a victory as well for faculty governance which includes not only civility between constituents of the community but a productive spirit of collaboration, especially on issues that elicit divergent views. It is an affirmation of Article XV of the Statutes, which sets forth the role of the Council to set certain policies and limits the time in which the University President can exercise his veto of those policies.

I am especially proud that, over course of several months and a number of formal and informal meetings, we worked together and listened to and heard one another and that we let our understanding evolve through dialogue. (For those of you know literary theory, this is a very Bakhtinian moment.)

So, President Adams, your decision gives me confidence that other challenges that face our community can be resolved in a manner that respects the voices of faculty and staff and students, and takes into consideration the difficult challenges faced by administrators. All of us are committed to well being of the University of Georgia.

In this cooperative spirit, I would like to urge Council to send the proposal about shortening rush back to committee along with the charge that faculty and students be brought into a larger conversation or dialogue about:

- 1) why some faculty have concerns about rush and 2) why current and former members of these social clubs object to the shortening of rush (based in part on countless letters on the topic that we have all received). Once this dialogue has taken place, the Student Affairs Committee should resubmit their proposal to E.C., providing the full rationale for it and setting forth the objectives the change in policy is meant to accomplish.

Thanks, everyone, for the opportunity to serve you as chair of the Executive Committee. I will later move that Chair's Remarks be added to each agenda of the Council.