

Report to the University Council
Minutes of the Committee on Student Affairs of the University Council
Mon. April 10, 2005 4:00 pm in room 217 Holmes/Hunter Academic Building

Present:

Richard Dunham, Faculty Representative, Franklin College and CHAIR
Malcolm Adams, Faculty Representative, Franklin College
Rodney Bennett, VP for Student Affairs
Tucker Brown, Undergraduate Student Representative
Katie Sciorntino, Undergraduate Student Representative
Peter Shedd, Faculty Representative, Terry College
Robert Vandenberg, Faculty Representative, Terry College
Paul Welch, Staff Representative

Guests:

Jim Bove, Judicial Programs
Tom Burke, Student Affairs
Art Leed, Legal Affairs
Eric Atkinson, Student Affairs
Pat Daugherty, Student Affairs
Jan Davis Barham, Student Affairs

Mr. Dunham called the meeting to order at 4 pm.

Introductions were made and the minutes from previous meeting were approved after striking the proposed date of "Night Out."

The "Night Out" where committee members tour downtown Athens late at night on a Friday has been moved to the fall term. Dr. Bennett announced that Head Football Coach Mark Richt expressed interest in joining the group.

General updates followed the approval of the minutes:

Mr. Dunham expressed his special thanks to the students who served on the committee as they rotate off of the committee.

He also reported that the two "big action items" of the committee were going forward to the full University Council and had been put on the agenda by Executive Committee: a mandatory substance abuse program for all new undergraduate students and a shortened eight week (from ten week) new member education program for Greek letter organizations.

Mr. Dunham announced that The Tate II Committee along with other campus representatives forwarded a selection for an architectural firm for Tate II to the Board of Regents for approval on April 18th. That committee will also be adding new student members. Mr. Tucker added that the committee had gotten "bogged down" but was now

moving forward rapidly. Dr. Bennett said that construction timelines were aiming for a January 2007 start with proposed completion by Spring 2009. The Tate II project will also include renovation of the current structures.

New Business followed updates:

A proposal concerning membership requirements of UC committees from the Statutes and Bylaws Committee was circulated by Mr. Dunham for comments. The main change increases each member's term to three years. Drs. Shedd and Adams were in approval as the proposal attempts to make expectations of members more clear. The Student Affairs Committee supported the proposal unanimously.

Mr. Dunham reported that the Educational Affairs Committee has been struggling with two issues: a policy on instructor initiated withdrawals for reasons other than attendance and a proposed "Student Bill of Rights."

Instructor or institutionally initiated withdrawals encouraged a lively discussion. The EAC forwarded it to the SAC because the policy will have a direct effect on students. A copy of the rough draft was included with the meeting agenda for April 10. Dr. Vandenberg voiced concern that the proposed policy would limit instructor's ability to control the classroom. Dr. Adams wondered why an instructor would withdraw a student who was performing poorly since a student's performance is his or her responsibility. Dr. Shedd asked if the new policy was in line with the current Code of Conduct in the Student Handbook. Mr. Dunham responded that the current policy is vague.

Mr. Leed added that the policy is clearly aimed at student misconduct. The judicial process is dragging into grade change procedures and Judicial Programs feels like the policy needs to be clearer since they do not have the authority to remove a student from only one course. If a student is threatening, then they are removed from all courses. The current policy is too vague with too much cross over between the academic and judiciary. The committee decided to send the proposed policy back to EAC and to work with both Student Affairs Committee and EAC next fall, commenting that it is too complicated, the committee does not like it and will note the issue to next year's committee.

The Student Bill of Rights was circulated to all members. It was created by a student who has worked for its adoption at UGA. The EAC has been considering it and Mr. Leed added that Legal Affairs is reviewing it as well. He noted that many of the so-called rights were already codified in other places. His response to it is to direct students to what is already approved. Some of the language is too vague as well. (Ex: item four mentions "economic status.") Mr. Brown said that the idea was to provide a guide to students to negotiate the confusing terrain of the university. Dr. Adams asked if it could be adopted as a good will gesture without legal binding. Mr. Leed answered that if the UC approved it with its current language of "rights," then that this might not be possible and that the document could become legally binding.

Mr. Burke added that a centralized document such as this might meet SACS requirements for dissemination of information to students since it is a clear statement of student rights and responsibilities. Dr. Vandenberg added that if these “rights” already exist, then a document should simply reference those existing policies. Mr. Dunham suggested moving the issue to next fall as the members could study the issue further since so many members had strong reservations. Dr. Shedd added that we all could do a better job of making good information available to students and the community.

Dr. Bennett announced that the process for finding a new housing director is continuing. The second candidate was due to visit the campus during the week of this meeting. Open forums were being conducted with each of the candidates. One individual withdrew from the search, but Dr. Bennett was continuing to move forward with the other two.

Mr. Dunham wrapped up the meeting by thanking Dr. Bennett for his effective administration of the OVPSA and to the entire committee who took on such a large task from the Provost. He also expressed his gratitude to the OVPSA staff.

Mr. Dunham adjourned the committee at 6:01 pm and some members stayed to watch a video of the last “Night Out” which started at the Arch at midnight on a (slow) Thursday night this past fall semester and ended at Russell Hall around 2-3 am.

Submitted by: Paul Welch, Recording Secretary
Richard Dunham, CHAIR