

University Council Executive Committee

Report to University Council September 17, 2009

The Executive Committee was to meet on September 3, 2009. However, as no agenda items were forwarded to the Committee for consideration, the meeting was canceled. Today's Council meeting will, as a result, have no action items. The deadline for submission of action items for the next Council meeting is October 12.

I'd like to begin the informal portion of my report by thanking my predecessor Bruce Hollett and all of our outgoing committee chairs for their work in the 2008–2009 academic year. The important functions of this Council rely heavily on its volunteer leadership, and we have all been the beneficiaries of their time and efforts. I would also like to acknowledge those who have agreed to serve in 2009–2010, some of whom will be introduced today in standing committee reports. I look forward to working with all of you.

I'm going to claim the bully pulpit for a moment to ask each member of Council to commit to improving engagement between the Council and the University Community as a whole. I had the privilege of attending the UGA Teaching Academy's 2009 Academic Affairs Symposium last March, on the theme of communication and collaboration in the challenged university. One consistent element that emerged from discussions at the Symposium was a sense of disconnect between members of the University Community and the activities of its various governing and administrative bodies.

I believe that gap can be bridged in part by promoting access to information. This is something that the Council, thanks to the hard work of Rebecca Macon, her assistant Kristie Sartain, and their staff, already does well. The University Council website alone contains agendas that include materials on all action items, minutes that include standing committee reports, and a searchable database of all motions dating back to 1988. But the other essential elements of the Council's conduct are the discussions, arguments, and studies that take place in meetings of our standing committees and the Council as a whole—those interesting moments that don't get preserved in the official record.

All members of the Council have been elected or appointed to represent a specific constituency of the University Community. I would challenge each of us to find a way to inform that constituency of the relevant details of Council actions in a way that will heighten engagement. We are distinctively qualified to act as both filter and conduit to convey the nuances of the Council's activities to our colleagues and to bring their concerns and reactions back for appropriate consideration; and I would argue that we have a firm responsibility to do so actively.

If you have thoughts or ideas about this or any other issue that you would like the Council to take up this year, I would appreciate your sharing them with me.

Respectfully submitted,

Adrian P. Childs, Chair
apchilds@uga.edu
706-542-2765