

University Council Executive Committee
Report to Council
April 27, 2010

The Executive Committee met on April 13, 2010. The meeting began with elections. Scott Shamp was chosen as chair-elect for the 2010–11 academic year, where he will serve with the current chair-elect, Jeff Dorfman; Dr. Shamp will then serve as chair in 2011–12. Empty seats on the PRAC oversight committee were also filled.

The Executive Committee received and considered action items from the Curriculum Committee and the Educational Affairs committee. Following discussion all but one of these items was placed on the agenda for the full council. An item from Educational Affairs relating to the University's Pass/Fail policy was withdrawn by the committee for further consideration.

An additional action item, relating to policy on the furloughing of grant-funded employees, was brought to the committee by David Live. Because Dr. Live's proposal came with the support of signatures of at least 50 faculty members, it was automatically placed on the Council's agenda in accordance with our bylaws.

The meeting closed with updates from standing committees.

After that meeting, the Executive Committee also acted on a request from President Adams to constitute a Hearing Committee. The official response to that request was ratified by the committee and communicated on April 22.

There is a somewhat sporadic tradition of Executive Committee chairs using this final report for reflection on the past year. But I will pause here to entertain any questions that Council members have about the Executive Committee's activities before offering a few remarks in that spirit.

Certainly, there's no need for me to inform anyone that this has been a difficult year for the University. And yet this Council has done its work smoothly, efficiently, and effectively. This is due, in no small measure, to the service of our members, our standing and ad hoc committees, and our elected and appointed leadership, who have performed their duties conscientiously and purposefully. I extend my personal thanks to all of you for your hard work this year and every year.

But I must also acknowledge that the continued challenges facing our institution have brought about concomitant challenges to our morale and engagement as a body. A sanguine view of our work this year might interpret the fact that major policy pieces—like our 2010–20 strategic plan—were approved by Council without discussion as simply an indicator of how thoroughly and effectively our committees have done their jobs. But a more realistic interpretation recognizes that the ever-increasing competition for the time, energies, and focus of members of the University community has expanded in reaction to the current situation, reducing our ability and enthusiasm for engagement and deliberation.

In my first comments before this Council as Executive Committee chair, I drew upon conversations and concerns that emerged from the UGA Teaching Academy's 2009 Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium. In an act of almost musical cyclicality, that symposium's topic in 2010—"the New Normal"—is very appropriate to my remarks today. An essential element that emerged from discussions at this year's symposium is the need for "the New Normal" to include a reinvigoration of engagement and citizenship across the University. To treat our investment in the University, and its return investment in our community of practitioners and facilitators of scholarship and learning, in the spirit of good stewardship, we must continue to engage critically with, and to challenge and be challenged by, all aspects of the enterprise of public higher education. It is at these times, when the discussions are most trying and most difficult, that they are also the most important.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege working with all of you this year. For those who will continue to serve on the Council, I would ask your heightened engagement with its activities. For those who are rotating off of service, I would also ask your heightened engagement.

My thanks again for everyone's efforts. I hope that the end of the semester and the summer treat everyone well.

Respectfully submitted,

Adrian P. Childs, Chair