

September 4, 2001

MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE

The first regular meeting of the Faculty Senate of the College of Charleston for the academic year 2001-2002 convened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 4, in Room 116 of the Education Center, Speaker of the Faculty Hugh Wilder presiding. Fifty-four senators attended. The Minutes of the previous meeting (April 3 and 17, 2001) were approved as circulated.

The Speaker welcomed the Senate for the start of the new academic year, and appointed George Pothering as Parliamentarian for the Fall semester. Beverly Diamond was nominated from the floor by Shaun Nichols and elected as Speaker of the Faculty *pro tempore*.

Reports

Gary McCombs, Senior Vice-President for Business Affairs, with the assistance of Samuel B. Jones from Budgeting and Payroll Services, reported on prospects for the 2001-0002 College Budget. He said that if current economic trends continue, we are not likely to be as fortunate this year as last, when the impact of state-mandated cuts turned out to be a good deal less severe than had originally been projected. This year, the “magic figure” appears to be \$1,000,000: if the budget is not cut by more than this, we should be all right.

He then reviewed the way the College budget is divided into four categories: unrestricted funds, designated funds, restricted funds, and auxiliary enterprises. Last year, unrestricted funds accounted for 72% of the total operating budget of about \$88,000,000. It costs \$303,460 per day to operate the College, and no less than 81% of the money goes for instructional purposes. We have 456 roster faculty, and 554 non faculty employees; “benefits” average \$9,316 per person. No new faculty lines are anticipated, vs. the twenty-to-twenty five new lines of last year. Our fees, however, have increased only 4.1%, the lowest in the State. Funds allocated for what can be called “technology” account for between \$300,000 and \$500,000 a year, but there is a great deal of uncertainty in this figure. Mr. McCombs asked if there were questions he could answer.

Phil Dustan asked what happens to funds designated as *indirect costs* associated with graduate study, now calculated at 50%? The answer: these are pooled with the general funds of the College, and not identified separately. Are there any plans to raise fees charged students? Mr. McCombs mentioned something that President Higdon had been heard to say: if we want quality, we will have to pay for it. In business terms, the alternative to charging more is to hold down costs, by becoming more “productive” – but it is hard, Mr. McCombs said, to see just how much more productive we could become, since our operations are already substantially more efficient than other comparable institutions. Essentially, more funding is needed, from whatever source.

On another matter: he said that he was painfully aware of parking problems on and near the campus, but expected to have some good news about this in a few weeks' time. Caroline Hunt asked about the costs of providing security at remote parking lots, saying that some faculty were simply afraid to walk to them after dark. Mr. McCombs said that he was definitely aware of this, and Hugh Wilder added that that Public Safety has extended their bicycle patrols to these remote lots.

Tom Baginski asked if there were any other areas that could be looked at for possible new sources of revenue, apart from outright tuition increases? A plan is in place for long-term capital investment, Mr. McCombs answered, and this could be "raided" in an emergency – but everyone hopes that this will not have to happen.

The Speaker

Hugh Wilder noted that his term as Speaker had begun on May 15, and that he had been very busy over the summer months. First of all, the members of the Presidential Search Committee, including Trisha Folds-Bennett, Deana Caveny, and himself, together with George Pothering and some other senators, had already met with President Higdon in August and were impressed with his qualities of leadership – including the fact that he had wanted to meet with a group of senators right away. They had discussed several matters of concern, including infrastructure problems at the College; leadership issues (a number of important administrative positions were about to fall vacant, through retirements, at the same time); the absence of a campus "Master Plan"; long-range plans for the College in general; faculty morale and professional development, including salaries, workload, and the problem of sheer *overwork*; and benefits for adjuncts, along with the possibility of sabbatical leaves for professional administrators.

Mr. Wilder noted that he had also met separately with President Higdon and had given him a copy of the Senate's resolution, passed at the September, 2000 meeting, favoring an eventual national search to select Dr. Festa's successor in the office of Provost. Mr. Higdon had been interested in the President's Advisory Committee and what its role is or has been, and he had read the Faculty Newsletter, with the result that he had wanted to know, for example, about the Faculty Welfare Committee and various other committee initiatives now under way. In addition, the College has in place a "transition team," made up mostly of Trustees, but with some administrators and faculty participating, including the Speaker. This team was looking forward to suggestions from the faculty. All of this, Mr. Wilder thought, spoke well of the new administration.

Constituents' Concerns & Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at about 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bishop Hunt
Faculty Secretary