Chancellor’s Remarks

Chancellor Huckaby commended GSU for its progress as an urban research university and in particular for its nationally recognized achievements in degree completion initiatives.

Chancellor Huckaby commented on changes facing higher education. Institutions will be increasingly reliant on tuition and fee revenues to meet budgets and at the same time facing pressures to restrain from significant tuition and fee rate increases. Athletics will receive more scrutiny at the university system level with establishment of a Board of Regents athletics committee. The Board of Regents will also establish a task force to examine campus security/safety issues from a risk management perspective.

Chancellor Huckaby noted long-term strategic issues, including more success in graduating students and maintaining fiscal viability. The new funding formula will be outcome based rather than enrollment based, which should benefit GSU given the trajectory of GSU graduation rates in recent years. The goal is to increase graduation rates without a decrease in program quality. The system will continue to monitor and in some cases eliminate degree programs with very low enrollments and will continue to evaluate new degree program proposals in an integrated way from academic, facility, and fiscal perspectives. Merit raises on an annual basis remain a top priority as institutions address recruitment, retention, inequities, market, and compression challenges. The major challenge will be holes in the state budget in such areas as healthcare which will be $20 million for the University System alone.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of August 6, 2014, were approved as distributed.

University Senate Report

Dr. Fredrick outlined some of the major areas to be addressed by University Senate committees during 2014-15, including the template for academic program review; bylaws changes to reflect the new graduate studies associate provost position; expansion of admissions and standards purview to include graduate student-related standards; updating and streamlining of university administrator evaluation procedures; revision of student evaluation of instruction procedures to allow colleges to add discipline-specific and instructional methodology-specific items; Affordable Care Act-related faculty HR issues; health insurance for graduate assistants; sustainability strategic plan; and accommodation of electric cars on campus.

Enrollment Report

Dr. Renick announced record enrollments of freshmen and transfer students for Fall Semester 2014, a record number of students overall, and the first university-wide 400K-plus credit hour enrollment for one semester. Exact numbers were pending non-payment drops and other fluctuations, but year-to-date comparisons strongly suggested these records would hold for census.
Dr. Renick commented on the continuing challenge to maintain or increase graduate enrollments. The Fall Semester 2014 graduate enrollments were down less than in preceding years. Over the last 5 years graduate student headcounts are down approximately 750 while undergraduate enrollments are up approximately 3,300. On the other hand Education and Arts & Sciences showed increases in graduate students for Fall Semester 2014, and Dr. Armistead is working with all of the colleges to determine obstacles, capacity for growth, etc. to accomplish similar increases in the future. Dr. Becker noted that a 3:1 mix of undergraduates and graduates is the generally desired ratio and that GSU has flat-lined in PhD degrees conferred.

Dr. Berman reported a record enrollment for the Honors College with 260 new students. The average high school GPA and SAT score for this cohort were 3.8 and 1300.

Dr. Renick pointed out that in spite of decreasing numbers of high school graduates in Georgia and 1,000 fewer admission applications, GSU had increased freshman enrollments unlike most other institutions in the University System. This reversal was attributed to the revamped campus tour, the new Welcome Center, and new earlier follow-up strategies with applicants about admission, financial aid, scholarships, etc.

Athletics

Mr. Cobb, the new Athletic Director, spoke briefly about his vision for GSU athletics around four main themes of (1) relationships matter; (2) achieve success; (3) reward innovation; and (4) create traditions. Emphasis for GSU athletes will be placed on athletic success, academic integrity, and social responsibility. Selling more football tickets and raising external dollars will be immediate goals.

President’s Remarks

Dr. Becker commented on the rising awareness of GSU and fading of “best kept secret in Atlanta” perceptions. The Turner Field project has grabbed wide attention and reminded that GSU is no longer the commuter institution of the 1970’s. GSU is increasingly the first choice of new students. Approximately 800 students are on the waiting list for on-campus housing.

Dr. Becker announced an upcoming press conference in Washington, DC would highlight the role of GSU in the University Innovation Alliance and its mission relative to the Obama administration initiative, “First in the World”. Member institutions are: GSU, Arizona State, Iowa State, Michigan State, Ohio State, Oregon State, Purdue, University of California-Riverside, University of Central Florida, University of Kansas, and University of Texas-Austin.

Announcements

Dr. Kaminshine announced the College of Law formation of a legal services center for veterans on campus in collaboration with the Georgia Bar Association and the GSU ROTC.