Senate Sustainability Committee  
Meeting Minutes: November 14, 2017  
Centennial Hall, Rm 224

Attending in Person: Lauren Curtright, Jenni Asman, Trisha Kanan, Debra Snell, Alessandra Raengo, Dennis Gilbride, Robert Moore, Denise Dimsdale, Dan Bulger  
Attending via WebEx: Dajun Dai, Kathy Dolan, Pamela Gore, Regena Spratling

Business:
   a. Currently, there are significant differences between student fees on the Atlanta campus and Perimeter College campuses.
      i. On the Atlanta campus, there are two calls for proposals per year; the application period is one month; a committee votes on chartered student groups’ budgets and project proposals; the amount allocated to sustainability projects is $3/student/semester (this may be increased to $5). Highlighted project: Panther Bikes, $6455 to host the annual bike summit and travel to conferences.
      ii. Fees for sustainability are $2/student/semester, including summer semester, on all Perimeter College campuses except for Distance/Online. Because there is no separate budget for recycling at Perimeter College, funds from the sustainability fee on Perimeter campuses are used for recycling infrastructure and hauling.
   b. Compared to 10 other mandatory student fee allocations, the Sustainability Fee is the lowest; the Athletic Fee towers above all others at around $250; the Technology Fee is the second highest at around $75. The other fees are all less than $50 each: Recreation Programming; Student Activity Fee, Campus Programming; Student Center Fee; Health Fee; Transportation Fee; International Education Fee; Library Fee.
   c. Accountability of student groups is an issue: some groups have failed to complete the required steps to spend their awarded funds and have been cut off consequently; in some cases, faculty advisors have neglected their responsibilities by not signing off on spending. Student club leaders haven’t always ensured that clubs had advisors’ approval. There is a need for increased communication with advisors. Seen another way, the need to hold clubs accountable presents an opportunity for teaching students how to manage budgets.
   d. The call for proposals for FY19 is due in December on the Atlanta campus.
2. Other updates:
   a. SI is also working on, or looking into, grant applications for: 100 specialized recycling bins for Perimeter campuses; implementing a system to alert drivers
when parking decks are full; going towards use of biodiesel fuels by campus shuttle buses.

b. SI funding sources include a Candida Fund grant for LED lighting and payment of $125/month from the material recovery facility, which goes towards paying for recycling bins on campuses and fuel for trucks that haul recycling.

c. On all GSU campuses, custodial staff is separate from the recycling crew; recycling is single-stream now; student interns are helping with new bin signage.

3. Discussion of drafting a proposal from our committee for the Executive Committee’s consideration.

a. Related to Jenni’s presentation, we should address that GSU has exorbitant student fees. We could propose that some percentage of GSU’s cost savings from sustainability initiatives be rolled back into SI so its funding is not on the backs of students. Georgia Tech and Agnes Scott have successful Green Revolving Funds to serve as models.

b. We need to define our role, goals, and priorities as a committee. “Sustainability” needs a rebranding to include cost savings and security on the one hand. On the other, we should promote other values of sustainability initiatives for the institution: e.g., GSU’s attractiveness to students, health, and leadership on improving quality of life and contributing to the betterment of society in the region, especially because Atlanta has been named one of 100 Resilient Cities. Models to use as guidelines include the United Nations’ Global Compact.

c. Experiences of other Senate committees demonstrate that drafting a resolution is difficult and time-consuming and requires a limited scope (e.g., the committee on Cultural Diversity decided to narrow its resolution’s focus to addressing faculty diversity). Trying to make athletic events zero waste is one example of a specific goal for sustainability. Emory set a goal for the University as a whole to become zero waste by 2030. We should try to compete with that and look for more examples of successful models. We should join forces with the Staff Council’s committee on sustainability; we will meet with the Chair, Lucy Gentles.

Meeting adjourned at 10:55 am.