

University Senate Budget & Faculty Affairs Committees Joint Meeting Joint Meeting

Tuesday, October 16, 2012

Ground Floor Conference Room, SunTrust Annex Building

3:00 PM

Members Present: Lesley Reid, Jerry Rackcliffe, JoAnn Bacon, Michele Brattain, Margo Brinton, Jennifer Chiovaro, Peggy Gallagher, Charles Gilbreath, Skye Hardesty, Hugh Hudson, Miriam Jackson, Jeff Lazarus, Maryann Ronski, Rose Sevcik, Cherian Thachenkary, Volkan Topalli, Mary Beth Walker, Elizabeth West, Katherine Willoughby.

1. Lesley Reid welcomed both committees and introduced the presenters: Jerry Rackcliffe, Beth Jones, and Linda Nelson.
2. Jerry Rackcliffe presented on the budget.

During the Summer 2012, GSU experienced a loss of about \$1.8 million from an increase in unpaid credit hours. However, during Fall 2012 the University saw an increase in full-time students and paid credit hours. Overall, the University is \$8.5 million down, including budget cuts. However, expected revenues and expenditures are met, and it is possible the University will recover the loss during Spring 2013. Next Fall Semester the University will focus on what it can do to continue growth.

The University is moving forward with the Atlanta Life Building renovations and Science Park expansion projects. There is a plan for a \$24 million expansion of the Science Center: A new building 9 stories tall. The University has set money aside for the past 4 years from indirect cost recoveries, carrying forward 3% of our tuition each year. We have \$17 million already and are only \$7 million short of our goal. Because we are paying in cash, there is a lot of leeway in regards to what we can do with the space – for example, if we don't want to build out lab space.

3. Corin Sorteberg and Robert Elmore presented on the University Benefits plans.

Finance Administration has worked with our broker to see what kinds of benefits other institutions offer. It has been a 2 year process to come up with the new package we are offering. There are 21 benefits counselors available on campus to speak with employees about their options within this new plan for the next two weeks. These plans run the gamut in regards to salary – not every plan fits everybody. We offer guaranteed life insurance issue rates for employees and spouses. We have lowered rates for long and short term disability, and increased the salary limit. We have added 3 new plans: critical illness insurance, whole life insurance, and accident insurance. We offer

everyone (including retirees) a package called Lifestyle Benefits that covers legal services, identity theft, consultation on taxes, and roadside assistance. Vision premiums have been lowered by 10%, and dental maximum allowance has increased. The plans that we did have we tried to enrich and/or lower the cost, and we have added new plans going forward to see how they work. Counselors are here to advise employees and run insurance checks to see if you are in the plan that is best for you. Information is on the HR site.

Two BOR updates: First, The BOR Total Rewards Committee has been concentrating on reforming the University System's health care plans, looking at point of sales (POS), HMOs and high deductible plans. They want to enhance health care coverage through offering more products where employees make choices that determine what their plans are. The BOR is not going back to PPOs. Decisions regarding next year's plan will be made by March or April. If you wish to express concerns, contact Marion Fedrick (Vice Chancellor for HR) or Tom Lewis. Finally, the HR advisory committee is also looking at reforming joint staffing policy, so that all 35 institutions will be doing joint staffing the same way.

Lesley Reid reported on vote at BOR meeting to make significant changes to reduce debt liability in regards to the retiree health care benefit plan. Currently after 10 years of service, the system pays 70% of your costs. Now after 10 years, the system will pay 15% of costs, increasing 2 or 3% each year up until 30 years, at which point you will meet 70%. Corin Sorteberg and Robert Elmore reported having the infrastructure in place to be more proactive in educating and assisting employees for long-term planning regarding these new packages, but employees must make the time to take advantage of it.

4. Lesley Reid began the Budget Committee meeting.
5. Maryann Ronski presented a report of the Doctoral Funding Model Subcommittee.

The committee is looking forward to having this report finished. We were charged to: (1) examine current funding models in grad programs, (2) review appropriate benchmarks, and (3) make recommendations about appropriate assistantship models. We conducted a survey of 26 departments, with a 54% response rate. 80% of departments reported that first year grad students received assistantships, with a median of \$15,000, and a broad range of funding models. The most common type of funding was for teaching and research assistantships. Other sources included external grants, lab assistantships, area focus fellowships, and 2CI. Once funded, students were likely to be funded for 3-4 years, and in some cases up to 5 years.

Departments reported a range of criteria to judge if the students were making progress. Most often this involved progress reports. We found variability in competitiveness. Compared to other programs, GSU stipends are equivalent to peers', but the cost of living in Atlanta decreased the value of the stipend. Other issues included: annual 12 month packages that prohibited students from receiving additional summer funding; fees that were too high as a proportion of overall stipend (esp. summer fees); the amount of work required to maintain a stipend is higher than normal (ex: our students teaching 3-4 rather than 1-2 courses, as in other institutions); finally, stipends do not cover health insurance, and health care costs have continually increased.

This survey is a starting point for discussing the issue of graduate stipends. We were not able to get specific info from particular colleges or programs, so our results are generic across the university. Also, the data available regarding peer institutions was limited to the university level, so it has been difficult to compare discipline by discipline. We did find that university level awards given at other universities are often supplemental to other awards. GSU offers few supplemental awards. Additionally, our university level assistantships (2CI) were in the lower range of other institutions in the state. Most other institutions don't offer assistantship beyond 3-4 years, but ours are up to 6 years.

Our recommendations include: 1) increase stipends by the amount fees have increased, 2) explore how GA Tech increased stipends to reflect rising fees, 3) examine number of years for which students have been receiving funding, 4) address stipend amounts and how stipends are packaged, 5) examine ways to address student fee structure issue, 6) expand visibility for external funding, 7) provide incentive structures for students who get external funding, 8) examine ways to decrease the number of classes taught by assistants, 9) consider using survey data to help advertise our programs and recruit students. Committee members added recommendations and comments: 10) Define different types of assistantships and 11) assess how we track funding/work by students.

Our next step is to add committee recommendations to our report and send to the Executive Committee, then to the full Senate Committee.

6. Meeting was adjourned.