Provost’s Council  
September 18, 2008


Regrets: Sylvia Gist

1. Ms. Lowe presented updated enrollment information. Enrollment in the University College is up. The number of new freshmen is up by 17, and the number of fully admitted graduate students is up by 32 since the same time last year. 244 students were purged on September 16, 2008 because they had not yet validated. Dr. Miari noted that the Projection Committee was only 1 student off in its projections of enrollment for this year. Dr. Miari also noted that enrollment at the other public universities is down approximately 1.5%.

Dr. McCrank asked whether we can get counts that separate students who pay tuition and those who receive tuition waivers in order to smooth identification of current enrollees in the library. Dr. Jefferson pointed out that all students should have full library privileges when they are registered and enrolled. She suggested that Dr. McCrank liaise with IT for assistance and suggested to the whole group that we need to be very clear with IT staff about precisely what we need. Often differing terminology creates misunderstandings. For example, IT was not aware that hiring practices differ for faculty and civil service personnel. Dr. Jefferson also informed the group that policies for tuition waivers are being clarified.

2. The university community has had the opportunity to review the academic calendar and have had an opportunity to respond to it. No modifications to the calendar were suggested.

3. Dr. Jefferson shared information from Course Scheduling about the meeting of deadlines for publication of the course schedule bulletin. The deadline was moved up to August 25 in order to get all changes in by the end of September. Ms. Hill indicates that most departments complied with the August 25 deadline: 14 final proofs were submitted before August 25; 7 final proofs were received after August 25, with the latest received on Sept. 9; and 6 final proofs were not received, but confirmation was received that no corrections were needed. Dr. Jefferson reiterated the need for departments to plan course offerings carefully, with student needs in mind and to follow all process and procedures. One or two departments have changed almost every line in their proposed schedules, which negatively impacts students and their retention. Dr. Simyar offered that his department chairs have been instructed to prepare three-year plans for course offerings. Dr. Jefferson commented that many other schools do this and that it has a positive effect on retention and graduation when students can plan ahead. Dr. Sorell indicated that Arts and Sciences is attempting to implement three-year planning for all departments.
4. Proposals for changes in enrollment criteria were discussed. Dr. Miari reported that he is working on a model that would assign points to each of several criteria (HS GPA, ACT, Class Rank) and allow admissions decisions to be based on the score rather than on a single number such as the ACT score. Dr. Akujieze reported that those students who meet the department’s criteria for admissions don’t need remediation in math and graduate more quickly. He suggested that if the ACT requirement is no longer required, graduate students should be hired to teach the remedial classes he anticipates would be needed for underprepared students. If graduate students could be hired to teach, the number of graduate students would increase. Dr. Lipscomb suggested that we look at the ACT scores of regular admits to see what should be done in terms of policies and practices and admission decisions. Ms. Lowe reported that her office had created a “Second Look” practice; students who are not accepted initially were given a second look, and those with promise were admitted. It was a successful practice, but Ms. Lowe was asked to discontinue the practice. Dr. Pogue will revisit the issue. Ms. Lowe and others pointed out that schools that have done away with the ACT requirement tend to be schools with very selective admissions criteria who don’t admit students with ACT scores of less than 22. The general consensus was that university personnel must do research and analysis to counter the misunderstandings about university operations on the part of various entities. Dr. Miari’s model was positively received.

5. Dr. Jefferson shared the group advertisement for faculty positions that would be placed in the Chronicle of Higher Education. Several deans indicated that they weren’t aware of the need to submit information for the advertisement. They were reminded that all were informed in April. Positions that opened after the deadline will be included in the next advertisement, if information is submitted by the deadline. No information was given about when the next advertisement would be placed. Dr. Jefferson also reminded the members of the council about the Higher Education Resource Consortium (HERC) which is another venue for indicating open positions in the area.

6. Dr. Bowie called for concrete policies on the development of pilot programs, their assessment, and decisions concerning their continuance. Dr. McCrank suggested three steps: 1) create an experimental course and run it once; 2) run the course a second time as a pilot; 3) assess the course and make the decision to keep it or discontinue it. Dr. Jefferson suggested that Dr. Bowie and Dr. McCrank form an ad hoc committee to explore the issue and to craft policy drafts. A problem is that certain area will develop and offer a pilot without informing all campus stakeholders.

7. Per Dr. Westbrooks, there will be a moratorium on contract or extension courses until deans are all absolutely clear on policies and procedures. Faculty teaching extension or contract courses must have equal credentials to faculty hired to teach on campus, and policies must be followed to ensure that the university receives tuition payments made by students enrolled in extension courses.
8. It was brought up that individual units are being charged for moving. Dr. Bowie indicated that she had been charged for construction costs, dumpsters, overtime, and asbestos protection in relationship to her move to Douglas Hall. Dr. McCrank indicated that he had been charged for the move from Douglas Hall to the Academic Library. Dr. Sorell indicated that CAS has born some of the costs for moving offices from HWH to the Academic Library during asbestos removal.

9. Dr. Simyar protested that there are too many meetings that run too long. Further when meetings such as the Provost’s Council or PED are rescheduled, Deans may have to reschedule other meetings they have called to further university business. Many long meetings interfere with the ability to do the necessary work of the university.

10. Dr. McCrank reported that 287 students attended the open house at the library. He pointed out that the university lacks a mechanism to establish basic information literacy for students.

11. Dr. McCrank reported that negotiations are ongoing with Blackboard. He also announced that all archived materials on Blackboard must be removed before they disappear. It may suit the university to move to an alternative course shell provider since Blackboard is very costly.

12. Dr. Balogun indicated that the regalia he had been provided with was filthy. Dr. Jefferson suggested that faculty using donor robes have them cleaned after wearing them and before returning them to the university.