

Meeting Minutes
Committee on Student Affairs, Religious Life, and University Relations
March 2, 2010

Committee Members Present: Scott McGinnis, Carol Ann Vaughn Cross, Greg Laughlin, Vicki Rochester, Danielle Cruthirds, David Loudon, Mark Castle, Garry Atkins, Mary Sue Baldwin, Matt Kerlin, Lauren Taylor, Philip Poole. Non-members attending: Allison Dearing, Angie Smith, Cherie Feenker, Chris Metress, Ashley Floyd.

McGinnis called the meeting to order at 3:00 P.M. and announced the agenda:

(1) announcements and brief business; (2) update on the Dean of Students search; (3) update on work of the ad hoc committee on sexual violence; (4) discussion of student disciplinary process.

McGinnis announced that he had been asked to serve the remainder of Betsy Dobbins' term as committee chair due to her leave this semester. He noted the name change and reconfiguration approved by the committee last term has been forwarded to the handbook committee of the senate for incorporation into the handbook and website. McGinnis passed along a question from the Faculty Senate Chair Robin Snyder as to whether or not the committee had been consulted last fall regarding the new student fee, and the committee answered in the negative.

Dean of Students Search

Carol Ann Vaughn Cross, the committee representative to the dean search committee, reported that two candidates had been brought to the campus last term for a thorough set of interviews. While each had merits, the search committee did not feel comfortable recommending either for the position. They are now planning to reconvene and consider the possibility of hiring a professional search agency to aid with the search.

Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Violence on Campus

Vicki Rochester, chair of the committee, described the composition and work of the committee. The ad hoc committee is made up of Vicki Rochester (Nursing, Chair), Garry Atkins (Assoc. Dean of Students), April Robinson (Minister to Students), Mary Sue Baldwin (Assoc. Provost), Laura Lee (Adult Education), Jessica Cunningham (undergrad student representative), Mike Coppage (Campus police), Angie Smith (counseling) Ashley Carroll (psychology), Cherie Feenker (grad student representative).

Rochester reported that after much research the committee had identified two tasks: (1) develop a comprehensive website that would give key information in a user-friendly way; (2) design and promote education components for the entire campus with an anticipated start date of fall 2010. The draft website had been completed and is now under review. Rochester then introduced Allison Dearing, a Samford and Cumberland Law alum who works locally with domestic violence issues. Rochester reported that she and Dearing were collaborating to apply for a U.S. Department of Justice grant to support a comprehensive education program for the campus. The grant covers a three-year period and may be worth up to \$300,000. The application is due in March and the results should be known by the summer.

The next step Rochester anticipates is a meeting with the President's cabinet. McGinnis observed that the cabinet should be encouraged to adopt and support the recommendations of the committee regardless of the whether the grant is obtained.

Kerlin reported on preliminary data from the University Ministries student survey that supported the ad hoc committee's findings and affirmed the direction the group was headed.

Discussion of Student Disciplinary Process

McGinnis introduced Chris Metress (University Fellows Director) and Ashley Floyd (Associate Director), who had requested time before the committee to discuss issues arising from a student discipline case last fall. McGinnis stressed that it was not within the committee's jurisdiction to review the outcome of the case itself but only to consider and make recommendations concerning procedural issues.

Metress and Floyd raised questions centering on (1) faculty involvement in the disciplinary process; (2) the opportunity/procedure for students to appeal a conviction and/or punishment; and (3) the minimum punishments outlined in the handbook. Atkins described the procedure as it exists today, including the responsibility of the chair of the Samford Life committee to appoint the faculty members of the values council and the appeals council. Much discussion ensued.

Atkins shared his desire to initiate a wholesale review of the disciplinary process, and the committee members supported this initiative and expressed a desire to be represented in this process.

Loudon moved that the committee endorse a review of the Values Violation Procedure Guide and the relevant sections of the Student Handbook by appropriate parties at the earliest feasible time. The motioned was seconded and approved unanimously.

There being no further business, McGinnis adjourned the meeting at 4:35 P.M.