Faculty Senate Minutes - April 27, 2001

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Faculty Senate Special Meeting

April 27, 2001


**Members Represented by Proxy:** J. Butts (E. Harrison), M. Cobb (M. Gregg), D. Douglas (K. Davis) D. Goff (A. Kaul), A. Jaffe (D. Hunt), J. Smith (D. Alford).

President Laughlin called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m., indicating that she convened the special meeting to share the latest information on the AY 2001-2002 (FY 2002) budget. President Laughlin distributed a handout of planned budget reductions and provided a brief overview.

Questions and discussion focused on the budget reduction for Academic Affairs. At nearly $4.8 million, the cut to Academic Affairs constitutes 77.5% of the total $6.1 million university reduction.

Key themes/issues which emerged in discussion include:

- The cut to Academic Affairs (77.5%) is disproportionately large in comparison to Academic Affairs’ share (less than 70%) of the total E & G budget. When cuts to the research area (1.8%) are factored in, the damage to the academic area is greater still.
- The size of the cut to Academic Affairs contradicts the administration’s stated commitment to protect academic programs and the priority given to academics in the university’s strategic plan. The actual priority appears to be on protecting "infrastructure" at the expense of academics.
- The decision making process regarding the cuts is unclear. The figures were distributed and discussed in a Cabinet-level meeting, but no vote of approval was taken, and no formal recommendation to President Fleming was made. The perception is that the figures represent "the president’s cuts." While the president and vice-presidents clearly did not create the budget crisis, the process of allocating remaining resources is suspect.
- Provost Griffin has lobbied President Fleming strenuously but unsuccessfully to reduce the size of the cut to Academic Affairs.
- It is essential that the Faculty Senate take action in opposition to the announced cuts and the process of deciding them. At least one senator recommended calling for a vote of no confidence in President Fleming.

President Laughlin established that a quorum existed for the conduct of business.
J. Palmer moved, and W. Scarborough seconded, that the Faculty Senate adopt the following resolution:

[BEGINNING OF RESOLUTION]

The Faculty Senate condemns the present plan to assign 77.5% of the university’s $6,156,698 FY 2002 budget reduction to Academic Affairs. The proposed cuts, substantially in excess of Academic Affairs’ proportionate share of the total budget, imply that academics and research hold secondary importance within the university. The Faculty Senate strongly urges the university leadership to reconsider proposed budget reductions immediately.

[END OF RESOLUTION]

There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

President Laughlin adjourned the meeting at approximately 4 p.m.

Minutes taken by Michael Forster, Faculty Senate Secretary