

Faculty Senate meeting with Erroll Davis - January 28, 2010

Mr. Davis began the meeting by stating that the current trends of increasing student enrollment and decreasing state funding were "unsustainable". He feels that a new direction is needed but it is not entirely clear how these two incompatible trends can be reconciled. There is \$140 million in stimulus funding that he would like to apply towards new ideas rather than using it as a temporary patch in the budget shortfalls. He also suggested that it would be good if we can get more students to graduate in four years or less.

Community Colleges: Mr. Davis feels that there is "no political will" to move the community colleges into the technical college system at this point in time. The technical colleges are interested in offering up to 40 courses that can transfer to the USG schools. The USG is not interested in setting up a comprehensive system for transferring credits from technical colleges to all USG institutions. The transfer of technical college courses beyond the mini-core will be negotiated by each individual institution in the USG.

Furloughs: Mr. Davis thinks that we could have six furlough days again next year if there are no new ideas about how to cut structural costs. Some people in state government feel that the governor's proposal is too optimistic, so the actual budget could end up being worse than the proposed budget. Student tuition could be increased by \$1000 to reach the median tuition of state universities in the Southeast. He cautioned that a dramatic tuition increase might not help much in the long run if the state legislature interprets the increase as a sign that we need less support from the state.

Adjuncts: Mr. Davis said that increasing the number of adjunct faculty is not a good long term solution to the budget problems. Adjunct faculty do not engage students outside the classroom. In addition, adjunct faculty do not contribute to institutional service like full-time faculty.

Tenure: Mr. Davis feels that tenure is not threatened at the moment. However, he did say that tenure was not meant to cover "insubordination" and other extreme behaviors. If tenure is abused, the abuses could be used as political ammunition to revoke tenure privileges.

Is the USG slowly moving in the direction of privatization?: Thirty-eight percent of the USG budget comes from the state. This percentage is less at GaTech and UGa. We may be moving in the direction of privatization whether we like it or not. The long term challenge will be to increase sources of funding that are not from the state budget or tuition.

Mr. Davis would like to see more collaboration and coordination between USG institutions. This includes the centralization of administrative services (example: ADP). He has never fully understood the need for having upper-level degrees that are offered by regional universities.

The role of technology in a budget crunch: Mr. Davis questioned whether we still need computer labs when students can buy laptop computers for \$500. He suggested that it might make sense to have fewer computer labs and spend more on wireless connectivity for student laptops.

Throughout the meeting, Mr. Davis repeatedly emphasized the need to think of innovative approaches to using our resources more efficiently. He called for defining priorities, then budgeting accordingly rather than simply doing business as usual.