

Minutes of the Emory Faculty Council

February 15, 1994

Present: D. Danner, W. Dillingham, S. Gebhart, B. Greene-Plauth, M. Gutterman, A. Hartgraves, S. Jinks-Robertson, M. Kaufman, H. King, F. Lechner, C. Lemons, R. Letz, E. Navarro, H. Ragsdale, S. Sherman, L. Smith, D. Treadaway.

Frank Lechner, Chair of the Faculty Council, opened the meeting at 3:15 p.m. The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

Harriet King, Vice-Provost for Academic Affairs, reported on the recent conversations held by members of the Council and the Priorities Committee with about 300 faculty. Among Emory's strengths noted by participants were endowment, physical plant, location, reputation, and faculty. Weaknesses included Atlanta, inadequate support for faculty, lack of vision, too much bureaucracy, weak overall governance (due to unit autonomy), and failure to live up to promise. Some responses were contradictory; for example, faculty found students improving and not sufficiently intellectual. Members commented that faculty morale was high but tenuous and that Emory could do more to participate in the surrounding community. Many expressed appreciation for the process and the fact that such conversations were held. The council decided to follow up on suggestions that these conversations be made a regular event, so that over time all faculty will have an opportunity to participate.

The Council continued its discussion about Emory's overall direction, roughly guided by the question what Emory can and should do to become a distinctive research university. Some members questioned the need to look for a distinctive or unique thrust, since it is more important to do a few central things well and remain comparable with other universities. However, others emphasized Emory's opportunity to take advantage of its special location, history and resources in an academically meaningful way; examples offered were that of a museum of slavery (Navarro), links with the Atlanta University Center and a move toward more collaborative learning (Smith), building on Emory's concentration of health-related programs and strengths (Lechner), making Emory a more international institution by capitalizing on the Carter Center (Gutterman), and moving toward learning-without-boundaries (Ragsdale).

Others noted the need for an overall vision (as President Laney tried to articulate in his speeches--Lemons), preferably produced not by looking to other institutions like Harvard and Yale (which some found a bad Emory habit) but by looking inside (Kaufman, Ragsdale), though changes in society toward more diversity and international integration will require Emory to adapt (Gebhart). Many members noted a need for more faculty involvement in charting Emory's direction and formulating specific policies. Suggestions for improvement included faculty town meetings on all major new initiatives (Smith), faculty representation on the Board and on the executive committee (Hartgraves), Senate involvement in constituting in all special committees to avoid loaded ad-hoc committees (Kaufman), faculty initiation of and involvement in the earliest formulation of new policies to avoid being merely reactive (Gutterman, Lechner), and institutionalizing Interim President Frye's initiatives so that faculty involvement in governance remains secure (Hartgraves). Dr. Lechner will convey such faculty concerns to the new president.

Adjourned at 5:00 p.m.