

Minutes of the Emory Faculty Council

April 12, 1994

Present: P. Castellano, D. Danner, W. Dillingham, B. Frye, R. Greenberg, B. Greene-Plauth, M. Gutterman, A. Hartgraves, S. Jinks-Robertson, M. Kaufman, H. King, K. LaGree, T. Lancaster, F. Lechner, C. Lemons, R. Letz, E. Navarro, U. Neisser, H. Ragsdale, R. Schlant, J. Scott, S. Sherman, L. Smith, J. Zaidan.

Frank Lechner, President of the Senate and Faculty Council, opened the meeting at 3:15 p.m. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Neal Smith, Chair of the University Research Committee, reported on the work of the committee this year. He provided data showing the success of the committee in providing seed money for research and described new procedures that might serve faculty better. Dr. Lechner thanked him and his colleagues for their service and on behalf of the council will write to the Dean of the Graduate School to stress the importance of internal research funds to the faculty as a whole.

Dr. Lechner gave the floor to Deans Raymond Greenberg (Public Health) and Kevin LaGree (Theology), who had been invited to report on conversations the deans have held concerning Emory's direction. In their comments, they stressed the convergence they perceived between the priorities that emerged from this year's faculty conversations and the priorities emphasized by the deans, for example in the areas of teaching/research and community. The deans were especially interested in pursuing opportunities for cross-unit/division cooperation, possibly by giving the Provost additional authority in this area. They conveyed their sense that with Billy Frye's assistance the deans had become a cohesive team and looked forward to further discussions with groups of faculty such as the Council to follow up on the priorities outlined this year. Speaking for the Council, Dr. Lechner expressed the hope that this occasion would be the first step toward more regular interaction between deans and faculty bodies.

Interim President Frye then described the background to the scheduled visit and lecture by Khalid Muhammad of the Nation of Islam, invited by the Black Student Association. While expressing concern about the irregular manner in which the invitation came about and the unfortunate timing of the event at the end of the semester, Dr. Frye emphasized that he felt at this stage that free speech concerns should prevail and that the lecture thus should not be cancelled. However, he had not made a decision and asked members of the Council for their views, indicating we might need to work toward a policy dealing with matters of this sort. Of special concern to him was the fact that Muhammad's visit would coincide with "Freaknik," when black students from around the region were expected to come to Atlanta to party; this made the event more unpredictable and the task of maintaining security that much greater. Most members endorsed Dr. Frye's position that on balance the interest in free speech even for controversial speakers should guide the decision, provided the necessary security arrangements could be made. Some members, however, stressed that Dr. Frye would be well within his rights to cancel the event, since it had not been properly arranged and could pose an unacceptable risk.

After Dr. Lechner reminded members that the Senate would take up speech-related issues at its next meeting, this meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.