

Minutes of the Emory Faculty Council

18 November 1997
Room 400 Administration

I. Welcome and Announcements

Faculty Council Chair Bill Cody called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m., and welcomed all members to the meeting. Council Chair Cody announced that the January meeting of the Council would be an extended session to review the plans for implementing both the recommendations from the Teaching Commission and the Strategic Plan Report. He then noted that the January meeting would convene at the Houston Mill House between 3:15 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

II. Presentation and Approval of Minutes of 21 October Meeting

Faculty Council Chair Bill Cody presented the minutes of the 21 October 1997 Faculty meeting. The Council approved the minutes.

III. Progress Report on the Strategic Plan

Chancellor Billy Frye reported on the current status of the Strategic Plan, which is the culmination of extensive, year-long conversations across the University concerning the draft proposal prepared for the Board of Trustees in May 1996.

The new outline now consists of five parts. The first part consists of a rehearsal of the context of the report, Choices & Responsibility, and the charge from the Board that grew out of the report. The second part sets out the objectives that emerged from discussions about Choices & Responsibility, with particular emphasis upon the issues of excellence and prevailing university research norms. The third part consists of recommendations, organized around six objectives, which will attempt to strike a balance between concreteness on the one side, and fluidity on the other. The fourth part attempts to summarize briefly unit plans that are consonant with, but not identical to, the strategic plan growing out of Choices & Responsibility. The fifth and final part looks toward the next steps of implementing the plan, noting especially the limitations and requirements that inform teaching, research, and interdisciplinarity at Emory.

Chancellor Frye expressed his hope that the document would continue to foster the kind of dialogue that would advance the excellence of the University and the values it embraces. Through improvements in the planning and implementation processes, in which decision-makers will have the opportunity to assess their proposals in relation to programmatic goals of the strategic plan, a more coherent ethos may evolve within the University.

IV. Report on New Faculty Orientation

Interim Provost Rebecca Chopp reported on the orientation program in which more than thirty new faculty members participated. Stressing that Emory is an intellectual community to which new faculty members struggle to belong, Interim Provost Chopp outlined the response of her office to help facilitate the transitions of newcomers into the Emory community. A panel of three "senior" faculty persons, together with President Chace and Interim Provost Chopp, addressed a range of concerns with new faculty members. Two further meetings of this group are proposed within the academic year.

V. "Teaching at Emory" Revisited

Interim Provost Chopp reported on the process that has been followed regarding the report of the Teaching Commission. Numerous luncheons with members of the Teaching Commission and faculty drawn from across the University have been conducted to discern the critical responses of the Emory community. These responses, in turn, have been reported to the Teaching Commission for their consideration. In addition, an all-university faculty meeting was convened on 11 November to discuss the report. Major questions that have arisen focus on skeptical readings of the intent of the report: Is it mere window dressing for the outside world? Is it the prelude to an era of surveillance and greater regulation? Interim Provost Chopp addressed these issues directly, noting that the principal intent was to foster initiatives in teaching that would enhance both research and interdisciplinarity. Noting the need for a commission on research, Interim Provost Chopp observed that this might be an ideal way to extend the questions of interdisciplinarity. She added that the findings of the Commission on Teaching had been the principal topic of discussion at the November meeting of the Board of Trustees.

VI. Report from the President of the University

President Chace reported on the successful resolution of the issues that had arisen between the University and several bishops of the United Methodist Church regarding appropriate religious practices in University chapels. He further noted that the majority of those present at the Trustees meeting had been devoted to the Report from the Commission on Teaching.

VII. Consideration of SGA Resolution on Disabilities

Assistant Vice President Robert Etheridge reported to the Faculty Council on the numerous ways in which the University has attempted to respond to the SGA Resolution on Disabilities. He alerted the Council to the escalating numbers of students who fall under the federally mandated disabilities guidelines and, therefore, require assistance that has substantially exceeded University expectations. He concluded by outlining the expansion of services that he envisions to accommodate this unexpected increase.

VIII. Other Business

The Faculty Council moved that a resolution of appreciation be extended to the Reverends Susan Henry-Crowe and Sammy Clark for their judicious leadership in resolving the policy conflict between the University and some of the bishops of the United Methodist Church regarding appropriate religious practices in University chapels. The resolution was unanimously adopted, and the Secretary was directed to communicate the resolution to both chaplains.

Respectfully submitted,

David S. Pacini, Secretary