Faculty Advisory Committee to the President  
Meeting convened 4:05 PM, October 12, 2012

Committee members present: Jason Coy, William Danaher, Marcello Forconi, Kristen Gentile (secretary), Edward Hart, Stephen Litvin, Tyler Mobley, Robert Podolsky (chair), Carwyn Sharp, Jen Wright

Committee members absent: Conseula Francis

Also in attendance: George Benson, President; Brian McGee, Chief of Staff and Senior Policy Advisor to the President

Agenda items

Introduction of the committee members

Role of this committee
- President Benson: The President sees this committee as a two-way street, as both a vehicle to address what faculty members are concerned with on campus and as a way for him to get feedback. He also views the committee has a way to make faculty members aware of what is going on with the Executive Team and the Board of Trustees.

Comprehensive Fundraising Campaign
- President Benson: The College is currently in the quiet phase of the campaign. The campaign will not go public until 50-60% of the funds have been raised. This campaign is working to build the institutional fundraising pipeline, which continues to grow despite the current economic climate.
- President Benson: Because of the young age of the College’s alumni (average age of 29 years), parents are an important source for fundraising.
- Committee question about whether the priorities for the campaign have already been decided. President Benson: The priorities have been decided by the individual schools and bubbled upwards.
- President Benson: The President stressed the need for hiring experienced, professional fundraisers. The College’s work to hire such professionals has helped lead to the increased fundraising in recent years.
- Committee question about how the priorities for the campaign map on to the Strategic Plan. President Benson: They do at their core, and the Strategic Plan is reexamined each year.

Strategic plan
- President Benson: There have been minor tweaks under consideration, in part because of the need to address the changing business landscape of Charleston. The emerging business interests of Charleston include aerospace, digital media/software, and healthcare/biological sciences.
- Committee question about whether basic needs of the College and faculty are being marginalized in the Strategic Plan. President Benson: They are not being marginalized but
need continued attention in future budget cycles. He recognizes that all operating budgets are too small and that people are stretched too thin.

Assessment and accountability for IT
- President Benson: This issue is getting the attention of the Board of Trustees. He and they are aware of issues concerning classrooms and wireless connectivity. There are plans in place to improve IT resources, along with two forms of assessment--an outside review and an internal survey--being used to understand IT needs.

Athletic conference realignment
- This item was not on the committee’s agenda, but was added by President Benson because it is time sensitive.
- President Benson: The College leadership is discussing the possibility of moving to the Colonial Athletic Association (CAA). The CAA is also looking at other possibilities for new member institutions. The possible move was in part prompted by the ongoing realignments in the so-called power conferences. CAA membership at the College needs to be considered in part because it is unclear what the future of the Southern Conference is.
- President Benson: If the College joined this conference, the CAA would stretch up and down the East Coast with the College as the southernmost school. It would allow for the College to have a greater fundraising and marketing presence in the Northeastern corridor. Historically the College’s tuition and donor bases have come from the Northeast, not South Carolina.
- President Benson: This move is also an academic one because it aligns us with schools similar to us, such as the College of William and Mary. In addition, the CAA mandates that the home institution provide academic services and support for the visiting school; as a result, CAA institutions provide significant academic resources for visiting student-athletes.
- Committee question about the effect of travel on student-athletes. President Benson: Of the College’s 21 sports, only seven will play all of the schools in the conference. Possible changes in travel time for student-athletes have been examined, and there will only be a slight increase.
- Committee question about the effect on the College’s in-state/out-state student ratio. President Benson: There is nothing mandated about this ratio. Applications are expected to increase dramatically as was seen with Northeastern when they joined the CAA in 2004. This would allow Admissions to be more selective. However, we are not trying to change the percentage of out-of-state students attending the College.
- Committee question about external pressure to expand the College’s athletic offerings. President Benson: The College is not interested (and will not be pressured) to add a football program. The next intercollegiate sport that will be considered is lacrosse.
- President Benson: The next step is for the Board of Trustees to make a determination. There are differences of opinion within the Board.

Issue of Regulatory Relief
This discussion was initiated by President Benson and was not on the committee’s agenda.
President Benson: A discussion is under way about how to secure some relief from state regulation in such areas as Human Resources, purchasing, and building. Regulatory relief could also allow the College to increase tuition to be more on par with other state institutions. Different options exist for securing regulatory relief.

Committee question about whether regulations cost the College more money than the state provides. President Benson: They probably do not, unless one factors in the state’s current pressure to hold down in-state tuition.

Committee question about merit funding for universities as mentioned in Governor Haley’s recent comments. President Benson: Thus far, the Legislature has not seemed interested in this change, although the President has discussed some ways to implement performance funding with various state leaders.

Committee question about the building of the new apartment complex near the Sottile Theatre. President Benson: It is private, being built by Anthony McAllister. The project is not affiliated with the College. Mr. McAllister is sensitive to the concerns of the College and is listening to feedback about the College’s wants/needs. The President is also aware of the potential issues with building noise and the Simons Center, and it appears the contractors are trying to be sensitive to these issues.

Online course evaluations

President Benson: He is aware of the issues regarding the response rates. He will speak with the Provost about how the system is not working and possibilities to change or incentivize participation.

Committee notes that other faculty committees have worked (Faculty Educational Technology Committee) and are currently working (Faculty Welfare Committee) on this issue.

Assessment and accountability for Deans and Chairs

This topic was briefly discussed, with some members observing they had not been given a recent opportunity to provide input on dean and chair evaluation.

Meeting adjourned 5:10 PM.
Submitted by Kristen Gentile, Secretary