

Minutes Faculty Meeting



Wednesday, September 21, 2005
3 p.m., room 170, University Hall

121 faculty members present; President Bloodworth called the meeting to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda Items

I. Report of the President – see Attachment A

II. Honorary Designation Committee – Professor Joe Greene, Chair

Proposal – That the Walton Way entrance fountain be dedicated to Mr. Russell A. Blanchard. See **Attachment B** for the full text of the proposal.

Discussion – none

Vote – unanimously in favor of the proposal.

III. Announcements

- A. Dr. Deborah Richardson – Reminder of the fall lecture series presented by Psychology. The first, on October 7, focuses on anxiety and depression.
- B. Dr. Charlotte Price – Reminder of the ASU Health Fair coming October 5. The fair is free; 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at Christenberry Field House.
- C. Chief Jasper Cooke – Thanks for faculty support of Lamar Elementary School. More than 80 books have been sold, and volunteer readers have been scheduled through January, 2006.
- D. Dr. Linda Banister – Reminder that the Augusta Opera has returned to ASU. There will be two performances the weekend of September 23. ASU faculty may attend free with their ID. Dr. Banister also reminded faculty of the Lyceum events approaching, including *Lelavision* on September 29.
- E. Dr. Peggy Geren – Announced a Phi Kappa Phi symposium on October 7, part of a year-long series of lectures.
- F. Ms. Michele Ellington – The Alumni Association Barbecue will be on October 7. Tickets are available at the at Maxwell House.

- G. Dr. Lillie Johnson – ASU Theater's production of Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice" begins Oct. 20 and continues through Oct. 23. All performances take place at 8 p.m. in the Maxwell Performing Arts Theater, except for the 3 p.m. matinee on Sunday, Oct. 23.
- H. Mrs. Maria Darley – The Career Center and various Liberal Arts Departments will be co-sponsoring a series of Career Spotlights focusing on various professionals in the field that have backgrounds in liberal arts. The Career Spotlights will start on October 3 and continue on every Monday, 1-2 p.m. in University Hall 220, through November.
- I. Mrs. Mellie Kerins – Reese Library hosts an October 4 special event for Georgia Archives Week focusing on J. Louis Sayre, a local composer, band leader and musician. ASU faculty and students will perform his works, 2:30 p.m.
- J. Vice President for Student Services and Dean of Students Joyce Jones – thanks to the cooks and other volunteers who served at the Pig Out September 21. The Faculty-Staff Golf Tournament will be Friday, September 23.
- K. Mr. Eddie Howard – Thanked the faculty for their active participation in the Constitution Day events.
- L. Mrs. Janice Williams Whiting – There will be a lecture on the eye and color vision on Thursday, September 29, 2005.

The meeting adjourned at 3:32 p.m.

Attachment A

President's Report to the Faculty September 21, 2005

In my report this afternoon, I want to return to a subject that I mentioned in my state of the university address. But before doing that, let me offer some information about our start-up this semester.

We began the semester with about 30 fewer students than we had last fall but with more student credit hours. The most likely reasons for 30 fewer students are new checkpoints for the HOPE scholarships and some improvements in the state economy.

Why students are taking more credit hours, I don't know. But I hope that it is because they're trying to raise our graduation rate, a subject to which I will return.

In any event, we have plenty of students actually in our classes, and if we have thirty fewer automobiles on campus, nobody is going to complain.

And our budget, so far, is in good shape. It's wonderful to start a year without a state budget cut. But please keep your fingers crossed, just in case.

This fall is our first experience with student housing, as you know. About 330 students are now living in our apartments at University Village—many of them from the Atlanta area. This is not as many as we'd like but it's enough to pay the bills, and more students are likely to become renters as the year progresses.

We also have a few students this fall who were displaced from their intended schools by Katrina—eight such students from universities on the Gulf Coast or in New Orleans. Three of them are living in University Village.

Speaking of Katrina, you may be interested to know that the campus donations to American Red Cross for its Katrina relief effort now total more than \$11,000. That is remarkable generosity, especially coming in addition to our "A Day" campaign.

The on-campus "A Day" total now exceeds \$133,000, much more than ever before. And the total since "A Day" began in 1994 is now more than a million dollars.

I have never seen or known the likes of this at any other institution. It sends a very powerful message to other people about the pride that people take in this place where they work. And it sends a special message this fall to Mr. Ernie Sizemore, who is honor bound to ensure that the community campaign exceeds its goal by an amount commensurate with the success of the campaign on campus. I want to thank all of you for your donations—and I want to thank Dr. Jim Garvey for the superb way in which he has led the campus campaign this fall and last fall. [Dr. Garvey, would you like to comment on the campaign?]

I'd like to say something else about "A Day" as an introduction to an announcement. "A Day for Augusta State University," originally "A Day for Augusta College," was the brainchild of Ms. Helen Hendee in 1994. It was her creativity and research that gave birth to the campaign—and she has been a very nurturing parent for the past eleven years.

It is therefore appropriate—and this is my announcement—that on October 1, Ms. Helen Hendee will begin to occupy on a permanent basis the position she held when I arrived here in 1993 and when "A Day" began in 1994: our chief development officer. On October 1, she will be promoted from all of what she has been at various times in the past—acting vice president, director of major gifts, director of development, acting

executive director of development—to the position of executive director of development and alumni relations.

She has earned this promotion—and even though it won't be fully official until after the October meeting of the Board of Regents—I'm quite pleased to be able to tell you about it today.

Also, we won't be using the term "University Advancement" to describe the operation for which Ms. Hendee is responsible. Instead, we'll use the more traditional term, "Development and Alumni Relations." Just call it the development office.

And to expand our development work, Ms. Hendee soon will begin a search for a major fundraiser—that is, an experienced professional to work almost solely on the raising of major funds. This will be an important step forward for us.

Now, if I may have your attention for a few more minutes, I'd like to return to a subject that I touched upon in my state of the university address—and that subject is student success.

As most of you probably know, the rate at which our students graduate is much lower than we'd like for it to be—and probably much lower than our students would like for it to be.

In the University System of Georgia, the percentage of students who begin as full-time students and earn a baccalaureate degree in six years at the institution where they began is about 48 percent. According to the chancellor, this is a little more than six points below the national average for public colleges and universities and is, therefore, a problem for the system.

Why the system is below average is not exactly clear. In fact, also according to the chancellor's office, the "flunk-out" rate in Georgia is also lower than the national average. If they don't flunk out more than average, why is their graduation rate so much lower? I don't know.

What I do know is that the graduation rate for our students has been historically and consistently low. Such rates vary considerably among different kinds of institutions, of course. Highly selective and highly residential schools, where fewer students are dependent on federal financial aid, have the highest rates. We are not in that category.

You can find our graduation rates on the "USG by the Numbers" website. If you look at our six-year graduation rate for every entering group of new full-time students since 1991, you'll see that the percentage of those who earn a baccalaureate degree here within six years is between 14 and 19 percent. That's about one student out of six in each year's group of new full-time students. If you look at the rate for students who begin here and graduate anywhere in the system, the percentage is usually about eight points higher. But even then, it's not much to crow about.

So we face an important question: How can we cause more of our students to achieve their goal of a college degree in a reasonable number of years?

The usual way for a college or university to get higher graduation rates is to get different students. But I'm not sure that doing so solves any fundamental problems.

Money is obviously part of the problem, because our students don't appear to have much of it. A very high percentage of our students depend on federal Pell Grants. And they have to borrow a lot of other money. Last year, they borrowed over \$14.5 million in federal student loans. In fact, our students made 4,435 such loans.

What I said in my state of the university address about student success was that “This year you’ll hear me talk about this matter more than ever before—and on this subject you’ll see me seek from our faculty more advice than ever before.”

So I need your advice. I would like to know what you think we can do to cause our students—and our kind of students—to be more successful. You know them better and more directly than I do. You may know some things that seem to work for them, and for you, in your classes. You might know some things that don’t work.

When we come up again for SACS reaffirmation in a few years, we’ll be required to submit a so-called “Quality Enhancement Plan.” I know of nothing more worth enhancing than the success of our students. How can we do this?

There are obviously some things we can’t do. We can’t have our students reborn into different economic circumstances—and we don’t have the resources for elaborate support services.

But you have much experience with our students, and from that experience, I’m sure you have some ideas.

So I would like to have your advice. What do you think we can do, in class and out, to increase the likelihood that our students—and our kind of students—will be more successful in the future than they have been in the past?

Let me have your advice by e-mail. I think you know my e-mail address. It’s wbloodwo@aug.edu. It doesn’t sound good or look good, but it works. Please use it. Tell me anything that you think would be useful for me to know about student success—or the lack thereof. Anything at all. I promise you that I will read whatever you have to say.

Attachment B

Honorary Designation Committee Recommendation

Russell A. Blanchard graduated from the Junior College of Augusta in 1928, and 40 years later received the first Distinguished Alumnus Award given by the College. He is also a graduate of the Stonier Graduate School of Banking at Rutgers University. In 1963, he helped to charter the Augusta College Foundation and served as its first chairman, a position he held until 1974.

A long and distinguished career in banking began in 1927, when he was employed by the Georgia Railroad Bank and Trust Company. Dr. Blanchard rose to the position of bank president in 1969, and vice-chairman in 1971. He served as president of the Georgia Bankers Association, as member of the American Bankers Association, and as member and president of the State Bank Division.

Dr. Blanchard is past president of the Rotary Club of Augusta, three times past president of the United Fund of Augusta, past director of the Finance Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, and was also organizer of the North Augusta Chamber of Commerce.

In 1998, Dr. Blanchard was awarded the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters by Augusta State University and in 2005 the President's Award. He is a trustee of the ASU Foundation. In 2001, he established the Russell A. Blanchard Endowment within the College of Business Administration.

For his commitment of time and resources to Augusta State University, and the commitment of friends and colleagues, it is recommended that the fountain at the Walton Way entrance be named the Russell A. Blanchard Fountain.