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Domestic Partners' Benefits

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Georgia Southern University

Faculty Welfare Committee

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Approved by the Senate: 2/12/2003

Not Approved by the Senate:

Approved by the President:

Not Approved by the President:

Domestic Partners' Benefits

Submitted by: David Dudley Report from the Faculty Welfare Committee

1/29/2003

Motion:

The Faculty Welfare Committee moves that the Faculty Senate requests that the appropriate individuals and organization on the Georgia Southern University campus make available to domestic partners of faculty and staff the same privileges currently accorded to families of faculty and staff. This request is made with the following clarifications:

Rationale:

The Faculty Welfare Committee formed a Domestic Partners' Issues subcommittee to respond to a request from the Senate to investigate domestic partners' issues on the GSU campus. Since the health care coverage issue is large and complex and must be determined by the BOR, we cannot address that immediately. However, we do encourage the GSU community to do what it can to recognize the existence rights of domestic partners and to provide them with equal access to campus facilities--the same access and privileges already extended to family of faculty and staff.

Response:

2/12/2003: Report from David Dudley, Chair of the Faculty Welfare Committee on Domestic Partners issue The Faculty Welfare Committee was charged by the Senate last Spring to investigate the issue of making benefits available to domestic partners of University System faculty and staff and made some discoveries, among them a good

definition of “domestic partner” and that we have not come to this issue alone or even first. For example, Emory University and Agnes Scott College, both private schools, but prestigious and representative of what in many ways is the best that our state has to offer, already offer full domestic partnership benefits and have for some time. Within the State System, Georgia State currently provides domestic partner benefits that do not need Board of Regents approval. Georgia Tech provides limited benefits. Also, this last Fall UGA University Council authorized its President Adams to petition the Board of Regents to grant domestic partnership benefits to domestic partners. The Faculty Welfare Committee believes that domestic partners benefits would be a good thing for the State System, and for Georgia Southern University for reasons of fairness and recruiting, and because studies show that they would present no significant increase in costs to those already in the System. Accordingly, the Faculty Welfare Committee offered two motions to the Senate, the first being, “We move that the Faculty Senate request the appropriate individuals and organizations on the GSU campus to make available to domestic partners of faculty and staff the same privileges currently accorded to families of faculty and staff.” This motion did not address benefits – that is something that the BOR must decide – but such things as, but not necessarily limited to, the privileges of the use of the RAC, and reduced ticket prices for on-campus events. The motion was seconded and approved.

Dudley (CLASS) then presented a second motion: “The Faculty Welfare Committee moves that the Faculty Senate request President Bruce Grube to forward to the Board of Regents a Senate resolution requesting that domestic partners of faculty and staff at Georgia Southern University be made eligible to receive University System benefits.” Cornwell (CHHS) made a friendly amendment to clarify the wording re: the motion including full health benefits: “full system benefits including health benefits.”

Dudley accepted the amendment. Stephens (COE) pointed out that we did not have an actual resolution for President Grube to forward; Dudley agreed, saying the Committee had wanted permission to proceed before drafting one. Flynn (CLASS) suggested the amended motion was such a resolution; Cyr (CLASS) agreed. Dudley demurred, noting the motion mentioned a resolution but no separate written resolution was extant; he also noted that the Faculty Welfare Committee had been undecided over whether to be brief or “become eloquent and persuasive and use the power of our words.”

Cyr (CLASS) suggested that they could add the rationales, but personally he favored the short and pithy version. Brown (COBA) and Cyr suggested the motion be withdrawn and the issue brought back when the Committee has a formal written resolution; Flynn

wanted to vote on the current motion so the Senate went on record as in favor of such a resolution.

Stephens (COE) wanted a formal motion to direct the Committee to bring a written resolution to the next Senate meeting for discussion and a vote, and a further motion on how to forward it to the BOR.

Dudley withdrew his motion; Stephens' motion was seconded and approved.