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Who is the legal owner of the Academic Club/Faculty Club funds which were placed in the care of GSU?

Submitted by David Seaman

11/4/2005

Question:

A. Who is the legal owner of the Faculty Club funds which were placed in the care of the GSU Foundation? B. How does a representative of the Faculty go about getting these funds to use them for creating a Faculty Club?

Rationale:

It is my understanding that the Faculty Club once existed and acquired up to \$110,000 to build or create a permanent home. At some point in the past it was disbanded and the funds invested, then placed in the care of the GSU foundation. I have heard that the funds are now under the control of the President. Many faculty still long for a faculty club, and new faculty have expressed a need for such a place. On behalf of all interested parties, I would like to find out what the actual situation is.

Response:

11-4-05: Response from the Senate Executive Committee: According to Billy Griffis, "The "legal" owner of the funds would be "all faculty and staff" at Ga Southern...many folks donated to this account over the years....the Foundation is the fiduciary for these funds to see that they are appropriated based on the intent they were given." In point of fact, according to him there is currently a balance of \$129,287.65 in the account. According to Dr. Grube: "The long range plan is to set up the current Eidson Alumni House as a university club once we build the new Alumni Center on Aikins Blvd. and are able to move Alumni and Foundation services to that new location. The fund would then be used to set up a club." Billy Griffis adds "The funds should only be used to support development of a University Club as mentioned to you by President Grube...I am sure a committee would be appointed including all interested parties to develop the plans once the Alumni Building becomes available..we are at least year or so away before that happens.." So – a Faculty Club will become a reality sometime in the future!

Information Requests: Since the last Senate meeting, there have been a couple of information requests from the same individual. David Seaman from CLASS asked about a faculty club. First, he wanted to know who legally owned the funds in the Foundation. How does a representative of the faculty go about getting the funds to use them for creating a Faculty Club? According to Billy Griffis, Vice President for University Advancement, the legal owner is "all faculty and staff of Georgia Southern." There is currently a balance of \$129,287.65 in the fund. The source of the funds was the old Faculty Club, a totally private entity that ran an establishment off-campus. Jay Fraser was apparently the last treasurer of the old Faculty Club, and he had custody of the funds. At the time that he retired and was moving to Savannah, he no longer wanted to have the responsibility, so that is when the money was transferred to the Foundation. Since then, Billy Griffis and Dr. Grube have been acting totally in a caretaking fiduciary aspect. They do not have any power over the funds. Furthermore, having spoken with Billy and talked with him on Saturday during the game at half time, it is his opinion, at this point, that to legally withdraw any money would require approval from Dr. Grube, Dr. Bleicken, myself as chair of the Faculty Senate, and the chair of the staff council. We would all have to agree. It also should be noted that the given ownership of the account as designated by Dr. Fraser when he committed the funds to the Foundation is that it is a University Club not a Faculty Club.

Apparently, my information is that staff were eligible to be members of the old club; it was not strictly restricted to faculty. Dr. Grube also replied at that point that the long-range plan is to set some sort of facility in the Eidson Alumni House after a new alumni house has been built. The new alumni house is in the works -- they have a site selected, they have been doing fundraising, and they have some preliminary plans. According to Billy Griffis, they received their first set of architects' drawings last week, and the estimated price was a million dollars over what the budgeted amount was. So they have got to go back and do some rethinking on that one. At any rate, a new alumni house is a year-and-a-half or so out in the future. Secondly, Dr. Seaman asked about immediate establishment of a faculty club, and I have been doing a little investigation on this question. Currently there is no space available on campus for a full-time faculty club. We have been doing some exploring of other options. One thought that has been investigated is using the Williams Center dining hall periodically.

I spoke with Leslie Furr just before the meeting and he has indicated that Hospitality has a facility that might be available periodically. So, we are thinking about an interim facility for use as some sort of periodical weekly, monthly, place where we can have some sort of faculty camaraderie. Before we can make such a thing a reality, we would need to survey faculty and staff about what do they want, about what they might be willing to pay for dues, and about what sort of programs they might be interested in. We would also want to establish a committee to be in essence a founding board, draw up bylaws, operation rules, etc. However, some of these things are not totally insurmountable, and I think we could do something fairly quickly, hopefully, maybe for next semester even. Another point of information-- interestingly enough in my research I found out that currently there is no other institution in the University System that has a faculty club. UGA used to have one; they had about 4,800 square feet in a place called Memorial Hall, but that has been turned into a general dining facility for the whole campus.

Candy Schille (CLASS): Could you give me the figure on the fiduciary count again for the faculty club? Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: You mean the fund balance? Candy Schille (CLASS): Yes. Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: Currently, it is \$129,287.65. Candy Schille (CLASS): Well, that is not very much. If we decided not to have a faculty club, could we just share that among ourselves, perhaps?

Pat Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator: I have no idea. One would have to look at the documents and how it was set up by Jay Fraser. Candy Schille (CLASS): Thank you.