FACULTY SENATE MEETING
April 2, 2003

I. Call to Order.
CHAIR ROBERT WILCOX – I call to order the April 2nd meeting of the Faculty Senate.

II. Corrections and Approval of Minutes.
CHAIR WILCOX – You have before you the minutes of the March 5, 2003 meeting. Are there any corrections or additions to be made to the minutes as circulated? Seeing none is there a motion for their approval? Second? All in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed? The minutes stand approved.

III. Reports of Committees.
a. Faculty Senate Steering Committee, Professor Sarah Wise, Secretary:

PROFESSOR WISE (Retailing) – The 2003-2004 committee nominations from the Steering Committee are located on page 31 of your packet. Additional nominations can be made from the floor now or at the end of the meeting.

PROFESSOR NANCY LANE (Languages, Literatures & Cultures) – I have a nomination for Faculty Advisory…Professor Laura Woliver in GINT and Women’s Studies.

CHAIR WILCOX – Professor Woliver has been nominated for one of the positions on the Faculty Advisory Committee. What we have on Advisory is a situation of two routine vacancies and Jim Augustine will vacate the committee to become the chair of the senate. So there will be a two-year term as well. Laura Woliver is nominated in addition to Ward Briggs, Lucia Pirisi-Creek, and Judith Alexander. Are there further nominations at this point? Nominations do remain open through the meeting.

PROFESSOR WISE – I believe Laura Woliver is on a list to be nominated to the University Committee on Tenure and Promotions (UCTP). I don’t know if that makes a difference.

CHAIR WILCOX – We have several people that have been nominated to UCTP that I should mention – Harriet Williams has been nominated to Libraries and UCTP, Elizabeth Patterson has been nominated to the Tenure Review Board and UCTP. I think generally when you are on the UCTP, you do not want another significant committee requirement. So what we may do is, if people are elected to these committees and then also get that election, we would just have to come back and fill their seat.

PROFESSOR LANE – Dr. Woliver would be willing to serve on both committees.
CHAIR WILCOX – We need to talk to Dr. Woliver – she is too dedicated. That is good, I appreciate that. But, that is a big commitment in January, February, and March particularly.

As I said the nominations remain open and, Sarah, if you will remind me to request additional nominations before we adjourn.

PROFESSOR WISE – I will.

b. Committee on Curricula and Courses, Professor Gary Blanpied, Chair:

PROFESSOR BLANPIED (Physics & Astronomy) – Our report is on pages 32 and 33 we move roman numeral one – a new course in Computer Science and Engineering from the College of Engineering.

CHAIR WILCOX – The committee has moved roman numeral one, the College of Engineering, a new course CSCE 548. It is open for discussion. Are there any comments on that course proposal? If there are none – we are ready for a vote. All in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed? Course is approved.

PROFESSOR BLANPIED – Roman numeral two, the College of Liberal Arts, we have a change in title and description from the Department of Government & International Studies, and a change in course number and prerequisites in the Department of Theatre and Dance.

CHAIR WILCOX – The committee has moved roman numeral two A and B change in title and description in the Department of GINT and a change in course number and prerequisites in the Department of Theatre and Dance. Discussion? If there is none, all in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed? They are approved.

PROFESSOR BLANPIED – Roman numeral three in the College of Mass Communications and Information Studies we have in the School of Library and Information Science two new courses.

CHAIR WILCOX – Two courses have been moved by the committee under roman numeral three the School of Library and Information Science – noting that CLIS 501 would be approved to offer via telecommunications or internet. Discussion? All in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed? They are approved.

PROFESSOR BLANPIED – Roman numeral four, College of Science and Mathematics in the Department of Biological Sciences and Marine Science Program we have three new courses in all.

CHAIR WILCOX – The committee has moved roman numeral four – three new courses from the departments of Biology and Marine Science Program. Discussion? Yes, Professor Eastman.
PROFESSOR CAROLINE EASTMAN (Computer Science and Engineering) – I have a question about the new courses MSCI 101 and 102. Are these courses that would be required of Marine Science majors?

PROFESSOR CLAUDIA BENITEZ-NELSON (Geological Sciences and Marine Science Program) – Yes.

PROFESSOR EASTMAN – So they will replace the previous courses?

PROFESSOR BENITEZ-NELSON – They will replace MSCI 111 and 112.

PROFESSOR EASTMAN – Just in case anyone is wondering why I asked it is because of the accreditation requirements for Engineering require that the science courses Engineering Majors take be those taken by the majors in those Sciences.

CHAIR WILCOX – So that is an affirmative to those questions?

PROFESSOR BENITEZ-NELSON – Yes.

CHAIR WILCOX – Any further discussion? All in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed? They stand approved. And, then you have an experimental course.

PROFESSOR BLANPIED – Roman numeral five is for the Senate’s information only. It is from the College of Science and Mathematics, and it is my course.

CHAIR WILCOX – Would anyone like to discuss with the Professor his course? Otherwise it is simply submitted for our information. Thank you very much.

c. Faculty Advisory Committee, Professor Betty Glad, Chair:

CHAIR WILCOX – I do not believe that Professor Glad is here, but I don’t know of a report from the Advisory Committee at this meeting.

d. Faculty Welfare Committee, Professor Peter Graham, Chair:

PROFESSOR GRAHAM (Sport & Entertainment Management) – The Welfare Committee does not have a report today.

e. Faculty Budget Committee, Professor Al Leitch, Chair:

PROFESSOR LEITCH (Moore School of Business) – Yes, I would just like to tell everybody that Budget Committee is currently meeting with the deans of the larger units on campus to review their strategy on how they are going to deal with the budget cut for this fall. That is all I have to say unless there are some questions.
BILLY GROOMS (Student Center – Liaison) – Have you all made a decision on the full time student fee going to a per credit hour fee?

PROFESSOR LEITCH – No we have not.

BILLY GROOMS – Okay – thank you.

PROFESSOR LEITCH – It is not our decision.

CHAIR WILCOX – I think the Provost may discuss that a little more as we get into the meeting later. Any other questions for the Budget Committee?

f. University Athletics Advisory Committee, Professor Harold Friedman, Chair:

PROFESSOR FRIEDMAN (Medicine) – I am Harold Friedman from the Medical School and I am chairman of the University Athletics Advisory Committee. Our committee over the last several semesters has been meeting to try and come up with a better frame work for class attendance for excused and unexcused absences from class, predominantly for undergraduate students. Reasons for this are many fold. If you look at the class attendance policy as it currently exists in the undergraduate bulletin, it really doesn’t define what excused absences are and it leaves it up to the discretion of the faculty to decide that. The current policy of 10% total absences from class discriminates against a particular group of students who represent this university in functions away from the campus. For those classes that meet twice per week it allows students approximately three absences and there are many scenarios that could be envisioned including death of a family member or serious illness that might require a longer period of absence. It limits student athletes particularly from taking any courses they want to in the curriculum for fear of a low grade. If the particular instructor has a reputation for strictly enforcing the current absence policy, it also has a tendency to limit the subject area that a student-athlete can major in. Many students already miss above the 10% limit in order to participate in away intercollegiate events. If the student is able to learn the material by borrowing notes, taking make-up exams, etc, why shouldn’t they be allowed excused absences? The critical endpoint is a knowledge base, not the amount of time spent in the lecture hall. We therefore would like to move to recommend to the President that the university adopt this policy that we have come up with for excused and unexcused absences. The policy is on page 34. Any questions?

PROFESSOR LANE – I have a lot to say about this. The first question is why is this coming from your committee and not from Standards and Petitions, which would be the normal committee that would propose a policy such as this?

CHAIR WILCOX – The matter came before the Steering committee. The originating concern was from NCAA athletes. The Steering committee sent it to his committee to come forward with the policies, since it was a concern they were expressing.
PROFESSOR LANE – I would respond that this is not the purview of the Athletics Advisory Committee but Scholastic Standards and Petitions. I’d like also to point out that the current policy was a product of extended and reflective discussion about the value of class attendance in a college education. And the notion that all students attend classes that are large lecture classes where you can get the knowledge base somewhere outside of class does not apply to all disciplines. Furthermore, students are in the classroom not just to carry away truckloads of knowledge but they are there to participate in the class and their input into many courses is crucial. So you cannot generalize to all academic areas from certain isolated instances. I’d like to point out further that proposals such as these reveal or shed light on the hypocrisy of the whole notion of student athlete. If a student is a student, that should be the student’s first priority and a student who is required to be away from campus to represent the University as a varsity athlete is doing an important job. Sadly, that may in fact conflict with that student’s goal as a student. So, I feel on several counts that this motion is out of order and that it’s ill-advised.

PROFESSOR FRIEDMAN – Okay. In response this proposal was sent to the Scholastic Standards and Petitions committee and they did have input into the document. On another front – it’s not just student athletes and I can give you a personal example of a son who was going to represent his university at the United Nations and was told by a professor that he was going to be marked down, in a letter grade, if he were to do that. Our goal here was trying to define what excused absences are, for all students, not just student athletes. And so, this at least gives a student an opportunity and with, by the way, the Scholastic Standards and Petition committee being a higher authority to appeal to if there is discrepancy between the student and the faculty member to adjudicate any sort of problem that might arise.

PROFESSOR LANE – I applaud the desire to discriminate between excused and unexcused absences. I have no objection to that part of this proposal. What I object to is overriding the 10% rule. The notion that if an absence is for a legitimate reason, it doesn’t somehow hinder the student’s progress is erroneous. The basic principle is absence from more than 10% can have a negative impact on the student’s learning and on the class experience. Now, in fact, not all professors exact any grade penalty for any amount of absences. It depends on the course. And, you’re right, a student may have to suffer some kind of grade penalty if the student’s curriculum collides head-on with legitimate reasons for being away from campus. But those are the kinds of choices that individual students make all the time.

PROFESSOR FRIEDMAN – Including, let’s say death or illness.

PROFESSOR LANE – Right.

PROFESSOR VENKAT LAKSHMI (Geological Sciences) – We have to remember that we should not be imposing double standards when we have a policy on attendance that every class has to be a part. Otherwise we are making ourselves open to legal action. In a class of 20, you can recognize everybody’s faces. In a class of 250, I cannot recognize anybody’s faces. But I can recognize faces of some people who sit at the same location.
So that results in discrimination. So we’ve got to be very clear that we do not have double standards and I do think take a universal policy of 10% that I can just catch hold of a few characters in class - all of them would result in discrimination. So I think this policy (and I am on this committee) does try to give some amount of general guidance to the instructor as well as the student – what they should and should not do.

PROFESSOR ROBERT CARLSSON (Economics) – I had a few comments but Nancy Lane beat me to it. She is much more articulate than I am anyway. I would also like to point out that this proposal is also very prescriptive with respect to what the instructor will and will not do. I would like if you presented this to the Scholastic Standards and Petitions committee to hear from them now as to what they came up with, what their deliberations were about, what they concluded and why.

PROFESSOR FRIEDMAN – Is Jane Olsgaard here?

CHAIR WILCOX – I don’t think that Jane is here. Is there any member of the committee who might help us?

PROFESSOR EASTMAN – It is not clear to me if there is any upper limit on the percent of excused absences that might be allowed under this policy. If a student comes to me and wants to take one of my classes and says, “Because of other obligations and commitments I plan to miss 60% of your classes,” am I obligated to accept that under this policy? It seems to me that there should be some upper limit in terms of whether it is 10% or not is perhaps an issue that could be revisited. 50%, 60%, 100%, I don’t need to come to your class, I can pick up everything from a book and fellow students?

PROFESSOR GRAHAM – I would like to bring to the attention of the Faculty Senate the fact that NCAA and the SCC both have policies regarding attendance in classes. They are very, very concerned with that. The policies are very direct. We have people here in our Athletics department that work very, very carefully in scheduling to try and minimize absences of student athletes. The irony is that the student athletes who miss the most classes have some of the highest GPAs in the University. So all the proposed policy is trying to do is protect these young people and others from vindictiveness because they have missed some additional classes. They have earned their grade – leave it as is.

KIP DILLHAY – I am a student and also I am on the committee with Dr. Friedman. I think it is very important that everyone realize that this is just not for athletes. This is going to effect students’ throughout the University. I myself I had a situation where I missed 4 classes instead of 3 and had an A in the class but the teacher felt it necessary to lower my grade to a B instead of the A. This policy distinguishes between excused and unexcused. The unexcused having the 10% and the excused being very prescriptive; we tried to get as detailed as we could for every situation. Both the professors and the student should have responsibility to work through these situations. As everyone knows there are some professors that nail students on this every semester and there are other professors whose students come to class, take the test and that is it and you might not see students any other time besides that. I think this is something that is very important and
needs to be looked at maybe a little bit more carefully and have more input from the faculty. But this change does need to be made.

PROFESSOR DOROTHY DISTERHEFT (ENGLISH) — I would like to make a few remarks. One of the specifically directed Professor Lane’s comment on the history of this attendance requirement. I too observed it 22 years ago when it was put in and it was put in by a small group of men from the English department who wanted to “get” students because, I believe, they were afraid that students could actually do well in the class without gathering the pearls of wisdom that these professors strewed before them. So they had to make sure that they had a captive audience. So I don’t know what that says about English literature classes but I’ll tell you that in my Linguistics classes, that I teach, if a student does choose to miss too many classes they just don’t know the material—they fail. In other classes they may be able to get the knowledge as other people pointed out so that they can pass the final exam without attending about 25% or 40% of classes or even zero classes if they have the knowledge they should get whatever grade their knowledge indicates. And, I really do believe that this was a vindictive motion that was somehow sneaked through Faculty Senate by some rather strange parliamentary maneuvers. These people—and I used to be married to one of them—chuckled all the way home from the Faculty Senate meeting because they could now “get” undergraduates.

PROFESSOR SARAH BARKER (Theatre and Dance) — Speaking after you I am in great danger here but I am going to represent performance classes. Not without practice—just like a football player couldn’t miss 3 or 4 or 10% of their practice and still be performing at peak ability—an undergraduate taking any of our performance classes and that is an extensive part of the Theatre and Dance department will not be able to achieve what I am teaching in the moment in the class. They cannot get notes from another student. They cannot get notes from a book because this is performance oriented.

Secondly, we are in discussions in class, and I don’t think this is just performance classes, in which their ability to discuss the concepts and the ideas that I am teaching them by demonstrating those concepts in the class—they won’t be able to do.

Thirdly, and this is the place where I find this a most valuable policy because I am able to say this is a University policy not just mine. Many of the projects that are graded and that is several throughout the semester—it is not just a final exam, are team oriented. So even if a person can tell me at the beginning of the semester that during that week they will be gone, that entire week (say it is Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) is preparing with a team of other students in the class with me and my teaching assistant working with those students—I cannot say to that student, “Well it is okay if you just show up on Friday and we will slip you in and if you can make it work. If you are just really, really talented the rest of the students will catch up with you. If you can demonstrate that you are really good at this, you don’t have to do the team part of this class.” Attendance is critical on many different levels. Now I say that, simply to say that I am teaching from a particular model and I am having difficulty with this policy being able to guide me and tell me how I am going to organize this class in a fundamentally different way. And, if I
have a student that has a problem with the way I do it, I am going to now have to go through the procedure of going through appeals and presenting and all that stuff. I think the policy as it stands now may not be perfect and maybe it needs to be looked at but I am questioning this as the solution.

PROFESSOR LANE – Yes I would like to thank Dr. Barker for reinforcing some of my own concerns about this policy. And, I would like respond to comments about the unfairness or the arbitrariness of baseline by saying that no professor is required to exact any grade penalty for absences. The policy as it stands allows professor to exact a grade penalty in cases where it is appropriate. Furthermore it is required that the professor state at the beginning of the semester exactly what the attendance policy is, so that there is no arbitrary application of some percentage to certain students in the class or some retroactive application of arbitrary attendance policy.

PROFESSOR FRIEDMAN – First of all I agree with several of the points being made. I mean clearly in Medical School, I am a surgeon, and we have to have the students there in the operating room to learn how to sew and tie. They can get away in some other courses with just reading the book but they have got to be there. So I think that is a very good point. I also think that the concept of an upper limit is probably also an excellent point that we might want to address with this policy as well. Finally, I think the concerns raised about the performance classes where students have to be there is also an extremely valid point. On the basis of all that, my suggestion is that we are going to withdraw our motion and reconsider some of these points that you all have raised and bring this back perhaps at a later time. Thank you.

g. Other Committees: No further reports at this time.

IV. Report of Secretary.

PROFESSOR WISE – No report today.

V. Unfinished Business.

None.

VI. New Business.

None

VII. Reports of Officers.

PRESIDENT ANDREW SORENSEN – Thank you Professor Wilcox. Ladies and gentlemen, it is good to be with you this afternoon. One week ago Saturday, the American Heart Association’s local chapter sponsored a heart health walk. I was asked to the honorary co-chair of the walk – one of the many honors that has been bestowed on me since I became President. We were given a goal by the Heart Association of the number of attendees and the amount of money to be raised. I am pleased to report that it was a huge turnout by a lot of University faculty/staff/students and – to the faculty who
participated either through giving money or walking or both – thank you very, very much! We had a great time and it was a beautiful day. The Provost and I tried to set a good example by walking fast.

The Legislature has been very busy since our last meeting. I would like to give you a brief overview of what is going on with the Legislature and I’d be happy to answer any specific questions about my report. A group known as the Palmetto Institute but together a proposal that has a number of facets. One is for the 3 research universities – the Medical University of South Carolina, Clemson University, and the University of South Carolina at Columbia – to pull out from the Commission on Higher Education for the State of South Carolina and to form an oversight group whose acronym is the ROC. The Research Oversight Committee’s goal is to avoid some of the onerous and complex and seemingly bureaucratic obstacles that are in our path as a result of CHE rules and regulations. They also proposed that we get regulatory relief from the state procurement code so that we could do things like have private investors build buildings on state property. I have discussed that with you at our last meeting when I described the research campus. We are prohibited by state law currently from doing that. I am highly supportive of the request for regulatory relief. There is also a proposal in there to allow us to give bonuses on a one time basis to faculty members. We are prohibited from doing that. A proposal to allow us to provide health insurance for graduate students which we are currently prohibited from doing and a whole host of similar recommendations.

A year ago the bonding authority was raised 0.5% to enable the BMW deal to be done with Clemson. The one-half of one percent increase in the current bonding authorities – at 5% a year ago, they raised it to 5.5% – generated $250 million. $130 million of that has been spent on this Clemson initiative and a couple of other initiatives leaving a balance of $120 million which can be used for capital construction. There is one proposal in the House that the research universities principally, but perhaps not exclusively, be allowed to use that $120 million for capital construction projects. Another proposal is to use that for purposes that Secretary Faith, who is the head of the Department of Commerce, has proposed to the Legislature and then raise it an additional 0.5% to go from 5.5% to 6%. Senator Leatherman is proposing that increase which would make $250 million available, and presumably the research universities would get a substantial portion of that, although again the details have not been worked out. There is the stipulation that every dollar from the State be matched with a private dollar. So that if the full $250 million would be made available, then we would match if with $250 million in private dollars for a total of $500 million. Both of those proposals are currently alive in the respective houses in the legislature and there is some joggling going on among the legislators as to whether: a) none of the above will happen, b) only the $120 million will be made available, c) the $120 million plus the $250 million will be made available. So at our next meeting I will let you know how that was resolved.

In all these deliberations and discussions I am placed in an incredible awkward situation. It is this, that although I am the President of the University of South Carolina which includes the Columbia campus. I am also the President of the entire University of South Carolina which includes now 3 four-year universities and 4 two-year schools. So
legislation that pulls the Columbia campus out to this new ROC entity for 3 research campuses does not address the other 7 institutions and 11 campuses that comprise the rest of the University of South Carolina. Since I came here I have been emphasizing consistently, and fairly relentlessly, the fact that we are all members of the University of South Carolina family. I have been affirming that in a variety of ways, not the least of which is going to all of those campuses regularly, meeting with their faculty, meeting with their students, making myself available, speaking at the local Rotary clubs, Kiwanis clubs, preaching in churches, addressing the Chamber of Commerce, marching in parades, kissing babies, cutting ribbons, a whole host of those kinds of endeavors. And, I am very serious about that. I take that responsibility as sacred trust. So I am trying to convey to you an appreciation for the dilemma in which I find myself - so we are trying to work all of this out. I am adamant that the 4-year institutions and the 2-year institutions that also comprise the University of South Carolina will not be neglected in whatever arrangement we come up with.

Yesterday, I spent a substantial amount of time with the members of the House Ways and Means Committee. I had dinner with the Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee last night and with the Speaker of the House and find that they are very supportive of the things that we are doing. So far in the House they have been able to continue sequestering the $30 million for the centers of excellence from the lottery funds. There have been a number of attempts to use those monies for other purposes. If you have the opportunity and are so inclined, please thank the members of the House that have staunchly defended that $30 million for the centers of excellence. If you want a list of who voted with us and who voted against us, Johnny Gregory and Shirley Mills can provide you with that list – because you wouldn’t want to congratulate somebody who voted the wrong way presumably.

We also have a $1 million for a nanotechnology project which is continuing and that also has been protected, and I am very grateful for that. There is in the House a proposed cap on tuition. I am vehemently opposed to that. We have a huge problem. The cap is about 4.3% as I recall. The reason I am opposed to that is we have a horrendous problem. Our budget has been cut $41 million this past year. We have been notified that we will be cut 9.88% additional, which will be another $20 million effective July 1st. That is a total of $61 million in 12 months. On the one hand I am loath to put the burden for the deficit visited upon us by the legislature on the students, but on the other hand I have got to figure out how to come up with revenues to pay our faculty/staff, provide scholarships support for our students, the maintenance of our facilities, etc. Just to give you an idea of the magnitude of the cut, if we were going to offset the $61 million cut that we have and will receive with a tuition increase, the tuition would have to go up by 70% – that is $870,000 is generated by each 1% rise in tuition. Clearly that is absurd and outrageous and I would never even consider that. But I am trying to convey to you the dilemma in which we find ourselves.

I am also working feverishly with the Washington delegation. I will be going up again next week meeting with members of our congressional delegation who are also supportive of many of the things that are going on. It is too early to report if my request
for specific support for specific projects will in fact be forthcoming, but I am hopeful that we will be getting some relief from the Federal Government on that.

I want to commend especially the faculty for the dramatic increase in grants and contracts revenues. We are up $20 million for the first 9 months of this fiscal year over a year ago. And, I hasten to report that the increases are manifest in the Liberal Arts faculty as well as Engineering and Math and Sciences. Indeed they are across the entire campus. In fact the most dramatic increase continues to be in the College of Liberal Arts, whose percentage increase is higher than any other entity within the University.

I am leaving after this meeting to go to Florida to meet with a very wealth group of Gamecocks in Jacksonville, Florida this evening. I am going to be meeting with more of them tomorrow morning. I am then going to Tampa, Florida to meet with another group of wealthy Gamecocks and I am going to be there Friday passing the hat. It is Gator country, but I know the flora and fauna well, and I am hopeful that I will be successful on your behalf. I get back Friday night and then Sunday afternoon I leave for Texas, and there is even more money in Texas. I am going to start at Houston and be spending two days there raising money. So I am stepping up the intensity and time that I am devoting to try to raise philanthropic monies to help us offset these huge cuts we are getting.

We are always faced with a mixture of good news and bad news. Another bit of good news is that there are huge increases in applications for undergraduate admissions are at an all time high. It is just extraordinary how many students want to come here. I am immensely gratified by that. Our other campuses are also reporting dramatic increases in admissions that is immensely gratifying. And, it speaks to you again as the faculty. I salute you and I express my gratitude to you because the perception is that students can get an extraordinary education here. I commend you and I thank you. I know it would be better if I could thank you by providing you with a dramatic increase in your salaries. I would like very much to do that but with a $61 million cut I haven’t figured out how the math will work. So I thank you for being forbearing. The morale that I detect is good in spite of these various set backs we get from the Legislature, and I am hopeful and optimistic that in the very near future things will be much better for us in the Legislature.

Provost Odom, Vice President Kelly and I spoke this afternoon to the Senate Finance Committee and received a very warm reception. We didn’t get any money but they said nice things about what is going on here and they seem supportive our collective goals. So I am hopeful that when times do get better that that will be translated into financial support.

Finally, it was my pleasure to observe a poster session and oral presentations by a number of graduate students at Russell House today. I attended several of the presentations and visited all the posters and the art work and we have a really remarkably talented group of graduate students who are reflective of having very talented and gifted mentors. So I thank all of you for all that you do. I will be happy to field any questions if there are any.
PROFESSOR LANE – I heard yesterday, as a matter of fact, the possibility that the cut will be much greater than 9.88% and that there will be yet again another mid-year cut on top of that – the figure I heard was 13%. Do you have any comment on that?

PRESIDENT SORENSEN – Yes, Madame. The only thing that I know unequivocally is that the 9.88% is what they predict. I spend more time in the halls of the Legislature than I would care to admit and I have been pressing the legislators there for a more specific number but nobody has mentioned a further cut. Now having said that, of course, there is no guarantee that there won’t be a cut, but a lot, of course, will depend on the national economy, which is reflected in our state economy. But nobody has talked about it. If I do hear about it, I promise you that I will tell you straight forwardly.

PROFESSOR JERRY WALLULIS (Philosophy) – I applaud very much the efforts that you are doing to help forward the goals of the University with regards to the budget process. As university employees but also state employees we are strongly influenced by the budget process. This especially concerns things like retirement benefits that may change and health benefits, the cost of which may strongly increase. Do you also in the administration support efforts to try to maintain those benefits, especially under these circumstances where we are not anticipating the likelihood of raises.

PRESIDENT SORENSEN – I support not only the effort to maintain it, I support the efforts to increase and enhance the benefits that you have. I have absolutely zero influence on the State Pension fund. As somebody who will someday benefit from that, I too hope that they will be prudent investors of our respective pension contributions. I gave a speech in Washington last week to all of the directors of the vice-presidents and CEO’s of academic health centers (140 of them around the state) – Ray Greenberg who is the President of MUSC was in the audience – and reviewed with them what is happening with respect to health insurance premiums which continue to increase at double digit rates. There was an article in the Wall Street Journal that reported on average in the United States health insurance premiums went up by 15% last year. We continue to have these extraordinary increases in charges for health care (but of course not in surgery) and in other fields. Those increase charges because states are not paying their fair share of the Medicaid and Medicare burden (South Carolina for example is refusing to do that) and consequently we all pay for that. That is those of us that are in employed with employers who provide health insurance benefits. So we wind up paying a higher proportion of the care for the medically indigent. So it is a national problem of enormous magnitude.

PROFESSOR ELDON WEDLOCK (Law) – I was wondering if you wanted to share with the Faculty Senate the unfortunate news that you shared with the Law School faculty yesterday?

PRESIDENT SORENSEN – Yes. We had been negotiating for a considerable period of time with a very highly talented and able candidate for Dean of the Law School and he withdrew this past weekend. I met with the Law School faculty on Monday afternoon to ask them to give Provost Odom and me suggestions for an interim dean. Provost Odom
will address that in his remarks as he is chair of the search committee so he has a vested interest in all that.

Anyone else? Thank you all very much, and I sincerely thank you for all that you do for the University. We are living in what are incredibly difficult times for a whole host of reasons and I appreciate your stick-to-it-iveness, your tenacity, and your good will in these less than optimal circumstances. Thank you.

CHAIR WILCOX – I have asked Dr. Odom to, as I mentioned earlier, as part of his other remarks to also address the issue of where we stand with concerns of pro-credit hour tuition proposals.

PROVOST JEROME ODOM – I am going to end with that one. Let me just make a couple of comments or announcements really. I want to call your attention first of all to Student Awards Day on April 17. There are a number of faculty awards that are primarily student awards as it says but there are some faculty awards, advising awards, freshman advocate awards, and I hope that if you have the opportunity – if it is a nice day it is on the Horseshoe and it is always a nice event. More importantly to this body on May 1 is our General Faculty meeting for the spring. That is when Faculty Awards are announced and given. There are a number of committees that are working right now to determine who those folks are. A number of committees have finished and I truly hope that you will urge your colleagues in your units to attend that General Faculty meeting because as the President said these are dire times but it is always good to honor our colleagues. So please try to do that on May 1.

Let me turn to Jerry Wallulis just a minute – I think it is important that you know and that you pass onto your colleagues when there is something that will affect the faculty. There is a bill in the legislature to do away with the TERI plan. We are following that fairly closely. Right now our indications are that will not happen this year. I try to monitor primarily for strategic planning purposes people who sign up for the TERI plan so that I know when various colleges are going to have big holes that they have to fill and try to hire people. On February 6 we had about 251 people here in the TERI plan. When that bill was introduced we had a large number of people who signed up for the TERI plan. I think it is important also for you to know that if the bill were to pass, you have 30 days within the passage of that bill to still sign up for the TERI plan. (Note: Instructional services had to flip the tape at this point – so don’t know what may be lost.)

Regarding the search for a dean of the Law School we had a number of outstanding candidates. Two of the folks that we brought to campus have accepted deans jobs somewhere else. One withdrew to accept a chaired professorship at a private institution that was apparently a very good job. So right now we are simply trying to assess the situation. We have asked the Law faculty to give us any suggestions that they have for an interim dean either internal or external by Friday. We will try to do something with the situation as quickly as we can.
In terms of tuition by the hour, I think the perception among some of you may be that, that is a done deal. It is not a done deal. Let me first of all say that when the SDI committee recommended value centered management in looking at a number of plans, that seemed to be the best way of accounting with respect to hours taken and how to take revenues and put those in the proper units. However, we have discussed this at the last dean’s council meeting where that was the only agenda item. We had a very long discussion of tuition payments by the hour. Rick Kelly, Vice President for Business and Finance and the Budget staff have worked very hard to try to make this revenue neutral at 16 hours. That is any student taking 16 hours or less, actually taking less would not cost as much. Up to 16 hours would be revenue neutral for the students. One of the deans suggested that we look at several schools that have a system whereby if you take less than 12 hours, which makes you a part-time student, you pay by the hour. If you take between 12 and 18 hours in at least a couple of these plans, then you pay a flat rate which is what our students do now. If you take more than that, then you pay additional funds for those additional hours above I think it was 18 in those cases. Rick and his staff are looking at that right now. He is here and he can answer any questions but this is not something that has yet been decided. We want to make sure that we try to do the best thing that we can do.

That ends my report and I will be happy to take questions.

VIII. Good of the Order.

None.

IX. Announcements.

None.

CHAIR WILCOX – Are there any further committee nominations? If there are none all of the nominations will be considered elected, except for Faculty Advisory Committee. We will circulate ballots for the election for that committee at the conclusion of this meeting.

Is there any other business to come before the body? If not, I remind you that the General Faculty meeting on May 1st is at 2:00 p.m. here. I echo the Provost’s comments, please come and support the people. I believe we recognize the emeritus faculty at that time as well do we not? So honor both those who are retiring as well as those receiving awards. It is one thing we can do in bleak budget times to lift our morale a little bit. So please, I urge you to come to that. We will meet as a Senate immediately upon the adjournment of the General Faculty meeting. You will have circulated, in the normal course, whatever proposals are to come before the General Faculty as well as before the Faculty Senate towards the end of this month. If there is no further business to come before the body, is there a motion to adjourn. We stand adjourned until our May 1st meeting. Thank you.