Florida Institute of Technology
Quality of Life Committee
Minutes, August 17, 2006

Members Attending: President Catanese, Gordon Patterson, Monica Baloga, Zach Nelson, Jayné Park, Melinda Milsap, Doug Nolder, Mark Ritter, Joanne Green, Tom Stewart, Sara Riggs, Joe Carrano, Matthew Normand, Greg Tsark, Frank Leslie, Robert Taylor, Amy Williams, Celine Lang

Dr. Baloga, Chair, brought the meeting to order and welcomed Dr. Gordon Patterson, former Chair, and President Catanese.

President Catanese reviewed his charge to the committee. The university’s many constituencies – faculty, staff, students, alumni, trustees, donors, community members, and others – have different goals and objectives, if not different values. The President looks to this committee to look at all sides of issues, to guarantee expression of minority views, to seek consensus, and to provide perspectives to him for guidance with the difficult “either-or” decisions that he must make.

The President also looks to the committee for new ideas to improve the campus quality of life. The committee’s recommendations about the amphitheater (the Panthereum) and the new holiday schedule have been implemented.

The Internet is the primary source of information for prospective students. Six thousand applicants sought 600 seats in the new freshman class. Florida Tech’s ratings in U.S. News and World Report have improved in national reputation; quality of students; and alumni giving. Florida Tech is no longer on the top-ten list for student debt after graduation. Washington Monthly rates institutions on the extent to which their students contribute to improvements in the life of our nation. Washington Monthly rates Florida Tech #1 among private institutions in Florida and #4 among private institutions in the nation.

Florida Tech will pursue the values of High Tech with a Human Touch and Quality Growth Management. Faculty-student ratios will remain low. Although a few introductory classes in physics and chemistry will have about 50 students, class size of less than 20 students will be the norm.

The President asked the committee to present findings, provide recommendations, and possibly to develop consensus on the following major issues prior to the Board of Trustees meeting on November 2:

Housing and Food Services. Florida Tech needs a 350-unit residence facility and a new dining facility, possibly located in the South campus.
The President reviewed and circulated descriptions of the new apartment-style residence project at Stetson. Stetson requires freshmen, sophomores, and juniors to live on campus and has a single dining facility, to build a sense of community. Florida Tech may wish to consider requiring freshmen and sophomores to live on campus. Multiple dining facilities may be more appropriate here.

The committee is asked to determine if the fraternities and sororities really want to have houses on campus. Community neighbors may applaud this move. The President is contemplating relocation of 6 fraternities and 4 sororities to campus.

Planned lighting of the athletic fields may annoy neighbors and may interfere with the operation of the telescope.

The Quad residence halls may be refurbished into small classrooms and offices. Southgate and Roberts Hall improvements are needed but may cost from 25 to 30M.

The City of Melbourne has raised two zoning issues. The first proposal was to re-zone the university-owned houses on Country Club Road from R-1 residential to institutional use. Community neighbor perceptions and concerns about this proposal are being taken into account. The second proposal was to change the institutional zoning of the Anchorage to C3 commercial. This proposal will not be pursued. The Anchorage will be used for the Crew Team and for research vessels. As of September 1, Florida Tech will no longer accept gifts of boats for re-sale. The boathouse at the Anchorage has been demolished and the Roberts House will be secured from trespassers.

The President briefly mentioned the Panthereum and the bench and bus-stop plan, and emphasized that public transportation IS available from campus.

Alcohol Policies. The President asked the committee to determine what the existing campus policies are; whether they are unduly complex; whether they are contradictory; and whether they are confusing. He also asked for recommendations from the committee on policies that are appropriate at Florida Tech. For example, should students over the age of 21 be permitted to have bottled wine in their residences? Should beer and wine be sold at home games (NCAA rules make this matter a local decision).

The general question for clarification is: what do students mean when they say that they would like to move off campus because the university is “too strict” with students in residence? What are the legal behaviors that students in residence cannot perform?

International Students. The President asked the committee for guidance on how to acculturate the Saudi students and how to involve them in student life.

Background: King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia plans to support education in the United States for a total of 5,000 students for 5 years. Potentially, 150 of these Saudi students could study at Florida Tech. Now, 48 Saudi students have been enrolled at Florida Tech and 100 students are taking English language classes. The President intends to cap at 75
the number of Saudi students at Florida Tech. Our Saudi students live in Grissom Hall and student leaders have emerged. The President advises that Dr. Muzaffar Shaikh and these student leaders be invited to the committee to present the Saudi students’ requests including an exemption from living on campus. The students find the residence halls ‘beneath their quality of life.’ They object to shared bathing facilities and the presence of women in the residence hall.

Committee volunteers to address the President’s charges:

Housing and Food Services: Doug Nolder, Tom Stewart
Housing: Sara Riggs, Joe Carrano, Greg Tsark, Zach Nelson
Food Services: Matt Normand, Mark Ritter, Celine Lang, Jayné Park

Old Business.

Babcock Street Corridor: all trade contracts are in place. The project will be completed in late September or early October.

Panthereum Amphitheater. Soil conditions have required design changes. The foundation is 18” thick, reinforced with 1” rebar. Masonry will be completed in about 3 weeks. The top will be installed. The dedication date has not been selected.

Bridge between the Quad and the Student Center. Improvements completed.

Safety. Cross walks on Country Club Road may be marked. Hedges or fences may be advisable to direct foot traffic to safe places to cross the road.

Smoking. A report prepared by Steve Hanna on environments for smokers away from the doors of buildings will be reviewed at a future meeting.

Student Technical Services. The Copy Center is now providing fax services for students. Frank Erdell will be asked to promote this service.

New Business.

Visitor Parking. Visitors need information about the locations of visitor parking and campus maps. Map options may include self-service campus map dispensers or mall-style maps.

Parking Stickers. The current process of annually changing parking permits is more economical and less labor intensive than alternative approaches.

Meeting Schedule:
Tuesday, September 19, 9AM
Tuesday, October 17, 12 NOON
Tuesday, November 14, 3PM

All of these meetings will be held in the Crawford Building, 7th floor Conference Room.