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Minutes, Arts & Sciences Finance and Service Committee Meeting, Tuesday, September 8, 2009

Arts & Sciences Finance and Service Committee

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Finance and Services Committee
School of Arts & Sciences
Approved minutes of the meeting of September 8, 2009

Committee members present: Lisa Tillmann (Presiding), Laura Coar, Tonia Warnecke, Mary Throumoulos, Larry Van Sickle, Arthur Grizzle, Eric Schutz (Secretary).

Also attending: Steve Neilson, Scott Bitikoffer and Ann Francis (representing CESI); Louisa Gibbs (student, SLAP Co-president).

We set our agenda such that our guest presentations would be accommodated at the beginning of our meeting.

Steve Neilson, Scott Bitikoffer and Ann Francis began with a discussion of the Committee on Environmental and Sustainability Issues (CESI) and its role in highlighting and initiating various efforts toward a more environmentally congenial Rollins community. These have included such activities as those of the Eco Rollins student organization, and Rollins's pioneering electronic water purification for our AC systems. We discussed other specific efforts such as a carbon-neutrality policy at Rollins and initiatives to recycle food-scrap and eating utensils and to institute an organic garden. The Finance & Services Committee will be working with CESI in the future, as we decided last semester (see the minutes of Spring, 2009).

Next we discussed the idea of a "sweat-free" initiative at Rollins whereby the College would refrain from doing business with companies that employ people in sweat-shop conditions both in its purchases from large corporations and in its business with local vendors. The Student Labor Action Project (SLAP) group on campus has begun such an initiative, as Louisa Gibbs explained, and is also considering joining the national group Worker Rights Consortium. We discussed various aspects of the issue, including Rollins's contracting policies for food, janitorial and other services, and also the possibility of a joint resolution before the faculty Executive Committee by the SGA, the Student Life Committee, and the Finance & Services Committee that Rollins be sweat-free.

Next it was noted briefly that Laura Coar's term this year on the Finance & Services Committee is an extension to a third year in order to begin staggering the terms of staff representatives on the Committee.

We then turned to the upcoming colloquium on faculty representation on the Board of Trustees. We felt that colloquium should be an occasion for us to present our findings last Spring about peer institutions' policies, and for an information-gathering discussion of faculty feelings on the matter. We decided to hold the colloquium on October 2, late afternoon (and it has now been arranged for that date).

We turned then briefly to discussing a living-wage policy here at Rollins, that is, one in which the lowest-paid employees of the College and all vendors with which it contracts are paid a wage suitable to keep employees out of poverty (as officially defined by the U.S. Census Bureau). Lisa Tillmann noted that according to the "living-wage calculator" online, the living-wage in Orange County now would be \$9.38/hour for a single-adult and \$17.34/hr for a single adult with one child. Laura Coar noted that starting pay for grounds-keepers at Rollins is now \$12.50/hr, but we have no idea about what our other employees make, nor what our contractors pay their employees. An important question also is how to include the cost of medical insurance in the living-wage. We will ask the College's Finance Department and Human Resources Department for more information relevant to strengthening Rollins's living-wage policy.

Finally, we discussed briefly the fact that there is much waste in Rollins's acquisitions, for example, in purchases of furniture and equipment at prices well above what we could be paying were we "shopping around". Sustaining relationships with vendors is important, of course, but so too is making sure we do not pay inflated prices.

We adjourned this meeting at a suitable hour.