Rinehart called the meeting to order with two items on the agenda: 1) Updates 2) Presentation by Tim Mack on the Faculty Electronic Annual Reporting System. A motion was made and passed to adopt the agenda.

The CFA asked that the tables related to the ‘Stop-the-clock’ provisions in the tenure system presented at the last meeting by Hyer be included with the minutes from the October 22, 2004 meeting. Pending this revision the minutes were approved. Members also asked that this provision be returned to at a later date for further discussion.

Update on Previous Agenda Items:

Rinehart updated the CFA on the status of recent agenda items. Since the University Council meeting was cancelled, the Computer Privacy Policy will not be presented until the December 6th meeting.

Rinehart met with Sumeet Bagai, President of the SGA, regarding mid-semester faculty evaluations. The SGA is still considering adding language to the Faculty Handbook that would recommend the use of mid-semester evaluations. They are also drafting a letter explaining the importance of such evaluations. CFA will help disseminate this letter to faculty. Rinehart will meet with SGA representatives again to determine what their next steps will be. Members of the CFA suggested the new faculty orientation held in the fall should place additional emphasis on the Faculty Handbook. There should be an opportunity during the orientation for new faculty to meet with senior faculty so additional emphasis could be given to key points included in the Handbook but also to pedagogical issues.

Presentation by Tim Mack on the Electronic Faculty Reporting System:

Tim Mack, Associate Dean for Information Tech. & Distance Ed., Agriculture, Human and Natural Resources (AHN) Information Technology, presented the Faculty Electronic Annual Reporting System (FEARS).

Mack gave a brief history regarding the development of FEARS. The Provost charged the AHN department with creating a web-based application that would allow faculty to submit annual faculty reports electronically. The Provost had previously considered a system at Clemson University but after further review felt the application fell short in
several areas. The Provost has asked developers to create a system that could save the faculty time while simultaneously providing administrators with the information they needed by acting as a database of faculty activities.

The system will allow multiple goals to be achieved [additional information and handouts were provided]. The system will save faculty time by automatically capturing data from the University, such as courses taught, student evaluations, and sponsored programs and grants. Having this information prevents faculty from having to re-input the data into annual reports. Faculty will be able access their own data and update it for annual reports as well as export it for use in other venues such as dossiers. FEARS will allow also achieve several administrative goals by allowing faculty activity data to be reused and repurposed by departments, colleges and the university. The system will provide individual, department, and college-wide data summaries on faculty activities. Faculty data will be able to be collapsed into a single, university-wide database that can provide accurate and current information on a range of topics including publication and presentations, instructional activities and innovations, graduate education, and service/outreach to the profession and the community. FEARS will provide required benchmarking data for SACS reviews and federal reporting requirements.

Three units have agreed to pilot FEARS. It is expected the system will be ready for use Fall 2005. While the system is being piloted and in its developmental phase, input from faculty is welcome. Developers are seeking to create a consensus-based system. Developers are looking at a way for departments to access different features in the system to meet their own needs.

CFA members raised several concerns including the security of the information in the system. Mack reported that as you move away from the individual, some areas on the form are confidential. In addition, the individual would be given secure access so others could not edit their record. Additional concerns included the standardization of the faculty report form, and whether it would provide valid information on faculty members out of the departmental context. Mack agreed the form may result in departments standardizing their process, but the initial value-added features of the system will allow faculty members to save time and would allow faculty to define scholarly principles used for evaluation. Additionally, more features can be added over time, and convenience features may be developed to suit the needs of each department. Commission members inquired whether it would be more useful to give the system a wider vetting during the pilot phase. Mack agreed that a series of pilots will need to be done to work out glitches before the system goes into place in the fall. After the initial pilot, one or two faculty members from each department will be recruited to test the system and provide feedback. This will occur sometime in February. Rinehart inquired at what point Mack would like to meet with the Faculty Senate. Mack expects to present to the Senate in January and will discuss further plans with Rinehart.

The next meeting will be on December 10, 2004 in 325 Burruss.

Recorder: C. Amelink, Office of the Provost