Report of HOP Committee to Faculty Senate Regarding Pending HOP Proposals
February 3, 2011
Submitted by Mel Laracey, Chair

2.44. There were two proposed HOP revisions for which comments were due by December 27. These were 2.44, regarding Minors in Laboratories, and 6.01, regarding the establishment and composition of University Standing Committees. No faculty comments on 2.44 were received by the HOP Committee, so none were submitted.

6.01. No faculty comments were received, but comments were submitted on 6.01 by both the Senate Chair and the Chair of the HOP Committee. These comments emphasized the basic principle that, wherever possible, faculty, through the Faculty Senate, should be involved in the selection of members of university committees whose work can affect faculty. It was also noted that faculty involvement in such selection procedures would be consistent with federal regulations regarding the composition of university Institutional Review Boards.

2.20. This proposal, regarding allocations for academic travel by faculty, was circulated to the Faculty Senate for comment on January 6. Comments are due by February 14.

Current HOP 2.20 seems to not reflect current college and department practice, because it provides for the appointment of "College Academic Research Committees." The current provision then provides that these committees make decisions on "travel applications from faculty members of the College on the basis of the quality and potential importance of the papers." Current 2.20 also provides, in section 3(b), that "only one trip per year per faculty member in any one Division will be funded until all eligible applications have been funded."

Proposed 2.20 provides that the "college dean and/or department chair . . . allocates funds to faculty based on policy." It then provides as follows:

A. Academic Travel Purpose
    1. The academic travel policy of each college shall support the mission and vision of UTSA.
    2. Academic travel approval and funding shall be evaluated based on the alignment of the travel request with University mission, vision and policy, and College policy. Consideration will include:
        a. The quality and importance of the original research to be presented,
        b. The quality of the venue in which the research to be presented, and
        c. The purpose for the requestor's attendance (if not presenting a paper).
    3. The academic travel policy, and travel approval and funding provided, if delegated to the department, shall align with the university mission and vision.

Some comments have been received from faculty regarding these proposed changes. The common objection is that the new language would permit departments to move away from current practice of funding one conference trip for each faculty member, to a competitive, potentially less equal system where travel proposals would be weighed in terms of perceived significance to the "University's reputation, mission, and vision." The concern is that this will "make the process far more political and arbitrary," as one commenter put it.

2.04 and 2.22. On February 2, these two proposals were circulated to all Faculty Senators for distribution to their departments. 2.04 applies to Faculty Recruitment; 2.22 covers Periodic Performance Evaluations (PPE's). The comment deadline for these proposals is March 28.

2.12. This provision concerns student course evaluations. The Teaching Survey Committee has the lead role on this and will report on it.