

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO

DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDING OF THE GENERAL FACULTY AND

DOCUMENTS and PROCEEDINGS OF THE UNIVERSITY ASSEMBLY

The minutes of the University Assembly meeting of March 11, 2003 published below have been prepared for the immediate use of the members of the University Assembly and are included in its Documents and Proceedings. They are also included in the Documents and Minutes of the General Faculty for the information of the members.

Mansour El-Kikhia, Secretary
The General Faculty

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE UNIVERSITY ASSEMBLY MEETING OF MARCH 11, 2003

I. Call to order and taking of attendance

Present: Jennifer Alcorta, Jane Armstrong, Guy Bailey, Gerard Barloco, Bruce Bublitz, Patricia Dunn, Mansour El-Kikhia, Eugene John, Miriam Juckett, Michael Kelly, Melissa Killen, David Larson, Deryl Martin, Ken Masden, James Mathis, James McDonald, Cindy Orth, George Negrete, Terri Reynolds, John Rundin, Woodie Spivey, and Rosalinda Stead

Absent: Leroy Alloway, Rosalie Ambrosino, Linda Black, Felecia Briscoe, Ryan Cramer, Ke'Ana Hardy, Rita Marquez, Christopher Reddick, Ricardo Romo, Eugene Salinas, and Brenda Stevens

Total members present: 22

Total members absent: 11

II. Minutes of January 22, 2003 meeting approved.

III. Reports

A. President's Report – Dr. Guy Bailey (substituting for Dr. Romo)

Dr. Bailey reported that the primary focus is on what is happening in Austin at this time. Dr. Romo was currently in Austin working with the legislators on the budget. Dr. Bailey states that it is important to keep in mind that nothing definite has been decided and that anything that appears in the media is likely to change; all the University can do at this point is wait. Dr. Bailey's second point was that unless the state passes some dramatic new taxes, there will be budget cuts; however, UTSA is in a better position than most universities. Since David Larson, Vice President for Business Affairs, is a comparatively conservative business manager and has anticipated these cuts, the University has been able to prepare in advance. Also, revenue growth will help further balance things out.

Dr. Bailey said that the University is already implementing some policies to minimize the impact of a reduced budget. For example, minimum enrollment in most classes has been reduced to 20 students. When asked who would authorize exceptions to this policy, Dr. Bailey replied that the Provost's Office would authorize exceptions, although the Deans would provide justification or rationale for these exceptions.

Dr. John Rundin expressed concern that minimizing enrollment would negatively impact the Department of English, Classics, and Philosophy and could result in the elimination of two majors, Humanities and

Classics. Dr. Bailey responded that each individual major would be examined and that the Provost's Office is aware that certain circumstances exist where the minimum enrollment requirement cannot apply; his Office would work with these departments.

In response to the question if there was unity in the higher education front in Austin, Dr. Bailey said that although unity was most needed at this time, it did not exist among the schools. It seems that every school has its own agenda. Dr. Bailey further stressed the importance of keeping up with equipment inventories as it was possible that legislators would use missing inventory as a reason to deny funds to the University. On the positive side, however, UTSA was praised for its Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB) program.

It was suggested that if anyone had any ideas that would help the University save money, they could be presented to the budget officer, Dr. Bailey, or President Romo. A money-saving suggestion had been made by the Information Technology (IT) program involving having staff members turn off their computers each night and over the weekends. Apparently, this effort would result in a substantial saving, and IT plans to send a communication throughout the campus encouraging everyone to do so.

B. Secretary – Dr. Mansour El-Kikhia

Dr. El-Kikhia reported that he and Dr. James McDonald recently attended a two-day UT System Faculty Advisory Council meeting in Austin. The most important issue discussed was the budget. Dr. El-Kikhia applauded the Vice President for Business Affairs, Mr. Larson, for putting money aside and being prepared for a budget crisis. He suggested that the process continue so that the University would be prepared in the future, as well. Dr. El-Kikhia further reported that the UT System Chancellor wanted a revision of the Regents' Rules and Regulations. For example, the Chancellor is working toward decentralization of tuition and fees; he does not want the legislature to continue to determine or allocate these amounts. Instead, both processes would be done at the UT System level. Dr. El-Kikhia then asked Dr. McDonald to report on health insurance benefits.

In terms of health insurance, Dr. McDonald said that UT System is in better shape than most campuses. He further stated that the University is currently operating without a deficit, so it should be able to maintain health care benefits as they now exist. In fact, the legislature was looking at the UT System as a model for the rest of the university systems in the state. Dr. McDonald claimed that one reason for the System's success with regard to insurance is the higher levels of co-payments. He further stated that in terms of health care options, there was a good chance the HMO option would not be renewed as HMO's are no longer competitive in most markets, and the UT Select PPO is a better value.

Dr. El-Kikhia completed his report by mentioning the release of social security numbers resulting from a break-in that occurred in the Austin computer system. A list of the numbers that were stolen would be forwarded to those involved. He further stated that he was happy that UTSA had switched to a new numbering system that no longer used social security numbers as identifiers.

C. Committees – no reports.

D. Other:

1. Report from the Chair of the Faculty Senate – Dr. James McDonald

Dr. McDonald reported that the Senate was able to recommend a laboratory space policy and that they were developing a good third-year review policy for faculty members. In addition, the Faculty Senate was in the process of recommending some alterations to the Grievance Procedure. Finally, Dr. McDonald said that the Faculty Senate Teaching Effectiveness Committee is developing a survey to be administered to Department Chairs to get a sense of what is going on with their faculties.

2. Report from the Chair of the Staff Council – Ms. Terri Reynolds

Ms. Reynolds reported that the Staff Council is currently working with the Vice President for Administration on the issue of summer hours. She said they were also monitoring the insurance and budget issues.

3. Report from the President of Student Government – Ms. Melissa Killen

Ms. Killen reported that Student Government has updated their Web site. It can be found on the UTSA site under Student Leadership and Cultural Programs. She said that they are also working on the book exchange idea, the online teacher evaluations, amending the constitution to include college councils, and getting a 24-hour study facility for students. Ms. Killen further reported that an anti-tuition deregulation petition had been circulated since, historically, deregulation of tuition has resulted in dramatic increases in tuition.

Student Government Elections for new officers will be held online from May 14-18. The UT System Student Advisory Council will meet in April for their final meeting of the year.

IV. Unfinished Business

1. Dr. McDonald reported that the Faculty Senate had two recommendations. First, that the Assembly develop its own electoral mechanisms; and second, that the faculty membership on the Assembly not be limited to Faculty Senators but rather be opened to the general faculty as well. He said that this would bring more faculty members into governance and decrease the Faculty Senate workload.
2. Jerry Barloco, Vice President for administration, commented on an article written by Dan Cook, a columnist for the San Antonio Express-News. According to Cook, a donor with a substantial contribution had decided against a donation to UTSA because of an antiwar ad that had been placed in the newspaper by a student organization claiming UTSA affiliation. Mr. Barloco stated that although free speech on an individual's behalf or on a group's behalf is necessary, he wondered what could be done to prevent this from happening again. Dr. El-Kikhia responded that the only thing that could be done was to ensure that when any student group gives a statement that it be made clear that the views expressed are those of the organization and not UTSA. He felt that it was very important that personal views be distinguished from University views.

V. New Business – None

VI. Questions to the President

Dr. Romo joined the meeting at this point. He said that it had been a very productive morning. The House Appropriations Committee had met to work on the budget recommendation for the House. He stated that in order to operate at current levels, UTSA needs \$145 million. The governor proposed a 12 percent cut in the budget, reducing the amount to \$119 million; the House Appropriations Committee proposed a 15 percent cut to the \$115 million. Since then, the University has been fighting to get back to the \$119 million amount. The UT System did not get to testify before the Committee. Although everyone was sent home at 2 p.m. and no more input was needed, Dr. Romo felt that the trip gave him the opportunity to talk to the Chancellor about his predictions for UTSA and other campuses.

Dr. Romo suggested that everyone read an article in the Metro section of the March 11, 2003 San Antonio Express-News by Carlos Guerra as the article discussed much of the background work that goes into lobbying for University funds. Apparently, the article was very supportive of higher education and was the result of a discussion between UTSA and six other universities and the editorial board

Dr. George Negrete asked if the University would be all right at \$115 million?

Dr. Romo responded that the University is “creeping up” toward the \$119 million, and if that happens, cuts will need to be made. On the positive side, UTSA is still hiring faculty members in needed areas, while other universities have stopped hiring. In addition, dormitories and the research lab on West Campus will be constructed because this is being done with UT System money and not with state money. Construction of the dorms is planned to begin Summer, 2003 if all goes well.

Dr. Romo reported that between May 15 and June 1, five members from the Senate and five members of the House comprising the Conference Committee will meet and attempt to draft the ideal budget and present it to the governor. If this committee cannot 'get together' and are unable to present the governor with the budget, the legislature can go into special session, and the roller coaster ride would not be over until August.

Dr. Romo ended by thanking everyone for the hard work. He said that the campus is running smoothly, and the University is carrying out its mission despite tough economic times.

Dr. El-Kikhia asked for an update on the 24-hour study facility?

Dr. Rosalie Ambrosino reported that the University Center had been opened for 24 hours at one time, but because of lack of use, the hours were scaled back to four and then to two hours. As it was a very expensive endeavor, Student Affairs suggested that they work with the students and determine their needs in this regard. Now the students are stating that the facility is definitely needed. Because of the cost, the Division of Student Affairs is continuing to work with the students to try to find funds for operations.

VII. Adjournment

Comments or questions to spottorff@utsa.edu

Last updated: Aug 30, 2005