

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 October 21, 2004 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.

James McDonald, Secretary
The General Faculty

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE UNIVERSITY ASSEMBLY MEETING OF OCTOBER 21, 2004

I. Call to order and taking of attendance

Present: Rosalie Ambrosino, Christian Borres, Cody Coeckelenbergh, Mansour El-Kikhia, Daniel Hogenauer, Michael Kelly, Elnora Kennedy, Richard Knight, Geraldine Lopez, Minnie Martinez, James McDonald, Angela McNair, Carolyn Motley, Julio Ramos, Dee Russell-Terrell Rudy Sandoval, Anne Speights, Rosalinda Stead, David Thompson, Destiny Waiters, Deanna White, Venetta Williams.

II. Reports

A. President's Report – Dr. Ricardo Romo

Dr. Romo reported new parking facilities that will add 328 spaces are currently under construction. This will expand parking to the corner of Babcock Road and Loop 1604 on the other side of Chisholm Hall. Fifty new staff parking spaces will be added in the area of Margaret Tobin Boulevard. An ad hoc student committee will be formed to revisit the parking situation. Students have expressed concerns about the Student A and B parking permits. The administration recognizes there is not enough parking overall. There are immediate plans to expand Lot 13 by 200 spaces and add 350 spaces adjacent to Valero Way. The goal is to eventually have a total of 1150 spaces in Lot 13. Building construction plans include a \$30 million expansion of the University Center and a parking garage.

UTSA's Fall 2004 enrollment is 26,200, making it the second largest component in the UT System. Although high student enrollment is good news, it is also a double-edged sword since far more services are needed to support the enrollment. A committee will be established to study issues such as the sufficiency of advisors, dining facilities, and child development and child care centers. The robust increase in enrollment is expected to continue for the next few years, which would mean an enrollment of 40,000 students in 10 years. UTSA continues to be committed to access and affordability.

Dr. Romo congratulated student leadership for having assisted with campus life initiatives. For example, a new campus housing project in the amount of \$27 million was just approved. Construction on this project, which will provide 680 more beds, will begin in Summer 2005 and is scheduled for completion in Summer 2006. The new Chaparral Village community center that accommodates 75 students has already outgrown its capacity. This is an indication that the manner in which the campus operates is changing for the better. Students are on campus more and are becoming more and more involved with campus life. There are still improvements that need to be made, such as additional accommodations for ADA compliance but, overall,

campus life is very vibrant. Additional intramural fields will be constructed and a swimming pool will be built in Chaparral Village. The Recreation Center has been a tremendous success, serving many students every day.

The University has hired 70 new faculty this year, which is a record. Fifteen of the new faculty are from Texas institutions. Faculty hiring will continue to be a major initiative in order to reduce the faculty/student ratio, which is the highest in the UT System. The retention rate has improved significantly due to the efforts of the faculty and the staff who work in advising. There are many programs that account for the increased success of the students. These include supplemental instruction for large classes, tutorial programs, peer mentoring, learning communities, and freshman seminars. Graduation rates are impacted by things the university cannot control, such as the need for some students to work two jobs.

The University recently held a very successful event titled, Rio Grande Day, that hosted students from Del Rio, Eagle Pass, Carrizo Springs, and Crystal City. Several hundred people attended, including the mayors of all four cities and the school superintendents from the area.

B. Secretary – as submitted by Dr. James McDonald

In the May meeting of the UT System Faculty Advisory Council, Robert Gates (Associate Director of UT Human Resources) and Brett Morris (Chair of the UT Retirement Programs Advisory Committee) provided an overview of the first major overhaul of the ORP information delivery platform since it was initiated in 1968. In 2005 ORP is moving from a paper-intensive administration system to an automated, 24/7, Web-based one. Ninety percent of the UT System faculty contract with the eight current companies that provide service to UT component campuses. The other 10% are with grandfathered companies. All eight of the current companies will participate in this automation initiative. Individuals who are still using one of the older companies will have a more limited number of automated capabilities.

ORP is, of course, the Optional Retirement Plan that most faculty opt for as their retirement package. Most faculty find out how their funds are doing by working with representatives from their respective ORP companies or by visiting company web sites and looking at their portfolios.

Over the course of 2005, all campuses will be rolled into a UT System automated platform where we can get a one page summary for each of our accounts. The ORP Web page will be on the UT EID Web site. Notable new capabilities on this Web site will include the ability to split funds between ORP companies and use various retirement planning tools so that faculty can factor in a variety of variables in figuring their retirement (e.g., social security, IRAs, inheritances, etc). Eventually the Web page will also include “life event planning” and allow employees to transfer funds between accounts.

In the latest Sysfac meeting last week (10/7-10/8), the upcoming legislative session loomed large in our various discussions. Key issues include: obtaining adequate formula funding to support rapid growth (some Regent’s are concerned about accountability and it is clear that more state funding will also mean more accountability) that would help fund closing the gap initiatives among other things; high quality education and academic practices; excellence in health care; institutional competitiveness for educators and researchers; strengthening educational services to public education and the community; improving efficiency of operations and the productive use of resources.

- Formula funding: this source provides 20-30% of University funding. “Full formula funding” is critical to provide funding that accounts for inflation and growth.
- Closing the gap: support for emerging institutions and doctoral programs that serve large minority populations.
- High quality education and success: funding to support the reduction of student-teacher ratios, provide more advisors, enhance through rates, and enhance the Texas grant program.
- Health care: physicians and other health personnel who are trained in Texas tend to stay here. Major cuts experienced by health components in the UT System from the loss of Medicaid revenues have to be addressed.

- Institutional competitiveness in faculty hiring: the UT System is providing additional funding for start up packages.
- Strengthen collaboration with public education: excellent K-12 partnerships already exist and need to be continued. Most of these are privately funded.
- Increase efficiency and productivity: the UT System and its components initiated accountability measures and it appears that in the upcoming legislative session such measures will be established for all higher education components.
- Additionally we heard about the *Commission of 125 Report* recently released by UT-Austin. This was a report developed by a large group of alumni (numbering more than 200) that emphasizes the revamping of the UT-Austin core curriculum, stabilize undergraduate enrollment, and create better and more empowered leadership at the Department and Center levels of administration.

C. Committees

D. Other

1. Report from the Chair of the Faculty Senate – Dr. Mansour El-Kikhia

Dr. El-Kikhia reported that, based on several reports presented by the UT System Faculty Advisory Council meeting, UTSA is in much better shape than many of the other components. The Regents have a clear understanding that UTSA's growth requires resources to hire more faculty and construct new buildings. Although the University might experience some budget cuts in the next few years, the future, overall, is very bright.

The Faculty Senate is in the process of rewriting its bylaws, as well as making recommendations to revamp the *UTSA Handbook of Operating Procedures*.

2. Report from the Chair of the Staff Council – Ms. Venetta Williams

Ms. Williams said one of the main objectives of the Staff Council is to educate all employees of its existence and how its members can be contacted. Staff should be aware the Council exists to talk with university officials and to do whatever it can to help the university move to Tier One status. All Staff Council members have a sign on their office door identifying their membership. All staff should contact their representatives with any concerns and should visit the Council's Web site to review minutes of the meetings and receive updates on the Council's work.

3. Report from the President of Student Government – Mr. Damon Garcia

Mr. Garcia introduced the student representatives who were in attendance – SGA Vice President, Cody Coeckelenbergh, College of Liberal and Fine Arts representative, Destiney Waiters, College of Sciences representative, Richard Knight, College of Business representative, Angela McNair, College of Engineering representative Julio Ramos, College of Public Policy representative, Geraldine Lopez, and School of Architecture representative, Christian Borres. He reported the Student Government Association has increased its membership two-fold. The organization continues to be more transparent and inclusive and is working to involve students campuswide.

SGA recently conducted a voter registration drive during which 969 new voters were registered. At the same time, 2500 mail-in forms were distributed. Early voting transportation is available from the University Center for faculty, staff, and students. SGA and other student organizations recently held a Civic Awareness Week, which was a big success. Debates and panel discussions included several elected representatives and candidates. During the week-long event, nearly 2000 students were involved in some manner.

A major initiative for Student Government is the development of college councils, i.e., student government within each college to provide the opportunity for students to further involve themselves. Students within these councils will have the ability to talk to one another to see what is going on in their college, whether it is a concern or a discussion of research. All of these efforts

work toward developing the type of campus environment that will move the university toward Tier One status, while improving retention. SGA's continued efforts to ensure students are being heard resulted in a "concerns week" during which over 200 concerns were processed.

Mr. Garcia announced the upcoming Election Night Party that SGA is sponsoring, in collaboration with the Department of Political Science and Geography. Everyone is invited to participate and enjoy food, entertainment, and activities. KENS 5 television station will be sending out live shots of the party in the new Main Building. This will highlight the new facility, as well as highlight UTSA students and their understanding of the importance of the political process.

The elected representatives of the Student Government Association are always available to receive feedback from the campus. Information on the organization can be found on the Web site at www.utsasga.com. The SGA phone number is 458-4597 or email can be sent to any member of student government by simply putting in the first letter of the first name followed by the last name and then followed by @utsasga.com. The current focus of the organization is to definitely be transparent and open to the students it serves.

III. Unfinished Business

None

IV. New Business

None

V. Questions to the President

1. Dr. Rudy Sandoval said he recently saw something about new legislation affecting veterans educational benefits. He asked how many veterans UTSA currently has participating in the veterans program. Dr. Romo replied that Dr. Richard Lewis, who is a veteran, can assemble some information on this issue and report back.
2. Julio Ramos, student representative from the College of Engineering, asked about the status of the acquisition of the Business Technology Center building and if there are plans to acquire any more buildings at the Downtown Campus. Dr. Romo responded all terms for the purchase of the building have been determined and they are just waiting to get the contract signed. The purchase of the land from the City has been delayed due to administrative changes with city staff, but that is now moving forward and everything should be finalized very soon. He added that this purchase and the acquisition of Cattlemen's Square will add 500 parking spaces adjacent to the Downtown Campus. UTSA has also reached an agreement with the State of Texas Department of Transportation to acquire the parking space underneath the freeway that is currently operated by the City of San Antonio. This will add approximately eight blocks of parking space from Buena Vista Street to Guadalupe Street and will probably become effective in April 2005.

VI. Adjournment

Comments or questions to spottorff@utsa.edu

Last updated: February 2, 2005