The regular meeting of the University Assembly for the academic year 2011-2012 was held April 24, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. in the University Room, BB 2.06.04 with Ricardo Romo, President of the University of Texas at San Antonio, presiding.

I. Call to order and taking of attendance

Present: Ricardo Romo, Jesse Zapata, Amy Jasperson, Carola Wenk, Sally Bench, James Chambers, Joshua Davidson, Donna Fiedler, Chris Goldsberry, Xavier Johnson, Jennifer Lozano-Lowe, Krisellen Maloney, John McGee, Goutham Menon, Laura Murray, Harrison Pierce, Elba Ramos, Mariela Rodriguez, Deanna White, Ryan Zapata

Absent: Mark Allen (excused), Jordan Bittner, Belinda Dovalina (excused), John Frederick (excused), Marjie French, Samantha Garcia, Daniel Gelo (excused), Suat Gunhan (excused), Kerry Kennedy (excused), Laurie Long (excused), John McCray (excused), Ana Navarro, Gage Paine (excused), Alex Roberts, Jude Valdez, Joe Weissmann, David Yang, Huang Michael Yue

Guests: Pam Bacon, Gregory Frieden, Sarah Leach, Sonia Martinez, Misty Sailors

II. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes were approved.

III. Reports

A. President – Dr. Ricardo Romo

President Romo discussed the new Park West athletic center which will include a track and field area, a soccer field, and an adjacent parking lot, located off 1604 and Hausman road. He said that this new complex is partially funded by a partnership with Bexar County, and will be used for high school and UIL events as well as for UTSA athletic events. The complex will cover 125 acres and the expected completion date for phase 1 is in the summer of 2013.

He told the assembly that UTSA’s Capital Campaign Kickoff was a few weeks ago and said that $94.5 million have been raised so far. This puts UTSA at 75% towards its goal
of $120 million. President Romo said that two $1 million gifts had also been given to the university on the week that the campaign was announced.

President Romo said that a parking survey was recently conducted by the UTSA police department. They surveyed lots 11 and 13 between March 26th (Tuesday) and March 28th (Thursday) each hour, between the hours of 8am and 6pm. President Romo invited Pam Bacon, Associate VP of Administration to discuss the survey results. She indicated that the results of the survey showed that lot 11 generally had the most spots available, even during the busiest hours around lunchtime. A question was raised about how many spots are available in each of the lots. She said that lot 11 has approximately 520 spaces and lot 13 has approximately 1,100 spaces. President Romo discussed the new Bauerle road Garage, and said that the garage will have parking meters, an alumni center, a welcome center, a coffee shop, and a spirit shop. He also mentioned VIA’s new Bus Rapid Transit (PRIMO) project, which will include a bus route between UTSA’s downtown campus and the main campus with minimum stops. President Romo said that this project with VIA will offer a faster option for people traveling between campuses. He expects the project to be implemented around December of 2012. The question was raised about the location of “B” parking permits for staff members, specifically janitors, who work on the north side of campus after dark and have to park in a farther lot. Pam Bacon explained that many of these workers purchase a single “Reserved” permit and carpool together, which allows them to park closer to the buildings. She also mentioned that “B” permit holders are allowed to park in “A” parking spots after 4:30pm. She said that people who hold higher permits generally have more parking options, even though these permits are more costly.

President Romo discussed the option of a tobacco-free campus, which is currently under review. He said that some campuses such as UT Austin, UT Arlington, UT Brownsville, ACC, and Austin community college have implemented smoke-free policies. Other campuses such as the University of Houston and Rice University have policies that restrict smoking, but do not require a full ban. Texas Tech and Texas A&M have a policy that does not allow smoking or tobacco use in areas where research is funded by the Cancer Prevention Research Institute (CPRIT). President Romo told the assembly that he plans to phase in more stringent guidelines at UTSA and mentioned that there are two CPRIT grants utilized at UTSA, around the engineering and sciences buildings. CPRIT compliance is scheduled to be implemented by August 31st. He said that teams comprised of representatives from human resources, research, academic affairs, and community engagement and communications have been formed to conduct an initial study on pursuing a tobacco-free campus policy.

B. Provost’s Report - Dr. Jesse Zapata (for Dr. John Frederick)

Dr. Zapata said that he has heard that some department chairs are having issues with adding additional courses at the downtown campus. This is due to changes in class scheduling not coinciding with the new bus schedule, which is making it hard to commute between campuses. He said that this issue will be monitored more carefully in the future.

He gave an update on the Graduation Rate Improvement Plan (GRIP), which is available on the Provost’s webpage. The contributors involved in implementing the plan are
meeting for a retreat on June 8th to review the plan and discuss any possible changes to improve it. Dr. Zapata said that implementation of the plan is partially tied to the tuition and fee increases that the Regents are reviewing. However, he said that no matter what the outcome is, at least some aspects of the GRIP will be implemented. He said that there has been some concern raised by students that faculty members are not identifying whether or not they are using +/- grades. He said that the administration is taking additional steps to improve communication. One of these steps encourages faculty to indicate scoring methods per the Provost’s instructional memo on developing syllabi. In addition, Krisellen Maloney, Dean of Libraries has developed a training module for Teaching Assistants which includes syllabus design. The module is also being developed for NTTs to be used at the new faculty orientation. This information will also be shared through the Provost’s webpage and at department chair meetings. He informed the assembly that each college has a handbook that they could incorporate a statement into. Dr. Zapata said that faculty members should use the same scoring method throughout the length of the semester and should notify students by the census date.

C. Secretary of the General Faculty – Dr. Amy Jasperson
Dr. Jasperson congratulated the winners of this year’s University Excellence Awards. She said that there is an upcoming SYSFAC meeting this week, where the recommendations of the teaching evaluation task force will be discussed. Dr. Jasperson said that the administration, faculty, and students are all concerned about the idea of delaying student access to their grades if they neglect to complete the teaching evaluations at the end of the semester. She told the assembly that these concerns will be communicated at the SYSFAC meeting. Dr. Jasperson said that she also expects to hear from OGC and the UT System on this issue. She said that a new policy called “conflict of commitment” is being reviewed and told the assembly that more information on this issue will be provided soon. She said that the academic inquiry course for the Freshman Initiative program is being developed, and feedback is being collected from faculty. Dr. Jasperson introduced Misty Sailors as the newly-elected Secretary of the General Faculty for the 2012-2014 term.

D. Chair of the Faculty Senate - Dr. Carola Wenk
Dr. Wenk said that the Faculty Senate recently updated their senate bylaws. In addition, the senate approved various graduate and undergraduate certificate programs, including certificates in Applied Behavior Analysis, Rhetoric and Composition, and a certificate in Latin. She expressed excitement that a Dietetics and Nutrition program is coming to UTSA soon and said that it will be a joint graduate/undergraduate program. Dr. Wenk said that the senate has also reviewed several HOP policies, including conflict of interest, non-reappointment of faculty, and NTT faculty titles. She said that the Faculty Senate is also reviewing the post tenure and annual review policy with Dr. Zapata.
E. Chair of the Staff Council - Mr. Christopher Goldsberry
Mr. Goldsberry notified the assembly of some recent changes to the Employee Educational Benefit program. He said that under the previous program, 6 credits per fiscal year were waived. The updated program will now waive 12 hours of designated tuition and mandatory fees. For staff members to qualify for the program, they must be benefits-eligible and they must have worked for UTSA for the past 12 consecutive months. Human resources will determine verification of eligibility. In addition, the employee’s supervisor does not have to sign the form, unless the employee plans to take courses during their normal work hours. Mr. Goldsberry said that the IRS guidelines for the program have also changed. The IRS previously excluded the first $5,250 from being taxed, but now requires the entire award to graduate students to be reported as taxable income.

Mr. Goldsberry said that all proposals and applications for the Student Affairs Transformation Fund are due on Friday, May 25th. He said that the fund provides one-time support to programs and services that fill the immediate needs and align with the VPSA strategic plan. He said that award decisions will be announced on June 19th. He encouraged the assembly members to attend UTSA’s 4th Annual Party on the Paseo on April 26th at the university center on UTSA’s main campus from 6:30-10:30pm. The Party on the Paseo is a free event for the UTSA community. He also told the assembly that the student affairs awards and recognition reception will take place on May 18th in the university center ballroom from 3:00-5:00 pm. The deadline for nominations is April 27th. He congratulated the UTSA cheer team on their recent NCAA collegiate national championship win. Mr. Goldsberry introduced Gregory Frieden from the career center as the new Staff Council chair for next year.

F. Student Government President – Mr. Xavier Johnson
Student Government Association (SGA) President Mr. Johnson told the assembly that although he was not selected by Governor Perry to serve as a student regent, he will be serving as the UT Student Advisory Council Chair. He said that the office of business affairs has been reviewing HOP 8.11 “Selection and Monitoring of Food Service Contractors”. Mr. Johnson said that he is working with the Faculty Senate and the office of Student Affairs in order to create a more formalized structure of the standing committee which is already in place. He said that as a result of the petition by the students for additional food options on the downtown campus, a Starbucks will be built at the downtown campus with an estimated completion date in the fall of 2012. He said that UT Student Advisory Council presentations are scheduled for May, and that the students are pushing for the Regents to look at other factors outside the 4-year graduation rates for tuition and fee proposals. President Romo and the assembly congratulated Mr. Johnson on his appointment to serve as the UT Student Advisory Council Chair.

IV. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.
V. New Business

- Revision to bylaws to include Retired Faculty Association representation
  Dr. Jasperson and Dr. Mariela Rodriguez, parliamentarian for the assembly, discussed the possibility of adding the chair of the Retired Faculty Association to the assembly (and to the Faculty Senate) as an ex officio member. The assembly bylaws state that a 30-day review period is required for any amendments to the bylaws, so assembly members will have the opportunity to vote on this proposal at the next meeting in the fall. A suggestion was made to include an alumni association member or parent’s council member as well. These proposals to add additional representation will be discussed again in the first assembly executive committee meeting of the fall semester, and a notice containing the final proposed revisions will be sent out 30 days prior to the first fall meeting.

- For the Kids (FTK) Dance Marathon – Ryan Zapata
  Mr. Zapata explained that FTK started four years ago at UTSA. He said that the student organization provides emotional and financial support for families who have been impacted by pediatric cancer. The organization has volunteers at Christus Santa Rosa Children’s Hospital, and gives all money that is raised back to the community. He said that the organization recently held an 18-hour dance marathon at UTSA’s convocation center which raised $33,875.46. This event has helped to distinguish FTK as the largest student philanthropy organization in San Antonio. He said that the UT Health Science Center put together a dance team for the event, and that the UT Health Science Center’s student government association has taken on FTK as their future fundraising service project.

VI. Questions to the President / Provost

There were no questions.

VII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.