SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE UNIVERSITY ASSEMBLY MEETING OF
October 15, 2014

The regular meeting of the University Assembly for the academic year 2014-2015 was held October 15, 2014 at 3:00 p.m. in the Assembly Room, JPL 4.04.22 with Ricardo Romo, President of the University of Texas at San Antonio, presiding.

I. Call to order and taking of attendance


Absent: Saadet Beeson (excused), Jurgen Engelberth, John Frederick (excused), Daniel Gelo (excused), Adrian Guajardo, Kerry Kennedy, Michael Klein, Manuel Maldonado, Marian Martinello (excused), Emeka Nwaeze, Lloyd Potter, Jude Valdez (excused)

Guests: Pepe Chang, Sarah Leach, Sonia Martinez, Sandy Welch (for John Frederick)

II. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes from February 18, 2014 were approved on April 30th via electronic vote. The minutes from April 22, 2014 were unanimously approved.

III. Election of Parliamentarian

President Romo called for nominations to elect a Parliamentarian for the University Assembly. Kirsten Gardner was nominated, accepted, and the Assembly unanimously approved for her to serve as Parliamentarian for the 2014-2015 year.

IV. Recommendation to revise Bylaws

President Romo said that there were two proposed changes to the Assembly’s bylaws. The first would add the Alumni representative and the Retired Faculty Association representative to the Assembly’s executive committee. The second change clarified the
quantity of Assembly meetings (at least once each semester). The University Assembly voted to unanimously approve these recommendations to revise the bylaws.

V. Topic of Discussion
President Romo gave an overview of his proposed Tier One goals and presented a chart showing a breakdown of these goals. He discussed the importance of each “pillar” to Tier One, as well as the importance of all pillars working together. He said that it was important to work on multiple goals at the same time and recommended that the Assembly members break into groups to discuss each pillar more in-depth.

“Educational Excellence”:
- How to improve graduation rates? One student at a time. The group stressed the importance of paying attention to each student to meet their needs.
- Need to create and sustain innovative and popular classes
- Faculty should continue to work to improve their teaching style to engage students (Example: innovative instruction utilizing media).
- Increase and broaden communication to the community. Get the word out to more students about why they should come to UTSA.

“Superior Infrastructure”:
- Communication at every level is important – increase marketing information
- Aligning budget to goals is important. Prepare multiple plans (and backup plans) to be better prepared for lack of state funding, university budget constraints, low enrollment, etc.
- Funding projects are important (Capital campaign, etc.). Perhaps look at showing a more tangible outcome when goals are reached for a greater impact.
- For greater endowment opportunities, increase alumni presence on campus among current students.

“Innovative Research & Discovery”:
- Publicize more student research at the undergraduate level
- Acknowledge and promote research in all academic areas (not solely focused on STEM fields).
- Instructors should place importance on promoting more critical and analytical thinking
- Abundant degrees – offer research programs to differentiate students and add to their overall experience
- Increase connection with the community so students can make business connections
- Offer scholarships to undergraduates who aspire to do research

“Strong Community Involvement”:
- Offer service learning as credit for service at UTSA to show the importance of volunteering
To recruit other students, promote our graduates, and reach out to alumni for fundraising and committee service opportunities.

There are some impressive companies listed on the UTSA Jobs website. Students can promote school spirit through their jobs as ambassadors of UTSA.

“**Superior Student Experience**”:

- Create the ability for students to declare their major early on if desired. Students can’t declare their major until they have achieved 30 credit hours. If a student doesn’t take 15 hours per semester, they won’t be able to declare their major until their second year, possibly not allowing them to register for required classes, which could put them behind in the 4-year graduation rate plan.
- Improve access to nearby campus housing; make more bike-friendly
- In addition to Student Instructors (SIs) in lower-level courses, focus on upper-level SIs that students could benefit from
- Reinforce the faculty relationship through SIs
- Increase internship opportunities, for students to gain real world experience
- Open up class availability times and advising options. For students who work, having limited meeting hours with their advisor can be challenging. Perhaps advisors could offer advising services through email or add special meeting hours to benefit students’ schedules.

“**World-Class Graduate Programs**”:

- Create a more flexible graduate program for workers with families, etc.
- Allow part-time PhD students to enroll in classes and receive funding
- Provide funding for Masters students through scholarships
- Provide joint-programs to interest students
- Increase variety of Masters programs
- Increase PhD student diversity and diversity on committees

VI. Discussion Feedback
President Romo thanked everyone for participating and said that this feedback will be shared with UTSA’s strategic planning committee.

VII. Adjournment
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.