

**College of Sciences (COS)
Meeting of Dean's Executive Council
2 March 2009**

Present:

Dean - George Perry

Department Chairs - Edwin Barea-Rodriguez, Alan Dutton, Waldek Gorski, Miguel Jose-Yacaman, Sandy Norman, Kleanthis Psarris

Associate Deans - Raymond Baird, Craig Jordan, George Negrete, Andy Tsin

Center/Institute/Program Directors - Aaron Cassill, Joe Lazor

Assistant Dean - Garry Castellanos

COS Undergraduate Advising Director - Patti Gonzalez

COS Retention and Graduation Analyst - Diane Elizondo

Guest Speakers - Joe Fritz, John Palmer

Summary Notes

Textbook Ordering Review and Evaluation

Dr. Perry welcomed John Palmer, Director, and Joe Fritz, Text Manager, of the UTSA Bookstore. Mr. Palmer stated that the Bookstore wants to meet the needs of faculty and students. He has heard comments about the Bookstore under-ordering books and he and his staff were approaching the colleges and soliciting feedback. He said a number of factors are taken into consideration when ordering books. Weekly enrollment reports are reviewed. The date of issue of the book is taken into consideration. About 90% of the time the right numbers of books are ordered. But it only takes one class with the incorrect number of books ordered that impacts students and receives much attention.

About 20% of students attempt to get through class without a book. Students view the Bookstore prices as being the highest and they are looking for the best buys on e-Bay or Amazon. Prices are driven by the publisher. The Bookstore provides used text books. If a textbook is being reused during the next term, the Bookstore will pay up to 50% of the new textbook price provided the book is in good condition.

Dr. Gorski asked about e-Books. Mr. Palmer responded that this is a good option. However, the e-Book business is developing and there is no organized way to determine the standard. The prices of e-Books vary and vendors have different policies. Dr. Barea-Rodriguez asked what faculty can do about the high costs of books. Mr. Palmer responded by using a book that will be used for a while and to stretch it out between editions. Customized books that use certain chapters can be sold at a lower cost. These can be ordered but the Bookstore would need assurances that books will be used for several years.

Dr. Barea-Rodriguez commented that he has had discussion with publishers and making them aware that some costs of books are too expensive and he will not use them for his classes. He feels that you have to bargain with publishers as a way to keep costs down.

Deadlines for ordering textbooks are:

Summer term - March 15

Fall term - April 15

Spring term – October 15

Mr. Palmer appreciated the feedback from administrators. He stated that in the past the Bookstore has worked primarily with staff in the departments. He wants to also encourage communication with administrators and faculty. Mr. Palmer and Mr. Fritz are available to attend department faculty meetings.

I Clickers

Dr. Dutton stated that the clicker technology should be standardized. Dr. Barea-Rodriguez commented that he had contacted Dr. Larry Williams about standardizing clickers. Dr. Perry requested department chairs to be thinking about moving to a standard clicker for the college. This will be discussed at the next meeting of the Dean's Executive Council.

End of Summer Research Conference and Diversity Initiatives' Activities

Dr. Negrete informed the forum that a summer research conference was being planned for late August. Undergraduate students will present posters on their research. Dr. Negrete wants to expand this for the entire college. Other universities would be invited to attend and the goal is to bring regional students so they can get to know UTSA. We will have an event organizer. Faculty would need to make contacts and do leg work.

Dr. Tsin suggested this could be a conference to showcase the college and suggested that it include master's and Ph.D. students and faculty. Dr. Negrete responded that we would need more money and resources. After hearing input, Dr. Negrete concluded that discussions will continue on the plan for the conference.

A committee will soon review nominations received for the Dean's Fellows.

The Lone Star Graduate Diversity Colloquium is scheduled for 27-28 March 2009 on the UTSA campus. An estimated 55-70 students are expected to attend. Dr. Negrete is requesting that department chairs have faculty available to connect with students.

Proposal Routing, CAYUSE

The CAYUSE system provides for electronic submission of proposals and routing through administrative levels for approvals. Dr. Tsin indicated that a problem appears to be routing. There are many proposals that need to be reviewed. Some proposals do not route to department chairs for approvals. Based on the Office of Sponsored Programs, a proposal is required to route through department chairs only if a faculty member indicates a response of "yes" to the questions that follow:

- Are matching funds or cost sharing included in this proposal?
- Are the faculty involved in this project requesting buy-out of their teaching time?
- Does the project require the hiring of new faculty?
- Does this proposal involve new space or alterations to existing space within the university?

The routing of proposals was discussed at earlier Chairs' Council and Provost's Council meetings. The outcome was approval for the current routing process. The Office of Sponsored Program has informed the college that until President Romo changes the directive, department chairs can be bypassed on proposal routing when the areas mentioned above are not involved.

Dr. Barea-Rodriguez pointed out some proposals involve buyouts and students. There is the concern of proposals from centers and institutes in the college not routed through the departments thus bypassing department chairs in the approval process. Dr. Psarris indicated that there is a cost for research and external funding should share part of the cost. He wants to see budgets and he commented that some proposals allow for course buyouts but faculty do not include them.

After a discussion, the department chairs agreed that all proposals should be routed through them for approval. Dr. Perry will request this recommendation be discussed at a future Provost's Council meeting.

Class Schedules

Dr. Barea-Rodriguez indicated that he was a member of the university room scheduling committee. An issue is the number of classrooms available on campus - 104 classrooms @ 1604, 40 downtown. Biology majors need classes offered at the same time as classes needed by chemistry students. He mentioned the model in the College of Business where one person does the scheduling of classes for the college. He asked "How can we work together as departments toward this and have classes scheduled so they do not conflict?" Patti suggested having a meeting with all the individuals in departments involved with scheduling classes, before the Schedule of Classes is published, so that they can consult and ensure that courses COS majors need are not offered at the same or overlapping times. She mentioned that she and Diane have been involved with the Downtown Curriculum Committee that Dr. Guentzel is chairing. Dr. Guentzel asked that she create a block schedule for FR, SO, JR, and SR biology students to take a full-load of courses at the Downtown Campus (for the spring 2008 and the fall 2009). She was also asked to create a block schedule for FR with non-biology COS majors to take a full-load of courses at the Downtown Campus (for the spring 2008 and the fall 2009). In doing so, she found that there were a number of time conflicts. After a discussion, Dr. Perry requested that Dr. Jordan follow up on this issue.

Stimulus Impact

Dr Baird summarized what he had been able to piece together from several sources regarding the potential impact of the federal "stimulus" package on COS funding. Several agencies will have enhanced funding (totaling several billion dollars) which will be awarded for research and

education. Most of the money is expected to be spent within 24 months and much of it will revolve about the themes of biomedical, energy, climate change, and competitive research. There will be much pressure to spend the money well (trying to avoid ridicule from across the aisle deriving from “bridges to nowhere,” etc.). There will be additional funding for student scholarships and work study programs. There will be some money available for rehabilitating buildings related to science activities, but these funds will be routed through state government agencies. Since many of the dollars will go to fund grant proposals (ROI’s) previously found to be highly meritorious but not funded due to budget limitations, Dean Perry advised department chairs to inform applicants who had grant proposals falling into this category to contact the appropriate program officers at the granting agencies.

Doctoral Faculty

Dr. Dutton provided a handout on the policy on funding support of doctoral aspirants/candidates from the handbook on the Environmental Science and Engineering Ph.D. Program. Dr. Perry indicated that we are trying to identify a subset of the graduate faculty to serve as doctoral faculty. These individuals would be principal advisors and supervising Ph.D. students.

President’s Distinguished Achievement Awards

Dr. Perry reported that he had reviewed the recommendations of the College Faculty Review Advisory Committee for the awards and forwarded the college’s nominees to the Provost’s Office. The department chairs will be informed of the nominees.

Other Business

San Antonio Math & Science Education Partnership

Dr. Cassill mentioned the very successful San Antonio Math & Science Education Partnership meeting with 75 K-12, community college and university teachers in attendance. Fifteen out of 18 school districts were represented as well as every community college and all but one four-year university. Provost Frederick attended the meeting along with two department chairs from the College of Sciences, Dr. Barea-Rodriguez and Dr. Norman. The group spent three hours discussing approaches to improving STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education in San Antonio.

Dr. Norman stated there is a big gap between what K-12 teachers are doing and what is expected of students coming to the university. He stated we hope to bring the leadership together and have future meetings. Dr. Lazor commented that it was important to have the presence of department chairs as we partner with districts.