

**College of Sciences (COS)
Meeting of Dean's Executive Council
1 April 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

Center/Institute/Program Directors - Aaron Cassill, Weldon Hammond, Joe Lazor, Ravi Sandhu

Assistant Dean - Garry Castellanos

COS Undergraduate Advising Director - Patti Gonzalez

COS Retention and Graduation Analyst - Diane Elizondo

Guest Speakers - Kim Rolf

Summary Notes

Fall 2008 Total Academic Costs

Dr. Perry referenced the handout on "Average Total Academic Cost for Resident Undergraduates." The page showed a comparison of costs. UTSA ranked 4th out of the nine universities listed in the UT System. He requested that the information be shared with faculty.

Meeting with the Chancellor

Dr. Perry attended a meeting with Chancellor Cigarroa of The University of Texas System. Topics discussed and summary comments are listed below:

- The UT System is considering a policy that would require student evaluations be available on websites. Dr. Norman indicated that the Faculty Senate is looking at revamping the surveys. Dr. Perry commented that administrators should be thinking about what we want to post at websites.
- Syllabi should be available to students before classes begin.
- A bonus system for good teachers is being considered; reference was made to the Texas A&M experience.
- Textbooks should be selected earlier so students can buy them by other means.
- UT Austin's School of Engineering has been cited as an exemplary program for mentoring new faculty. Dr. Perry stated that we should have some kind of program even if it is not formal. When a faculty member is given a terminal contract, time has been lost and this can create low morale. Dr. Yacaman mentioned his positive experience at UT Austin with mentoring. Faculty receive assistance with teaching and grant writing. Dr. Yacaman indicated he could contact some of the department chairs at UT Austin for additional information.
- The Chancellor is enthusiastic about our Ph.D. in Physics at UT Brownsville. The Department of Biology is working on offering the Ph.D. in Biology in both emphases at UT Brownsville. The Chancellor encourages UTSA to pursue more programs.

Rotating Graduate Students and Training Requirements

Dr. Yacaman indicated that he has been communicating with the staff in the Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Assessment Office (EHSRA) about rotating graduate students completing training requirements before they begin working in a laboratory. He mentioned the large number of rotating graduate students and that training is difficult and not practical to accommodate for them.

Dr. Barea-Rodriguez recommended the training be on-line but Garry commented that there may be a need for some hands-on training. There was a discussion with agreement that it was not the responsibility of a department to develop training.

The EHSRA Office needs to make sure there is a training program and there is a need for an expert on safety topics and protocols. Dr. Barea-Rodriguez commented that departments should be able to list laboratory activities and recommend subject matter experts. Dr. Perry suggested administrators could contact Brian Moroney or Pam Bacon for assistance. Dr. Barea-Rodriguez indicated those biology students who have not completed training will do so during the summer.

Budget Preparation Request

Members of the Dean's Executive Council were sent a portion of an e-mail Dr. Perry received from Provost Frederick requesting information for the college's budget defense. Garry advised administrators to include everything to enhance our mission. Information will be collected from departments, centers and institutes in COS. Garry intends to collect inputs, send information back out, and prioritize requests. The information should be reviewed by administrators for common items. Garry commented that he hopes to present information collected for prioritization at a future meeting of the Dean's Executive Council. The request for information also includes the COS Advising Office. Requested information is for the timeframe of the next two years and is due to the Office of the Dean by Wednesday, April 8. Requests for future years, e.g, 3-5 years, 5-7 years, can also be included. Dr. Yacaman asked if we can revise the college list of equipment. Garry responded that now is the time as it is a changeable list.

Dr. Yacaman asked if requests for renovation can be included. Garry responded "yes" and Dr. Perry recommended that Dr. Yacaman attend the meetings of the Research Facilities Committee scheduled on Wednesdays. Dr. Perry commented there will be some funds to renovate the Science Building.

Status of Annual Faculty Performance Appraisals

Department chairs were reminded to complete annual faculty performance appraisals. The status of completion of the appraisals will be discussed at the next meeting of the Dean's Executive Council.

Dr. Perry mentioned the "Web of Science" citation analysis for the entire university using zip codes. The growth of citations for UTSA is more impressive than the dollars. It provides for comparing UTSA with other UT campuses. He will provide additional information at a future meeting.

Faculty Promotion-Tenure Guidelines

The guidelines to be used for 2009 reviews were sent by the Provost's Office and e-mailed to departments. Dr. Baird reminded department chairs to review the documents and follow the procedures.

Dr. Yacaman stated that there were reviews scheduled in his department and the guidelines were too restricted. The format letter sent to external reviewers was revised by the Provost's Office. Dr. Yacaman indicated he had concerns about the language in the letter. There was a discussion about the explicit wording in the letter sent to external reviewers and the statement that it will be made available if someone wishes to see it. Dr. Yacaman felt that reviewers would not be frank and that all the recommendations would be positive.

Professional Science Teaching Track

Dr. Baird noted that he and Dean Perry have discussed the idea of a professional science teaching track with faculty from most of the departments in the college. Since some sections of the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) are being re-written, if we want to make our case for sustained excellence in teaching as one basis for promotion to full professor, it might be advantageous to initiate that discussion before the changes are finalized. Dr. Baird asked department chairs for their "read" of faculty sentiment in each department. Before going forward, Dean Perry needs to know if faculty will be supportive of an initiative that would recognize superior teaching record as a basis for promotion to full (paralleling promotion based on superior research record). The department chairs individually assessed faculty opinion in their individual departments. All reported that they thought faculty would be supportive, generally speaking, except Dr. Norman, who said he could not make an estimate of the collective opinion of the Mathematics faculty.

Dr. Perry mentioned the faculty merit process. We are required to give a minimum amount to faculty who eligible because of their rating. He suggested some funds in the merit pool could be reserved for those faculty who are exceptional teachers and researchers. Garry commented that this could create a discrepancy. Dr. Psarris indicated that the merit exercise rewards faculty for different levels of performance.

Fall 2008 Strategies for Academic Success (SAS) Results

Dr. Perry introduced Kim Rolf, lead SAS advisor. She distributed the report "Review of SAS for Fall 2008" and discussed the information about students on probation. The goal of the College of Sciences Undergraduate Advising Center (COSUAC) is retention. The probation advisors have surveyed students and geared efforts towards these issues. However, we do not have a good record of retaining those on probation.

Dr. Barea-Rodriguez commented that some students are afraid to talk to faculty. A discussion followed on creating a sense of community for students. Kim and Patti reminded the forum about the COSUAC newsletter. They are working on a facebook page that they can post on for the departments. They also have a transfer WebCT and WebCT's for specific student populations: SAS, Step Up, Seniors (Grad 101), and Graduation Candidates (for seniors who have applied to graduate).

Other Business

Visiting Students

Dr. Yacaman informed the forum that 10 students from Monterrey Tech want to do research, two in physics and 8 in biology at UTSA. These students may apply to our doctoral programs. Dr. Yacaman will send names of students to Dr. Barea-Rodriguez.

Textbooks

Dr. Yacaman expressed his concern about the ruling on 27 March 2009 regarding textbooks. The State Board of Education voted to put in place a plan that would instead require teachers to encourage students to scrutinize "all sides" of scientific theories. The new standards remove current requirements that students be taught the "strengths and weaknesses" of scientific theories. Instead, teachers will be required to have students scrutinize "all sides" of the theories. The new standards will determine what will be included in science textbooks in Texas.