November 11, 2011

Tuition & Fee Proposal Committee
Meeting Minutes
Location: Travis Room UH 2.202
Time: 12:00 noon

In Attendance:

Student Members: Carolina Canizales, Nicole Davison, Lorenzo Garcia, Norma Gonzalez, Kiara Gradney, Marco Guerrero, Xavier Johnson, Kimberly Jones, Travis Jourdan, Kayla Long, Dominique Moore, Steven Ordaz, Mahdy Seady, Alicia Sebastien, Alan Shoho, Chris Stone, Jennifer Stone, Jay Vega, Justina Williams, Martha Wright, Robert Zubiate

Faculty Members: Gerry Dizinno, Kirsten Gardner, Alan Shoho

Administration / Ex-Officio Members: John Frederick, Janet Parker, Sandra Welch, Lawrence Williams, Sam Gonzales, Terry Wilson

Guests: Kirsten Gardner, Lynn Bishop, Becky Sanchez, Rogelio Cardenas (student)

Absent Student Members: Andrea Watson

Tuition and Fee Committee Website:

http://www.utsa.edu/financialaffairs/TuitionFees/proposals.html

John Frederick, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and reviewing the meeting agenda.

To access the presentations listed below, select the following link:

http://www.utsa.edu/financialaffairs/financecommittee/agendas.html

1. Overview of Tuition & Fee Proposal Process and Committee Charge

Provost Frederick identified the role of the Tuition and Fees Committee:

- Review details of Tuition and Fee Proposal UTSA is preparing which will go forward to the Regents
- Serve as a conduit to other students
- Have a transparent process
- Student participation in this process
What is the Tuition & Fee Proposal?
Designated Tuition and fees (referred to as the Total Academic Cost) are reviewed every two years for approval by the Board of Regents for a two-year period.

The Board of Regents will not entertain any tuition and fee increases unless tied to a very specific plan for improvement of UTSA’s four-year graduation rate. Increases for graduate student tuition must be justified.

Proposal Assumptions:
- Consultative - The campus community should be involved throughout the process
- Open and Transparent - Interested parties should have access to the information used in determining tuition and fee rates
- Comprehensive - Proposals must take into consideration flexible tuition and mandatory fees, including average course and program fees, to provide an accurate picture of the total academic costs to students
- Frugal - Proposals should take into consideration cost-saving initiatives to keep tuition and fee rates affordable

2. Overview of the University Budget - Janet Parker, Associate Vice President for Financial Affairs

Funding Sources:
- State funds, also referred to as Education and General (made up of formula funding and line item appropriations)
- State provides approximately 60% of the benefit costs for employees paid from State funds
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) transfers funds to UTSA for:
  - Texas Grants and Work Study (Financial Aid)
  - Other funding – e.g. in previous years UTSA received Incentive funding
- Statutory Tuition is technically state money collected locally; a revenue source for formula funding
- A portion of the Formula funding comes from State general revenue
  - A portion is Statutory tuition
  - Lab fees are also required to be collected as general revenue-dedicated
- Largest revenue source to cover general operating expenses is designated tuition
- Auxiliary Enterprise Funds are commonly used by each self-supporting entity such as Parking, Housing, Recreation Center, Food Services, University Center, etc.
- Restricted Funds – gifts and grants and contracts

Less than half of UTSA’s budget is discretionary. Formula funding makes up about 30% of UTSA’s FY 12 discretionary monies.
- State cut almost $9 million of the formula funding for FY 12
- State Appropriations related to special items we can use in a discretionary manner (Institutional Enhancement) cut very significantly
- Statutory Tuition revenue increased because of enrollment and additional graduate students
• UTSA remains one of the lowest funded by State Appropriations for FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) student.
• Identified some of the uses of Discretionary Budget
  o Majority of Faculty and staff salaries
  o Benefits not paid by the State
  o Instruction-related costs covered by specific fees
  o Library
  o Research and public service expenses that aren’t covered from certain special items
  o Piece of student services
  o Operation of maintenance and plant, including majority of utility costs
  o Scholarship/Fellowship and Financial Aid; UTSA allocates more for Financial Aid than required to
  o Debt Service/Capital Outlay for improvement of facilities

**Question from Student Robert Zubiate:** How does the State decide amount for each institution?

**Answer/Response:** The state uses two formulas that allocate the majority of funding institutions receive – in addition to special items. All semester credit hours and costs are reported by each state institution an apportioned by discipline and between undergraduate lower and upper division and graduate – masters and doctoral. 1 SCH of Liberal Arts undergraduate costs is given a factor of 1.0 and all other disciplines and levels are given factors based on costs relative to Liberal Arts at 1.0. Then, the entire amount of funding available is divided by all of the credit hours to determine the base rate. The base rate is then multiplied by the factor to come up with an allocation based on each institution’s array of SCH by discipline and class level. This allocation is not sufficient to cover the full cost of instruction.

The State determines the overall amount available to allocate. The piece UTSA receives is proportional to our weighted student credit hours relative to the other State institutions and the weighing of particular programs have. Retaining more students to the upper divisions and growing Graduate student body will help UTSA’s “piece of the pie” grow. (Assuming the state doesn’t further contract funding to the formula.)

THECB has been required by the legislature to look at moving Formula funding into Incentive-based allocations.

**Question from Student Jose Vega:** Is it based on students’ completed hours or hours registered?

**Answer/Response:** May be changed in future legislative sessions, but right now it is based on attempted, not completed. There was discussion to move it to completed, which would have resulted in a huge loss of funding for UTSA.

**Question from Student Nicole Davison:** Does the State take into consideration the schools in Texas that are going towards Tier One where funding is involved or is it not a factor?

**Answer/Response:** Not through formula funding; more information about programs for Emerging Research institutions can be found at the THECB website:

http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=3AEE7B8C-C9A0-F730-737CF4D01A404487
3. **Provost Frederick** gave an introduction of ideas going into the Graduation Rate Improvement Plan (GRIP)

A lot more emphasis being placed at various levels, e.g., Legislature, THECB, Regents’ level for us to improve the rate at which UTSA graduates students in four years.

Attendees discussed a recent article in *The Huffington Post* which inferred that UTSA students are unhappy because of our low retention rates of first time freshmen. Not sure the source of the data but it was not entirely accurate.

Attendees were asked if they knew UTSA’s freshman retention rate. The Freshman Retention Rate for students coming to UTSA with the intention of receiving a degree from UTSA is about 66%. Taking into consideration all students who come to UTSA, the rate is 61% (meaning including CAP students who enroll at UTSA with the express intent to leave.)

John explained the Graduation Metric

- Originally devised by the NCAA to ensure that student athletes were making progress towards a degree (in addition to playing sports); as such the metric was used for a set of students who were on a full scholarship with lots of resources and support offered to them.

- Applying that same metric to students who
  - may have significant financial challenges to attend college,
  - don’t have same type of full-ride financial aid *(not all student athletics have full rides)*,
  - don’t have the same kind of support services available to them or the same level of degree monitoring degree progress, may not correlate.

- Metric also doesn’t take into account when students
  - change from one institution to another or from one major to another
  - have to work 30 hours/week and take fewer credit hours per semester hour
  - support a family and or may have to stop for a while before coming back to their studies.

- UTSA’s students reflect the kinds of students found nation-wide. It is sort of unrealistic to expect that students today perform the way students did in the past - students came in, stayed with their cohort and the majority of those students stayed with that college and graduated in four years.

Based on the 2007 cohort, UTSA’s four-year graduation rate is 9.6%; UTSA’s six-year graduation rate is 27%. If rate includes students who started at UTSA and graduated from anywhere in Texas, that six-year rate is 45%. This is not necessarily a failure, rather a sign of the times.

UTSA needs to set goals and determine what it will take to reach those goals. Every change we make will take time to implement as well as change the culture of UTSA. To get to a four-year graduation rate of 25%, it will result in a six-year graduation rate will more than double. The plan is to work on ways to improve our rate.
The CAP program was a good program for UTSA. Thirty percent of CAP students who come to UTSA end up staying at UTSA. For the 70% that leave, this is a huge “hit” on UTSA’s graduation rate and persistence from freshman to sophomore year. If we consider only those students who came to UTSA with the intention of graduating from UTSA, the first to second year retention is closer to 70%; up from recent years.

One of the suggestions in this Graduation Rate Improvement Plan is that we will phase out the CAP program. Transfer students are not figured into the graduation rate nor are the students who graduate from UTSA but started at a different institution.

**Question from Student Nicole Davison:** As high schools continue to push dual-credit classes, more students are graduating from high school with around the 30 credit mark. Are they considered a full-time freshman?

**Answer/Response:** The student would still be counted as part of the cohort.

50 – 60% of UTSA graduates started somewhere else and therefore do not count in the metric. Majority of UTSA graduates, 60 – 70%, do not count towards UTSA’s graduation rate or UTSA’s success stories.

**Question from Student Martha Wright:** Is there a way to make a Transfer Graduation Rate?

**Answer/Response:** Although this is not a metric that is commonly used (as these are national metrics) UTSA needs to begin championing such a measurement, as it reflects what UTSA does. Inferred from other data, 80% - 85% of students who transfer to UTSA from other institutions do finish their degrees here.

**Question from Student Jose Vega:** Is a student who starts at UTSA, providing a better solution for UTSA later on based on jobs, GPA vs. a student who transfers to UTSA?

**Answer/Response:** They are probably equivalent. Quality is very important to UTSA. Some students may begin behind, but catch up with a year. More than two-thirds of UTSA students qualify for need-based financial aid, many of whom are first generation students. When those students graduate, we are changing the educational history of that family.

**Question/Comment from Student Xavier Johnson:** comparing the demographic profile of UTSA student compared to how the national economy does, when there is a dip in the economy, because of the type of students we serve, our student population is more adversely affected and there is more attrition. Doesn’t accurately reflect what we do here.

**Answer/Response:** When economy goes down, graduate enrollment goes up.

4. **Provost Frederick** discussed success factors for student completion:
   - Student/family circumstances
   - Institutional characteristics
     - Offer courses when students need them
Does UTSA’s curriculum structure help students make their way through college in a logical progression?

- Financial Aid availability
- Enrollment policies; how easy is it to retake a class and should there be stricter rules for taking classes multiple times to prevent delaying completion of degree?

The plan identifies four Success Factors for students:

- Student Academic Preparedness
- Curriculum Structure and Course Delivery
- Advising and Academic Support Services
- Policies and Incentives

5. **Sandra Welch**, Vice Provost for Accountability and Institutional Effectiveness, provided an overview of the challenges that arise because of these factors.

**Student Academic Preparedness**: A number of UTSA students are not well academically prepared for college-level work, and require developmental coursework that do not account toward the degree plan and may delay graduation.

**Curriculum Structure and Course Delivery**: Students may be having difficulty obtaining needed courses due to availability, schedule conflicts, pre-requisite requirements, transfer credits may not be accepted by UTSA, course and classroom availability and or lack of faculty to teach.

**Advising and Academic Support**: UTSA has heard the issues/concerns from students.

**Policies and Incentives**: Some policies UTSA has in place may actually be a deterrent to graduating on time, such as allowing students option of repeating classes.

**Academic Preparedness: Leticia Duncan**, Executive Director, Tomas Rivera Center and **Kristi Meyer**, Director, Graduation Initiative discussed strategies for student success. All students benefit when we are able to graduate students in four years.

Two-thirds of students leave UTSA with approximately $20,000 in school loan debt, whether they graduate or not. Nationally, and in Texas, higher education is under-producing graduates.

We are asking for financial support to create some new programs:

The *Jump Start Program* is designed to help students who come in needing a Calculus course, or a major that is calculus-based and are unprepared and do not test well. The *Jump Start Program*, through a one-day intensive class, helps students prepare for the Calculus class. Students end up re-testing with significant improvement and placement in class. The *Jump Start Program* is currently in third year of pilot program; we want to expand it to more students and majors. Results indicate students have a higher GPA with a 70 – 88% pass rate.

Leticia recognized **Alicia Sebastien** as Roadrunner of the Month.
National research indicates that students are being lost throughout the education process. Ninety-seven percent of students enter 9th grade, of that population only 75% graduate from high school. Of that group, 52.5% enter college and only 29% receive a bachelor’s degree.

Specific to UTSA: 25 – 30% of entering students need developmental course work in reading, writing or math with the largest percentage being in math.

We are proposing intervention programs that identify students early to result in better prepared, college-ready freshmen.

One of the proposed programs will work with SAISD and NISD. UTSA identified ten high schools to work with high potential students who indicated an interest in attending UTSA but that would need assistance in reading, writing and or math. We will be working with the following departments to get these students who commit to UTSA, college-ready:

- P-20
- Math Department
- Writing Center
- Graduation Initiative
- Tomas Rivera Center

Through Enrollment Management and Admissions, we are continuing to review admissions standards. SAT and ACT are not always the strongest predictors. High school GPA is often a better indicator. Student recruitment would consider scholars in the top 25%. We will aggressively reach out to these students so they are able to meet UTSA faculty, staff and successful students. This outreach will provide opportunities to ask questions about potential majors, careers and research interests. The goal is to provide opportunities for academic success with career potential. We will also work with students at Orientation to be on the correct path for their major.

UTSA is intensifying academic support for students. Following national models based on research and best practices, some of the programs include: supplemental Instruction – cover curriculum and gateway courses; tutoring – cover curriculum and gateway courses; academic Coaching; working with Colleges and students to identify other areas we may not be aware of; and we are exploring on-line services for tutoring and other assistance.

**Curriculum Structure and Delivery:** Nancy Martin, Associate Vice Provost, Core Curriculum and QEP. The Freshman Focus Initiative came about after last years’ Freshman Academic Experience Taskforce, which reviewed national and UTSA-specific data.

The committee’s report to the Provost had many suggestions that will take work and planning. The Freshman Focus Initiative Steering Committee will take this year to dig into the details and recommendations from last year’s report. Some of those recommendations include:

- Block scheduling for incoming freshman; details of how this would work are still in development;
• Creation of a new course (under development) titled Academic Inquiry – taught from an inter-disciplinary approach to introduce college-level courses. The courses would be capped with enrollment at 25 students and students would be enrolled in a cohort group.
• Streamlining the curriculum; departments will review course requirements for redundancy, relevancy, and flexibility of course selection.
• Reduction of prerequisite courses and development of competency-based assessments every 3 years. Also, considering other ways for students to show they are prepared for a course, e.g., competency testing.

Publicize the new Multidisciplinary Studies BA degree. MSBA degree is in its first semester – offering 30 degrees. Multidisciplinary Studies degree is tailored to an individual student’s needs and interests. Students choose three areas of focus for a tailored, personalized degree. Following is the link to the Multidisciplinary Studies website http://www.utsa.edu/success/mdst/

**Question from Student Jose Vega:** With the Multidisciplinary Studies degree, will students have to be accepted into their specific College?

*Answer/Response:* A Multidisciplinary Studies degree is an option for students who are not able to get into specific Colleges with higher entrance requirements, students who have undeclared majors or students who will be continuing on to medical school, law school, etc.

**Question from Student Martha Wright:** What College is overseeing this degree?

*Answer/Response:* Undergraduate Studies. The Multidisciplinary Studies degree will benefit transfer students that may have coursework from previous institutions that don’t fit into UTSA degree plans, without having to take extra courses.

**Comment from Student Martha Wright:** When she transferred to UTSA, her English classes didn’t transfer. (Why is that, since English is English?) Her UTSA advisor suggested the CLEP to pass out of the needed English classes.

**Question from Student Jason Miller (sitting in on behalf of Dominique Moore):** Does UTSA offer more test-out options than CLEP?

*Answer/Response:* UTSA also offers the DANTES exam.

Some other possibilities – looking at adding classrooms, expanding the size of faculty, and looking at more innovative class scheduling, e.g., very early morning classes, later in evening classes, Saturday classes, etc. Enhancing alternative course delivery by using hybrid and on-line use of technology, in addition to expanding summer school offerings, can help facilitate students’ success towards graduation.

**Question from Student Xavier Johnson:** How does UTSA’s space utilization during the summer compare to the regular school year?

*Answer/Response:* No real difference, although some of the usage is for camps and other programs during the summer, in addition to class offerings. UTSA is hoping to expand summer course offerings. Summer funding is different as we need to pay faculty in addition to their regular academic year salary contracts that are for nine months.
Discussion concerning the four-year graduation rate and its correlation with student to faculty ratios indicated that there is evidence that decreasing Student/Faculty ratio has an impact on higher graduation rates. Research about freshman success and retention is the rationale for recommendation that at least two of the courses in the blocks being capped at 25 to allow students to become socially integrated. Also included in the GRIP proposal are to add freshman seminars, learning communities and or multidisciplinary courses to expose Freshmen students to different disciplines – which will be part of the new course Academic Inquiry.

**Question from Student Xavier Johnson**: Do on-line courses count the same as classroom courses (in terms of student faculty ratio)?
**Answer/Response:** Yes, these measures are based on numbers of students served by each faculty whether the student is enrolled in an online class, hybrid class or traditional classroom.

**Question from Student Justina Williams**: How will the Freshman Focus Initiative differ from Learning Communities?
**Answer/Response:** Basically, the Learning Communities was the beginning of the Freshman Focus Initiative. It will be expanded to become the new Freshman Focus Initiative.

**Question from Student Jennifer Stone**: How does the common core curriculum fit into the Freshman Focus Initiative?
**Answer/Response:** The Initiative is “under construction” as the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board just approved new guidelines for the core curriculum on October 27, 2011. We are in the early stages of revising UTSA’s core curriculum. Our intent is to create the new Academic Inquiry course, and review how it fits into the core curriculum as we will not be adding credit hour requirements to degree plans.

**Question from Lorenzo Garcia**: Dr. Frederick mentioned in one of the earlier Student Government Association meetings that budget cuts were the main reason why UTSA wasn’t able to bring in new faculty. Is that still the case?
**Answer/Response:** Correct. The state reduced UTSA’s budget and we received a slight increase in funding from designated tuition that was allocated to hire ten new faculty this year.

**Advising and Academic Support Services: Lawrence Williams**, Dean of Undergraduate Studies. We wish to establish the University College to implement the Freshman Focus to include all entering freshman, as well as all students with pre majors, e.g., pre-Engineering, pre-Biology, pre-Business and undecided majors. The purpose is to provide essential interventions and academic support for those students experiencing academic difficulty. Freshman will be organized into cohorts. We will develop strategies to have students complete at least 30 credit hours per year to stay on track to graduate in four years. Academic progress will be monitored during the semester. Another consideration with the University College is to hire some upper level students to serve as Peer Mentors for the freshmen cohorts.
Once a student has earned 30 credit hours, declared their major and removed any deficiencies, student can move from the University College to the College of their major.

To improve Advising and Academic Support Services, all students will be required to complete a four year degree plan by the end of 30 credit hours rather than the current requirement of 45 credit hours.

We also hope to have the degree plans in an electronic format to integrate with the student records system - which would ideally automatically update the student’s degree plan as courses are completed. UT System is partnering with My EDU.com to delivery student success tools to all UT System institutions.

**Question from Gerry Dizinno:** Re University College, will we no longer be having separate admission s requirements for different Colleges? Also, is My EDU a true degree audit facility that will allow students to monitor their academic progress toward a particular major?

**Answer/Response:** Students will still have to qualify for their major. A degree audit module is one of the modules My EDU will be providing. We hopefully can integrate our current student records system with this and create a more streamlined on-line degree audit system. The on-line degree system will have a “what if” feature.

**Question from Student Xavier Johnson:** What are they doing to get feedback from students on My EDU?

**Answer/Response:** Ken Pierce, Vice Provost Information Technology, is our representative on the system wide committee charged with working with faculty to provide input. Students’ input would also be helpful.

Our goal is to improve the quality of, and access to advising services. On-line audit will help increase the efficiency of advisors. We want to have more effective on-line resources, market the off-peak times for advising centers, provide electronic training for advisors, hold annual workshops for advisors and reward and retain our best advisors.

We would also like to implement an electronic “early alert” system for academic issues early in the semester. This system would assist in identifying students having academic difficulty and notify students of financial holds to help students with their registration and academic success.

**Policies and Incentives:** Lisa Blazer, Assistant Vice President, Student Financial Aid and Enrollment Services and Kristi Meyer, Director of Graduation Initiatives, identified some financial incentives that have been proposed.

We have an ongoing process of analyzing enrollment policies for effectiveness. George Norton, AVP of Admissions leads the effort by looking at retention and admissions standards.

UTSA is piloting a wait list program this spring for over-enrolled courses. Future goal is to have a registration system that uses wait listing.

**Question from Student Alicia Sebastien:** Would there be a time period in which you have to enroll?
Answer/Response: More than likely 24 hours.

Comment from Student Xavier Johnson: The wait list process is championed by UTSA Student Government that has looked at all issues and received feedback from students to increase effectiveness in the registration process.

Question from Student Justina Williams: Will the Wait List effect/change the current requirement to use “Add” forms?
Answer/Response: We are looking at ways to streamline process. The wait list process works up to registration deadlines. “Add” forms would still be required after the wait list process goes away (after census?)

Sixty-seven to sixty-eight percent of UTSA students require some form of financial aid to pay for higher education. Over half are PELL grant eligible. UTSA has seen reductions in both Federal and State financial aid over the last couple of years. The Texas Grant Program was cut by approximately 30% ($6 million). Therefore, we are looking at options for alternative funding to help students graduate on time.

The Get on Track Program would offer summer tuition grants for eligible freshmen and sophomores. These would be students, who didn’t complete 30 credit hours during fall and spring that could take necessary courses during the summer to stay on track to graduate in four years. UTSA will have a significant decrease in Federal PELL funding for the summer. The proposal is to offer a $1,000 summer grant to freshmen and sophomores who meet specific requirements.

We are also looking at expanding on-campus employment opportunities as federal funding for Work Study has been cut. Working on campus is important to give students work experience in additional to the income. It also provides more flexible hours in support of their educational goals.

The Finish in Four incentive would identify students who have completed 60 credit hours with a 2.5 GPA to provide them educational assistance grants to help them stay on track to graduate in four years. The Finish in Four program is modeled after a highly successful program that works with students in an attempt to improve our 6 year graduation rate. This plan pairs eligible students with financial assistance, intensive academic and personal assistance to get students to graduate in 6 years.

Question from Student Kiara Gradney: Would students be eligible for both the State Be on Time and the Finish in Four programs?
Answer/Response: Yes, but depends on what other aid you have – as awards cannot exceed the Cost of Attendance. If students graduate on time with a 3.0 GPA, the Be on Time loan is forgiven.

Janet Parker concluded the meeting by providing a brief overview of the second Tuition and Fee Committee meeting to be held on Thursday, November 17th at 9:00 a.m. in the Travis Room and thanked everyone for their participation.

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