November 17, 2011

Tuition & Fee Proposal Committee
Meeting Minutes
Location: Travis Room UH 2.202
Time: 9:00 a.m.

In Attendance:

Student Members: Carolina Canizales, Nicole Davison, Norma Gonzalez, Marco Guerrero, Xavier Johnson, Kimberly Jones, Travis Jourdan, Kayla Long, Dominique Moore, Steven Ordaz, Alicia Sebastien, Alicia Starkey, Chris Stone, Jennifer Stone, Jay Vega, Justina Williams, Martha Wright, Kristi Meyer

Faculty Members: Gerry Dizinno, Kirsten Gardner

Administration / Ex-Officio Members: Kerry Kennedy, Janet Parker, Sandra Welch, Jackie Hobson, Sam Gonzales, Terry Wilson, Brad Parrott, Dorothy Flanagan

Guests: Lynn Bishop, Becky Sanchez, Mary Simon

Tuition and Fee Committee Website:
http://www.utsa.edu/financialaffairs/TuitionFees/proposals.html

Kerry Kennedy, Vice President for Business Affairs, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking them for participating in this important process.

Question from Gerry Dizinno: When Tuition & Fees Proposal is presented to UT System, are we making a case that these 40 new faculty positions are strategically allotted to departments with specific “real” needs, e.g., instruction vs. research.

Response: We will need to link those faculty resources towards improving the graduation rate.

Question from Student Xavier Johnson: Regarding Early Alert System, what happens after a student is identified in the Early Alert System?
Response: Very situational specific; faculty and staff determine what intervention is needed to address the area that was “flagged” for this student, e.g. financial, academic, etc.

**Question from Student Jennifer Stone:** Will faculty have specific training? Not all professors enter grades before mid-term or take attendance. Expressed concern that if faculty doesn’t enter the required data into the system to set off a flag for the Early Alert System.

Response: Yes, faculty needs to buy into the program and you raise an excellent point.

**Question from Student Martha Wright:** Is the Early Alert System directed only to freshman?

Response: Directed towards all students.

**Question from Student Justina Williams:** If student has an alert, with Advising for example, but did not go to the appointment, would it impact financial aid?

Response: Probably not, but depends on the specific circumstances.

**Question from Student Xavier Johnson:** How will students who are already succeeding academically be impacted?

Response: A student who has no academic or financial issues will not be impacted by the Alert System.

**Comment from Gerry Dizinno:** What are the Designated Tuition set asides of 1.7 million? For every revenue dollar we bring in for Designated Tuition in excess of $46, State law requires that we allocate 15% of that to Undergraduate financial aid and 20% of that to Graduate financial aid.

**Question from Student Marco Guerrero:** Who do Incentive Grants go to?

Response: There will be two different programs. All students are eligible.

**Question from Student Nicole Davison:** Is it a need based grant?

Response: No, it is not need-based. All of these programs are still subject to approval by UT System.

**Comment from Student Nicole Davison:** State of Texas gives students who graduate from high school in 3 years $2,000. If a student graduates with 15 or more college hours, the State gives the student an additional $1,000.

Response: Thank you for that information which indicates there is a precedent for the type of program we are proposing.

**Question from Student Justina Williams:** Will students be able to use grant towards housing or other needs, or just tuition?
Response: Details have not been worked out. If the student is already receiving financial aid, this would need to be managed in that regard. If student is eligible for a refund, then yes it could, particularly UTSA student housing (which is treated similarly to other fees owed the university.)

**Question from Student Nicole Davison:** Where would Health Professions Office receive fees from?

Response: They will continue to receive a budget allocation. The only difference is that all of the money will go into one pot for allocation by Academic Affairs.

**Question from Student Nicole Davison:** Will students continue to receive the same level of advising service?

Response: Yes, in theory, services will either be the same or improve. The key point of doing this is to eliminate the subsidy and make the amount of money allocated for advising to be more equitable.

**Question from Student Justina Williams:** Why is Athletic Fee rate based on Semester Credit Hours?

Response: This is the way the Education Code was written (Sec. 54.5322). To change to a flat rate, students would need to vote and the Board of Regents would need to approve. Based on the way our Total Academic Cost is computed, this would not impact it because it is based on 15 SCH and the fee is capped at 12 SCH.

**Comment from Student Justina Williams:** Wouldn’t it make more sense to pay Advising fees based on Semester Credit Hours rather than Athletics?

Response: It does make sense to charge all students the same for Athletics because they are all receiving the same benefit, e.g. athletic tickets, etc. and to charge Advising on a per semester credit hour basis. However, it would cause a steep increase in the fee rate for full time students.

**Question from Student Martha Wright:** Is tuition the only thing that is different between Resident Student and Non-resident student? Do fees remain the same?

Response: Yes. Non-resident students’ tuition rate for statutory tuition is different and set by Texas Education Code.

**Comment from Student Carolina Canizales:** It would be a good idea as part of the revenue allocation from the increase of tuition, to give Graduate students money to assist with publishing their work. Several journals charge an entry fee.

Response: Good suggestion.

**Question from Gerry Dizinno:** How do our requests for Graduate increases fit into UT System rules?
Response: Any request for an increase must be tied to costs.

**Comment from Student Nicole Davison:** One of their research graduate students was selected out of 200 (ten total were chosen) to present at a key conference in California. Just like Athletics, these types of accomplishments also get UTSA recognized and should be supported with that tuition revenue.

**Xavier Johnson and Marco Guerrero gave a presentation regarding UTSA’s Transportation Fee.**

**Comment by Student Martha Wright:** Do the apartment complexes off campus, where the shuttles go, pay to use shuttle? Couldn’t those rates be increased rather than the entire student population?

Response: Apartment complexes off campus do pay to have shuttle service (but not sure how much additional revenue we could ‘demand’.)

**Question from Kirsten Gardner:** You mentioned the cutting of VIA service routes 93 and 94. Are you doing anything to address the Downtown campus students’ transportation needs?

Response: One of the suggestions is to bring back VIA route 94.

**Question from Student Carolina Canizales:** How much does UTSA profit from parking fees alone?

Response: None of our fees are profit centers; fees are used for paying debt service, cost of staff working in the Parking Office, maintenance of parking lots and garages.

**Question from Student Kimberly Jones:** Would the new proposed vehicles/shuttles be more energy efficient?

Response: Yes, able to use bio diesel and other energy efficient sources.

Mr. Kennedy thanked Xavier and Marco and the SGA for taking on such a difficult topic of the Transportation Fee with funding issues and needs. As stated throughout the Tuition and Fees Committee process, any increases must be tied to the improvement in the graduation rate. Those are the parameters that the Board of Regents will accept.

**Comment by Sam Gonzales:** This body is a recommending body. Even if Transportation Fee proposal was included in this proposal, administration has the capacity to make another decision.

Response: We need to understand how we can tie this to the four year graduation rate improvement. Ultimately, it is the President’s decision on whether or not it will be in our proposal. The Transportation Fee increase has benefits and is important to the students and we really wanted to give time to the students who worked so hard and feel so passionately about this, but we need to tie it to the four year graduation rate improvement plan.
Comment from Gerry Dizinno: If the Transportation Fee increase is going to be tied to improving the graduation rate, we need better data than the student survey because if UT System denies the increase, we could potentially lose the funding that we would have raised had we not included the Transportation fee increase in the Total Academic Cost. We need a much better justification for the Transportation Fee’s impact on the 4 year graduation rate.

Comment from Student Xavier Johnson: Increasing the Transportation Fee is probably not the most direct way to improve the graduation rate. We can all see that. The committee’s job is to represent the student’s views. I plan on talking to Dr. Romo based on the fact that the students asked for this. The President will do what he thinks is best for UTSA, but if we agree that this is a good initiative and is worth more evaluation, we should support it and let President Romo prioritize things.

Comment from Gerry Dizinno: I also hope that in the plan included is an evaluation requirement for all of the programs. It will strengthen our request to the Regents if we intend to regularly evaluate how effective they are and modify them as necessary.

Comment from Gerry Dizinno: We need additional financial aid for our students. If you asked to choose between financial aid or increasing the Transportation Fee, I know where I’d go based on the data presented here. I would say to give our students some financial aid. There are other ways to think about this fee. What would it cost us if we just made a minor change and just provided summer school students, since we are trying to increase summer school enrollment, with transportation to get from the parking lots to class. That would not cost another $20 per student. Another option would be to include the Transportation Fee increase as an addendum and in addition to the 2.6% cap. This way the student’s concerns are satisfied and the current proposal is still whole.

Response: We are not charging the Transportation Fee during the Summer. Even if the Transportation Fee was not increase, we could entertain charging during the Summer. The question that remains is would that generate enough revenue to keep drivers here over the summer and have enough routes so that students feel like they’re getting some benefit.

Janet Parker, Associate Vice President of Financial Affairs, asked if the committee is in support of the recommendation to include the transportation fee increase but not within the 2.6% and 3.6% caps, subject to administration approval.

Comment by Sam Gonzales: The idea is that the Transportation Fee increase will not be included in the graduation improvement plan.

Response: Yes.

Comment from Gerry Dizinno: The way we justify this fee as an addendum is by telling UT System they approved an increase in the Athletic Fee based on the student referendum. The students are also asking for the increase in the Transportation Fee. We are asking above and beyond the 2.6% cap. Since our students have supported the Transportation Fee proposal, we are asking UT System to consider it separately. That’s what I would support. We will not be able to put an evaluation plan in place in time for
our submittal to System, but what we can say is that all of the plans will involve a detailed evaluation. For those that we don’t have evaluation plans for yet, we can just say that is the first thing we will do. I do not want to see the plans we have that clearly tie to graduation rates being reduced if we fail to get UT System endorsement on increasing the Transportation Fee. Do it as a separate deal and hope they understand that the students thought it was a good idea.

**Question from Kirsten Gardner:** Could that addendum include a statement about asking the apartment complexes to share part of the responsibility in a show of good faith that we’re asking more from students who are not using the service?

**Response:** Pam Bacon and her staff have been actively pursuing those apartment complexes to pay their share and we’ve gotten what we can out of them. (We will ask them the feasibility of getting more.)

**Comment from Sam Gonzales:** I think part of the justification for separating the transportation fee increase from the graduation rate improvement plan is that this is the kind of enhancement that we need now to limit future cost increases. That is what is going to happen if we don’t enhance the shuttle system. We want to do this now because it’s going to save students dollars down the road because we will not have to build more parking garages which will cost them more to park on campus and those fees are not considered in the Total Academic Cost calculation.

**Janet Parker:** Does everyone feel comfortable with that recommendation? If everyone is comfortable with the recommendation, we will be drafting the proposal (using the template we are given to follow.) The proposal will then go to the CMO (Campus Management and Operations) and what we submit to UT System will be available for review in draft form. If some of you would like to be more involved in some of the language or reviewing the proposal, please let me know. The process is that UT System will look at the proposal and tell us what they like and what they don’t like and that is where we’ll have to rework it. The final proposal is due in January for vote by the Board of Regents in March. That version will be posted to our website. All of the past proposals are also posted to our website.

I would also be happy to talk to the Student Government Association once the proposal is put together.

I appreciate your service to this committee - your participation, good feedback and information. If you have any ideas or things you did not want to express in front of the group, please email or call me.

Janet Parker concluded the meeting and thanked everyone for their participation.

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