November 5, 2015

November 4, 2015 Tuition & Fee Proposal Committee
Meeting Minutes
Location: Travis Room UH 2.202
Time: 9:00 a.m.

In Attendance:

Student Members: Brandon Anderson, Mary Brockman, Jennifer Cervera, Sergio Gonzales, Ileana Gonzalez, Kort Everett Jackson, Bianca Obinyan, Vivian Phan, Aaron Pulido, William Trynoski, Terralyn Wilburn

Faculty Members: Eugene John

Administration / Ex-Officio Members: Edwin Barea-Rodriguez, Lynn Bishop, Lenora Chapman, John Frederick, Jackie Hobson, Mary Simon

Guests: Clay Haverland, Sandra Welch, Joseph King, Paula Villagran, Debra Villanueva

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Lenora Chapman, Associate Vice President for Financial Affairs, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking them for participating in this important process and introductions were made.

Overview of Tuition and Fee Meetings and Committee Charge: Lenora Chapman, Associate Vice President for Financial Affairs went over the Tuition & Fee process and the charge of the committee.

Overview of Operating Budget and Revenue Structure: Mary Simon, presented an update on UTSA’s 2016 Operating Budget.

Question from Student: Would greater allocation of funds toward research provide better opportunity for students to receive funds from the University?

Response from Dr. Frederick: We are one of the eight emerging research universities and there are several criterion we are held responsible for and are measured by—one of which is research funding. And if we attain a certain level of research funding each year and an average over several years it helps to make us eligible for enhancement funding from the state out of a separate pot of money than the normal state appropriation. So the short answer is “yes”. It’s a more complicated answer than that because there is more complicated criteria, but it definitely does help us.

Question from Student: How are research funds dispersed across the University?

Response from Dr. Frederick: Most of those funds are grants that individual faculty and staff apply for, and then when they receive it, it comes in for a very specific project. So it’s rare that we get any funding that is general to be applied to any research project. Usually it’s coming to fund a specific project. The biggest single are that receives funs is the College of Science and the second is the College of Engineering, followed
by the Institute for Economic Development, which constitutes about three quarters of the total external research funding that we receive. But it is based on individual professors who are Principal Investigators on grants. We are seeing an increase in activity among all of our colleges; in particular, the Social Sciences for funding. So I think we will continue to see that number go up.

Response from Eugene John: I should also mention that we have about $20-$25 million that comes in for student training in different areas. So it’s not necessarily just research in the lab.

Question from Student: You showed tuition rates, and there were two different rates shown: Statutory @ $50/credit hour and Designated by Board of Regents @ $149. I don’t understand how those fit in to what students are charged and why they are different.

Response from Dr. Frederick: Statutory tuition is set by the Legislature and Designated tuition is set by the Regents. The Legislature hasn’t changed the statutory tuition in years and years and years. The Designated tuition is what adjusts, and so that is primarily what we are talking about. Statutory is the same for all UT Institutions; Designated may be different across institutions.

Response from Lenora Chapman: The total of Statutory and Designated tuition is your tuition. In my next presentation I will actually show a very simplified slide of what encompasses total costs.

Question from Student: On average, if there were to be an increase in research funding, what is the time horizon that applicable in most cases? Is it feasible to say we will try to double our research funding in the next year or two?

Response from Dr. Frederick: No, not in the next year or two, but maybe in the next five to seven. We are talking about increasing it by ten percent/year, which is about a seven year cycle to double it. And by doubling it, we would be up at about $100 million research expenditure level.

Question from Student: And the majority of this funding comes from the state?

Response from Dr. Frederick: The majority of it comes from Federal grants, but there is a piece that is from the state and a piece that is from the institution. We provide funding for research out of institutional dollars as well, but it’s a smaller amount.

Response from Mary Simon: When talking about federal funds, you will see that those funds are restricted. Because they are for a specific purpose.

Comment/Question from Student: There was a constitutional amendment item on the ballot yesterday for a tax deduction, which said that it would be taken away from public education totaling $600 million, I believe. How much of that is going to affect higher education?

Response from Lenora Chapman: We really don’t know at this point. That process starts in the spring and lasts about another year. Normally we are looking at tuition and fees one year and the next year we start the legislative process.

Response from Mary Simon: It all depends on how the state of Texas performs. Our office will look at a lot of fiscal impacts when the fiscal notes processes begin, and we will start assessing our impacts.
Response from Dr. Frederick: I haven’t read the constitutional amendment but I think what people were voting on has to do with property taxes. So largely what that is affecting is going to be K-12 funding and community college funding. It may not have as great of an effect on us; however, if their funding is reduced, other dollars in the state may need to be put into them to maintain those. And that does affect higher education.

GRIP Initiatives: Dr Sandy Welch, Senior Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness presented on UTSA’s Graduation Rate Improvement Pan (GRIP) Initiative.

Question from Student: Does DegreeWorks work for Graduate degrees?

Response from Sandy Welch: It could. We don’t have those loaded right now, but that is something that can be added without much difficulty.

Question from Student: How are we advertising DegreeWorks to Students?

Response from Sandy Welch: I understand that advisors have started with the freshman class and so upper-classmen may not be aware of it. We need to have every undergraduate student in DegreeWorks, and marketing it is critical.

Response from Dr. Frederick: I think that part of the difficulty was that when implemented, we ran into some glitches in the program and they were fairly catastrophic because the program was not giving accurate information to students. Then they were contesting what advisors were telling them. The advisors were actually correct and the information obtained from DegreeWorks was wrong, so we had to work all year last year to get that back on track. There may still be some difficulties with setting up a degree plan, but it will tell you where you stand relative to the progress you are making toward your degree. As we get more of the bugs worked out, there will be a bigger push to market to students.

Response from Sandy Welch: And I will note that the bugs were from the vendor and affected every university that was using DegreeWorks.

Question from Student: Is there any data on attrition rates for students living on campus vs. those who are not?

Response from Sandy Welch: Yes, we have done studies on that. And generally, students who live on campus have better odds of succeeding because resources are there, and the bonding is there which may not occur if a student lives off campus.

Question from Student: How many students are in a freshman class, and what is the undergraduate population total?

Response from Sandy Welch: In terms of head count, last year we had about 4800 freshman students, and about 800 or so were CAP. This year we are close to 5000, with 500 CAP.

Response from Dr. Frederick: The total number of undergraduates is about 25,500.

Question from Student: I’m assuming you use your ABC123 to log in to DegreeWorks? Does that mean when I log in, as a first time student using it, is it already going to have all the classes I’ve taken?
**Response from Sandy Welch:** The classes you’ve taken are pulling in from Banner, so my take is they should be there. Who’s using DegreeWorks right now? Maybe you can answer this?

**Response from Student:** Yes, the information automatically pulls in from your Banner ID. Green indicates you have fulfilled a required course, red indicates a required course has not been taken, yellow indicates a currently enrolled course.

**Question from Student:** Does it account for your minors?

**Response from Sandy Welch:** I don’t think so. It’s mostly accounting for majors. There may be a way of setting that up, but I just can’t answer that question.

**Question from Student:** For freshmen, are we trying to implement DegreeWorks only with advisors, or are we talking about doing it in AIS courses?

**Response from Sandy Welch:** Right now, mostly the student and advisor has access to DegreeWorks.

**Response from Dr. Frederick:** If you are talking about how we are marketing to students, primarily through the advisors, but we have had discussions this week about using the AIS courses as a means of doing that better. But perhaps with online tutorial videos, that might be the mechanism we use to help train students on how to use the program.

**Response from Sandy Welch:** We have freshmen in the room. Were you told about DegreeWorks during your advising session?

**Response from Student:** No, I was not.

**Response from Sandy Welch:** Good feedback to take back to advisors/directors to make sure that happens.

**Response from Dr. Frederick:** That’s a good clue for us!

**Question from Student:** I heard you say you actually call students who left the University to ask them what happened.

**Response from Sandy Welch:** We would like to have every student who hasn’t signed up for the next semester to be called and encouraged and at least find out what’s going on. Maybe we can help. Maybe it’s something simple.

**Comment from Student:** From my own experience, when people do have to drop out, it doesn’t sit well with them when no one from the university they just spent three years at calls to ask what happened.

**Response from Sandy Welch:** That’s wonderful feedback because we will incorporate that into processes.

**Question from Student:** Do the attrition rates include students who leave to attend another university?

**Response from Sandy Welch:** Yes, we do have that information. But it was not a large number.

**Question from Student:** Has there been any data collected on any correlation between student debt and graduation rate?
Response from Sandy Welch: I suspect not. But that’s a good one. Send it to me.

Response from Dr. Frederick: Probably not.

Explanation of Fees: Lenora Chapman presented a high-level overview of our Tuition and Fee Structure (total academic costs).

Automated Services: Dr. Frederick presented on the Automated Services and Library Resources fees.

Library Resources:

Question from student: Will the downtown campus library benefit?

Response from Dr. Frederick: I can’t answer that question because I haven’t seen any plans for the downtown library. We are currently in the process of hiring a new Library Dean, and when hired, I think that is something we would ask them to be planning for. However, often times construction projects take quite a few years to complete, so it may not be something you will see during your time as a student.

Question from student: Do you have data to assess what databases are utilized more than others? Have there been efforts to cut costs if it is determined databases are not being utilized at all?

Response from Dr. Frederick: Yes, Library staff assess that very regularly and quite diligently. What I’m told is that all the databases we have are used regularly, but there are demands for other databases we don’t have, and at this point we can’t afford. I can say with sure confidence, that yes, we do look at that.

Comment from student: I just wanted to suggest that for us to get into the library, I think we would benefit a lot of we had to use our Student ID to get in. That way we can track who is getting in and also we would avoid certain problems.

Response from Dr. Frederick: You mean like people who shouldn’t be in there?

Comment from student: Yes.

Response from Dr. Frederick: There is a very fine line there; we are a public institution, so like the public library, I don’t think we can deny access.

Response from Dr. Frederick: Where would the license purchases be covered?

Response from Dr. Frederick: That would be covered under the Automated Services fee.

Comment from student: Regarding the network access point; you would add an additional access point?

Response from Dr. Frederick: Yes, that is correct.

Question from Student: Has there been any suggestion to remove the $25/credit hour if we do negotiate contracts with vendors?

Response from Dr. Frederick: We would eliminate that fee altogether.
**Question from Student:** How detrimental would the lost fee be?

**Response from Dr. Frederick:** The amount of money that fee generates now would easily be covered by the increase in the automated fee.

**Question from Student:** Can you speak a little bit more about your vision for improving the campus network?

**Response from Dr. Frederick:** The network access that we just signed increased our access from 10 gb to 40. We do anticipate that over the next ten years or so that it will double again.

**Question from Student:** That’s all wireless, correct?

**Response from Dr. Frederick:** That’s total network access. Once it comes to the campus we put into wireless routers. We just did an upgrade to wireless access because we were seeing a real bottleneck in the library and other parts of campus. So we’ve added wireless access points to critical areas to relieve congestion we were seeing on the network.

**Question from Student:** What is the primary source of revenue for the Library?

**Response from Dr. Frederick:** It is this fee.

**Question from Student:** How long will this library fee increase sustain the campus?

**Response from Dr. Frederick:** I hope it would take care of us for four or five years at least.

**Transportation Fee:** Clay Haverland presented on the Transportation Fee.

**Question from Student:** What percentage of your operations is fuel cost?

**Response from Clay Haverland:** My annual fuel cost is right around a quarter of a million dollars.

**Question from Student:** What kind of practices are emphasized for efficiency?

**Response from Clay Haverland:** Preventive maintenance is much more efficient than allowing equipment to break down. We’ve learned in years past that pushing a bus a little further becomes a more expensive repair as well as losing the equipment while it is being repaired.

**Question from Student:** Who does the maintenance and repair on the buses?

**Response from Clay Haverland:** Maintenance and repairs are bid out each year to try and find the best possible price. We currently have a partnership with Two Fat Guys Goodyear in Boerne and Helotes.

**Question from Student:** Has there been any effort to utilize technical schools for automotive repair and maintenance?

**Response from Clay Haverland:** No. Since they are a teaching environment, they may not be quick enough to make the repairs.
**Question from Student:** Who do we currently purchase fuel from, and what type of incremental savings do we receive.

**Response from Clay Haverland:** We currently get fuel under a state purchasing contract, which strips out taxes and also provides a bulk discount. The fuel cost is not only the fuel itself. I have two employees who are “fuelers”, and all they do all day long is drive buses back and forth to gas stations to refuel them. Because of the size of the bus, they aren’t able to get into just any place for fuel. We have to drive our buses almost to Boerne, and they only get about 4 miles to the gallon. So there is a cost to fuel them. We are looking at a service I discovered at a conference last year that will come to the parking lot and fuel your vehicle for you for a location fee. We are looking at saving, theoretically, 15% in costs if we can pull this off.

**Question from Student:** Has there been any thought given to adding a fueling station on campus?

**Response from Clay Haverland:** Since we are over the aquifer, to build a fueling station, it has come back at around $750,000 minimum just to have an uncovered fueling station. The return on that would take too long.

**Comment from Student:** I really like the idea of bringing back the shopping shuttle. Some students have to rent cars on the weekend or take the city bus to purchase groceries on the weekend.

**Do you have data on what are the bus peak hours?** We record everybody on and everybody off the bus. Buses are then adjusted based on peak hours. Schedules are tweaked early in the semester to accommodate these peak hours.

**Question from Student:** Are there seats on the buses for people with disabilities?

**Response from Clay Haverland:** All of our buses are equipped for ADA.

**Comment from Student:** I’m talking more about seats. Are there seats in the front of the bus for people with disabilities?

**Response from Clay Haverland:** The new buses are more transit style, inward-facing. We are changing our fleet to that style.

**Comment from Student:** One of the downsides to the apartments providing their own transportation is that they go for more limited hours; for example Aspen stops their shuttle at 6 pm while UTSA stops at 10 pm. That creates a problem for students who have class until 7 or later. They also do not run as often, every 30 minutes.

**Response from Clay Haverland:** They also have the problem of shuttling students when their one and only bus breaks down.

**Question from Student:** Can you speak on the benefits our drivers receive?

**Response from Clay Haverland:** The majority are full-time employees, and they receive full health and vacation benefits just like any other university employee. We also employ some hourly staff.

**Question from Student:** Is there any plan to get a shuttle to go to Prado?
Response from Clay Haverland: We have approached them, but their design does not allow for a bus to get in and out.

Question from Student: Can you speak about the development of Lot 13? There is no development allowed in that area of campus.

Response from Dr. Frederick: A large portion of the woods north of that lot are designated as a nature preserve.

Question from Student: There are times that I do get lucky and get a parking spot and enjoy the walk to campus. But there are not clearly marked sidewalks. I find myself dodging cars.

Response from Clay Haverland: Pedestrian paths are part of the master plan being developed right now.

Question from Student: Would you see any value in incorporating a parking lot availability integrated with a UTSA app that would let students know where there is open parking?

Response from Clay Haverland: Yes, we've looked at it and the cost is about $30,000 for each parking lot entry point. Some of our parking lots have seven or eight entry points.

Response from Clay Haverland: In terms of parking passes, is there a big drop? Do you think more parking passes would be purchased if there were more parking spaces?

Response from Clay Haverland: We have about the same number of people buying passes. We are seeing a trend of students paying for convenience in paying to park in a garage rather than further away in a lot.

Response from Clay Haverland: Do you believe parking passes are well marketed?

Response from Clay Haverland: We are working on educational campaigns. It’s not marketed to sell, but rather to educate.

Discussion Q&A, Wrap-up:

Lenora Chapman concluded the meeting at 11:30 a.m. and reminded everyone of the next Committee meeting on November 11, 2015.

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

November 4, 2015 meeting presentations can be accessed at:
http://www.utsa.edu/financialaffairs/tuitionfees/committee/agendas.html