Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure
Report re: SYSFAC’s decision to support revised Regents’ Rule 31102
March 27, 2012

Background: SYSFAC's decision to support revised rule was discussed at the February meeting of the Faculty Senate. At that time, a suggestion was made to form a committee to address the process by which SYSFAC ultimately supported the revised rule. Subsequently, calls went out for Senators to participate in a committee, but there was insufficient interest to form this committee. Prior to the March meeting of the Faculty Senate, the chair of the Faculty Senate, Carola Wenk, received a draft resolution. This draft was sent to the Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure (CAFT) for consideration.

Members of CAFT voted on whether they supported submitting the resolution (either in the original or revised form) to the Senate and SYSFAC.
Votes for sending to the Senate: 8 in favor, 4 opposed, and 7 members not responding.
Votes for sending to SYSFAC: 7 in favor, 5 opposed, and 7 members not responding.

Revised resolution concerning SYSFAC’s support of revised Regents’ Rule 31102

Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate of the University of Texas at San Antonio expresses concern with recent revisions made to Regents’ Rule 31102 and proposes that the support for these revisions by the University of Texas System Faculty Advisory Committee (SYSFAC) did not represent the best interests of the faculty in the University of Texas System. The UTSA Faculty Senate supports a role for post tenure evaluation in maintaining high educational standards; however, new provisions contained in the rule will weaken tenure protections that are essential to the academic freedom of faculty members, provide incentives that are unlikely to improve research quality, impose evaluation measures that are unnecessary and overly burdensome, and ultimately will decrease the overall quality of the contribution of faculty members to the educational and research goals of the UT system.