

Faculty Senate Academic Freedom, Evaluation and Merit committee comments and concerns regarding the Summer Term Initiative 2015-16

Philosophy

The policy shifts the focus to the university as a business rather than as a public good.

Preference for adjunct over T/TT faculty

“As UTSA strives for recognition as a research university, we will naturally want our most research-active faculty, both tenured and tenure-track, to pursue scholarly activities during the summer.”

Most faculty members are on 9 month contracts and are not compensated to do research during the summer. If the university is telling faculty they must be doing research instead of teaching, then faculty should be compensated for doing that research.

The policy is taxing researchers, especially those that cannot get access to external funding as they will potentially not be able to teach in the summer.

Concern expressed about privileging of those doing less research to teach in the summer.

Compensation

The initiative seeks to “compensate instructors in economically efficient ways”. Faculty are already compensated in economically efficient ways – i.e. 1/12 of annual salary.

The statement: “two instructors teaching comparably sized sections of the same course should receive comparable compensation,” suggests that a graduate student or a lecturer without a PhD should earn the same amount of money to give a course as a tenured professor with a PhD.

It is a bad precedent to base instructor funding on a separate scale from their regular pay.

Reduction in quality of teaching

Concern expressed about watered down requirements (e.g. prerequisites) for entering students.

Concern expressed that summer becoming a pedagogical second tier, where departments are encouraged to staff courses with cheaper and less qualified faculty.

Concern expressed that it is unfair to students and the T/TT professors to give priority to non-tenure track teachers for summer courses.

To attract non-UTSA students taking summer courses we should offer the best educational experience. Therefore, we would want our best instructors/professors teaching over the summer.

From a financial perspective we pay the least possible to offer a course, is the offering then “you get what you pay for.?”.

Treating graduate courses in the way laid out in the white paper will encourage departments / colleges to reduce the difficulty and quality of courses to attempt to allow the top of student the white paper specifies. Which, in turn, may decrease the quality and prestige of our graduate programs.

Potential for penalizing colleges and departments

It seems unfair that if a college has positive net income, it will not receive any revenue sharing unless it increases its total student credit hours relative to summer 2015.

The “financial model” would seem to penalize departments that are already profitable.

Possible to penalize successful departments who happen to be in underperforming colleges

Other

Overhead for courses taught off-campus is being calculated in the same way as overhead for on-campus courses. UTSA does not pay any overhead to high schools, or the college campuses that are used for course delivery.

What would stop a department or college from offering the largest courses (or those that generate the most revenue) over the summer rather than during the regular semester?

For REFERENCE

Summer Term Initiative 2015-16

UTSA is initiating an effort to revitalize our summer sessions, beginning with Summer 2016. This effort has two primary objectives:

1. Supporting student success and timely graduation
2. Maximizing student enrollment to provide additional resources for the university.

In order to achieve these objectives, we will employ several strategies, including but not limited to:

1. Aggressively marketing our summer terms to
 - current students,
 - incoming admitted students at both the entry-level and as transfers,
 - students presently studying at other local universities,
 - students from San Antonio who are enrolled in universities out of town,
 - veterans and active military personnel,
 - online students,
 - faculty and staff who may wish to pursue professional development, and
 - working professionals in SA who may wish to sample graduate coursework;
2. Streamlining the admission process for non-degree-seeking students in the summer;
3. Expanding summer financial aid and using tuition discounting;
4. Targeting courses needed by students, including core courses and gateway courses;
5. Scheduling classes at times that students prefer;
6. Expanding the number of courses taught online;
7. Utilizing a self-sustaining financial model for the summer terms, coupled with revenue sharing with academic units to incentivize efficiency;
8. Adapting policies to promote appropriate practices; and
9. Adding campus life activities during the summer terms.

Each of these strategies will be led by appropriate individuals to ensure that the approaches used are effective, and are coordinated with other strategies. The overall project will be guided by the Summer Term Tiger Team, or **ST³**, who will meet weekly through the fall and winter to share ideas, best practices, and implementation challenges with one another. This will help the effort to coordinate the various strategies and make corrections, as needed, during the implementation process.

New Financial Model

The most significant departure from our traditional approach to the summer term is to treat it as a self-supporting operation. In effect, this means that the net total tuition generated by student

registration must be sufficient to pay overhead costs and cover the cost of instruction. If more tuition revenue is generated than the combined cost of overhead and instruction, the colleges and departments will be able to participate in revenue sharing to augment their operating budgets.

This financial model consists of the following parts:

- We will determine what portion of summer tuition revenue in the most recent past summers has been absorbed into the university's E&G accounts. A preliminary estimate suggests that this "overhead" amount is about \$8 million, but this number will be refined further as part of this project.
- The overhead amount will be subtracted from the total net tuition revenue, resulting in the effective "net instructional revenue" for the summer.
- Net instructional revenue will be attributed to each course according to the portion of the total tuition revenue generated by that course. For example, if the total net tuition revenue for the summer is \$15 million, and a given undergraduate course has an enrollment of 50 students paying \$200/credit hour x 3 credit hours = \$30,000, then that course generates $\$30,000/\$15,000,000 = 0.002$ of the total summer tuition revenue. The net instructional revenue for that course would be computed to be $0.002 \times (\$15,000,000 - \$8,000,000) = \$14,000$. Graduate courses will be weighted more heavily per student because the tuition income paid by graduate students is higher per credit hour.
- Next, the net income for each course is computed by subtracting the cost of instruction from the net instructional revenue. In the previous example, if the course instructor is paid \$6,000, then the net income for that course would be $\$14,000 - \$6,000 = \$8,000$.
- To determine the total net income generated by each department for the summer term, one would then sum the net incomes for each of the courses taught within that department. If the total net income for a department is positive, and it generates more total student credit hours than in Summer 2015, then the department may be eligible for revenue sharing (however, see below).
- Similarly, the net income and total SCH for each college will be computed by summing the net incomes and total SCHs for each of its departments. Likewise, the net income of the university is computed by summing the net incomes of the colleges.
- If the overall net income of the university is negative, then there will be no revenue to share with the academic units.
- Positive revenue generated by the summer term will be allocated to the colleges with positive net income proportional to their net incomes. *Colleges must also show an increase in total student credit hours (SCH) relative to Summer 2015 to be eligible for revenue sharing.*
- If a college has a negative net income, it will not be eligible for shared revenue.
- To illustrate the revenue sharing formula, consider the following example. College A has net income of \$100,000 and College B has net income of \$150,000, both with an increase in total SCH relative to 2015. College C has net income of \$25,000, but has lower total SCH than 2015, and College D has negative net income of -\$20,000. Under this

scenario, College A would receive $100,000/(100,000 + 150,000)$ or 40% of the overall net revenue, and College B would receive 60% of the overall net revenue. Colleges C and D would receive no shared revenue.

- Colleges will allocate shared revenues among departments with positive net income proportional to their net incomes, with no revenue sharing going to departments having a negative net income and/or no increase in SCH. Colleges may retain a portion of the college's net revenue before distributing shared revenue to departments.

This financial model may appear complicated, but its net effect is fairly straightforward: each department should strive to teach courses that will generate more student credit hours than in Summer 2015, and arrange faculty compensation so that it is covered by the net instructional revenue. Thus, there is incentive to

- offer courses that will generate healthy enrollments;
- teach courses at times that will be most convenient and desired by students; and
- compensate instructors in economically efficient ways.

Summer Faculty Focus

As UTSA strives for recognition as a research university, we will naturally want our most research-active faculty, both tenured and tenure-track, to pursue scholarly activities during the summer. Consequently, we will encourage T/TT faculty to pursue research activities rather than teaching during the summer months. However it is also important that summer course instructors should be appropriate to the level of a given course. For example, graduate courses should be taught by faculty members who ordinarily would be utilized to teach a graduate course during the school year. *In all cases, instructors should meet the credentialing requirements of SACSCOC.*

It is also advisable to design a summer teaching pay scale that compensates according to the work done, not according to the salary earned during the academic year. Two instructors teaching comparably sized sections of the same course should receive comparable compensation.

As a result, it may be useful to engage summer instructors according to the following priorities (highest priority listed first), with allowances made to ensure that a faculty member with appropriate background and experience teaches upper-level and graduate courses:

1. Full-time, continuing lecturers
2. Graduate students who meet SACSCOC credentialing requirements
3. Adjunct instructors
4. Tenured faculty on a predominantly teaching workload during the academic year
5. Tenured faculty on a "balanced" workload (40-40-20) during the academic year
6. Tenure-track faculty (limited to one course)

7. Tenured faculty on a predominantly research workload during the academic year.

By utilizing these priorities, we can also support those instructors who earn the least compensation during the school year and who most support our instructional mission.

Summer Course Offerings

In Summer 2015, UTSA offered about 170 fewer courses than it had only a couple of summers before. A good place for departments to start in determining which courses to teach in Summer 2016 would be to look at which courses were offered in 2012, then exercise judgment based on whether the class

- generated a healthy, self-sustaining enrollment;
- was needed by undergraduate students to maintain progress toward a four-year degree;
- was needed by graduate students in a given program;
- has historically had a high failure rate in the spring semester;
- is a large Core Curriculum course; or
- is a gateway course needed by one or more majors.

Any class that was observed through our financial analysis to have a negative net income last summer should be evaluated to see if it could be taught less expensively, or if there is reason to believe that its enrollments could be increased next summer. If neither of these outcomes is likely, and the course is not critically needed by more than 10 students to maintain progress toward their degrees, then it may be best to omit it from the summer schedule and concentrate resources on courses likely to generate larger enrollments.

We are also targeting incoming students admitted to the freshman class or as transfers, and the university will need to designate a handful of appropriate classes to be offered specifically to those populations as a means of getting a head start on their UTSA education. For freshman students, this might be math, writing, AIS, or Core curriculum classes. For transfer students, identifying the most suitable courses might require some research into the needs of that population.

Finally, general graduate courses in business, public administration, social work, or education might be used to entice working professionals in those fields to try out a course during the summer as a prelude to entering the corresponding graduate program. Such courses might be offered at a discount, held at the Downtown campus, scheduled to meet at 12:00 noon, or other inducements used to attract prospective students.

Summer Admission Process

With one emphasis on increasing the size of the summer term enrollments, UTSA will fashion a more streamlined admission process to attract non-degree-seeking students to enroll. The process will be simple, requiring the minimum documentation possible, so that prospective students can easily matriculate at UTSA as “Visiting Summer Students.” Should any be interested in converting their participation at UTSA into admission to a degree program, the university could also devise a process that would make such applications easier.

Financial Aid and Tuition Discounting

One of the chief obstacles cited by students to enrolling in the summer term is the expense, coupled with the need to earn money to pay for academic year courses. It is no coincidence that summer enrollments have declined following the federal government’s discontinuation of summer Pell grants. One of the more urgent aspects of the planning for Summer 2016 is to identify scholarship funds that may be used to support student enrollment in summer classes, and explore the possibility of tuition discounting to attract higher enrollments.

Several strategies to make summer registration more affordable should be considered, including:

1. Targeting financial aid to UTSA degree-seeking students who are on track to complete degrees within four years;
2. Providing financial aid to Pell-eligible students who have exhausted their Pell aid during the school year, but are in academic good standing;
3. Implementing modest tuition discounts for students who enroll in more than one course—for example, giving a 10% discount on the tuition for a second course enrollment;
4. Using tuition discounts to attract working professionals to “try out” graduate courses as a means of potentially recruiting them into our graduate programs; and
5. Examining the possibility of reducing or waiving certain mandatory fees not related to summer course instruction, or associated with particular student cohorts—for example, waiving some fees for university employees or for working professionals who enroll in noon-time graduate classes at the Downtown campus.

These are just a few of many possibilities that might be considered, but each must be analyzed in the context of its effect on overall revenues and its possible impact on the fee-supported areas of the university.