

**DRAFT Approved (2-18-16) by the Faculty Senate Academic Freedom, Evaluation  
and Merit Committee**

**Faculty Senate statement of concern and recommendations regarding the Summer  
Term Initiative 2015-16**

The Academic Freedom, Evaluation and Merit Committee of the UTSA Faculty Senate has reviewed the Summer Term Initiative 2015-16 and has received faculty member input from and through Senate members.

The Faculty Senate supports efforts to advance the efficiency and cost-effectiveness in teaching while maintaining or improving the quality of instruction in a manner consistent with an emerging tier one research university. Committee members and other Senate members expressed concerns about elements of the Summer Term Initiative 2015-16 that appear to be inconsistent with improving the quality of instruction and that appear to be problematic for other reasons. Although the Committee received a number of expressions of concern, those that were expressed by multiple faculty members are summarized here under four headings along with recommendations to address them.

**Quality of instruction.** Multiple faculty members have expressed concerns regarding the potential impact on the quality of instruction:

- More limited requirements (e.g. prerequisites) for entering students is a concern. While this may result in larger class sizes, it may also result in lowering either the quality of students and have an overall impact on the quality instruction (teaching to the lowest level).
- Potential for summer classes to become a pedagogical second tier, where departments are encouraged and financially rewarded to staff courses with cheaper and perhaps less qualified faculty.

*The Faculty Senate recommends* not lowering requirements for admission or waiving prerequisites for summer courses.

*The Faculty Senate recommends* that Colleges and Departments be encouraged to offer courses in the summer that are at least of the same quality as during the academic year and to emphasize that the qualifications of faculty teaching those courses is a major consideration in ensuring maintenance of quality.

**Preference for adjunct over T/TT faculty.** The following statement in the Initiative was of concern to multiple faculty members: “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.”

- Several faculty members commented that we should have our best instructors/professors teaching over the summer as this is most likely to provide the best experience for potential students that may result in them deciding to apply for admission. Courses providing less than this may actually steer students away.
- Multiple faculty members expressed concern about potential negative consequences for students and T/TT professors to give priority to non-tenure track teachers for summer courses.
- It was noted that most faculty members are on 9 month contracts and are not compensated to do research during the summer.
  - Thus, if the University is communicating to faculty that they must be doing research instead of teaching, the University should compensate faculty for doing research in the summer.
  - Some noted that the policy appears to be taxing researchers, especially those that cannot get access to external funding as they will potentially not be able to teach in the summer.
  - Another possible interpretation is that the Initiative privileges those doing less research to teach in the summer.

*The Faculty Senate recommends* that language and the sentiment encouraging Colleges and Departments to select non-TT faculty to teach in the summer over T/TT faculty be removed from the initiative.

**Compensation.** Several faculty members expressed concern about the statement in the Initiative: “compensate instructors in economically efficient ways.” The intent of this statement is unclear though it could be interpreted as encouraging paying as little as possible for instructors. This would encourage hiring potentially less qualified instructors and as discouraging the hiring of T/TT faculty members to teach summer courses and possibly as a suggestion to find ways to pay T/TT faculty less in the summer.

Also concern was expressed about the statement: “two instructors teaching comparably sized sections of the same course should receive comparable compensation.” This statement suggests that either less qualified instructors should be paid the same as T/TT faculty or that T/TT faculty should be paid the same as less qualified instructors.

While it is understood that the Summer Term Initiative is intended to increase revenue streams to UTSA, colleges, and departments, the Faculty Senate is concerned that a focus on reducing instructor related costs through finding ways to limit compensation to T/TT faculty may be counterproductive for improving quality instruction at UTSA and may lead to demoralization of T/TT faculty.

*The Faculty Senate recommends* the Summer Initiative be modified toward limiting emphasis on reducing instructor related costs while emphasizing efforts to increase enrollment while maintaining admission and prerequisite standards and quality of teaching.

**Potential for penalizing colleges and departments.** Concern was expressed regarding the policy referencing the summer 2015 as the benchmark against which colleges must increase credit hours to qualify for revenue sharing. This strategy has potential to penalize colleges and departments that are already profitable. It also may unduly reward those who had previously been substantially underperforming in that incremental improvements may be simple for previously low performing colleges and departments.

*The Faculty Senate recommends* focusing on the profitability of colleges and departments as the basis of revenue sharing rather than comparison to past benchmarks.