THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO

DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY
AND
DOCUMENT and PROCEEDINGS OF THE
UNIVERSITY ASSEMBLY

The minutes of the University Assembly meeting of March 9, 1999 published below have been prepared for the immediate use of the members of the University Assembly and are included in its Documents and Proceedings. They are also included in the Documents and Minutes of the General Faculty for the information of the members.

Betty S. Travis, Secretary
The General Faculty

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE UNIVERSITY ASSEMBLY MEETING OF MARCH 9, 1999

The third regular meeting of the University Assembly for the academic year 1998-99 was held in room 4.03.08, John Peace Library Building, on March 9, 1999, at 3:30 p.m. with President Samuel A. Kirkpatrick presiding.

I. ATTENDANCE

PRESENT: Ron Alexander, Diana Allan, Deborah Armstrong, Ron Ayers, Guy Bailey, Monica Berry, Robert Burdick, Eric Denton, Eugene Dowdy, Rey Elizondo, Jane Kindling, Patricia Harris, Dwight Henderson, Robert Hiromoto, Michael F. Kelly, Samuel A. Kirkpatrick, David Larson, Lalatendu Misra, F. Alexander Norman, Walter Richardson, Jr., James Schneider, Betty Travis, Raydel Tullous, Jude Valdez, Maggie Valentine, Arturo Vega, Bobbie Walker, Matthew Wayner, Karen Whitney

ABSENT: Donde Ashmos, Alan Craven, Jahan Eftekhar, Mansour El-Kikhia, James Gaertner, Andrea Hall, Christina Hanson, Kymberly Holmes, Ann Howell, Sheila Johnson, Constance Lowe, Monica Lumley, James McDonald (excused), Susan Nordhauser, Tom Ricento (excused), Clemencia Rodriguez, R. K. Smith, Sandra Speed, Sandra Welch

Total members present: 29
Total members absent: 19

II. Minutes of the December 1, 1998, meeting were approved.

III. Reports

   A. President - Dr. Samuel A. Kirkpatrick

   Dr. Kirkpatrick reported that UTSA received funding for approximately one-third of the building project on the 1604 campus designated as academic building three. A joint faculty, staff and student planning committee is preparing sketches of the project to be presented for approval at the Board of Regents' meeting in May. The committee continues to work with the architects to determine the site for the building. He reported that the Recreation and Wellness Center is on hold due to Regents' concern about the design. Dr. Kirkpatrick said that the third building of the Downtown Campus, currently under design, would include parking facilities. This shift in the master plan has occurred due to higher projections for growth and the need for more density.

   Dr. Kirkpatrick's report on the status of the legislative session focused on appropriation issues since UTSA
does not have any requests for special legislation during the current session. There is concern that the Downtown Campus will be eliminated from special item funding in the appropriation bill. He said that although there is good enrollment growth at the Downtown Campus, only $2.8 million dollars are being generated through formula funding. Currently operation of the Downtown Campus is funded by special appropriations in the amount of $4.2 million per year. The legislature is considering combining appropriations for some of the special items and including that funding in formula funding. Additionally, even though the growth supplement portion of the formula continues to increase, it remains a very small portion of total formula funding. Dr. Kirkpatrick added that the tenure supplement continues to cause a loss of funding for UTSA because of the proportion of tenure track faculty teaching lower division classes.

Dr. Kirkpatrick reported that the legislature is considering moving capital funding for several higher education institutions from the Permanent University Fund (PUF) to the Higher Education Assistance Fund (HEAF). This change would generate a tremendous increase in the amount UTSA would receive for capital projects funding, include repairs, renovations and instrumentation. Dr. Kirkpatrick said that changes in funding for scholarships are also being reviewed by the legislature.

Dr. Kirkpatrick reported that student government completed revisions to its constitution and that bylaws for a staff council are currently under administrative review. He said that the University Assembly Ad Hoc Committee on Bylaws and Shared Governance, through focus group meetings and Internet conversations, had established basic principles in terms of inclusiveness and respect for university community for the institution and governance process.

Dr. Kirkpatrick asked Dr. Guy Bailey, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, to address concerns related to the accreditation review report for the Division of Engineering.

Dr. Bailey said that the final report had not been received from Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) but concerns were raised as a result of the site visit. A letter has been sent to ABET outlining commitments made to address these concerns. He noted that the site visit occurred at a time when there had been several faculty resignations, causing a problem with the student to faculty ratio. The Division of Engineering is currently recruiting to fill the faculty lines left vacant by the resignations. In addition, as many as six new faculty lines may be approved over the next five years. Dr. Bailey reported that the Office of the Provost allocated $150,000 per year for the next five years to upgrade undergraduate laboratory facilities. Another concern expressed by ABET was that undergraduate engineering students were not required to see an engineering advisor prior to registration. A commitment has been made by the Office of the Provost to work with the Division of Engineering and the Office of Admissions and Registrar to ensure that the requirement to meet with an advisor is included in the program.

Dr. Walter Richardson asked if the large number of faculty vacancies had only occurred recently or if this was an ongoing situation?

Dr. Lex Akers, director of the Division of Engineering, acknowledged that such a large number of resignations were unusual.

Dr. Richardson inquired about the status of grant proposals in engineering since, in most engineering programs, outside sources must be solicited to supplement funding?

Dr. Akers said that the $150,000 allocation from the Office of the Provost would be advantageous to the grant proposals since there are numerous undergraduate engineering equipment awards presented each year that require matching funds from the institutions. For the last few years, the Division of Engineering had not been able to submit proposals because they did not have funds to match the grants. They will submit several proposals during the Spring semester in an attempt to maximize the funds recently made available.

In response to Dr. Richardson's question regarding what information was submitted to ABET, Dr. Akers replied that a yearlong self-assessment had been conducted for each of the engineering programs. ABET
then prepares a preliminary report and the Division of Engineering has an opportunity to respond before the final report is submitted by the site visit team to the ABET Board. Copies of the self-study reports are available in the Office of the College of Sciences and Engineering and the Office of the Division of Engineering. The preliminary report from ABET has not yet been received.

Dr. Richardson asked if the Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering continues to go forward in its approval process?

Dr. Akers responded that the Division met recently with the subcommittee regarding editorial changes to the proposal. The Division will make the necessary changes and return the proposal to the subcommittee. He added that some of the additional faculty lines allocated by the Office of the Provost would satisfy requests in the Ph.D. proposal and will also help with faculty retention.

Dr. Richardson asked if those faculty allocations were in addition to the five positions currently being recruited.

Dr. Akers replied affirmatively.

Dr. Betty Travis inquired when ABET would send a response.

Dr. Akers answered that the final response would be at the end of Summer 1999, but a preliminary draft report from the ABET team should be received within a month. The team has assured the Division that additional information sent to it after the visit would be taken into consideration before the final report is prepared.

Dr. Rey Elizondo noted that, regardless of the findings of the final report, the Division of Engineering would not lose accreditation in the next three years, when another visit would occur and final action taken. This will allow time to address all of the concerns in the final report.

Dr. Bailey stated that another concern is how to approach the accreditation visits for all programs and anticipate problems in advance.

Dr. Kirkpatrick pointed out that the program review cycle should take the external accreditation review process for each program into consideration, instead of scheduling reviews by college.

B. Secretary - Dr. Betty S. Travis

Dr. Travis reported that faculty continue to be concerned about the status of UTSA's grievance policy. Faculty have been notified by the UT System Office of General Counsel that the grievance policy only has to conform to Regents' Rules and state law and that changes suggested by the Office of General Counsel are only advisory. The normal procedure followed by the other institutions in the UT System is for the Faculty Senate to meet with the President and work together very closely as they continue negotiations with the Office of General Counsel until a reasonable compromise has been reached.

Dr. Travis said that proposed changes to the grievance process being incorporated into Regents' Rules are also of concern. The Texas Government Code requires that an employee must have an opportunity to bring a grievance to someone in a position of authority and that person must consider the grievance. The process is being changed to state, "grievance shall be presented to the employee's immediate supervisor or administrative equivalent for consideration within 10 work days after the day of the decision or action that was subject to the grievance." The concern is that many times the grievant does not become aware of decisions or actions until long after the 10 day deadline has passed. The UT System Faculty Advisory Council continues to work with the Office of General Counsel to reach a compromise that will set a deadline after the employee has been notified of the decision or action.

Dr. Travis reported that faculty are concerned that changes to the academic structure are taking place
without discussion with the Faculty Senate and without going through any approval process. She noted that the Faculty Senate's Academic Policy and Requirements Committee is developing guidelines, principles, and criteria for restructuring which would allow faculty to have input in any restructuring decisions.

Dr. Travis reported that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has had difficulty implementing the "field of studies" portion of Senate Bill 148, which was passed during the last legislative session. The process has slowed down, with no new committees being formed. She explained that faculty are concerned because the legislation allows the Coordinating Board to determine curriculum for undergraduate majors, so that if a student completes the field of studies curricula at any state supported institution in Texas, it transfers to any institution without additional lower division requirements on the student. Faculty remain hopeful that the bill will be rescinded since program curriculum should belong to the faculty in that program.

Dr. Kirkpatrick reported that UTSA recently received NCAA certification. He thanked all of the faculty, staff, and students who worked on the self-study process.

Dr. Kirkpatrick reported that the Office of General Counsel had not accepted UTSA's changes to the grievance policy. They have indicated which changes must be made before they would give their approval. The attorneys at the Office of General Counsel are the ones insisting on the changes and they will make the decision.

C. Committees

None

D. President of Student Government - Eric Denton

Mr. Denton reported that weekly Student Government meetings are now held in distance learning classrooms in order to allow students to participate from either campus. Meetings are open to all students and provide an open forum for students to discuss any issue.

Mr. Denton said that Student Government sent recommendations concerning the Student Judicial Policy to the UT System Office of General Counsel. Recommendations included: 1) setting a deadline for a verdict from the hearing committee for a student who has been accused of wrongdoing; 2) issuing Student Guides, which are paid for in student fees, to students; 3) involving students as jurors when violations of the Code of Conduct occur; and, 4) having student advocates so that students will have the opportunity to be advised by a third party that does not have the responsibility to present evidence against them.

Mr. Denton said that Student Government's review of class availability determined that there are classes required for graduation that are never offered in the evenings. He noted that forty-five percent of UTSA students are non-traditional and cannot take classes during the day. Student Government will make recommendations on which classes should be offered during evening class hours.

Mr. Denton reported that Student Government supports House Bills 179 and 528, which will provide tax exempt status for textbooks, and opposes legislative bill 345, which caps state funding for students taking more than 45 hours above those required for a degree.

He announced that Student Government has received permission for periodic mass e-mailing to all students at UTSA, the University Life Awards would be presented on April 8, 1999, and a Townhall Meeting with Business Affairs was scheduled for April 14, 1999. Mr. Denton thanked Dr. and Mrs. Kirkpatrick, Dr. Bobbie Walker, and Ms. Karen Whitney for their support at UTSA's Homecoming.

E. Chair of the Faculty Senate - Dr. Arturo Vega

Dr. Vega reported that the Faculty Senate expects to present a report on academic restructuring guidelines,
principles and criteria to the University Assembly at its next meeting. He said that the Faculty Senate's Teaching Effectiveness and Development Committee continues its work on the issue of teaching evaluations. Dr. Vega reported that the Faculty Senate's Ad Hoc Committee on Women Faculty Issues had identified several issues related to the advancement of women. Their report included questions on these issues. The Faculty Senate will forward these questions to Dr. Kirkpatrick.

IV. Consent Calendar: Faculty Senate

V. Unfinished Business

None

VI. New Business

None

VII. Questions to the President

None

VIII. Meeting Adjourned

Comments or questions to spottorff@utsa.edu

Last updated: Sept. 1, 2005