The third regular meeting of the University Assembly for the academic year 2000–2001 was held in room 4.03.08, John Peace Library Building, on March 6, 2001, at 3:30 p.m. with Dr. Ricardo Romo presiding.

I. ATTENDANCE


ABSENT: Sos Agaian (excused), Christine Alvear, Bill Angrove, Ron Ayers, Gerard Barloco, Russell Briner (excused), Blandina Cardenas, Wanda Hedrick (excused), Robert Hiromoto (excused), Kellye Jones, Cynthia Katz (excused), David Larson, George Negrete, Christina Pigott (excused), Walter B. Richardson, Jr., Kent Rush (excused), R. K. Smith, Sandy Speed (excused), Maria Elizabeth Stone, Jude Valdez (excused), Arturo Vega, Jesse Zapata

Total members present: 32
Total members absent: 22

II. Minutes of the January 16, 2001 Meeting were amended to reflect an excused absence for Shane Foley. Minutes were approved as amended.

III. Reports

A. President – Dr. Ricardo Romo

1. Dr. Romo reported that State Senator Leticia VandePutte had introduced a bill to establish a Life Sciences Institute at UTSA and the UT Health Science Center with an $11 million funding request included. Another piece of legislation, House Bill 737, requests $50 million in excellence funds for higher education institutions, however, Texas Tech and the University of Houston would be the only institutions that could qualify for the funding. Dr. Romo reported that the major priority for the current legislative session has been tuition revenue bonds. UTSA requested funding in the amount of $60 million for a science building on the 1604 Campus and another academic building at the Downtown Campus. He said that there was good progress on the Phase III building downtown. This building will provide space for the Criminal Justice program, the College of Urban Professional
Programs, and new studios for the School of Architecture. One entire floor will be dedicated to the College of Education and Human Development allowing 25 faculty members to relocate to the Downtown Campus. Completion of the building is scheduled for June 2001. The new parking facility will also be completed during Summer 2001.

2. Dr. Romo reported that UTSA had met with the UT System Board of Regents, as well as state legislators, concerning developing new doctoral programs in conjunction with the UT Health Science Center. There are currently ten programs ranging from biology and neuroscience to teacher education and social work, providing a wide range of opportunities for students. It is expected that some of these programs will move forward very quickly during the coming year.

3. Dr. Romo said that he had participated in discussions with leaders from the University Assembly and Faculty Senate concerning the University Assembly. Because of the new academic structure of the University, changes to the University Assembly Bylaws are necessary to ensure appropriate representation. Dr. Romo reported that he had also met with the board of the Staff Council. The Council members have been very active since the formation of that governance body.

4. Dr. Romo noted that, during the past week, he had hosted several visitors on the campus. These visitors included potential donors, benefactors, and patrons. He thanked the faculty who participated in the UTSA Great Conversation program.

B. Secretary – Dr. Mansour El-Kikhia

1. Dr. El-Kikhia reported that he and Drs. Patricia Harris and Sandy Norman had met with the President and the Provost about the need to address governance issues in light of the new academic structure. A recommendation has been made that the Faculty Senate become independent of the University Assembly. The Assembly would then serve as an advisory council to the President. Representation would include, faculty, staff, students and administrators, as well as chairs of major UTSA committees.

2. Dr. El-Kikhia reported that The University of Texas System Faculty Advisory Council has made an assumption that the State Legislature will increase funding for System components by six percent and provide three percent salary increases for faculty and staff. There has been an attempt to acquire approximately $500 million in tuition revenue bonds for capital investment. An issue of continuing concern has been health insurance. Although it is expected that the increase to the employee will not be as high as was previously anticipated. Long-term care coverage has been modified, so that an employee can now include coverage for a parent.

C. Committees

None

D. Other

1. Report from the Chair of the Faculty Senate – Dr. Patricia Harris

The Faculty Senate met once since the last meeting of the University Assembly, on February 13. The Senate has accomplished the following activities since the Chair’s last report to this body:

- Three faculty, Sandy Norman, Mansour El-Kikhia, and Patricia Harris, met with President Romo and Provost Bailey regarding establishing the Senate as an independent body. Though these negotiations are not final, it appears that a separation is in progress.
- President Romo reports he has approved the idea of a Campus Committee on the Advancement of Women, and that the Committee will be constituted as recommended by the Senate.
- Dr. James McDonald has been appointed chair of an ad hoc committee that will review and make recommendations concerning the Provost Office’s proposed new merit plan.
- The Ad Hoc Committee on Evaluation of Administrators reported on an evaluation of Jim Broderick.

2. The Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee reported on a survey of faculty satisfaction with tenure and promotion criteria. The Committee seeks input from additional faculty.

3. The Senate has much work in progress that hopefully will reach closure very soon. These include
the following items.

At the special meeting of the Senate on March 20:

- The Academic Policy and Requirements Committee will propose a new reapportionment plan and recommend changes to Senate Bylaws. These may include proposals regarding creation of new committees and bylaws regarding committee membership.
- The Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee will report its recommendations regarding what constructive remedies should be implemented in response to serious intra-disciplinary conflict, short of receivership.
- The University Curriculum Committee will make recommendations regarding certification proposals by the College of Education. The Committee is also supposed to make recommendations regarding how duplication in course offerings across disciplines should be handled.
- An Ad Hoc Committee on International Programs will report its recommendations regarding the handling of issues related to international students and faculty following the dissolution of the University’s Office of International Programs.

At the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Faculty Senate on April 10:

- The Ad Hoc Committee on the Course Evaluation Instrument will deliver a recommendation regarding whether to replace the existing course/instructor survey. The Committee is currently reviewing a number of alternate instruments for this purpose.
- The Senate Committee on Teaching Effectiveness will report its recommendations regarding whether there should be additional measures used in the assessment of faculty teaching performance.
- The Ad Hoc Committee on the Proposed Merit System will report its recommendations as soon as it is able to. This may occur later than the April 10 meeting.

4. In February, the Provost’s Office funded the Chair’s attendance at the American Association of Higher Education’s annual conference on faculty roles and rewards. Information gleaned from this conference was presented at the last meeting of the Senate. The presentation focused on post-tenure review and faculty development programs at Universities in other states. A Senate Committee will consider the feasibility of a periodic development and resource system for UTSA faculty in the coming year.

E. Report from the President of Student Government – Mr. Shane Foley

1. Mr. Foley reported that Student Government had recently had very successful meetings with some of the vice presidents. He clarified the Student Government’s position on the search for the Vice President for Student Affairs by stating that a letter had been sent to the Chair of the Search Committee saying that Student Government would like to see more candidates brought on campus to be interviewed. Student Government did not say that the finalists were unsatisfactory.

2. Mr. Foley reported that Student Government has had student-concern tables set up to provide opportunities to reach out to the students and be able to communicate on a one-to-one basis about student concerns. Student Government also has meetings scheduled with the Chairs of the Faculty Senate and the Staff Council in order to develop a relationship with those groups.

3. Mr. Foley announced that Student Government elections would be held in April. He plans to announce the new officers at the next Assembly meeting. He reported that, in response to a question about campus crime from a previous Assembly meeting, he had determined that the actual numbers of crimes on campus have not gone up according to reports issued by the UTSA Police. The one thing that did go up was the reporting of alcohol-related offenses.

4. Mr. Foley reported on issues that members of Student Government had been addressing:
   a. UTSA Card: Currently students are charged $3 for each semester for the services the UTSA Card provides. Student Government is looking into this to see what those services are; how services might be increased; and how the process could be made more efficient for students.
   b. UTSA Web Site: There have been some concerns that the web site is not as student-friendly
as it could be. Student Government has met with Dr. Annette Evans from Information Technology and will continue to work with her and David Gabler from University Communications to make the web site more student-friendly and allow people to access information more easily.

c. Smoking outside of buildings: Student Government is reviewing the campus smoking policy, since there have been concerns people cannot enter or exit a building without being bothered by smoke.

d. Laundry facilities at the University Oaks Apartments: There is concern because of limited hours and equipment failure. Student Government is sensitive to the fact that there are security issues and is awaiting a report about how these concerns can be addressed.

e. Copy machines on campus: Student Government is reviewing reports that the machines do not work as frequently as they should and that the machines are not located where they are really needed.

f. Wellness and Recreation Center: Student Government feels that the completion of the Wellness and Recreation Center is an important issue at UTSA and would like to see groundbreaking very soon.

Mr. Foley presented the following resolutions:

- Resolution Regarding 24 Hour On-campus Study Facilities (copy attached to and made a part of the Minutes)
- Request for the Creation of a Student Member of The University of Texas System Board of Regents (copy attached to and made a part of the Minutes)

IV. Consent Calendar: Faculty Senate

V. Unfinished Business

None

VI. New Business

UT System Accountability Project – Dr. Ray Rodrigues

Dr. Romo introduced Dr. Ray Rodrigues, Special Assistant for Assessment to the Executive Vice Chancellor of the UT System. Dr. Rodrigues is the former provost of UT Brownsville. The following points were included in his presentation regarding Assessment of General Education:

The Assessment Cycle includes: Assessment, Assessment Results, Analysis of Results, Projection of Improvements, Update of Assessment Process, and Learning Outcomes.

Methods of assessment include:
- Capstone Courses
- Standardized Tests
- Surveys
- Primary trait analysis
- Transcript analysis
- Course and Syllabi Inventories
- Embedded Assessments
- Portfolios

Dr. Rodrigues stated that the Academic Affairs of the Regents has asked the UT System for the best appointment to assess general education, and they have asked the System to present this plan so that implementation can begin next year. It is his charge to find the best way to do this. He further stated that in the matter of assessment, the goal is to assess the system not the students, and the program in this case is general education. The primary intent is to do so by gathering information, thus improving the programs. He feels that there are a number of ways to do this. In order to achieve this goal, Dr. Rodrigues is going to each campus and asking that each
campus create a team to work with him to develop a proposed plan across the system and ultimately take that plan back to the System institutions for comments and critique.

Although a high-stakes test, where students either move on or not is not what he is looking at, it has been done in a number of states. Dr. Rodrigues did not feel that Texas would adopt a high-stakes test because Texas also has the closing-the-gap initiative, with the emphasis of finding more ways of getting students into college, helping them succeed in college, and ultimately graduate. He feels that a high-stakes test would be counter-productive to that goal.

Dr. Rodrigues has found that most people seem to prefer an assessment process that is the least intrusive assessment process possible. Examples of this process include:

Portfolio. The advantage of this assessment is that it is under the control of the faculty and relates directly to the program that the faculty has in place. The difficulties include collecting portfolio materials and data samples over time. It is also difficult to translate them to external constituencies in terms of evaluation.

Capstone Course. This is another technique that can be used in assessment and is already in place. An example is student teaching. This too is a bit difficult to translate to external groups, although it can be done.

Imbedded Assessment. Dr. Rodrigues stated that he liked this assessment and found that others liked it also. In this assessment, types of work are designated as students go through the program in a specific course. That work is then pooled out of the courses, and used for assessment purposes. For the students, it is absolutely invisible. This assessment could be combined with a portfolio.

Standardized Test. The advantages of the assessment are: it is easy to grade, and get scores and results. The disadvantages include costs, the high-stakes element which can add anxiety to the issue, and the question whether those tests match your program. Another difficulty is that this form of assessment is not a direct measure of student learning, only an indirect measure.

Other: Inventories of syllabi and transcripts, student teaching reports, employer reports, graduate school reports, etc. The disadvantages include the labor-intensive nature of these assessments.

Trait Analysis. In this assessment vehicle, it is imperative that faculty be brought together and that they agree on a common approach across the entire System.

Dr. Rodrigues has included institutional research in his team so that the data that is being collected on individual campuses can be included for that purpose.

A question and answer period followed. Questions included:

What is the goal of this assessment?

Dr. Rodrigues listed the following goals:

1. Collecting valuable information to assist with improvement of programs.
2. Faculty can obtain more sources of data about how well the students are doing.
3. Giving the taxpayers of the State of Texas value for their money.
4. The Regents, in talking with the System Faculty Advisory Council have learned a great deal about our institutions.

Accountability is getting more and more difficult to establish. How do we know if the students are learning?

Dr. Rodrigues reported that in a recent address by legislator, Mr. Rob Junnell to the presidents and vice presidents of institutions of higher education, he (Mr. Junnell) commented that “you folks in higher education don’t do a very good job of telling the world what you do. You come to us for faculty, buildings, equipment,
extra funding, etc., but we don’t really know what you accomplish.” Dr. Rodrigues further commented that a systematic explanation for what is accomplished is often not given ‘to the world.’ Hopefully students go off and get good jobs, but success is often seen in how much students grow once they come to higher education. He feels that at this point, not just at UTSA, but nationally, we have to try to determine the best way to determine student growth.

The fear that the assessment of core curriculum is just a stepping stone to assessment for individual majors.

Dr. Rodrigues answered that he would hate to see programs become ‘cookie cutter’ programs, and that is why the primary value of assessment has to be to give faculty in the individual institutions and programs the information that they need to do their best. He further stated that there would be merit in starting with the assessment of majors, as it would be easier to get a handle on a major rather than general education courses. Assessments also have value in discovering weaknesses, although if weaknesses are discovered in a program, there is a fear of potential punishment. It is his feeling that if weaknesses are discovered, and attempts are being made to address them, then this needs to be recognized not punished.

The concern is that, like the TAAS, this is going to be yet another tool to judge, to discipline, to determine what faculty teach or how they teach, and take away the ability to teach the way we know how to teach.

Dr. Rodrigues concurred that these are valid concerns that must be kept in mind as this plan develops.

Who is going to bear the costs? Would it be the institutions or the State of Texas? What type of costs are expected?

Dr. Rodrigues feels that determining potential costs would be part of his responsibility in putting together this plan.

VII. Questions to the President

Mr. Foley asked if a decision had been made regarding the position of vice president for student affairs. Dr. Romo responded that the unanimous consensus of the search committee had been that they were not prepared to make a recommendation on any of the candidates. Dr. Romo thanked the committee for its work and announced that he would appoint a new committee to explore the various avenues available to continue the search. Dr. Guy Bailey, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Mr. Gerard Barloco, Vice President for Administration will co-chair the new committee, which would be fast-tracked with the expectation of an announcement no later than the end of the semester.

VIII. Meeting Adjourned.

Comments or questions to spottorff@utsa.edu
Last updated: Aug 30, 2005