



REPORT OF THE SECRETARY TO THE GENERAL FACULTY

February 2015
SYSFAC



Announcements

- Texas Council of Faculty Senates
- Texas Tech: -organization, governance, IP, etc.
- On Rowdy:
 1. Extensive SGF Report from SYSFAC
 2. How Will the UT System Fare in the 84th Legislative Session?
 3. Regents' Report on IP
 4. Current UTSA LAR
 5. THECB Incentive-Based Formula Funding

SYSFAC Updates, Jan 2015

- **BOR has declined to make the suggested changes to its meetings to allow SYSFAC representation.**
- System is busy w/ the transition to Admiral McCraven's team, hiring UT-Austin president, and opening two new medical schools. In the Chancellor's first appearance with the Legislature, McCraven discussed research that didn't have commercial value (against Lt Gov Dan Patrick's contention that research that doesn't have commercial value shouldn't be pursued or funded.)
- **Top issues w/ BOR and Leg: TRBs, Hazelwood, In-state tuition for undocumented students.**
- Other issues *same as Fall*: concealed handguns (Chancellor is *against concealed handguns*, which is important coming from his background); community colleges awarding BA degrees (the BOR has declined to make a statement on this, leaving it to individual campuses); governance (domestic partner benefits has been removed until the SC ruling in June).
- **Leg. changed the 2/3 rule.**

New Items

- * “Seek UT” program (search, earnings, employment = knowledge) has gone mobile: <http://www.utsystem.edu/seekut/Terms.htm>
- * UT System graduates (2002-2012) who worked in Texas during 2003-2013 earned \$85.7 billion; during the same time, total state appropriations for UT System were \$20 billion.
- * Stillwell and Powell are going off the BOR; two others are being appointed, Sarah Martinez Tucker and David Beck (pending confirmation and appointment—neither have TPPF ties). (Steve Hicks has been reappointed for a second six-year term.
- * THECB Commish Paredes: Discussed inefficiencies in higher ed (administration, faculty, staff). He suggested cutbacks: cutting hours to degree (average credit hours at graduation is 142 for an 120 hour degree), more online classes, and having faculty work more in advising.
- * Policy on undue influence on admissions; service assessment for T/P.

Budget Highlights

- -Early Projections for ***House Budget have been provided*** (*Senate will be more conservative*): overall spending increase of 0.2%; GR increases by 3.9% (due to Medicaid growth, increase in state contribution to ERS, and replacing hwy funds). **No tuition revenue bonds.**
- -Research Development Fund and Texas Competitive Knowledge Fund **eliminated**. (Creates Texas Research Fund for UT and A&M, one other fund for 8 emerging research institutions (Texas Emerging Research Institutions = Texas Research Incentive Program), and one other Competitive Research Funds for other universities)
- -\$23.8m offered (vs \$169m) cost of Hazelwood; McRaven recognizes this is an unsustainable benefit, so new proposals may be in the works.
- FY 16-17 budget pressures: School finance lawsuit (biggest issue), Medicaid, border security, water, business/local property tax relief.
- System Higher Ed funding priorities: 1.) Capital Projects; 2) Formula Funding (outcomes-based funding); 3.) full funding for Hazlewood tuition exemption; 4.) financial aid—but especially work study); 5.) Engineering education initiative (computer science & engineering; a matching grant initiative has been requested by system to fund this up to \$40m).