

Tuition Policy Advisory Council
Meeting Notes
February 18, 2005

The Tuition Policy Advisory Council met on Friday, February 18, 2005 in the President's conference room, 10th floor Rudder Tower. The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

Guest: President Robert M. Gates.

The deans appear to like the amended tuition policy recommendations. However, there is some concern about the five-year penalty. The University needs to ensure that academics will be able to meet the increased demand. Therefore, the deans have suggested that the penalty begin with the Freshman class entering the University in Fall 2006 and use Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 as a guide to better determine the change in student behavior.

A Student Senate resolution against flat tuition was tabled at the last Student Senate meeting. The resolution will remain on the table until a decision is made to either adopt or reject it. The resolution may be brought forward again at the next meeting.

The majority of the feedback received from the student body concerns special circumstances that might arise and what the process will be in place to deal with these situations. The Frequently Asked Questions that the Council is assembling should alleviate many of these concerns. The questions and answers will be posted on the web sites of the student organizations represented on the Council, and the FAQ's will also be placed in "The Battalion". Dr. Gates indicated that it would be beneficial to include in the Frequently Asked Questions statistics from other universities that show the number of engineering students who graduate in five years or less. He suggested using the following institutions:

- Georgia Tech
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hills
- Pennsylvania State University
- Purdue University
- University of Illinois

The FAQ's should also include the date of the last update. Another question to be added to the list is, "What if I can't get the 15 hours?"

The students will also want information regarding the appeals panel and the timeline for implementing the panel. It was noted that the appeals committee that deals with the 45-hour rule and the \$1,000 rebate appeals meet only about once per semester. The Council will need to submit a revised proposal to Dr. Gates. Included in the revised recommendations will be a request for Dr. Gates to appoint an appeals panel to hear the cases that will arise from the tuition policy. The groundwork for the appeals process should be based on broad grounds regarding flat tuition, the five-year surcharge, and unique personal circumstances.

A handout from the Office of Institutional Studies and Planning was distributed that showed the breakdown by semester credit hour of the percentage of students taking those hours for Spring 2005. 47% of the students take 12-14 semester credit hours. Therefore, the recommended tuition policy will affect less than 50% of the student population. Dr. Gates stated that he has received less than two dozen e-mail messages, mostly from parents, faculty and advisors who were displeased with the tuition recommendations.

It was proposed that mandatory fees charged by the semester credit hour should be flattened at 15 hours for graduate and professional students. The current recommendation regarding fees is for undergraduate students only. The Council approved the following modified recommendation regarding mandatory fees charged by the SCH:

Undergraduate Student Fees

- 1-11 semester credit hours, no change
- 12 or more semester credit hours, charged for 15 semester credit hours

Graduate and Professional Student Fees

- 1-14 semester credit hours, no change
- 15 or more semester credit hours, charged for 15 semester credit hours

A future consideration for the Tuition Policy Advisory Council might be to look at the combined number of semester credit hours a student takes during the Fall, Spring, and Summer. For example, a student taking 12 hours in the Fall, 12 hours in the Spring, and 6 hours in the Summer would equate to a student taking 15 hours in the Fall and 15 hours in the Spring. If a mechanism were put in place that would give a rebate to the students who go to summer school, it could provide multiple benefits. Students could take fewer hours during the regular semesters while making up the difference in Summer school, and Summer school enrollment could be enhanced because this might prove to be an attractive option for students. The rebate would be offered in the Fall semester following the Summer enrollment and the student would have to prove that at least 30 hours were taken in the previous semesters. It was suggested that the rebate only be offered to students who take more than 30 hours. The combined semester credit hour proposal will have to be studied in much further detail when the Council resumes deliberations.

Dr. Gates stated that he appreciates the efforts of the Council, and the Council Chairman stated that after the revised recommendations are delivered to the President, the Council will take a short recess before reconvening to follow up on the next steps.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.