

Tuition Policy Advisory Council
MEETING NOTES
March 24, 2006

The Tuition Policy Advisory Council met on Friday, March 24, 2006 in the Provost's Conference Room, 9th floor, Rudder Tower.

Guests: Charles Johnson, Dean of Liberal Arts; Leann South, Director of College Relations for Liberal Arts; Pam Matthews, Associate Professor of English; Tom Regan, Dean of Architecture; Mark Clayton, Executive Associate Dean for Architecture, Craig Griffith, Assistant Dean for Architecture; Deborah Wright, Director of Budgets.

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

Dr. Charles Johnson stated that the College of Liberal Arts is the largest college at Texas A&M University and teaches the largest number of upper division students, as well as awards the largest number of undergraduate degrees. The college has nationally ranked programs and national award winning faculty.

Differential tuition within the college would provide enhanced educational opportunities, such as quality, competitive programs, freshmen learning experiences, study abroad and internships. All of these things lead to engaged students and competitive graduates. Differential tuition would also allow the college to lower the student-faculty ratio by reducing class sizes, increase class choices and expand opportunities. Liberal Arts would like to add an additional thirty faculty to the number that has already been allotted for faculty reinvestment.

Dean Johnson has appointed a college-level committee comprised of students, faculty and staff to consider differential tuition and to formulate a plan of who should be charged differential tuition—probably upper division students, what the tuition rate should be and what deliverables could be offered with the additional revenue. The committee has already submitted a draft report to the Dean and he will bring the information back to TPAC before the end of the semester. Dr. Johnson is also speaking to various student and faculty groups for feedback.

Dean Regan reported that the College of Architecture at Texas A&M University is the largest college of architecture in the nation, with 1,100 undergraduate and 600 graduate students. 38% of the courses taught in the college are taught to students from another college. The College of Architecture is a professional school, offering three professional degrees which must be accredited. The students have very specialized requirements, such as individual desks and very high tech equipment. The professional programs also require summer school attendance creating special faculty needs. Additional funding is needed so that courses can be offered during all semesters. Currently, the college is unable to offer all courses in the summer, causing some students to delay graduation. All undergraduates in Architecture are required to spend one long semester off-campus: at another university, internships or study abroad.

Currently, large course fees are charged to cover the costs incurred by these special requirements. However, the college is proposing to switch the instructional equipment

enhancement fees to differential tuition, creating a cost neutral situation for the students. Students outside of the College of Architecture taking courses within the college would continue to pay course fees. Moving from the fee to differential tuition will provide flexibility for the college to use the money where it would be most beneficial rather than being restricted to a specific course. For instance, it would allow for more summer school offerings and salaries for visiting faculty. It would also provide set-asides for scholarships. Equipment costs have also been reduced because all freshmen are now required to purchase their own computer, which allows the college to reduce computer labs and costs.

Dean Regan has discussed the proposal among the college leadership and with the students. The students agree that this proposal would be beneficial, and the Dean has a meeting next Tuesday with a large student group for more discussion on the topic. This proposal could create difficulties for the Student Information Management System (SIMS), but since differential tuition could not be charged in the College of Architecture for two years, this will allow time to implement the new SIMS.

It was announced that the Board of Regents approved the recommendations that were put forth by the Tuition Policy Advisory Council and the Mays Business School proposal is being finalized.

The Council should begin to bring their replacements as soon as possible so that they may begin to become aware of the topics currently being discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.