

Tuition Policy Advisory Council
MEETING NOTES
November 17, 2006

The Tuition Policy Advisory Council met on Friday, November 17, 2006 in the Provost's Conference Room, 9th floor, Rudder Tower.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 a.m.

It was reported that the Deans discussed differential tuition at the November 15 Council of Deans meeting. They are working to simplify how differential tuition would be charged in each college, while at the same time maintaining student equity, where possible. Students' tuition bills need to be transparent in that all charges are straightforward. The Deans determined that differential tuition should be charged by the course rather than the major so that the revenue will stay within the college offering the service to the student. Additionally, this would maintain equity so that all students within a particular course are paying the same amount for that class. Financial aid set-asides would also stay within the college of the course. It was also determined at the Council of Deans meeting that the colleges would bear the burden of faculty start-up costs and merit raises for the first five years. Course fee intensive colleges, such as Engineering and Architecture, would like to maintain enhancement fees in order to adequately fund those particular courses. As determined by the President, all tuition proposals must be submitted to the Tuition Policy Advisory Council for consideration. Tuition will not be set before appropriations are determined by the State Legislature. Also, the President will not approve the implementation of differential tuition before fall 2008.

The Council was reminded that the Student Energy Fee is currently set at \$99 per student per semester to cover the \$10.3 million difference between the budgeted and actual cost of utilities. The utility forecast predicts a downward trend in the price of natural gas; however, there is still significant variability in pricing. However, the President has decided to reduce the Student Energy Fee to \$65 per student per semester for the spring and summer semesters of 2007. The fee for FY2008 will be determined after utility costs have been locked in.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved the University Studies program. The President would like for the program to start small for quality control assurance. The actual number cannot be predicted at this time, so it is difficult to determine the number of advisors that will be needed. A phase-in approach to the program was recommended because the areas of concentration that the students will choose are unknown. If the program is flooded with one particular area of concentration, GPR will not be used to determine a student's acceptance to the program; rather, the determination will be made based on number of hours to graduation, etc. The University Studies program will not be open to freshmen or to incoming transfer students for two years. Guidelines to the program state that a student must declare an area of concentration and two minors, with the requirement that at least one of the minors must be outside the college of concentration.

A list of resident and non-resident undergraduate tuition and fees for Big XII and peer institutions was distributed. It was noted that Texas A&M University is at the median for resident tuition and fees. The University is among the lowest for non-resident tuition and fees. The Texas Higher Education

Coordinating Board sets the non-resident State mandated rate and currently, the state mandated tuition is \$325 per semester credit hour. This amount is given to the State and becomes a part of the appropriation. It was proposed to the Council that they begin to look at the feasibility of increasing the deregulated designated tuition for non-resident students.

It was reported that one-third of freshmen applications are reviewed for admittance status. Fall 2006 was the first semester of the planned enrollment increase. The proportion of in-state to out-of-state and international students has remained consistent. An advantage of increasing the number of out-of-state students would be an increase in geographic diversity. At the present time, recruiters are not physically traveling to recruit students. Many students research universities online, so Texas A&M is working to enhance its web site.

Revenue stream scenarios were distributed which reflect the University's current designated tuition rate per semester credit hour, and what the designated tuition rate would be in order to match the University of Texas' or the University of Michigan's non-resident tuition rate. These revenue streams do not include the State minimum designated tuition. Flat rate tuition and the enrollment increase should raise the State's appropriation to the University.

Handouts of a list of fees that have been proposed to the University Student Fee Committee were provided to TPAC. The group was reminded that the Tuition Policy Advisory Council is not an approving committee, but rather a recommendation committee to the President regarding tuition and fees. Fee proposal updates include the following: the Writing Center fee would now include graduate students; the Student Center Complex fee requires a student referendum—the Student Center Complex is an auxiliary so the complex pays its own utilities and the Student Utility fee does not cover the utility costs of the complex; the Hospital and Medical Services fee would be used to upgrade services; the increased Library Access fee stems from the fact that the Library does not have much flexibility in their purchase requirements and many electronic resources require annual membership; the current Property Deposit fee does not generate enough revenue to even cover the cost of returning the deposit to students upon graduation. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is working to broaden the definition of what types of property the deposit would cover. In that event, it would be feasible to increase the cost of the deposit. The Tuition Policy Advisory Council asked the Division of Finance to determine the current administrative costs of the fee. Additionally, the Council will recommend that the increased fee only apply to incoming freshmen. It was also noted that the International Orientation fee could bring additional burden to already financially strapped students. The Council was asked to send comments regarding any of the proposed fees to the Chair of the University Student Fee Committee. The University Student Fee Committee will send recommendations to the President after they meet on November 29.

The next meeting of the Tuition Policy Advisory Council will be Wednesday, December 6, at 3:00 p.m. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 a.m.