

Tuition Policy Advisory Council
MEETING NOTES
October 10, 2007

The Tuition Policy Advisory Council met on Wednesday, October 10, 2007 in the Provost's Conference Room, 9th floor, Rudder Tower.

Present: Dan Parker (Chair), Michelle Berry, Bruce Edwards, Jonathan Glueck, Ricky Griffin, Nick Guillemette, Marty Gunn, Shari Hilding-Kronforst, Tyler Koch, Joe Pettibon (ex-officio), Conner Prochaska, Lynn Ruoff, Kathy Steffen, Van Taylor for Bill Flores, and Deborah Wright (ex-officio).

Absent: Anne Rabalais.

Guests: G. Kemble Bennett, Vice Chancellor & Dean, Dwight Look College of Engineering; Jim Kracht, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; Larry Malota, Associate Director of Enterprise Information Systems; Doug Palmer, Dean, College of Education and Human Development; Bob Piwonka, Executive Director for Student Business Services; Christine Rowland, student; and Deena Wallace, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Administration & Legal Affairs.

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

Dan Parker announced that Wednesday afternoons were found to be the best meeting time for the majority of the members of TPAC. Unfortunately, Bill Flores, President of the Association of Former Students, will not be able to attend at that time. Therefore, Van Taylor, Former President of the Association of Former Students and former member of TPAC, will attend the meetings on Mr. Flores' behalf.

Mr. Parker stated that the Council will have much work to do this semester, as at least four colleges will be submitting proposals for differential tuition and an additional two colleges are tentatively considering doing so, as well. Each of these proposals will be unique in the approach to which differential tuition would be applied. However, it will be for TPAC to recommend a uniform approach to charging differential tuition because the current Student Information Management System (SIMS) is not capable of applying a multitude of scenarios. Representatives from SIMS are here today to help determine what the system can do. In order to accommodate all of the presentations, it is very likely that an additional meeting date will be added to the calendar for TPAC discussion.

Mr. Parker stressed that this Council serves in an advisory capacity to the President. To date, the President has not turned down any of TPAC's recommendations, but the President makes the final decision.

One of the presentations today will address differential tuition by major and the other presentation will be by course.

Dwight Look College of Engineering Differential Tuition Proposal

Dean Bennett stated that professional programs across the country, such as engineering, charge differential tuition. Providing a quality engineering education is expensive and the demand and need for engineers is at an all-time high. The Dwight Look College of Engineering is currently ranked 8th among all public institutions and the goal is to move into the top five. In order to accomplish this goal and further improve the quality of education offered, significant investment must be made into the program. As a result, graduates will remain highly competitive. Additionally, the costs associated with an engineering education are increasing because technology is rapidly changing, which requires equipment and laboratory upgrades, etc. The college is involved in much cross-work across disciplines and other colleges, especially in the use of design teams.

Differential tuition for the College of Engineering is essential to maintain the quality of education and graduates produced, provide access to resources similar to peer institutions, and secure and maintain a top ten status. The revenue produced from differential tuition would be used for student financial aid (20% of designated tuition is state mandated to be set aside for student financial aid), facilities maintenance and repair, laboratory equipment needs and repairs, enrichment of targeted programs, targeted scholarships, and potential increased faculty salaries. The college is losing top students because of inadequate student financial aid packages. Potential students are also judging the quality of the program, at least in part, by its facilities. Zachry is in major disrepair and an embarrassment to the college, yet the building is the cornerstone of many activities. Currently, students are raising \$70,000 to repair the fountain in front of the building. Top engineering faculty are also being recruited away by other institutions because of the quality of facilities and salaries.

The resulting benefits of differential tuition revenue to the students would be enhanced and additional labs and classrooms, increased diversity, and increased marketability and competitiveness of students. The University would realize the benefits of additional facilities, better faculty and student retention, enhanced quality education, meeting the demand for additional engineers, and the potential for the college to attain national top five rankings.

Differential tuition costs per academic year of peer engineering programs ahead of Texas A&M University in rankings are:

- University of Illinois \$3,792
- University of Michigan \$2,666
- University of Texas \$ 916 (includes some fees)
- Penn State \$ 786
- Purdue \$ 628

Dr. Bennett announced that the differential tuition proposal for the Dwight Look College of Engineering would apply to all undergraduate engineering students at a cost of \$495 per student per year to be implemented in fall 2008. When the program reaches about 7,600 undergraduate

students, approximately \$3.76 million would be generated in revenue. The college estimated the funds that would be needed to achieve the goals mentioned, yet the annual cost per student is still less than these other institutions.

The college has considered differential tuition for several years and has spent a considerable amount of time ensuring that it is the right thing to do. Presentations have been made within the college and student groups do not seem opposed to the idea. Every student will see some benefit—the extent to the benefit will depend on each student and the opportunities taken.

Dr. Bennett indicated that a student advisory committee will review how the funds raised from differential tuition are spent. Members of TPAC asked that a one-page allocation of the \$3.76 million in revenue be presented at its next meeting. Dr. Bennett also stated that course fees would still exist to pay for equipment. A portion of the differential tuition revenue would be used to maintain that equipment.

Mr. Parker interjected that TPAC will be reviewing three types of differential tuition proposals that will come forward—charging differential tuition for all majors, for only upper division majors, or for only upper division students by course rather than by major.

Dr. Bennett remarked that students enter the college of engineering as freshmen, not as juniors or seniors. The cost of differential tuition would have to be raised if only charged to upper division students and yet all students within the college would benefit. Very few non-majors take upper division engineering courses because of the required prerequisites. The college also does not participate in the University Studies degree because of accreditation issues and requirements.

College of Education & Human Development Differential Tuition Proposal

Dean Palmer announced that the differential tuition proposal for the College of Education and Human Development would be a course-based model. The proposal calls for a \$35 per semester credit hour differential tuition for all upper division courses taken within the college. The Instructional Enhancement Fee will be removed from upper division courses, approximately \$25/semester credit hour on average. This plan revenue neutral for the college, but at the same time will generate scholarship funds and allow for flexibility to use funds to benefit the college at large, rather than strictly a particular course. All students taking courses within the college will be affected by the benefits to the college, not just education and human development majors. It is estimated that the maximum additional cost per student would be approximately \$156 per semester and the college would like to implement in the fall of 2008. The college anticipates benefits would include being able to offer about 35 more class sections per year which would lower faculty/student ratios, allow Wintermester and Maymester sections, more hands-on/interactive classes, shorten time to degree for students, ability to attract external funds, increase the transfer applicant pool, and produce an estimated \$455,600 per year in need-based scholarships.

Dr. Palmer noted that 50% of educators nationwide leave the field within five years, but about 85% of Texas A&M University's education graduates remain in the field, indicating that the college must be adequately preparing its graduates.

A semester cost comparison of tuition and fees for a few peer institutions to Texas A&M University include:

- University of Michigan \$5,480 (juniors/seniors)
- University of Illinois \$4,983
- University of Texas \$4,682
- Michigan State \$4,447

With differential tuition in place in College of Education & Human Development, Texas A&M University would still lag behind at \$3,790.

The college has been discussing the current differential tuition proposal since the spring 2007 semester and the idea is receiving unanimous support. The students like the idea of reduced class size and faculty/student ratios, as well as additional funds being available for scholarships. Charging differential tuition by major may be problematic because 13% of students taking courses within the college are not majors, e.g. a student wanting to become a math teacher would major in math (College of Science), not in education and would only take the necessary education courses in the College of Education and Human Development. Only about 45 semester credit hours are required in a major within the college. Additionally, lower division courses should not incur differential tuition costs, e.g. approximately 19,000 students across campus per semester take kinesiology (PE) courses and would not pay differential tuition costs.

Mr. Parker admonished that the Council must be consistent in its recommendation regarding how differential tuition is to be charged because one college could charge by major and another college by course, potentially causing the same student to pay two sets of differential tuition.

Dr. Palmer was asked how the college would be affected if differential tuition was charged by major. He replied that one in ten students would then not be paying the differential tuition because of being a non-major, yet they would receive the benefits of the revenue being supplied by the majors. An additional \$5 per student per semester credit hour would have to be charged to majors if differential tuition would only apply to majors.

Mr. Parker reiterated that this would be a difficult semester for TPAC because of all the nuances to be considered. The Council will also need to revise the recommendation that was made to wait two long semesters before implementation of differential tuition and the revision will need to go to the Board of Regents.

In the last legislative session, it was determined that Texas A&M University would be required to offer reduced tuition for one five-week summer session during summer 2008. This is a pilot program and TAMU is the only institution required to participate at this time. The reduced tuition will be offered in summer session II. Next summer is part of the base period, which the

Meeting Notes
Tuition Policy Advisory Council
October 10, 2007
Page 5 of 5

legislature uses to determine funding for the next biennium. Additional information will be brought to the next TPAC meeting.

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