

Tuition Policy Advisory Council  
MEETING NOTES  
October 24, 2007

The Tuition Policy Advisory Council met on Wednesday, October 24, 2007 in the Provost's Conference Room, 9<sup>th</sup> floor, Rudder Tower.

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

Absent: Jonathan Glueck, Ricky Griffin, and Anne Rabalais.

Guests: Charles Johnson, Dean, College of Liberal Arts; Pam Matthews, Associate Dean; Don Curtis, Assistant Dean; and Larry Malota, Associate Director of Enterprise Information Systems.

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

College of Liberal Art Differential Tuition Proposal

Dean Charles Johnson remarked that the College of Liberal Arts is different from all of the other colleges in that approximately 140,000 semester credit hours (SCH) are taught by the college every semester. With the exception of the College of Science (teaching 100,000 SCH/semester), all of the other colleges only teach about 50,000 or less SCH per semester. Every student at Texas A&M University must take many core curriculum courses in the College of Liberal Arts. The college also awards more undergraduate degrees than any other college within the University. About 25% of the undergraduate degrees awarded each year at TAMU are from the College of Liberal Arts. As a result, the college plays a dual role by offering a large number of core curriculum courses and awarding the most undergraduate degrees. Because every undergraduate must take liberal arts courses, the faculty are, in essence, being shared with all of the other colleges. They employ about the same number of faculty as the College of Engineering, yet almost 100% of engineering's faculty are able to focus on engineering students while only about 60% of liberal arts' faculty can focus on their majors.

Liberal arts majors at TAMU take approximately 36 upper division semester credit hours in liberal arts courses. In all of the upper division courses offered by the college, about 75% of the students are majors in the college and about 25% are non-majors.

The College of Liberal Arts would like to offer enhanced educational opportunities in an effort to engage more students, which would likely create better students and therefore create more competitive graduates. In order to make this possible, the college would need additional funding that would be provided by differential tuition. This additional revenue would allow the college to hire additional faculty, thus reducing faculty/student class ratios from the current 18.1 to about 16.1, and about 100 additional sections of classes could be offered annually. Expanded off-

campus opportunities would also be available, such as 10 new study abroad courses, which would allow approximately 250 more students the opportunity to participate in study abroad and an estimated \$500,000 would be available for scholarships.

The differential tuition proposal calls for an additional \$35 per semester credit hour to be charged for all upper division liberal arts courses, resulting in about a \$1,300 increase in tuition for a student over the course of four years. The revenue generated would be dedicated for the enhancement of upper division courses and experiences for liberal arts majors. 20% of the revenue must be used for scholarships. The college also plans to hire an additional staff member for coordinating internships and learning communities. Dr. Johnson noted that a college-level committee comprised of three students, three faculty members and the Associate and Assistant Deans would oversee the implementation and usage of the differential tuition revenue.

The Council asked Dr. Johnson what the advantage would be to applying differential tuition only to the upper division courses versus charging it to all majors. He replied that within the first two years of a student's college career, there is a tremendous amount of movement within majors and colleges. The College of Liberal Arts gains about 1,000 students from other colleges when the students reach upper division. Dan Parker asked Marty Gunn to send to TPAC a migration chart that Alice Reinarz, Assistant Provost for Enrollment, had created that documented this movement. Dr. Johnson also remarked that most of the core curriculum courses are lower division courses taught to non-majors.

Dr. Johnson stated that not many peer institutions charge differential tuition for the liberal arts and that budget allocations to colleges vary widely among institutions. At Texas A&M, the colleges of engineering and liberal arts receive the largest budget allocations. Access to better student engagement would likely be quantified by an improved ranking in the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) because student presentations, study abroad and scholarships will all increase leading students to report an enhanced education. Study abroad fees do not allow payment of faculty salaries, but differential tuition would allow for this. Research shows that study abroad scholarships encourage more students to go who otherwise would not.

The Dean was asked if there had been any thought/discussion to dispensing with course fees in lieu of differential tuition. Dr. Johnson responded that the College of Liberal Arts has one of the lowest course fee structures of all the colleges, but those course fees do provide a real benefit to the course. Approximately \$1.4 million is currently collected in course fees. To do away with those fees would require a substantial increase to the proposed differential tuition cost.

Mr. Parker informed Dean Johnson that TPAC will hear all of the presentations before beginning discussion regarding the structure of differential tuition. Dr. Johnson may be contacted to provide additional information to the Council during those deliberations.

The Colleges of Architecture and Geosciences have expressed an interest in submitting a differential tuition proposal to the Council, so an October 31 meeting has been added to the schedule in order to accommodate the deadline for presentations.

Mr. Parker reported that House Bill 1330, a pilot program to provide reduced undergraduate tuition during the summer, was approved in the 2005 legislative session but was not funded, so the 2005 bill was amended and passed again in 2007 with funding. Texas A&M University is the only institution in the state required to offer one summer session at a 50% reduction in tuition. Currently, State-mandated tuition is \$50 per semester credit hour and designated tuition is \$106 per SCH, so only for the second summer session of 2008 at Texas A&M University State-mandated tuition will be \$37.50/SCH and designated tuition will also be \$37.50/SCH, for a total of \$75/SCH versus \$156/SCH. Even with this reduction in tuition, it will still cost more for a student to take courses at TAMU than at a local university, at least in most cases. The deans are preparing summer offerings and in order to attract students, classes will need to be offered that likely could not be taken elsewhere. It is not known how cutting tuition will affect enrollment during the first summer session and the ten-week session. If semester credit hours increase next summer, the University will receive an increase in formula funding from the weighted semester credit hours.

Colleges are very unique and even more so in the summer, so individual departments will need to identify which courses would be beneficial and attractive to students. Mr. Parker asked the Council to discuss summer school with their constituents.

Mr. Parker reiterated that the Council must establish a uniform method of charging differential tuition because if one college charges by course and another by major, a student could be double-billed; not to mention the level of difficulty for SIMS to sort out.

The next meeting will be October 31 at which time it is anticipated that the Colleges of Geosciences and Architecture will present proposals for differential tuition. The November 7 meeting is scheduled for the fee discussion.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.