

Tuition Policy Advisory Council  
MEETING NOTES  
October 31, 2007

The Tuition Policy Advisory Council met on Wednesday, October 31, 2007 in the Provost's Conference Room, 9<sup>th</sup> floor, Rudder Tower.

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

Absent: Ricky Griffin, Nick Guillemette, Marty Gunn, and Anne Rabalais.

Guests: Bjorn Kjerfve, Dean, College of Geosciences; Vatche Tchakerian, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; Charles Graham, Professor and Executive Associate Dean and Director of Outreach; Leslie Feigenbaum, Senior Lecturer and Assistant Dean for Student Services; Craig Griffith, Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration; Bob Piwonka, Executive Director of Student Business Services.

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

College of Geosciences Differential Tuition Proposal

Dean Bjorn Kjerfve stated that the College of Geosciences has a small number of students but enrollment is growing and the college is committed to continuing that growth. Start-up funds make it possible for faculty to be "research ready" at the outset. The college would like to implement the priorities established by the Murano Report, which was created to enhance the undergraduate academic experience. However, additional resources would be necessary to incorporate those priorities. Dr. Kjerfve went on to state that other Geosciences colleges charge differential tuition. In order to enhance the undergraduate experience as outlined in the Murano Report, the College of Geosciences would need to charge differential tuition. The college would like to offer additional capstone courses and off-campus experiences. As required, 20% of the revenue would be set aside for scholarships, which would be a great benefit to this small college. Differential tuition of \$15 per semester credit hour is being proposed for all courses taught by the college, resulting in an estimated additional cost of \$75 per student per semester. Approximately \$650,000 would be generated in revenue and \$130,000 of that would be devoted to scholarships. This additional revenue would assist in the hiring of new graduate assistants; more writing intensive courses; enhanced technology in labs, GIS, and Remote Sensing courses; and implementation of undergraduate seminars. Globalization is also essential to the college because the natural scope of geosciences requires it.

There are approximately 460 undergraduate majors and 300 graduates within the college. However, it is mostly non-majors who take geosciences courses. About 60-65% of the revenue is generated by lower division courses. Dr. Kjerfve added that this differential tuition proposal has not yet been presented to the students.

Dan Parker remarked that the college was initially established as a graduate college and has only recently emphasized growth in the undergraduate population. Dean Kjerfve added that the college would like to grow about 7.5% per year for the next five years. It was noted that only about 8% of

high school students take earth sciences classes, so it becomes necessary at the college level to actively advertise to attract an increased number of students. The College of Geosciences at Texas A&M University has the only meteorology program in the state and the college is also unique in its combination of departments. Texas A&M University offers a large geosciences program by national standards. Other institutions incorporate some geosciences departments into other colleges.

Enrollment in geology and geophysics is currently on the rise because of the increase in oil costs. Environmental concerns are also making people aware of what the college has to offer. Geosciences has some connection with the petroleum engineering program in the Dwight Look College of Engineering and with the urban planning program in the College of Architecture.

The Council noted that undergraduate students may take issue if undergraduate tuition is increased in order to hire additional graduate students. Dean Kjerfve was asked how the proposed \$15 of differential tuition was determined and he indicated that the administrators within the college considered areas such as infrastructure costs and scholarship needs. Dr. Kjerfve reported that the average cost of course fees within the College of Geosciences is generally one of the lowest within the University. Institutional enhancement fees are still necessary to provide the funding they were intended for, but the college also needs the flexibility that differential tuition would provide. Dr. Kjerfve also indicated that it would be difficult to determine the breakdown of exactly how the additional revenue would be distributed.

Mr. Parker stated that the Council may ask the college to supply additional information as it prepares to deliberate on the various proposals that have been submitted. The Council asked Dr. Kjerfve to submit a one-page breakdown of the potential distribution of differential tuition revenue.

Deborah Wright announced that the University Fee Committee has received more fee proposals than expected and the Committee needs many questions answered before sending their recommendations forward, so more time will be needed to process the proposals. Rather than bringing the fees to TPAC on November 7, they will be discussed at the Council's November 28 or December 5 meeting.

#### College of Architecture Differential Tuition Proposal

Dr. Charles Graham reported that Dean Regan is currently in Minnesota attending a meeting for the College and is unable to make the presentation himself. The College of Architecture is one of three enrollment managed colleges at Texas A&M University. The college is anticipating about a 2% growth rate per year for the next five years with the majority of that growth expected to be in the two new Bachelor of Science programs: construction science and urban and regional science.

The proposal calls for a \$200 per semester charge to be assessed to all undergraduate majors beginning in fall 2008, generating approximately \$500,000 in revenue per year. Differential tuition would not be charged for summer classes. The revenue would be used to hire specialized faculty, increase summer course offerings, increase national and international experiences such as student travel to professional meetings and study abroad, and an increased emphasis on quality e.g. scholarships and updating labs. Spending decisions will be made by committee according to the strategic plans of the department and college. The funds' use would be overseen by students, staff and administration.

The overall goal of the college is to enhance learning experiences for undergraduate education in support of Vision 2020 goals. The college would be like to be able to recruit more under-represented students, increase graduation rates, provide cutting edge technologies in classes and labs, and enhance programs' global emphasis. Each curriculum requires a long semester away from Texas A&M University. An Eco-house is about to be launched and the college is collaborating with other colleges at Texas A&M University to establish a University-level multi-disciplinary center in Costa Rica.

Dr. Graham reported that the college has approximately 1,500 undergraduate majors. This differential tuition proposal has been discussed with various student groups and the reaction has been mostly positive.

The Council asked for a one-page "best estimate" of the distribution breakdown of the differential tuition revenue. Dr. Graham remarked that revenue usage will vary from year to year and all funds will go back to the department generating it. The departments will also be able to decide where the funds would best be used and those needs will vary year to year. The Council also asked what the current graduation rate is within the College of Architecture. Construction Sciences currently has an average five year graduation rate and the delay can be attributed mostly to internal transfer students changing majors. The summer program offerings could be enhanced through this additional revenue helping students in this situation to "catch up" and thus enhance graduation rates.

Dr. Graham announced that the College of Architecture at Texas A&M University is in the top 10 of the colleges of its type and is also the largest of its kind. The \$200 per semester proposed differential tuition is slightly lower than what peer institutions charge.

Mr. Parker stated that TPAC would need to meet next week to begin deliberations as to how differential tuition should be charged. Additionally, a November 14 meeting date should be added to the calendar as it is probable that deliberations will need to continue. November 28 will also be added to discuss fees at that time. It was noted that after the Council determines the best method for charging differential tuition, one or more college may decide not to move forward with their request. Even if a proposal coming forward matches the method that the Council chooses, the Council can reject based on other criteria. The Council also is not required to recommend approval for a certain number of proposals. It may reject or accept all proposals or any mix of the two. Once a college has been granted approval by the President to charge differential tuition, the college will have to submit future changes to the rate to TPAC for review.

The System wants an idea of tuition costs by November 12, but the deadline has been extended to January for TAMU to submit a designated tuition range. The tuition hearing will be held at the end of January or in early February. Mr. Parker suggested that each college approved to charge differential tuition should offer a separate tuition hearing within the college to address questions unique to them. The reaction by the student body has been relatively positive to this point.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.