

Tuition Policy Advisory Council
MEETING NOTES
February 1, 2008

The Tuition Policy Advisory Council met on Friday, February 1, 2008 in the Provost's Conference Room, 9th floor, Rudder Tower.

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

Guests: Elsa Murano, President of Texas A&M University and Sherylon Carroll, Associate Vice President for Marketing and Communications.

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

Each of the Council members introduced him- or herself to Dr. Murano. Mr. Parker informed the members that Dr. Murano had come to visit with the Council so she could inform them firsthand of her decisions concerning the differential tuition recommendations from the colleges and the fee proposals forwarded from the University Fee Committee.

President Murano thanked the Council for the opportunity to visit with the group about her decisions. During the decision-making process, she visited with student leadership, faculty, and the Division of Finance. Dr. Murano stated that the core principle must be to maintain accessibility to public education and not to price people out of an education. Serious consideration must be given when students are asked to support additional education costs.

Dr. Murano appreciates the perspective TPAC gives regarding new and increased fee proposals. The President concurred with all of TPAC's non-mandatory fee recommendations. Dr. Murano also concurred with TPAC's recommendations regarding the following mandatory fees: Computer Access/Instructional Technology, Library Access, Student Service, Group Hospital and Medical Services, Recreational Sports, and Transportation. Dr. Murano concurred with the Student Center Complex Fee recommendation with the following caveats—confirmation of exactly what the renovation plan is and the timeline for completion, e.g. when the various project stages are scheduled to take place. The increased fee may not be collected immediately if construction will not begin soon and if a very long timeline is anticipated.

Dr. Murano would like for the Career Center to provide a quality service so she will allow the Center to charge a \$6.75 per semester fee to all students. However, the Center will be required to conduct surveys to determine usage and customer satisfaction.

Five colleges submitted differential tuition proposals to the Tuition Policy Advisory Council: College of Architecture, Mays Business School, College of Education and Human Development, Dwight Look College of Engineering, and the College of Liberal Arts. Dr. Murano indicated

that all proposals provided good reasons for implementing differential tuition, but the University needs to be cautious and when differential tuition is approved, it sets a precedent. The Mays Business School has the strongest case for differential tuition and will likely see a good return on the investment. The school needs more faculty, but the market is very competitive and hiring additional faculty with the present budget is not possible. It is also necessary to offer additional class sections. In light of these considerations, President Murano will only proceed with the Mays Business School at this time and will use the school as a test case before allowing other colleges to collect differential tuition.

Dr. Murano added that the University will try to keep the increase in designated tuition at a minimum. The budget has been scrubbed and reserves are being used where necessary. However, it is important to keep current faculty well paid and faculty and student recruitment need to continue. Therefore, it is anticipated that the Fall 2008 designated tuition increase will be in the range of \$10-\$16 per semester credit hour.

Dr. Ricky Griffin expressed gratitude to Dr. Murano for her consideration. He added that, because students will want to see immediate results, Mays has established a plan to reduce the average upper division class size from 38 to 30 students in the Fall of 2008. Dr. Griffin indicated that, if Mays is the only college allowed to charge differential tuition at this time, the school would prefer to retain a per semester credit hour charge rather than a semester charge. Dr. Murano remarked that she would like to visit with Dr. Griffin further to discuss the pros and cons. However, the decision will need to be made very quickly.

Mr. Dan Parker stated that the Tuition Policy Advisory Council has discussed differential tuition for three years and the Council has found that a per semester charge is easier to explain to students and parents. Dr. Murano added that it also creates an incentive to graduate. Mays would also have to revisit this structure when other colleges come online because the student information system does not have the ability to assess differential tuition in multiple manners. Dr. Griffin voiced concern that if differential tuition were charged during the summer, it is unclear what the impact would be on summer enrollment in the school. If differential tuition is charged only in the Spring and Fall, it may be an incentive for summer enrollment to increase. Members of the Council noted that moving from the one model, charging per semester credit hour, to the other model, charging per semester, could be difficult and unpalatable for students. Mr. Conner Prochaska added that if Mays is to be the model and the per semester credit hour charge is used, it will then be difficult to switch to a per semester charge when other colleges begin charging differential tuition because the model will not be as useful unless the basis for charging differential tuition remains consistent. Dr. Murano stated that using the Mays Business School as a model will include accountability metrics. Dr. Griffin notified the Council that Mays will form a college-level TPAC and Dr. Murano concurred.

The University-wide tuition hearing will be held on Wednesday, February 6, at 3:30 p.m. in room 292 of the Memorial Student Center (MSC). The presentation will be divided into three parts—designated tuition, differential tuition, and fees. Mr. Murano asked that Mr. Prochaska, Student Body President, present the fees portion. Mr. Parker added that TPAC had also

recommended that college-level hearings take place in the colleges for which differential tuition is approved.

Mr. Parker announced that TPAC has concluded the discussion on current policy and, with his retirement from the University on January 31, 2007, the next chair of the Council is still unknown. Mr. Parker added that since the first group to sit on the Council, this one has worked exceptionally hard and the work that TPAC does really counts. Texas A&M University got the largest appropriation in the State last year largely due to flat tuition. Another good legislative session is anticipated because of a continuation of the University's tuition policy, as well as increased enrollment. Mr. Parker concluded the meeting by saying it has been a pleasure to work with the Tuition Policy Advisory Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.