ACADEMIC SENATE MEETING
March 23, 2005


ABSENT: Tom Brikowski, Juan Gonzalez, Matthew Leybourne, Joseph Picken, S. Venkatesan

VISITORS: Priscilla Beadle, Michael Coleman, Larry Terry, Hobson Wildenthal

1. CALL TO ORDER, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Dr. Jenifer called the meeting to order and brought the Senate members up to date on the tuition proposal. The Chancellor rejected the UTD and UT Arlington original proposals and asked us to submit revised proposals by next week. UTD’s proposal was a copy of U. T. Austin’s proposal, but their proposal wasn’t pulled. The new proposal will be submitted and, if it is approved, it would generate $5 M.

Regarding the budget, UTD needs $13 million in order for it to function properly next year. The House is recommending a $5 M increase over the biennium. The Senate is recommending a $9 M increase over the biennium. We would expect to receive somewhere between the two.

The students who worked with Dr. Wildenthal on the tuition proposal were quite disappointed about the rejection of our plan. They felt that it was a good plan and wanted it to be approved.

The House and Senate have passed full funding of tuition revenue bonds. There is a meeting next week on the budget, and if everything goes well, we should end up being okay.

Senator Shapiro has introduced a bill that provides state funding for the payment on the Emmitt bill rather than having to take that money out of our budget.
The Board of Regents, especially Chairman Huffines, are actively developing a proposal for the Bush Presidential Library. Chairman Huffines put together a very powerful committee, including friends of the President and major benefactors. They also want UTD to form a committee to put together a proposal as to what UTD has to offer if the Library were acquired. Our major benefit is that we have a lot of great land – land on the Bush Freeway. There would probably need to be a museum, a library, and University facilities such as an auditorium and seminar space. We would not have to raise any money for this Library. The UTD committee, which is being chaired by Dr. Terry, has its first meeting scheduled for March 24th. A plan will be put together, and it will be given to President Daniel.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the February meeting. The motion passed.

3. SPEAKER’S REPORT

Speaker Nelsen reported on a meeting with Provost Wildenthal about a number of items.

We are moving forward with a part-time employment policy for full-time faculty, but are not putting it in terms of tenured faculty (thereby not endangering that term). It will not stop the tenure clock and will apply to all individuals. The faculty members that were serving on this committee with Dr. Nelsen were Laksman Tamil, Gail Breen, and Andy Blanchard.

The Policy on Hiring Administrators was approved by the Senate but needs reworking. The version that was approved by the Senate uses UTD’s terminology, and it needs to be reworked to use the Regents’ terminology. It also can be misread to apply only to internal searches.

There are no program reviews scheduled this year. Next year the sciences will be reviewed. The policy for this committee needs to be revised so there is no duplication with reviews by accrediting agencies. Speaker Nelsen will talk to the Committee Chair, Jay Dowling, to look into possibly revising the Committee’s Charge.

There will also be no dean reviews this year. The reviews for Dean Coleman and Dean Cunningham will be reported on next month at the Council and Senate.
The Receivership Policy that was approved by the Senate a year or so ago also has not been forwarded to the System. The Provost feels that it takes the prerogative of the President to appoint administrators out of the President’s hands. The Provost also feels that the proposal could tie up appointments for up to two years if there is a disgruntled faculty member. Speaker Nelsen will work on a revision and will then meet again with the Provost.

Dr. Nelsen also brought along copies for the Senators of the revised Regents’ Rules about what the faculty can and cannot say in the classroom (avoid controversial issues if they have no connection to the subject).

Dr. Leaf and the ad hoc committee on workload policy have finished their work and will report to the Council and Senate next month.

Elections are being finalized. The Council election will be handled via the weighted system as per last year’s change.

The Committee on Mentoring has not been active, but they are in the process of being revitalized.

The change in classification for Juniors from 54 to 60 hours approved by CEP and the Student Government Association was put on hold by the Council because of a potential $300,000 budgetary liability.

4. FACULTY ADVISORY COUNCIL (FAC) REPORT

The Coordinating Board has been totally revamped. There are no more divisions between community colleges and four year schools.

An emphasis will be on outcomes and program reviews. They will be much more aggressive and less hands off. Speaker Nelsen has been asked to serve on a new Graduate Education Advisory Council to review graduate programs.

The Legislative session is in full swing. The bills to be concerned about are UTD’s deregulations, textbook use for three years, top ten percent, no extra money for teaching lower division, removal of rowdy students and faculty, transferability of courses, etc.
The FAC passed a resolution defining faculty for committees: all full-time teachers and researchers, not including anyone with administrative positions above and including an appointed department chair (elected chair is okay).

A high number of schools have gone to WP and WF. Many are counting WF in the GPA as incentive to keep in school and lower GPA – Council decided that we wouldn’t mess with this.

The A&M system faculty can drop students after three to five class absences. We will wait on this for now.

5. CHARGE: COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

This committee has been working for about four years without an official charge and the Committee feels that it should be a permanent committee. There are nine faculty plus students in addition to the Dean of Students that are on this committee. The charge has been drafted by the Committee for the approval of the Senate and the committee members would be nominated by the Committee on Committees. A motion was made and seconded to approve this new charge. The motion passed.

6. CHANGE OF MAJOR POLICY

The current change of major policy only allows a change if the student has a 2.0 average. This policy was partially because we didn’t want failing students to easily move into A&H, GS, SS, etc. It was also to keep the number of changes lower in hopes of graduating students sooner. It really doesn’t work – it prolongs time by creating shadow majors where students take easier classes to boost their GPA. The proposed change allows changes of major with the approval of both undergraduate associate deans (the sending and receiving deans). They both need to know when the student is leaving the program or entering the program. A motion was made and seconded to approve this change of major policy. The motion passed.

7. MINIMUM GRADE REQUIRED FOR TRANSFER CREDIT

This policy was never changed to reflect the standard of pluses and minuses. This would clarify the policy by making explicit the minimum quality points of 2.0 for a grade of C. A motion was made and seconded to approve the motion and the motion passed.
8. MID-TERM GRADES FOR ALL UNDERGRADUATES

Currently we only do mid-term grades for freshmen. We have had to rearrange pedagogically freshmen classes so that we have enough feedback by mid-term to do mid-term grades. We will have to do the same for some minimal number of courses. The students are very much in favor of mid-term grades because students want to know if they should drop the class or not. CEP debated this and came forward with the recommendation for mid-term grades in all classes.

It was recommended that internships be added as exceptions, and a request was made to remove the comma after “upper-division” in the last sentence.

A clarification was made that the mid-term grade does not indicate that a student has completed one-half of the class. The grade will be turned into the Registrar’s office and the advisers will receive copies.

It was noted that this requires extra work for the faculty members.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the recommendation with the above recommended changes. After further discussion, the motion was approved with two abstentions.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Speaker Nelsen reminded the Senators that a small committee needs to be convened to discuss the Strategic Plan that President Daniel is initiating. Please let Dr. Nelsen know if you are interested in participating on this committee.

The business was concluded and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Goertzen
Academic Governance Secretary