

1. **U. T. System: Annual Meeting with Officers of the U. T. System Student Advisory Council**

The U. T. System Student Advisory Council will meet with the Board of Regents to discuss accomplishments of the Council and plans for the future. The Council's recommendations are on Pages 88 - 94. Also attached on Pages 95 - 101 is a chart showing the status of prior recommendations from the Council.

AGENDA

1. Executive and Standing Committee Member Introductions
2. Chairperson's Report and Overview
3. Executive Committee and Standing Committee Remarks and Recommendations

Council members scheduled to attend are:

Chair: Ms. Crystal Gonzalez, U. T. Pan American, Philosophy

Academic Affairs: Mr. Basheer Benhalim, U. T. Dallas, Political Science

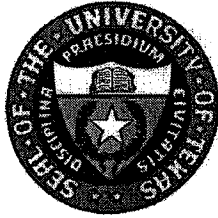
Student Involvement and Campus Life Committee: Ms. Stephanie Rich, U. T. Permian Basin, Psychology

Graduate and Health Affairs Committee: Ms. Amy Forestell, U. T. Austin, Graduate School, Astronomy

Financial and Legislative Affairs Committee: Ms. Danielle Rugoff, U. T. Austin, Government

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The U. T. System Student Advisory Council was established in 1989 to provide input to the U. T. System Board of Regents working through and with the Chancellor and U. T. System Administration on issues of student concern. The operating guidelines of the Council require that recommendations have a multi-institutional focus and that the Council explore individual campus issues with institutional administrators prior to any consideration thereof. The Student Advisory Council consists of two student representatives from each U. T. System institution enrolling students, and meets three times yearly in Austin. The Standing Committees of the Council are: Academic Affairs, Student Involvement and Campus Life, Health and Graduate Affairs, and Financial and Legislative Affairs.



*Student Advisory Council
Crystal Gonzalez, Chair
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(956) 624-5679*

March 27, 2007

Chancellor Mark G. Yudof
Chancellor, University of Texas System
601 Colorado St.
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Chancellor Yudof:

I would first like to thank you for giving a voice to the students through The University of Texas System Student Advisory Council. Begun in 1989, this process allows The University of Texas System Board of Regents to obtain further suggestions, ideas and plans brought by our members. In our current configuration, this fantastic opportunity allows two members of each University of Texas System institution to voice their concerns within our four standing committees; Academic Affairs, Student Involvement and Campus Life, Financial and Legislative, and Graduate and Health Affairs.

I would also like to thank the members that served on the 2006- 2007 UT System Student Advisory Council. Their hard work is reflected in the recommendations that we bring forth today. The attached recommendations represent a variety of issues, affecting many campuses in the UT System.

I would like to publicly express gratitude to Dr. Edward Baldwin for his patience, support, and guidance.

I look forward to presenting our recommendations to the Board in May.

Sincerely,

Crystal Gonzalez, Chair

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
SYSTEM**

After careful consideration we, the members of The University of Texas System Student Advisory Council (SAC), respectfully submit the following recommendations to The University of Texas System Board of Regents. The SAC recommendations concern a wide array of students at multiple institutions in The University of Texas System.

Student Involvement and Campus Life Committee

Recommendation 1

The Campus Life Committee recommends that an on-campus 24-hour quiet study facility be provided to students at all UT System Schools

We recognize that final exams are a vital part of the students' academic grade, and are often the deciding factor between passing and failing a class. In order to facilitate student success, the council recommends that:

- These facilities should open beginning at least 48 hours before the first scheduled final examination and continue operations until the last scheduled final examination.
- The primary recommended study facility is the library. Other possibilities could include, but are not limited to, the university center study rooms and residential club houses if the library is currently not a feasible solution.
- The study facility should be made readily available to all students and should be large enough to accommodate sizable study groups as well as the amount of individual students on campus who wish to use these facilities.
- We also encourage all institutions to open these study facilities for a 24-hour period throughout the year when they become financially capable of doing so.

Recommendation 2

Implement study days before final examinations

This recommendation will benefit all students; they will have more time to prepare for final examinations. The time to prepare will help improve graduation rates.

For all institutions that have a final examination week, there should be a minimum of one study day prior to the scheduled final exams.

To further facilitate student success, the council recommends:

- There should be no mandatory academic scheduled events during study day(s). These events shall include classes, discussion sessions, help sessions, or anything that can impact the students' grade.
- Weekends and scheduled holidays are not to be considered as study day(s).
- During these study days we strongly encourage faculty members to hold office hours during study day(s).

We acknowledge that scheduling conflicts may occur, but we would encourage each university to implement the study day(s) as it deems practicable.

Recommendation 3

All institutions have a university-supported recycling program

This program should include, but not be limited to:

- The recycling of paper goods, aluminum, glass, and plastic. This program may be sponsored by the university, a registered student organization, the city in which the university resides, or any other entity that chooses to participate.

Financial and Legislative Affairs Committee

Recommendation 4

Encourage all UT System institutions to make tuition information more readily available to Texas students and families

Recognizing that most of our institutions have tuition websites, we recommend making the pre-existing information more accessible by including the information in course packets which many students purchase, and by displaying a link to the tuition website prominently on the main page of the institution's website. We ask that a breakdown of tuition *and* fees be included. For schools that do not have fees and are operating on a flat rate tuition plan, we ask that a detailed breakdown of tuition be shown.

Recommendation 5

Require that all UT System institutions maintain and publish book lists in a timely manner to allow students the opportunity to purchase their textbooks from multiple venues

Currently, few of our institutions maintain or publish booklists, forcing students to purchase their books at limited venues, as in some cases the campus bookstore may be the only place other than students' syllabi where they can find out which books are required for their courses. We ask that all UT System institutions collect, compile, and publish a book list with required texts and their ISBN numbers *and* provide it to any venue that requests it.

Recommendation 6

Discourage the purchase of bundled textbooks in cases where there are purchasing options and not all of the contents of the bundle are required by the professor

Students are currently forced to purchase "bundled" textbook packages. Bundles typically include a textbook, workbook, and CD Rom. Oftentimes these bundles are extremely expensive and not all of the contents are utilized in the course. This forces students to spend money unnecessarily with no academic gain. We ask that all UT System institutions discourage the purchase of bundled textbooks and actively support anti-bundling legislation at the Texas Legislature.

Recommendation 7

Issue: Extra course charges over \$50 not included in tuition and fees. We ask that the UT System institutions require a special note or an asterisk to be placed on the class registration page *and* the course catalogue noting the charge

There are often unexpected educational costs associated with courses. When course materials outside of textbooks are *required*, we ask that a notation be added to notify students prior to enrolling in courses that such costs are associated and required for those particular courses. These costs are usually associated with classroom remotes, art supplies, medical and lab supplies, and much more.

Recommendation 8

Actively support tax free textbooks

According to a Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report, on average, students spend \$900 on required textbooks annually. To curb the steep cost, students often utilize textbook copies from the campus library, share books with a friend, or forego purchasing them altogether. Tax Free Textbooks would save UT System students millions and benefit all students regardless of discipline or location. Thus, we ask that all UT System institutions actively support Tax Free Textbook legislation at the Texas Legislature.

Recommendation 9

Encourage UT System campuses to engage city and county officials to ensure that each campus has a polling location and the option for early voting on campus

It is important that polls are easily accessible to all students to ensure that the student voice is heard. We ask the UT System to evaluate polling locations and early voting availability on each System campus *and* that UT System institutions work with city and county officials to increase access to polling locations. We also ask that the UT System ensure early voting polling locations System-wide. We ask that the UT System enhance its efforts, in accord with an amendment to the Higher Education Act in 1998, to develop a comprehensive voter registration card distribution strategy on all System campuses.

Recommendation 10

Support having a student on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

As we have seen with the addition of a student on the Board of Regents, there is great value in having student perspective on boards affecting higher education. Likewise, as the future leaders of this state we recognize it is our responsibility to get involved in important discussions affecting the UT System and Texas' future. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, as the architect of higher education policy for the Governor and the Texas Legislature, needs a student voice. Thus, we ask that the UT System support legislation in the Texas Legislature adding a student to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Recommendation 11

Graduate student recruitment and financial assistance

- Do a survey on how UT System institutions are attracting and recruiting graduate students and share "best practices" with all institutions.
- Set up a task force of graduate Deans to address the competitiveness of graduate recruitment.
- Encourage more funding from the State for graduate students, as well as research and teaching assistants.
- Do a peer institution study with each campus' national peer institution to see how UT System schools compare in the graduate assistance we provide to our students.

Graduate and Health Affairs

Recommendation 12

Provide access to health insurance to all graduate students

Graduate students typically have health insurance needs that are different than those of undergraduates. Generally, graduate students are older, no longer have insurance support from their parents, and may also be supporting families of their own. In addition, students at the health science centers and all international students are required to carry health insurance. We respectfully submit the following recommendations:

- The current UT Select plan provided to graduate student academic employees should be offered to nonemployee graduate students. If this is a legislative issue then the System should make this a legislative priority.
- If the UT Select plan cannot be made available to graduate students then a comprehensive health insurance option should be provided in addition to the supplemental insurance MEGA Life currently offers.
- The System should explore options to provide financial aid and grants to cover health insurance for graduate students.
- The current MEGA Life student health insurance should be expanded to include preventative care, such as gynecological exams and annual checkups, as well as prepay options.
- All UT System campuses should have a wellness or health center including a pharmacy.

Recommendation 13

Expand graduate student international study programs

The opportunity to study abroad during a college career provides valuable benefits to the student, the visited location, and the university as a whole. These programs currently tend to be focused on undergraduate students, but the benefits still apply in graduate and professional education. Graduate student international study programs would provide opportunities for strong international research collaborations, unique opportunities for advanced study, and ability to

spread the reputation of the university's highest quality academics. The health science institutions in particular have a strong potential to benefit from these kinds of programs. We respectfully submit the following recommendations:

- Current international opportunities for graduate students should be publicized and expanded. This may require the creation of a dedicated staff position.
- The UT System should coordinate an international study program tailored to graduate students.
- The System has the ability to link smaller programs across System institutions, as well as advertise effective programs to other areas of the System.

These recommendations work to achieve the UT System Strategic Plan's goals of increasing research, global competitiveness, and technology transfer as well as enhancing student success through expanding global initiatives.

Recommendation 14

Provide adequate support for graduate student academic employees

Adequate support for graduate student academic employees is essential to the success of our graduate programs. Graduate students greatly influence the character, strength, and reputation of our universities as teachers and researchers.

On those campuses that have graduate student academic employees we respectfully request that the System ensures that the financial packages adequately cover full tuition and cost of living.

Tuition assistance packages for graduate student academic employees should cover all components of tuition and fees.

Graduate student academic employee stipends should at least cover the cost of living for that campus.

For example, the graduate cost of attendance for one long semester given on the UT-Austin financial aid website is:

Tuition/Fees	Books	Room/ Board	Transportation	Personal/ Misc.	Total
3,130	450	4,000	447	1,375	\$9,613

Assuming that the tuition assistance package covers all tuition and fees (which is not the case; in 2006-2007 the tuition benefit was \$2,975), that leaves \$6,483 of cost over 4 months, or \$1,620.75 per month. Yet the minimum stipend is \$939/month.

This recommendation works to achieve the UT System Strategic Plan's goal of enhancing student success through improving graduate education.

Academic Affairs

Recommendation 15

Help improve graduation rates

- **Define full time and what is full-time status and timelines for degrees**

In order for students to graduate on time, a clear definition of what exactly is expected in their specific undergraduate programs must be implemented. In this regard, we think it is important to change the rhetoric from graduating in 'four years' to graduating 'on-time'. This can be done by defining the number of years required to complete each major (EX: Engineers might not be reasonably expected to graduate within four years; for them on-time may mean five years of education). Another recommendation is to have a similar Course Number for each UT System school, so students transferring from one UT school to another need not have to take that same course again.

- **Decrease the student to advisor ratio**

It is recommended that student to advisor ratio be decreased so that the quality of personal advising increases for individual departments and majors. This can improve the quality of advising by training, establishing a reward system (encouragement), and following best practice policies for this area of academia.

- **Increase the availability of prerequisite courses**

Timely graduation depends on course availability. Failure to offer a sequenced class interferes with a student's ability to move forward in his or her degree plan. Therefore, we recommend that prerequisite courses be taught at least two out of the three long semesters System-wide.

Recommendation 16

We strongly encourage all UT System institutions to conduct a survey to explore and share best practices for incorporating diversity into the culture of the university.

Student Advisory Council Recommendations Cumulative List/Update

Subject	Recommendation	System Administration Response
<p>Collaborative Academic and Certificate Programs May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</p>	<p>Expand Collaborative Academic and Certificate Programs among member institutions of the System.</p>	<p>Currently, there are more than a dozen collaborative academic programs among member institutions of the UT System. These programs are strategically placed and make the best use of the scarce resources available.</p> <p>Status: Implemented and ongoing. A major initiative is underway at UT System to foster these collaborative programs between academic and health institutions. Major programs have already been established.</p>
<p>Reserve Copies of Required Course materials May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</p>	<p>Amend the Regents' <i>Rules</i> to require each institution to maintain a standing copy of every course section's required course materials (including textbooks and packets) to be on reserve in each institution's respective library.</p>	<p>Since students traditionally have been responsible for providing their own textbooks, UT libraries do not, as a standard practice, stock all textbooks used in campus courses. No budget source is currently available to enable libraries to provide textbooks to students. The initial cost to provide textbooks, in hard copy form, would be substantial. For example, the initial cost is estimated at over \$35 million for UT Austin.</p> <p>Status: Responded to this request. Difficult to implement because of cost restrictions.</p>
<p>NetLibrary Expansion May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</p>	<p>Expand the NetLibrary to make available required texts of each section of each course offered at each institution</p>	<p>The use of electronic textbooks, while an innovative teaching tool, has become a complex issue. This recommendation would require all texts for each of the courses at all of the UT institutions be made available through the NetLibrary online service; as a result a System-wide contract would have to be developed and executed with NetLibrary.</p> <p>Note however that not all textbooks are available in electronic format. The libraries estimate that only a small percentage of textbooks are currently available in digital format.</p>

		<p>The recommendation also raises significant issues about what obligations UT institutions would be subject to in order to protect NetLibrary and the eBook authors' copyrights and other intellectual property rights, especially to prevent any infringement of such rights by the students accessing eBooks through the NetLibrary system.</p> <p>Ensuring that all textbooks are available via the NetLibrary system would require UT to devote significant ongoing resources to such an effort.</p> <p>Status: Acknowledged and no action because of significant budget implications.</p>
<p>Community Code of Honor May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</p>	<p>Encourage each institution to continue to promote a community code of honor or a code of ethical conduct; and if a code of honor or ethical conduct does not presently exist, to develop and advertise a community code similar to that which was announced by President Faulkner at U. T. Austin in April 2004.</p>	<p>The honor code established at Austin was developed by student initiative and was vetted with faculty and staff of the university. UT Austin's honor code seeks to remind the members of their community that civility and integrity have meaning and that there are expectations concerning these virtues. This code is simple and does not set up an elaborate justice system to deal with violations.</p> <p>The presidents of the U. T. System institutions were made aware of this recommendation.</p> <p>Status: Acknowledged and recommended to presidents to follow up.</p>
<p>Institutional Compliance Effectiveness May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</p>	<p>Ask the Office of the Chancellor to study and report on the effectiveness of the institutional compliance policies to promoting professionalism and ethical conduct within the operations of each System institution, and recommend action to the respective institution when appropriate.</p>	<p>Students currently have a variety of offices to which they can report unethical or illegal conduct that do not rely on hierarchical systems. These offices include the Office of Student Affairs, Institutional Compliance, and Equal Opportunity Office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally, the Office of Student Affairs or the Dean of Students is charged by the institution with responsibility for handling student concerns. • However, students could also utilize resources provided by the Institutional Compliance Office.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the nature of the complaint relates to sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct, the Equal Opportunity Office would also be appropriate. <p>Each System institution has an external hotline for reporting instances of suspected noncompliance, and unethical or illegal behavior. Calls are reported to the Institutional Compliance Officer for review and investigation. Hotlines provide a way to report issues anonymously or for other instances where there is discomfort in using the institution's established administrative channels. There are no restrictions regarding who may use the hotlines.</p> <p>Information on services provided by institutional compliance offices is publicized on the institutions' websites and through the use of posters displayed across the campuses.</p> <p>Status: Being implemented. There is a U. T. System Task Force on institutional compliance.</p>
<p>Financial Aid May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</p>	<p>Conduct a study on the impact of new tuition increases on students who do not qualify for financial aid.</p>	<p>Since the first round of tuition deregulation, System Administration has been keenly aware of the impact of tuition increases on the student's ability to pay.</p> <p>The first of the eight guiding principles set forth during the first tuition setting process was to ensure that a UT education remains affordable. These eight guiding principles remained intact for our most recent tuition increases.</p> <p>For example, institutions have set aside 20 or more percent from designated tuition to help students from all income levels. UT Austin set aside 28 percent from each dollar for additional financial aid to support students from low and middle-income families.</p> <p>UT San Antonio, UT Permian Basin, and UT Tyler instituted other financial assistance programs for middle income students who did not qualify for other aid. UT Dallas, UT El Paso, and UT Tyler created campus jobs for students who qualified and were not provided aid.</p>

<p>System Nursing Hotline May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</p>	<p>Investigate the feasibility of expanding UT Austin's nursing hotline so that institutions could "opt-in" to the service.</p>	<p>The Office of Academic Affairs continues to do analytical work to make sure students can afford their education.</p> <p>Status: Acknowledged and ongoing.</p> <p>The nursing hotline at UT Austin is staffed by 5 nurses who rotate handling calls. Student fees are used to finance operations. The nurse taking a call from the hotline assesses the situation and decides the appropriate course of action. Those courses of action could be to send the student to a minor emergency clinic, send them to a hospital emergency room, or suggest that the student come in to the campus health facility the next day. Should the need arise, the nurse has access to one of the health center's physicians.</p> <p>Other institutions in the System could adopt the Austin model or they could contract with private vendors to provide the service to their students.</p> <p>Status: Acknowledged and recommended to individual campuses.</p>
<p>Mental Health Information May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</p>	<p>Require all UT System institutions to make information readily available pertaining to mental health. Specifically, this information should include services provided both on and off-campus that relate to psychiatric issues, substance abuse, sexual harassment, rape crisis, women's health, suicide, and sexually transmitted diseases.</p>	<p>Each member institution has already established a mechanism for providing on-campus resources to its students. Some counties and cities have hotline resources for crisis intervention and other mental health conditions. System institutions could publish information about these resources in available University materials – however, much of the information is already available in the various telephone books and on websites.</p> <p>We encourage each institution to review the availability of local resources and consider the best method to make this information available to students.</p> <p>Status: Acknowledged and recommended to individual institutions for follow up.</p>
<p>Dedicated Diversity Issues Administrator May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</p>	<p>Ensure the presence of an administrative position at each institution designed to deal with diversity issues and adequate processes for maintaining diversity at each institution.</p>	<p>Status: Acknowledged and recommended to individual institutions for follow up.</p> <p>U. T. System has a history of commitment to diversity both at the System and campus level. The Student, Faculty, and Staff Campus Life Committee of the Board of Regents monitors the progress made by institutions. There is much discussion of whether it is better to have a separate office or</p>

<p>Investigate the effectiveness of current anti-drug efforts at our health institutions</p> <p>May 10-11, 2006 Board Meeting</p>	<p>Institute random drug testing to those students who are directly involved in patient care and investigate the effectiveness of current antidrug efforts at health institutions.</p>	<p>to charge a high-ranking campus official (e.g. the provost) with the responsibility. Four System institutions (UT Austin, UT San Antonio, UT Permian Basin, and UT M. D. Anderson Cancer Center) have an office or an individual dedicated to diversity issues. On small campuses, it may be difficult to fund a separate office.</p> <p>Most institutions sponsor multicultural or diversity events every year.</p> <p>Member institutions were made aware of UT Austin's diversity report.</p> <p>Status: Acknowledged and recommended to individual institutions for discussion.</p>
<p>Tuition Guarantees</p> <p>May 10-11, 2006 Board Meeting</p>	<p>Ask all institutions to begin setting tuition locks or guarantees for incoming students based on their academic program's expected time of completion</p>	<p>The Office of Health Affairs has surveyed the health institutions and found that those students who are involved in direct patient care are randomly tested by the facilities where they work. Under the <i>Drug Free Schools and Campus Act</i> regulations 34CFR 86.1 institutions are already required to promote Student Health Service Programs about drug rehabilitation.</p> <p>Status: Acknowledged and ongoing.</p>
		<p>A tuition guarantee policy may not make sense for all institutions. In general, the policies are designed for, and benefit, the traditional full-time university student who may be able to complete this degree program in four or five years. At many UT System institutions, large numbers of part-time and nontraditional students would derive no benefit from such a policy.</p> <p>This fall, qualified freshmen at UT El Paso had the option of selecting a guaranteed tuition rate for four years. Beginning in fall 2007, incoming freshmen at UT Dallas will be given a tuition guarantee for four years.</p>

		<p>It is also important to note that the new UT System strategic plan calls for the development of enrollment management plans by each institution. Institutions may consider tuition guarantees as they develop these plans.</p> <p>Status: Acknowledged and recommended to individual institutions for discussion.</p>
<p>Standardize dates for the tuition setting process May 10-11, 2006 Board Meeting</p>	<p>Implement standard dates for the tuition setting process at each institution</p>	<p>This recommendation will be incorporated into the next set of instructions that are sent to the schools well in advance of the next tuition setting process. The Office of Academic Affairs is currently developing a suggested timeline for the next tuition setting process.</p> <p>Status: Acknowledged and ongoing.</p>
<p>Online Degree Audit Plan Evaluation May 10-11, 2006 Board Meeting</p>	<p>Require an Online Degree Audit Plan Evaluation Tool at each institution</p>	<p>UT System academic institutions are in different stages of implementation of the online degree evaluation. Several are using commercial products available, usually chosen for their capability to integrate well with other campus needs.</p> <p>Status: Acknowledged and ongoing.</p>
<p>Advising Accountability May 10-11, 2006 Board Meeting</p>	<p>Require Advising Accountability</p>	<p>Academic advising needs to be improved. At most campuses the bulk of advising, at the undergraduate level, is done by staff rather than by faculty. For faculty members, advising is part of the promotion and tenure process. For staff advisers we will determine whether or not we have a sufficient career line developed.</p> <p>Status: Acknowledged and ongoing.</p>
<p>Course Transfer Equivalency Guide May 10-11, 2006 Board Meeting</p>	<p>Develop a Transfer Equivalency Guide that is useable by all UT System schools</p>	<p>The Office of Academic Affairs will ascertain the state of course equivalency guides at each institution and will determine if this service is best provided on each campus, centrally, or in combination.</p> <p>Status: Acknowledged and ongoing.</p>

Prepared by the Office of Academic Affairs
February 2007

<p>Communications Portal for Student Leaders within UT System schools</p> <p>May 10-11, 2006 Board Meeting</p>	<p>Create and moderate a network (similar to the UT System Student Advisory Council (UTSSAC) Portal) to facilitate communication within the UT System schools</p>	<p>The Office Academic Affairs will test using the already created UT System Student Advisory Council portal for this purpose.</p> <p>Status: Acknowledged and ongoing</p>
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