

## 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 143 - 147. Also attached on Pages 148 - 155 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:** Mr. Tommy Thompson, U. T. San Antonio, Management

**Academic Affairs Committee:** Mr. Stephen Myers, U. T. Austin, Government

**Student Involvement and Campus Life Committee:** Mr. Jaime Villanueva, U. T. San Antonio, Mathematics

**Graduate and Health Affairs Committee:** Mr. Sean Paul, U. T. Health Science Center - San Antonio, Medicine

**Financial and Legislative Affairs Committee:** Mr. Andrew Solomon, U. T. Austin, Radio-Television-Film

### 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, Graduate and Health Affairs, and Financial and Legislative Affairs.



*Student Advisory Council  
Thomas J. Thompson, Chair  
One UTSA Circle  
San Antonio, Texas 78249*

March 29, 2008

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 council of students allows The University of Texas System Board of Regents to obtain further suggestions, ideas and plans brought by our members. In its current configuration, this fantastic opportunity allows two members of each University of Texas System institution the opportunity to voice their concerns and offer support within our four standing committees; Academic Affairs, Student Involvement and Campus Life, Financial and Legislative, and Graduate and Health Affairs.

Additionally, I would like to offer my thanks and bring to light the hard work of the members that served on the 2007–2008 U. T. System Student Advisory Council. Attached are the recommendations that represent the hard work and dedication to excellence of these members. You will see that they represent a variety of issues, each affecting many campuses in the U. T. System.

Finally, I would like to express my deep gratitude to Dr. Edward Baldwin and Dr. Jim Studer for their continued hard work, guidance, and dedication. Without their support, none of what we do could be possible.

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

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Thompson  
Chair

Prepared for the Student Advisory Council  
by the Office of Academic Affairs  
March 2008

**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. These recommendations concern a wide variety of students at multiple institutions in The University of Texas System.

**Academic Affairs Committee**

Recommendation 1

**Each campus should model the on-line course instructor and course evaluation survey results tool used at The University of Texas at Dallas. The course instructor and course evaluation surveys should be linked to the on-line course catalog and be made readily available to students during registration periods from the registration menu.**

**The U. T. Dallas course instructor and course evaluation survey tool can be found on-line at: <http://www.utdallas.edu/lookup/>.**

The Academic Affairs Committee found that U. T. System institutions currently do an adequate job of collecting student feedback through course instructor and course evaluation surveys. However, campuses do an inadequate job of making the results from these surveys available to students. Such information will be helpful to students during the course selection process, as it will allow them to assess a professor's teaching style and ability as well as the effectiveness of a particular course.

Recommendation 2

**Each campus should implement a policy encouraging professors to post course syllabi on-line preferably before the first registration period but at least before the first day of class.**

Course syllabi provide important information (i.e. grading policies, assignment due-dates, examination dates, and course procedures) that can help students make informed decisions about courses. There are various benefits to helping students make well-informed choices during the course selection process, including better student performance in class, fewer dropped classes, and more timely graduation rates.

### Recommendation 3

**A recommendation from the 2004-2005 Academic Affairs Committee of the Student Advisory Council encouraged each institution to develop and promote an honor code. We reiterate our support for this idea and ask again that it be made a priority at the U. T. System level. Each campus president should be charged with the task of convening a group of students, faculty, staff, and administrators to develop and implement an honor code.**

A well developed and integrated honor code demonstrates the significance institutions place on academic integrity, ethics, and civility. Research also shows the positive effects a well-integrated honor code can have when it comes to curbing scholastic dishonesty among students. Currently only a very few of the U. T. System's institutions have an honor code of some kind.

### **Student Involvement and Campus Life Committee**

#### Recommendation 4

**Concerned with campus safety, we request that each institution implement a criminal emergency response system in order to avoid additional potential crimes against students on campus. We ask the U. T. System to look at the possibilities of a Shared Services Contract in order to keep costs low when shopping for a criminal emergency response system.**

The U. T. System should consist of a three tier communication process that protects student privacy. Students should have the ability to opt out of any emergency response system put in place.

First Tier- These are first response crimes, examples of murder, aggravated assault, and sexual offense. The main issue with reporting these crimes comes when the suspect is at large and can harm other students.

Second Tier- These are viewed as person-to-person crimes where the suspect is caught or there is not a potential to harm other students.

Third Tier- These actions occur when property or other crimes are committed where the potential danger to other students is minimum or rare.

We ask that First Tier crimes be reported immediately to students using a system like Reverse 911 using a voice call or text message. Second tier crimes should be reported using university email within twelve hours of the given crime. Third tier crimes should be reported on a weekly basis in order to keep students aware of potential crimes.

## Graduate and Health Affairs Committee

### Recommendation 5

**We commend the report from the Task Force on Doctoral Education and Post-Doctoral Experience. To continue this goal of improving the doctoral education and post-doctoral experience and to better recruit and serve graduate students, graduate housing must be addressed for graduate students.**

The report is a great start toward positively impacting the graduate student experience; however the report did not thoroughly address the importance of appropriate and affordable housing options for U. T. System graduate students.

### Recommendation 6

**We recommend that a student representative from the SAC be included in the evaluation, analysis, and investigation of developing a standard of student health care for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. Once established, the standard should be a required goal for each of the student health care facilities in the U. T. System.**

We support the review of student health centers of the U. T. System to evaluate adequate and appropriate health clinics for students. Student representatives at each institution should be consulted to assure that campus specific needs be met.

## Financial and Legislative Affairs

### Recommendation 7

**Conduct a survey to ascertain the adequacy of student health insurance in the U. T. System. The results of this survey should be used to study the possible development of a Tiered Health Insurance System with options for additional coverage for students with specific needs.**

We acknowledge that a survey is being conducted for graduate students but recommend that a health insurance survey be conducted for undergraduate and professional students as well.

This survey would be an opportunity to explore the unique health care needs of our diverse student population, and that it would lead to better solutions of providing appropriate health insurance options.

A member of SAC, as well as a Student Health Coordinator Representative should be included in the design, bid process, collection of data, analysis, bid process, and distribution of results to all campuses.

#### Recommendation 8

**Concerned with the Archer Center, we wish to express our support for the program, and encourage the U. T. System to offer a similar program during the summer whether it is an abbreviated version of the Archer Fellowship or a new service targeted specifically for summer students, when more students are likely to take time away from their home institution.**

SAC believes that the Archer program is a positive experience for its participants; we only wish that more students were able to participate in the Archer Program.

Currently, the Archer Program is only offered during the fall and spring semesters. At this time only undergraduate students are allowed to participate in the Archer Program. We feel that the U. T. System should also offer a program that graduate students are eligible for in Washington, D.C.

#### Recommendation 9

**We recommend that U. T. System and its Governmental Relations office institute a policy to effectively communicate legislative issues to student leaders during the next legislative session. We recommend that students be designated as campus liaisons in the information-sharing process.**

During a legislative session it is difficult for students to stay up-to-date on new legislation that could potentially affect them. This is especially true for students not at the U. T. Austin campus.

Often times, students do not know about a piece of legislation until it has already been enacted. Student leaders may not find out about an important committee hearing on a bill until it is too late for them to actively engage their student body.

In addition to the nine recommendations presented above, the SAC wishes to express its strong disagreement with the U. T. Board of Regents in regards to the tuition cap that was voted on in December of 2007.

We acknowledge that outside forces, such as the Texas legislature, played a factor in the Regents' decision making. The SAC also acknowledges the difficult balance between excellence and affordability.

We appreciate the previously set tuition-setting process that involves a collaborative effort between students, faculty, the administration, and the University presidents before a recommendation is sent to the Board of Regents. We do not believe that the process was followed this year, and we believe it has diminished the student collaboration in this process.

We also believe that a universal cap set on all U. T. institutions in response to a tuition proposal from U. T. Austin does not take into consideration the diversity of the schools with the U. T. System and the diverse needs at each school.

As students, we look forward to working with the Board of Regents on future decisions regarding tuition.

Prepared for the Student Advisory Council  
by the Office of Academic Affairs  
March 2008