
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, following their meeting on February 10-11, 2006, wherein they finalized recommendations set forth on Pages 2 – 8. A cumulative listing of Council recommendations and status is set forth on Pages 9 - 14.

**AGENDA**

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

**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. 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.

Council members scheduled to attend are:

**Chair:** Mr. Brent Chaney, U. T. Austin, English and Government

**Academic Affairs:** Mr. Franco Marquez, U. T. El Paso, Multi-Disciplinary Study

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

**Health and Graduate Affairs Committee:** Mr. Matthew Ramirez, U. T. Medical Branch - Galveston, Doctor of Medicine

**Financial and Legislative Affairs Committee:** Mr. Omar Ochoa, U. T. Austin, Business Honors Program
March 30, 2006

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

Dear Chancellor Yudof,

Each year, the UT System Student Advisory Council, consisting of two representatives from each institution, meets to discuss issues of importance to students across the System. These recommendations are researched, discussed, and debated until the most salient, relevant recommendations are forwarded for your review. These recommendations represent the efforts of our 28 members over the past year. We trust that they will receive your earnest attention.

This was an innovative year for the Council. With the assistance of the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Technology and Information Services we utilized Sharepoint, an online threaded discussion tool, to keep our discussions going after our face-to-face meetings in Austin. Our recommendations cover a variety of topics categorized into our four major working groups. This year’s committees included academic affairs, graduate and health affairs, financial and legislative affairs, and student involvement and campus life.

We continue to support the United to Serve Initiative which will be held on April 23-29, 2006 during the National Volunteer Week and acknowledge the time and effort that your staff gives to coordinate that program.

I would also like to take this opportunity to publicly thank and commend the members of the 2005-2006 University of Texas System Student Advisory Council for their service to the Council and to their fellow students. These recommendations show their dedication and effort to serving their fellow students well, and it has been an honor to serve as their Chair.

Finally, I would like to give a special thanks to Dr. Edward Baldwin. Without his guidance, much of what we have accomplished would not have been possible.

We appreciate the opportunity to present these recommendations on behalf of the 180,000 students in the UT System.

Sincerely,

Brent Chaney, Chair
The University of Texas System Student Advisory Council
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, respectfully recommend the following recommendations to The University of Texas System Board Of Regents. The findings of the Council show that recommendations presented here concern a wide array of students at multiple institutions in The University of Texas System.

Graduate and Health Affairs

Recommendation 1

Require all U. T. System institutions which offer any health care component to institute random drug testing of students participating in patient care and investigate the effectiveness of current anti-drug efforts at our health institutions.

As society has evolved, drug use and abuse has gained a type of casual acceptance among young adults attending our institutions. These same students participate in patient interaction through various endeavors as part of their curriculum. Drug use among this population therefore could have disastrous effects on patient care, the institution and the health care profession.

In 2005 an article in the New England Journal of Medicine\(^1\) found drug and alcohol abuse by observed physicians to be the primary behavior leading to Medical Board disciplinary action. This finding is not isolated. The literature contains numerous accounts from across the disciplines which find drug use among medical professionals to be a widespread problem. One cannot assume that this behavior begins only after graduating from health care institutions.

Our goal at the U.T. System is to provide the health care field with the most competent and prepared professionals possible. We recognize that every effort must be taken to ensure that drug use does not influence patient care at our health institutions. If the Board concurs with the Council with respect to this recommendation, the Board could act by taking the following actions:

a. Initiate random drug testing for students participating in programs whose educational activities bring them into patient contact or whose actions might alter patient care through the administration or formulation of medication.

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Prepared for Student Advisory Council
By the Office of Academic Affairs
February 11, 2006
b. Evaluate current and/or develop new curriculum to increase student knowledge of the dangerous and often personally/professionally damaging effects of drug abuse by health care professionals with an emphasis on professional conduct in the Hippocratic tradition.

c. Evaluate and promote Student Health Service programs available for individuals seeking to relinquish their drug activities, with an emphasis on rehabilitation.

d. Develop a campus wide educational campaign (e.g. posters/pamphlets) that recognizes the problem of drug abuse among health care professionals and the effects such abuse has on patient trust, patient care and the public’s perception of the health care profession.

This recommendation represents the best solution to an alarming drug culture present among students at our campuses and places patient safety as well as professional conduct paramount at these institutions.

Financial and Legislative Affairs

Recommendation 2

Ask all institutions to begin setting tuition locks or guarantees for incoming students based on their academic program’s expected time of completion.

With decreasing monetary support from the State of Texas, students and their families are expected to shoulder an increasing amount of the financial burden of their education. Though this may be necessary to maintain a high quality education, the process used to set tuition makes the total cost of education unpredictable. Students know what they will have to pay for their education for a limited time which makes planning work schedules, financial aid, and family contributions difficult. The recent 2 year process of setting tuition is a step in the right direction but the system should strive to make the total cost of education known. Unpredictable tuition has been one of the biggest complaints from parents and students since tuition deregulation.

Students are expected to know how long they will be working on their degree; in return they should know how much it is going to cost to complete their degree. When students gain entry into higher education, i.e. universities, law schools, medical schools, etc., they will benefit from knowing the total cost of their education within a time frame. The time frame will consist of the number of years indicated by each program, depending on the form of higher education. For example, an undergrad program normally consists of four years, medical school four years and law schools three years. Tuition would be fixed or “locked” for the indicated number of years estimated for each program.
Tuition locks can also increase timely graduation. Once the student acquires a “locked” fee he/she will be able to more accurately plan their expenses for pursuing a degree. Unforeseen costs become unpredictable obstacles that potentially delay graduation. The percentage of students graduating in four years may increase once the number of “unpredictable” obstacles for obtaining a higher education is reduced. Being able to plan for education costs increases a student’s ability to plan for timely graduation. Also, a financial incentive to graduate on time is created as students will strongly consider graduating on time to avoid increases in their tuition.

Recommendation 3

Implement standard dates for the tuition setting process at each institution.

Each institution has a tuition setting process that includes a committee consisting of students, faculty and administrators. The involvement of students on these committees has been an important way of including the major stakeholders of the university in the process.

What’s important is that students are given the maximum opportunity to have an impact on the tuition deliberations. The education of the tuition committee has a direct effect on the productivity and quality of its members. Because there are no standard dates in place for when students should appoint new members, receive briefing information or solicit student feedback, it makes it extremely difficult for students to get up to speed on difficult information.

The system should require each institution to work with student leaders to develop a standard calendar. As a minimum, the Board should instruct institutions to provide tuition committees information and an education briefing two weeks before their first meeting. This first meeting should be no later than one month prior to the due date of the recommendation.

Academic Affairs

Recommendation 4

Require an Online Degree Audit Plan Evaluation Tool at each Institution.

While some of the departments in our universities have capable degree plans online, the entire system would benefit from a simple, user friendly, new setup of degree plans. This online program should be constructed in phases that systematically address the needs of the student population. Initially the program should include:

a. Updated information on the student’s progress (transcript)
b. Classes needed for completion of their degree
c. Printable degree plan to speed up advising process

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By the Office of Academic Affairs
February 11, 2006
Later phases of this program should contain:

a. Registration information for those classes (date, time, place and professor)
b. Financial information regarding tuition and fees to be assessed for that semester

Ultimately, this would be a great tool in improving graduation time and rates because it would take much of the guess work out of registration, advising, and financial predicaments that many of our students face.

Recommendation 5

Require Advising Accountability.

It is our recommendation that all advisors be held accountable for the advice they offer to students in regard to the class offerings and the degree requirements. Students are often frustrated with the process and the information received. This slows the progress of graduation.

For this reason, we urge the system to increase advisors’ accountability for assisting the students. Advisors should be required to have an understanding of degree plans so that the quality and accuracy of their advising is the best. Additionally, all advisors should have an audit done every five years so that a record of their performance of helping students graduate is maintained. For faculty advisors, it would serve as a component in tenure and post-tenure evaluations. For staff advisors, it would serve as a component of their job performance evaluations.

Recommendation 6

Develop a Transfer Equivalency Guide that is usable by all UT System Schools.

The University of Texas at Austin offers an online program, The Automated Transfer Equivalency Guide (ATE), which is unheard of at the rest of our institutions. The system is a searchable database of transfer credit evaluations for more than 246,966 courses offered at Texas colleges & universities. It offers an equivalency guide form that allows students to know whether a class taken at another institution will count towards their required classes at UT Austin. All academic institutions would benefit from such a program. Allowing prospective transfer students the ability to see how much of their earned credit hours would be accepted at our institution would further facilitate the steps in attending one of the UT institutions.

Making this program available between our universities would further enhance the appeal of our system to the rest of Texas and beyond.
Student Involvement & Campus Life

Recommendation 7

Create and moderate a network (similar to The University of Texas System Student Advisory Council (UTSSAC) Portal) to facilitate communication within the UT System schools.

As student representatives from our respective schools, we have, through social and formal engagements, shared ideas of what various departments at our home institutions are doing to make the experience of each UT System student successful and memorable. UTSSAC offers the separate institutions an opportunity to share individually what the student government association, Student Affairs, and other organizations at each institution do for different activities. If the student representatives (other than the two UTSSAC members) had an opportunity to contact other UT System students on a regular basis, then students would be able to know ahead of time if a certain plan of action has been successful in the past at another campus. Thus, energy, time, and resources could be saved.

The Council offers the following guidelines it believes are important to be included in the intercampus communication network:

a. The network should be piloted with the student government group of each institution. Access will be limited to the student government group president and one additional officer.
b. The network should be closely moderated to avoid misuse of such resource.
c. Depending on the success of the network, it will be opened up to the various divisions of campus. Each would have a username and pass code, such that Student Activities, Greek Life, Orientation Program, etc. would be allowed to review, post, and respond only to their department.
d. The Student Regent would have access to the network in order to enhance communication with the rest of the UT Student Leaders.
# Student Advisory Council Recommendations
## Cumulative List/Update

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<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>System Administration Response</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The UT System Digital Library (UTsDL)</strong>&lt;br&gt;May 12-13, 2004 Board Meeting</td>
<td>Increase support to achieve an extensive list of journals and electronic resources that can be used by both students and faculty; cooperation among the health science centers to maximize access to electronic sources at minimum cost to the System and the individual institutions.</td>
<td>The System continues its support of the digital library. An additional $1 million dollars was allocated for this effort. Status: Implemented</td>
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<td><strong>Health Insurance</strong>&lt;br&gt;May 12-13, 2004 Board Meeting</td>
<td>Study the feasibility of providing health insurance for all students. The analysis should include the possibility of decreasing premiums and deductibles (in light of increases in membership of healthy persons in the insurance pool), expanding coverage and benefits and improving customer service.</td>
<td>Employee Group Insurance (EGI) has developed an RFP for the Student Health Insurance Program. The Student Advisory Council selected four of its members to participate in a focus group to help articulate plan design changes. Suggestions from the group were incorporated into the current student health insurance plan. Status: Contracted with Student Resources Mega Insurance</td>
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<td><strong>Student Assessment</strong>&lt;br&gt;May 12-13, 2004 Board Meeting</td>
<td>Strongly believe in the utility of student learning assessment. The results should be used for improvement, not for punitive purposes. Nor should they be used in any manner that infringes on academic freedom.</td>
<td>Office of Academic Affairs continues to work on student assessment. Continues to explore various tests and testing methods designed to calculate the value that each of our member institutions add to student learning. Status: Implemented and ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student Engagement</strong>&lt;br&gt;May 12-13, 2004 Board Meeting</td>
<td>The National Survey of Student Engagement should be better publicized to students to make them aware of the impact that their participation has in the development for a quality education. The results should be made readily available to students at each institution via the institution's website.</td>
<td>The Office of Academic Affairs continues to participate in the National Survey of Student Engagement. The results of the survey are currently a part of the UT System Accountability and Performance Report and are used by some of our institutions to satisfy state government customer satisfaction requirements. Status: Implemented and ongoing</td>
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Prepared by the Office of Academic Affairs<br>February 2006
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<tr>
<th><strong>Tuition Deregulation and Accountability</strong></th>
<th>Carefully track the flow of money generated by tuition increases and hold the member institutions accountable for the use of the additional revenue.</th>
<th>General Appropriations Act, Rider 59, Report Concerning Designated Tuition, requires the Board annually file a report detailing the uses of designated tuition.</th>
<th><strong>Status:</strong> Implemented and ongoing</th>
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<td><strong>UTServe</strong></td>
<td>Continued support of the Chancellor and the presidents for the System-wide outreach activity (UTServe). This activity is connected with National Volunteer Week.</td>
<td>The System will continue to support UTServe.</td>
<td><strong>Status:</strong> Implemented – This year's event took place the week of April 23 – 29, 2006</td>
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<td><strong>Collaborative Academic and Certificate Programs</strong></td>
<td>Expand Collaborative Academic and Certificate Programs among member institutions of the System.</td>
<td>Currently, there are more than a dozen collaborative academic programs among member institutions of the University of Texas System. These programs are strategically placed and make the best use of the scarce resources available.</td>
<td><strong>Status:</strong> Implemented and ongoing. A major initiative is underway at UTS to foster these collaborative programs between academic and health-related institutions. Major programs have been already established.</td>
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<td><strong>Reserve Copies of Required Course materials</strong></td>
<td>Amend the Regents' Rules 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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td><strong>Status:</strong> Responded to this request. Difficult to implement because of cost restrictions.</td>
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<td><strong>NetLibrary Expansion</strong></td>
<td>Expand the NetLibrary to make available required texts of each section of each course offered at each institution.</td>
<td>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.</td>
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| Community Code of Honor | **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.**

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.

Ensuring that all textbooks are available via the NetLibrary system would require UT to devote significant ongoing resources to such an effort.

**Status:** Acknowledged and no action because of significant budget implications. |
| May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting | 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 The University of Texas at Austin in April 2004.  

The honor code established at Austin was developed by student initiative and was vetted with faculty and staff of the university. U.T. 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.

The presidents of our member institutions were made aware of this recommendation.

**Status:** Acknowledged and recommended to presidents to follow up. |
| Institutional Compliance Effectiveness | 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. | 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.  
- 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.  
- If the nature of the complaint relates to sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct, the Equal Opportunity Office would also be appropriate.  
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.  
Information on services provided by institutional compliance offices is publicized on the institutions' websites and through the use of posters displayed across the campuses.  
**Status:** Being implemented. There is a UTS Task Force on institutional compliance. |

Prepared by the Office of Academic Affairs  
February 2006
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<th><strong>Financial Aid</strong></th>
<th>Conduct a study on the impact of new tuition increases on students that do not qualify for financial aid.</th>
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<td><strong>May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</strong></td>
<td>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. 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. 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. 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. The Office of Academic Affairs continues to do analytical work to make sure students can afford their education.</td>
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<td><strong>System Nursing hotline.</strong></td>
<td>Investigate the feasibility of expanding UT Austin’s nursing hotline so that institutions could “opt-in” to the service.</td>
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<td><strong>May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</strong></td>
<td>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. Other institutions in the System could adopt the Austin program.</td>
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<td><strong>Status:</strong></td>
<td>Acknowledged and ongoing.</td>
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<td>Mental Health Information</td>
<td>Require all UT System institutions 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.</td>
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<td>May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</td>
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<td>Dedicated Diversity Issues Administrator</td>
<td>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.</td>
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