

Report to the Faculty Senate October 10, 2013

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Secretary of the General Faculty

University Assembly
(September 17, 2013)

SYS Faculty Advisory Council
(September 26-27, 2013)

UNIVERSITY ASSEMBLY (SEPTEMBER 17, 2013)

President Romo's Report

1. Census date enrollment: 28,758
2. San Saba residence hall open
3. Offer to purchase a building from Valero
4. Park West athletic complex
5. Pool renovation
6. No tuition revenue bonds

7. Legislative update (83rd session)

- a. \$11.8 m increase in General Revenue Formula Funding (4.8% increase)
- b. 10% funding increase to SBDC
- c. 3% funding increase to State Data Center
- d. \$5 m from Texas Competitive Knowledge Fund
- e. Hazelwood Act update
- f. Campus carry law did not pass

SYS FACULTY ADVISORY COUNCIL (SEPTEMBER 26-27, 2013)

1. Inappropriate Employee Relationships with Students **(report located in Rowdy Space)**

- a. Report to be presented at Nov Board meeting
- b. Regents pushing for prohibition
- c. Recommendations include (but not limited to)
 - Review of sexual harassment policies
 - Single policy across UTS
 - Disclosure and mitigation plan
- d. SYSFAC considering a resolution re: the report

2. UTS 180 and UTS Model Policy (COI/COC) (on Rowdy Space)

- a. Senate meetings in Jan and Feb 2013
- b. UTSA draft policy
 - a. Included Senate recommendations
 - b. Being compared to System Model Policy for consistency
 - c. November date (?)

3. Resolutions

a. FAC Core Curriculum Statement (to Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs)

While we endorse the goal of a transferrable core curriculum across Texas institutions of higher education the THECB's requirement for a dramatic overhaul of the Core Curriculum and Academic Course Guide Manual, including new Core Objectives and the development of new rubrics to assess fulfillment of the objectives, has created a significant imposition that is contrary to the principles of academic freedom.

Therefore FAC reasserts the principle that faculty at each university of the system, rather than the coordinating board, should be responsible for making decisions about student learning objectives and the courses and methods of teaching and evaluation. The board's efforts to mandate the new core represent an inappropriate effort to make educational policy. This task should remain the prerogative of faculty at individual University of Texas campuses with the oversight of the UT System.

b. Resolution on the Creation of a System-wide Task Force for Environmental Sustainability Practices on Academic and Medical Campuses (to Chancellor and VC for Academic and Health Affairs)

Recognition is mounting within academia that our universities must aggressively implement environmental sustainability initiatives. This trend has manifested itself for a number of reasons.

- Universities have a unique opportunity to teach a broad segment of our population about environmental ethics*
- Numerous faculty, staff, and students already support sustainability efforts and are seeking leadership to coordinate efforts*
- Many sustainability initiatives have been demonstrated to save substantial amounts of money*

For these reasons, the Faculty Advisory Council recommends that a System-level task force be appointed to evaluate and support the implementation of Sustainability Plan UTS 169 dated 2009, to provide guidance, resources, and minimum standards for sustainability practices on all UT System campuses. The task force will include faculty, staff, and student leaders.

c. Resolution in Support of the Liberal Arts (to Chancellor)

A recent report of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, commissioned by a bipartisan group of US senators and representatives, has championed the cultural purpose of a liberal arts education and warned against its gradual diminishing in higher education: “[W]e are...narrowing our focus and abandoning our sense of what education has been and should continue to be.” This assessment is shared by John Churchill, Secretary of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, who has written that “There is a powerful push to vocationalize college curricula and to measure the worth of a degree solely in economic terms....College is not about training for jobs. It is about citizenship.”

The Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) has recognized similar trends in the UT System in, among other ways, the recent erosion of the general education curriculum. The FAC endorses the value of a liberal arts education and strongly encourages the UT System to champion the liberal arts.

- d. Resolution Concerning the Integration of Ethics, Humanities and Professionalism in Health Care
- e. Resolution on the Anatomical Board