



**TABLE OF CONTENTS  
FOR  
STUDENT, FACULTY, AND STAFF CAMPUS LIFE  
COMMITTEE**

**Committee Meeting: 5/10/2007**  
Austin, Texas

*Judith L. Craven, M.D., Chairman*  
*John W. Barnhill, Jr.*  
*Rita C. Clements*  
*Robert A. Estrada*  
*Colleen McHugh*  
*Ann Tate, Chair, Employee Advisory Council*  
*Dennis Reinhartz, Chair, Faculty Advisory Council*  
*Crystal Gonzalez, Chair, Student Advisory Council*

	<b>Committee Meeting</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Convene</b>	8:30 a.m. <i>Chairman Craven</i>	
<b>1. U. T. System: Annual Meeting with Officers of the U. T. System Student Advisory Council</b>	8:30 a.m. <b>Report</b> <i>Ms. Crystal Gonzalez</i> <i>Mr. Basheer Benhalim</i> <i>Ms. Stephanie Rich</i> <i>Ms. Amy Forestell</i> <i>Ms. Danielle Rugoff</i>	<b>87</b>
<b>2. U. T. System: Report from Task Force on Doctoral Education and the Postdoctoral Experience</b>	9:25 a.m. <b>Report</b> <i>Dr. George Stancel,</i> <i>U. T. Health Science</i> <i>Center - Houston</i>	<b>102</b>
<b>Adjourn</b>	9:45 a.m.	

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  
1201 W. University Drive  
Edinburg, Texas 78541  
(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><b>Collaborative Academic and Certificate Programs</b> <b>May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</b></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><b>Status:</b> 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><b>Reserve Copies of Required Course materials</b> <b>May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</b></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><b>Status:</b> Responded to this request. Difficult to implement because of cost restrictions.</p>
<p><b>NetLibrary Expansion</b> <b>May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</b></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><b>Status:</b> Acknowledged and no action because of significant budget implications.</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><b>Status:</b> Acknowledged and recommended to presidents to follow up.</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><b>Community Code of Honor</b> <b>May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</b></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"> <li>• Generally, the Office of Student Affairs or the Dean of Students is charged by the institution with responsibility for handling student concerns.</li> <li>• However, students could also utilize resources provided by the Institutional Compliance Office.</li> </ul>	<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><b>Institutional Compliance Effectiveness</b> <b>May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</b></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the nature of the complaint relates to sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct, the Equal Opportunity Office would also be appropriate.</li> </ul> <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><b>Status:</b> Being implemented. There is a U. T. System Task Force on institutional compliance.</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>Conduct a study on the impact of new tuition increases on students who do not qualify for financial aid.</p>	<p><b>Financial Aid</b>  <b>May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</b></p>

<p>The Office of Academic Affairs continues to do analytical work to make sure students can afford their education.</p> <p><b>Status:</b> 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><b>Status:</b> Acknowledged and recommended to individual campuses.</p>
<p><b>System Nursing Hotline</b> <b>May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</b></p>	<p>Investigate the feasibility of expanding UT Austin's nursing hotline so that institutions could "opt-in" to the service.</p>
<p><b>Mental Health Information</b> <b>May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</b></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><b>Status:</b> 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><b>Dedicated Diversity Issues Administrator</b> <b>May 11-12, 2005 Board Meeting</b></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>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><b>Status:</b> Acknowledged and recommended to individual institutions for discussion.</p>		<p><b>Investigate the effectiveness of current anti-drug efforts at our health institutions</b></p> <p><b>May 10-11, 2006 Board Meeting</b></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><b>Status:</b> Acknowledged and ongoing.</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><b>Tuition Guarantees</b></p> <p><b>May 10-11, 2006 Board Meeting</b></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>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>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><b>Status:</b> Acknowledged and recommended to individual institutions for discussion.</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><b>Status:</b> Acknowledged and ongoing.</p>	<p>Implement standard dates for the tuition setting process at each institution</p>	<p><b>Standardize dates for the tuition setting process</b> <b>May 10-11, 2006 Board Meeting</b></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><b>Status:</b> Acknowledged and ongoing.</p>	<p>Require an Online Degree Audit Plan Evaluation Tool at each institution</p>	<p><b>Online Degree Audit Plan Evaluation</b> <b>May 10-11, 2006 Board Meeting</b></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><b>Status:</b> Acknowledged and ongoing.</p>	<p>Require Advising Accountability</p>	<p><b>Advising Accountability</b> <b>May 10-11, 2006 Board Meeting</b></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><b>Status:</b> Acknowledged and ongoing.</p>	<p>Develop a Transfer Equivalency Guide that is useable by all UT System schools</p>	<p><b>Course Transfer Equivalency Guide</b> <b>May 10-11, 2006 Board Meeting</b></p>

<p><b>Communications Portal for Student Leaders within UT System schools</b></p> <p><b>May 10-11, 2006 Board Meeting</b></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><b>Status:</b> Acknowledged and ongoing</p>
--	---	---



2. **U. T. System: Report from Task Force on Doctoral Education and the Postdoctoral Experience**

REPORT

Dr. George Stancel, Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at U. T. Health Science Center - Houston, will brief the Board of Regents on the progress of the Task Force on Doctoral Education and the Postdoctoral Experience.

One of the elements of the U. T. System Strategic Plan is doctoral education. In 2006, the Executive Vice Chancellors commissioned a task force to prepare an assessment of doctoral education throughout the U. T. System. The task force, chaired by Dr. Stancel, has conducted hearings throughout the state with faculty, graduate students, post-doctoral faculty, and administrators such as graduate school deans. These groups have provided information and advice on how to strengthen doctoral education within the U. T. System. The report of the Task Force is on Pages 103 - 104.



**The University of Texas System  
Task Force on Doctoral Education and the Postdoctoral Experience  
Interim Report**

## **Background**

In 2006, The University of Texas System unveiled an ambitious strategic plan for the coming decade that was designed to help ensure that the UT System, Texas, and the nation will be competitive in the 21st Century. The plan called for a task force on doctoral education and the postdoctoral experience to be convened to consider how to

- recruit, retain, and graduate more doctoral students and postdoctoral scholars;
- enhance the value and contributions of these programs to their institutions, the UT System, and the state; and
- increase the competitiveness and prestige of the UT System's research, education, and service programs.

To this end a task force with representatives from all UT institutions that offer PhD programs was appointed in June, 2006, and obtained widespread input from all UT System institutions. Meetings were held in Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Houston, and San Antonio with administrative leaders, faculty, doctoral students, and postdoctoral scholars from all UT System institutions which have PhD programs. Representatives from UT Brownsville, UT Pan American, UT Permian Basin, and UT Tyler also met with the group. In addition, Dr. Raymund Paredes, Commissioner of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, spoke to the task force about his views on graduate education.

A final report is anticipated in summer 2007, after soliciting comments on a preliminary draft from institutional presidents, other campus and System leaders, and the Faculty Advisory Committee. This update highlights some of the key findings and preliminary draft recommendations that are being actively discussed.

## **Doctoral and Postdoctoral Education is Extraordinarily Important for Both Academic and Health Institutions**

- Key factor in recruitment of best faculty
- Indispensable for competitive research programs
- Essential for undergraduate education in UT System
- Graduates provide innovation and creativity to drive economy
- Need to increase public understanding of the importance of doctoral and postdoctoral education
  - The Nature of the PhD Degree and Postdoctoral Experience
  - The Value of Doctoral Education: An Investment in Texas and the Nation

*"When Southwestern loses a brilliant faculty recruit to one of our prestigious competitors, it is not money, not research space or environment, and not quality of our faculty that is lacking. It is most often a fear in young faculty that they will not be able to recruit high quality graduate students in the same way that they can in Boston and San Francisco."*

Alfred Gilman, M.D., Ph.D.  
Provost, UT Southwestern, and Nobel Laureate

## **Key Considerations Underlying Task Force Recommendations**

- UT must recruit the very best students and postdocs in the face of fierce competition.
- Significant numbers of the very best candidates are non-Texans.
- Quality and competitiveness are paramount but will not be achieved if finite resources are spread too thin.
- All institutions may aspire to doctoral programs but must unequivocally meet standards assessed by rigorous external peer review.
- A critical mass of faculty actively engaged in research with a stable base of funding, adequate infrastructure, and an administration that understands and supports research and research training are absolutely essential.

## **Preliminary Draft Summary of Key Recommendations**

### The UT System must:

- Prominently address doctoral and postdoctoral education in major UT System planning efforts.
- Hold institutional leaders accountable for establishing and maintaining competitive doctoral and postdoctoral programs in line with System plans and institutional missions
- Provide health benefits equivalent to those received by faculty and staff for all full-time, salaried doctoral students and postdoctoral scholars.
- Increase the recruitment and success of outstanding and diverse doctoral students and postdoctoral scholars.
- Conduct rigorous reviews of new proposals and ongoing programs that involve external peers.
- Facilitate and support the development of trans-disciplinary research educational programs.

### UT System institutions must:

- Explicitly include doctoral and postdoctoral education in planning, budget preparation, evaluation, and external communications.
- Disseminate expectations, commitments, and anticipated timelines for successful doctoral and postdoctoral programs.
- Conduct rigorous reviews of new proposals and ongoing programs that involve external peers.
- Include expectations and rewards for doctoral and postdoctoral education in tenure and promotion guidelines and support development of required skills.
- Facilitate and support the development of trans-disciplinary research and educational programs.
- Teach critical thinking and problem-solving skills that prepare graduates for a wide range of careers.
- Incorporate doctoral students and postdoctoral scholars more fully into the community of scholars on university campuses.

In addition to the recommendations and to assist the UT System and institutions, guide the implementation of recommendations, and aid programmatic reviews, the task force will provide:

- Impediments uncovered and critical areas for improvement within UT System.
- Best practices and characteristics of competitive programs.

## **Doctoral and Postdoctoral Education is an Investment in Human Capital that will pay Important Dividends in the Future**

- Educated and principled leaders for business, government, and universities.
- Discovery, innovation, and understanding that is the basis of competitiveness.
- Leadership in research, technology, and intellectual property.
- A highly educated populace with critical thinking and problem solving skills essential for creativity and innovation.