DRAFT
Minutes of the Provost’s Council Meeting of June 17, 2008


Note taker: Kathy Winston

I. Call to Order

Provost Babbili called the meeting to order. Any corrections in the minutes of the previous meeting should be given to Winston. Otherwise, the minutes will be considered approved.

II. Enrollment Update (Summer/Fall)

Dechant reported on enrollment for the summer, which is not as high as anticipated, and discussed efforts to increase enrollment, such as making scholarship funds available to students on the deregistration list. She asked the deans to encourage enrollment in Summer Session II. Projected fall 2008 enrollment figures look good, with both applications and admissions up substantially. Increasing the number of online courses may be something to consider to promote additional enrollment. Dechant said the migration to Banner is complete. She met with the academic advisors on issues they had identified in Banner. She reported that the meeting was very productive, and the concerns are being addressed.

III. Mission Statement Revision – attachment

Babbili provided background information on the proposed revised mission statement that was submitted to the Provost’s Council for approval. An institution’s mission statement is not a static document. Mission statements are subject to a four-year review process required by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. He addressed some objections that had been expressed at the Faculty Senate meeting, such as the inclusion of the term “Hispanic-serving institution” and the focus on the region in the proposed mission statement. Guerra said the Hispanic-serving designation brings federal money to the university, enabling it to better serve the whole area, not just Hispanic students. The funds also are used for first-generation students. Guerra offered to give a workshop to explain the Hispanic-serving designation to students. Gigliotti suggested changing “Hispanic serving” to “federally-designated Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI).” Huerta commented on the goal that focuses on achieving national prominence. Some programs here already have national prominence, and it is important to maintain rather than just achieve such prominence. Following further discussion, the members voted to approve the mission statement. Babbili will ask Margaret Lucero to schedule the mission statement discussion early enough to meet the Board of Regents meeting schedule.

IV. Councils and Committees draft document – attachment

Members were asked to provide updates for the University Committees and University Administrative Councils document.

V. Drop policy in view of THECB’s move toward revenue based on enrollment on the last day of classes.

Discussion focused on the loss of funds that may result from changing the official enrollment date from the 12th class day to the last day of classes. Babbili recommended advising students not to drop classes.
Abdelsamad noted the need to address retention at the same time. Students need to be given support so that they can succeed. It was also pointed out the asking students not to drop classes (to enable the university to get more revenue) may not be in the best interest of the students. This approach can put students in danger of failing. There is a strong chance the bill will pass. Guerra said grant funds are being sought for retention activities.

VI. Hurricane Command Structure

Babbili provided brief information on the development of a hurricane command structure. There should have been an attachment listing the people responsible for various areas.

VII. Formula Funding/Last Day of Enrollment

This topic was addressed under item V above

VIII. Board of Regents/THECB Update

Babbili reported that the joint PhD/MS degree in Marine Biology with Texas A&M University was approved by the THECB Academic Excellence and Research Committee, and that approval by the board was also expected. The preliminary authority request for the BS in Mechanical Engineering and the degree program request for the MA in Communication have been approved by the Board of Regents and are being submitted to the THECB.

Gigliotti announced that the BAS advisor will be Larry Dubose.

IX. Institutional Advancement Event Calendar

The handout showing the calendar was discussed briefly.

X. Other Issues of the Council

Babbili emphasized the importance of FERPA training for staff and faculty who work with and have access to student records.

The Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration has developed a list of staff who owe money to the University (parking fees, etc.) and has issued a directive for department heads to remind staff to pay the bills.

Abdelsamad expressed some objections to the process used to issue faculty appointment letters.

Gigliotti reported on a successful band camp and mentioned upcoming theatre and writing camps.