May 15, 2007

MEMORANDUM

To: Margaret Dechant, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management  
    Dr. Robert Kirby, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Subject: Proposed Fees for the Administration of the COMPASS

In the fall of 2003, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved the usage of alternative assessments to the THEA (TASP). They were the ASSET, COMPASS, and ACCUPLACER. The THEA is a paper-pencil exam that is only offered in the state of Texas and grading occurs in Austin. We will continue to offer the THEA and THEA Quick Test at our institution. But because of the need for immediate assessment of late applicants and in an effort to better accommodate out-of-state students, the Office of Academic Testing has chosen to offer the COMPASS, a computerized-adaptive test that can be found around the United States. As part of the implementation process, we need to set a fee before we can administer this exam. There is a $29 fee for the THEA. This fee is set by the testing company. In searching for other institutions in Texas that administer the COMPASS, I found the following fee structures:

- Del Mar College – Cost: $29, Retest Cost: $16
- Galveston Community College - $40
- Houston Community College - $25, No Retesting fee
- Midland College - $29
- Odessa College - $29, Retest Cost: $10 per section
- San Jacinto College - $29
- Sul Ross University-$65
- Texas A&M University-International - $25
- Weatherford College-$25

For the most part, these institutions are keeping the rate competitive with the THEA. Since the institution is responsible for the payment of proctors and mailing costs, the institution often loses money in the administration of the THEA Quick Test. Our proposed initial fee of $29 will help defray the costs from losses produced by the THEA Quick Test, the fee paid to ACT, Inc. for the annual COMPASS maintenance fee, the cost of purchasing “units” for the four sections of the exam, the cost of using the exam for remote testing, the expense of toner and paper used in producing candidate score reports, and the general upkeep of the testing facility. Keeping the fee structure the same as the THEA will also prevent any unnecessary bias by students in choosing one exam over the other. We would like to also propose a flat retesting fee of $20.

Because of the size of our testing facility (3 seats) and the other exams that are scheduled here, I project that we may accommodate 50 candidates during the academic year.

Judith Perales  
Assistant Director of Academic Testing