

Administrative Council
September 9, 2009
President's Conference Room

Members Present

Mohamed Abdelrahman	Mark Groundland	Caleb Petty
Suellen Alfred	Bobby Hodum (sub. Vanessa Palmer)	Randy Raper
Deborah Allen	David Huddleston	Rita Reese
S. K. Ballal	Azurae Johnson	Andrew Smith
Robert Bell	Pat Jordan	Matthew Smith
Joe Biernacki	Regina Lee	Mark Stephens
Chris Brown	Charlie Macke	Claire Stinson
Marc Burnett	Jeffery Marquis	Tom Timmerman
Erin Chambers	Jack Matson	Debbie Walker
Mike Cowan	Nancy Mielke	Mark Wilson
Helen Dainty	Sean Ochsenbein	Jeff Young
Susan Elkins	Sally Pardue	John Zhu

Members Absent

Jim Baier	Glenn James
Cathy Cunningham	Mike Nivens
Sheila Green	Joseph Ojo

Others Present

Doug Airhart	Kent Clawson
Ed Boucher	Allan Mills
Jim Cobb	Linda Null
Edith Duvier	Dustin Rawls

Summary of Proceedings

Agenda approved

Minutes of April 15, 2009, approved

Retention Plan received

H1N1 update received

Campus Safety report concerning the disposal of hazardous waste received

Strategic planning and budgeting information updated

Tobacco use on campus, policy/previous action discussed

Proceedings

A motion to approve the agenda of September 9, 2009, as distributed was made by Mr. Wilson and seconded by Dr. Ballal. Motion APPROVED.

Mr. Wilson moved to approve the minutes of April 15, 2009, and Dr. Ballal seconded. Motion APPROVED.

Mr. Burnett, along with members of the Retention Ad Hoc Committee, introduced TTU's Retention Plan initiatives to the Council. Tech plans to follow in the footsteps of other colleges and universities who have in recent years transformed dormitories into living-and-learning units based on older models at places like Yale. All such new-style residential arrangements will try to create smaller groups within the larger university to enhance student-faculty interaction, and to extend learning beyond the classroom. Tech plans to use the term "living-and-learning villages" (or "villages" for short) instead of "dormitories." Each village will bring together 150-300 individuals from the TTU campus community, including on-campus, commuting, and online students, and all will have different themes. Each village will also have a faculty head serving for a three-year renewable term and "fellows," or faculty members who have a special ongoing relationship with the given village. There will be academic and non-academic programs offered within the villages. New Hall South and North (under construction) will be the first two villages introduced to students in Fall 2010.

Dr. Null addressed UNIV 1020 initiatives. There are 103 sections of UNIV 1020 or equivalent courses offered this semester, and 2,273 freshman are enrolled as of September 8. In addition to offering first-year experience courses, Tech now offers two new approaches to learning and faculty-student connections:

1. There is a new learning community in New Hall that pairs Mr. Smith's sections of ENGL 1010 and UNIV 1020 classes; the classes meet in New Hall so the students do not have to leave their residential hall to attend class. There are also Writing Center hours and math tutoring hours scheduled in New Hall for Monday nights.
2. The Retention Ad Hoc Committee has begun a two-year study of the curriculum in the UNIV 1020 sections; half the sections have a social focus and half have an academic focus. Retention levels will be compared in each to see where emphasis should be placed in UNIV 1020 (retention is measured from fall-to-fall of the freshman year).

Mr. Rawls reported that Tech currently has a 89-90% freshman retention rate; this needs to improve. A prime way to increase retention is to increase student contact in the freshmen's spring semester. Among other initiatives, Mr. Rawls mentioned the development of a peer-mentoring program that would continue beyond UNIV 1020; peer mentors would meet their incoming freshmen prior to convocation, develop relationships in the fall and then intentionally continue communications with freshmen in the spring.

Mr. Rawls noted the three main reasons students leave Tech are family, financial, and personal – though it’s difficult to draw out precise answers from students regarding their decision.

Dr. Mills wrapped up the Retention discussion by introducing the idea of a Learning Commons. The Library Redesign Committee was formed in Spring 2009, and its purpose is to re-conceptualize the Volpe Library as a “library and learning assistance center.” Proposals are to revamp each floor of the library in varying degrees to include transforming the main floor into an open informal space that will offer many educational amenities.

The search for a dean of the future library and learning center is underway, and an appointment is anticipated for Spring 2010.

Mr. Burnett updated the group on the H1N1 flu’s impact thus far on Tech’s campus. As of September 10, a total of 25 students have been treated for flu-like symptoms and 18 culture samples have been sent to the state for testing. Five students have been confirmed with H1N1, but three of those have already returned to class. People confirmed with any strand of the flu should go home immediately – to their dorm room if going home is not feasible – and not return to class until they have been fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication. Compared to other colleges and universities, Tech has experienced a relatively low amount of H1N1 cases.

Tech recently underwent an EPA inspection for the disposal of hazardous waste; Tech is the third TBR school to receive a hazardous waste inspection, per Mr. Cobb. Problems in only one unit (unspecified) were found; Tech has yet to receive the final report. Problems were found with labeling, employee training and open containers. Campus Safety is contacting department chairpersons of buildings with wetlabs so they can begin implementing improvements.

Dr. Stinson addressed Tech’s forthcoming five-year strategic plan. Tech is in the last year of its current plan, and the new Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee, which has 30 voting members, will link the future plan and the university budgets to encourage more comprehensive decision making. The Budget Committee will continue to work on this year’s budget and then will merge with the strategic plan team. On another note, Dr. Stinson mentioned that Tech has seen a modest increase in revenues, which can be attributed to enrollment growth and small tuition increases. These revenues have yet to be allocated.

Dr. Airhart represented the Building and Grounds Committee relative to discussion of policy and previous action by the Council on tobacco use on campus. He distributed the current TTU policy and policies from other TBR universities (attached). The amended motion approved at the April 15, 2009, meeting was: To designate that the Building and Grounds Committee develop and define a policy to designate TTU as a smoke-free and tobacco-free campus. The Committee will submit a proposed policy for action at the October 14 Council meeting.

A motion to adjourn was made by Dr. Ballal and seconded by Dr. Alfred. The meeting
ADJOURNED at 4:25 p.m.

Terri Taylor, Recorder

Documents on file with minutes:

Retention Plan Initiatives from Ad Hoc Committee
Tobacco-Use Policies