

## APPROVED MINUTES

### ACADEMIC SENATE MEETING February 21, 2007

PRESENT: Mark Anderson, Poras Balsara, Gail Breen, Duane Buhrmester, John Burr, Cy Cantrell, R. Chandrasekaran, Jeff DeJong, Gregg Dieckmann, John Gooch, Jennifer Holmes, Marilyn Kaplan, Robert Kieschnick, Murray Leaf, Dennis Miller, Homer Montgomery, Ramachandran Natarajan, Shun Chen Niu, Simeon Ntafos, William Pervin, Ravi Prakash, Beatrice Rasmussen, Tim Redman, Young Ryu,

ABSENT: James Bartlett, Dinesh Bhatia, Tom Brikowski, Santosh D'Mello, Juan Gonzalez, Warren Goux, Gopal Gupta, D.T. Huynh, Sumit Majumdar, Brian Ratchford, Liz Salter, Mary Urquhart, S. Venkatesan,

VISITORS: Charlie Arnett, Cristen Casey, Rick Grant, Karen Jarrell, Rochelle Pena, Maria Ramos

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Dr. Wildenthal called the meeting to order in President Daniel's absence. He began his report on Dr. Daniel's work in Austin with the Texas Legislature. This year, UTD is expected to receive an increase in funds from the state. Dr. Daniel and Amanda Rockow, Vice President for Public Affairs, have been in Austin at least three days of every week to meet with members of the Texas Congress to lobby for additional funding for UTD, and, in general, higher education in Texas.

The plans for the new Science and Mathematics Classroom building are on-going. Tentative locations include the area where the bookstore is, which would be moved to a new location. Architects are being consulted for the Science/Math building, and also for a new housing facility for students, which would likely be where the golf range currently is. The Student Services building is waiting for approval by the U.T. System Board of Regents. One possible location would be south of the Student Activities Center. In addition, approval for a central dining facility is expected. No location has been determined for it.

Peter Walker and Partners, the landscape architects hired to redesign the grounds around campus, are still in the planning stage of their work. They have been collecting feedback for the ideas they presented to the campus community in January. When they return next they will bring models of the plans they presented previously so people will get a better idea of their vision.

The Guaranteed Four-Year Tuition Plan seems to have been approved. No negative feedback has been received yet, despite the fact that UTD will have the highest tuition rate in Texas next fall, compared to other colleges in the state.

Freshman applications are slightly down from last year, but applications for master's programs are up. The problem that Admissions was having with processing applications has mostly been resolved. As a result, the time between the submission of applications and the notification of acceptance should be shorter.

## 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR JANUARY 24, 2007

Speaker Leaf had some minor editorial corrections. A motion was made by Dr. Cy Cantrell to accept the minutes as amended. Dr. Robert Kieschnick seconded, and the motion carried.

## 3. SPEAKER'S REPORT

**1. The CEP has answered the questions regarding the Honors in the Major** posed by the Senate at the last meeting. Its views have now been forwarded to the CUE for their comment. The results should be available to the Senate at the next meeting.

**2. Compliance Committee.** Some of the Senate members may have heard of the Compliance Committee and/or the Compliance Sub-committee, chaired by Toni Messer. This past fall, Lynn Melton and Dr. Leaf found themselves appointed to it, some what to their surprise since the Senate has not been in any way involved in its creation. Since then, they have been receiving a compliance newsletter. From the contents of the newsletter, it appears that the scope of the committee is exceedingly wide. According to the appointment letter:

In accordance with the U. T. System Action Plan to Enhance Institutional Compliance, the Committee meets quarterly to identify, review, and discuss areas identified as having a high risk to the University's compliance with various internal and external policies and procedures.

Toni also provides the following relevant websites:

UTD Compliance Office website at  
<http://www.utdallas.edu/audit-compliance/compliance.htm>  
<<http://www.utdallas.edu/audit-compliance/compliance.htm>>

U. T. System Compliance website:  
<http://www.utsystem.edu/systemcompliance/>  
<<http://www.utsystem.edu/systemcompliance/>>

Action Plan: <http://www.utsystem.edu/systemcompliance/03ActionPlanforCompliance.pdf>  
<<http://www.utsystem.edu/systemcompliance/03ActionPlanforCompliance.pdf>>

Such initiatives from above without faculty consultation are always worrisome. Dr. Leaf had missed the quarterly meetings for last Fall term but attended one on February 12. The membership is basically the heads of all the units on campus concerned with topics subject to federal, state, or system regulation. As such, it has the potential to interfere with several bodies that we have established for related purposes, but at this point it appears to be not only

benign but useful. Its function seems to be to set compliance priorities on campus, rather than act as any kind of compliance police.

### 3. Meeting of the Texas Council of Faculty Senates

The meeting was held at the Howard Johnson Four Points Hotel, in Austin, February 16 and 17. Meetings are held in conjunction with the Texas Association of College Teachers (TACT) and the Texas AAUP. Some functions are held together, most notably an initial "legislative update" and a banquet in which there is usually a speaker representing some government body concerned with higher education.

#### A. Legislative Update. There are several bills that bear watching for potential mischief.

(1). Community Colleges giving four year degrees. Senate Bill 238, as amended, which requires that:

(a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall establish a pilot project to examine the feasibility and effectiveness of authorizing public junior colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs in the fields described by Subsection (b) [of applied science and applied technology]. Participation in the pilot project does not otherwise alter the role and mission of a public junior college.

(b) The coordinating board shall operate the pilot project at:

(1) three public junior colleges, as determined by the coordinating board, to offer baccalaureate degree programs in the fields of applied science and applied technology; and

(2) one public junior college, with an established accredited interior design program that includes an advanced technical certificate program, to offer a baccalaureate degree program in the field of interior design.

url: <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/80R/billtext/html/SB00238I.htm>

This is sponsored by Senator Florence Shapiro.

(2) Creationism. Senate Concurrent Resolution 3, being referred to as "The Academic Bill of Rights." This is a long list of "whereas" statements that mainly seem to affirm basic values like respect for diversity of opinions that concludes with two resolution:

RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby encourage the state's colleges and universities to implement policies to safeguard the academic freedom of faculty and students alike and ensure the diversity of opinion not only in the classroom and campus but beyond; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the commissioner of higher education and to the chair of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

The bill originates in the activities of David Horowitz--formerly new left, now new religious right. What it means by "diversity" is primarily creationism, and the evident intent is to provide a basis for attacking individual universities for not including it in the science curriculum by means of protests (by "Students for Academic Freedom," which Horowitz chairs) and legislative hearings.

In Pennsylvania, after the state adopted such a statement, Horowitz's group issued a report attacking the U of Penn and Temple that their website describes thus:

“Authored by Students for Academic Freedom Chairman David Horowitz and Senior Editor Jacob Laksin, the report examines official class syllabi, departmental web pages, and course descriptions and singles out the Penn State Women's Studies Department for failing to meet academic standards and being a program designed to indoctrinate students in a sectarian ideology. “

The url for Students for Academic Freedom is <http://cms.studentsforacademicfreedom.org/>  
Another blog that lays out the strategy is:

<http://www.frontpagemag.com/Content/read.asp?ID=50>

The author of the Texas bill is Jeff Wentworth, SD 25 (San Antonio)

(3). Limiting number of drops. [80\(R\) HB 116 - Introduced version - Fiscal Note](#) To limit the number of courses that students may drop under certain circumstances at public institutions of higher education.

**Excerpt:** Under provisions of the bill, a student would not be allowed to drop more than three courses at an institution of higher education under certain circumstances. The Higher Education Coordinating Board indicates that the agency would be able to implement provisions of the bill within existing resources. No significant fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

The url is

<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=80R&Bill=HB116>

This bill has had a first reading and was scheduled for public hearing on the 19<sup>th</sup> of this month.

(4). Playing taps. There is also a bill that promises a \$25.00 voucher to help pay for higher education to any student above the sixth grade who plays taps at the funeral of any veteran in the state. The student would receive the voucher each time they were so engaged.

B. The TACT Legislative Agenda for 2007 consists of four items:

1. Adopt a phased plan to raise Texas academic salaries to the median of the top ten most populous states. The aim is to close one fourth of the gap in each of the next four bienniums.
2. Return the state ORP employer contribution to 8.5%.
3. Increase state contribution to TRS.
4. Include a faculty member on the Boards of Regents of all state systems.

C. The meeting was addressed by Representative Donna Howard, newly elected from Austin. Representative Howard is a nurse. She is bright, articulate, poised, intensely interested in

helping higher education, and understands the answers to questions such as “why can’t one funding formula work for all kinds of institutions of higher education?” or “How do the needs of research universities differ from campuses that concentrate only on teaching?” She has been appointed to the House Higher Education Committee and invites communication from faculty. You should feel free to respond. Her home page is:

<http://www.house.state.tx.us/members/dist48/howard.htm>

D. The banquet speaker was David Young, the Advisor for Higher Education in the Office of the Governor—the principle spokesman for, and apparently author of, Governor Perry’s plan to incentivise higher education in Texas. Essentially the plan has three components. First, the formula will be funded at 100%. Second, on top of that 13% in new money will be provided for the incentive plan. Third, the incentive plan will involve giving payments to schools for each bachelor’s degree awarded to a student who completes their degree in six years or less and passes the designated examination at the required level.

The formula would give extra weight to “critical fields.” The examinations in question will be those that already exist, like the Rand exam, that test for “critical thinking” as well as simple information such as is on the TAKS that high school students have to take.

The plan was coldly received. Most of the discussion focused on the naive faith of the available tests. Other obvious questions would have what makes the governor think handing out the 13% this way—essentially after the student’s have graduated—would be more efficacious than simply adding it to the formula funding? Another might be why none of the large states with universities recognized as national and international leaders has adopted such a scheme— such as California, New York, or Michigan. The states they looked at were Tennessee, South Carolina, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, Colorado, and Virginia—none of which seem to be working well enough to copy.

E. Robert Nelsen gave an overview of the SACS process that many in the group just facing the process seemed to find very helpful, and others who had just gone through the process consistently endorsed.

**4. Retirees and the Faculty Club.** On the 13<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Leaf met with the UTD retirees association to report on what has been happening in the governance organization. In the discussion, he described the proposed faculty/staff club. On the basis of the reaction he asked if the retirees would also be interested in taking part. They said they would. Dr. Leaf said that he would report this, and offered the opinion that their participation would be most welcome. It will enhance both the financial viability of the enterprise and the sense of community that the club should represent.

#### 4. FAC REPORT

No Faculty Advisory Council Report. The next meeting will be March 1 and 2.

#### 5. AD HOC CALENDAR POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

Dr. Wiorkowski explained the reasoning of the recommendations in the Senate agenda packet, then the discussions in the Academic Council. Of the our recommendations, the

second has been referred to CEP and the third to the standing Calendar Committee. The first and fourth are referred to the Senate.

The first recommendation is that **The Faculty Senate endorse the concept of providing early grades for graduating undergraduates.** After discussion, Tim Redman moved that this recommendation also be referred to the CEP, with the proviso that the CEP should also consider the alternative policy of making honors provisional. Cy Cantrell seconded the motion and it carried.

The fourth recommendation is that *The Faculty Senate should urge the University to adopt a formal rule that no student be required to take more than two mid-term or final examinations on the same day. The rule should further state that a student in this situation may, in a timely fashion, contact either the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and/or the Dean of Graduate Studies (as appropriate) who will work with the student and the faculty of the courses involved to determine a mutually satisfactory examination schedule for the student.* In discussion, Cy Cantrell moved that mid-term exams be taken out of the proposal. Marilyn Kaplan seconded. The motion carried.

The recommendation as amended then was:

The Faculty Senate urges the University to adopt a formal rule that no student be required to take more than two final examinations on the same day. The rule should further state that a student in this situation may, in a timely fashion, contact either the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and/or the Dean of Graduate Studies (as appropriate) who will work with the student and the faculty of the courses involved to determine a mutually satisfactory examination schedule for the student.

John Burr moved to approve the recommendation as amended. Cy Cantrell seconded the motion, and it carried.

It was the sense of the discussion that since this is a “recommendation” rather than a policy, it will be incumbent upon the Academic Council to see that it gets further consideration and development, as appropriate.

(The entire report, with the original recommendations for the Council, the amended recommendations for the Senate, and the modified Academic Calendar for the 2007-2008 year, are attached at the end of these minutes in Appendix A.)

## 6. GRADUATE CATALOG COPY

The copy Supplementary Graduate Catalog copy has been approved by CEP and comes to the Senate for their approval. If approved, it will appear in the online graduate catalog first, then in the next published catalog in 2008. This is supplementary copy, and lacks the “first forty pages” of general recommendations.

Cy Cantrell moved that the Senate approve the graduate catalog copy, as amended, with the provision that the Graduate Dean may make editorial revisions as required. Tim Redman seconded the motion, and it carried.

(Note: a copy of this draft of the graduate catalog will be retained in the Academic Governance Office.)

#### 7. PROPOSED CHANGES TO PERSONNEL REVIEW PROCEDURES IN PM 81-III.22-41: INITIAL APPOINTMENTS

Dr. Leaf described the vulnerabilities that seem to have been produced by the removal, last year, of CQ from oversight of initial, non-tenured but tenure-track appointments. The reasons for the removal were that CQ was having difficulty managing its increasing workload, and President Daniel and others felt that the process for initial hires should be as expeditious as possible. Although the complaints that had been received regarding improprieties had not reflected any actual improprieties, they did indicate points where improprieties were possible. Short of putting CQ back in the process, an alternative way to assure checks and balances and the desired transparency of the hiring process, which most schools are in fact already employing, is to require faculty votes for initial hires. Accordingly, Dr. Leaf and the Council were proposing amendments to the policies concerned. These are the policy regarding initial hires and the policy regarding procedures for promotion and tenure. The changes to the latter provide a general default university policy on voting eligibility in case no such policy is provided in the school bylaws. The changes to the former then carry over this approach to eligibility to the process for considering initial hires. The policy on initial appointments was considered first. the motion was:

To insert an additional step in the procedure for new hires described in PM 81-III 22-41, page 3, the Appointment Process, namely, after step 5, step 6 will become:

Vote of the faculty of the concerned program(s) on the recommendation of the ad hoc committee.

The procedures for the vote should be established in the school bylaws. If not so established, the vote should follow the same procedures as for promotion and tenure recommendations, and the voting faculty should include all appropriate rank tenure-track faculty in the department or school in which the appointment will be made.

The subsequent steps will be renumbered 7 through 9.

In discussion, it was understood to be the intent of this motion that the schools would have great flexibility in establishing voting procedures, including provisions for email or other balloting by correspondence, to assure procedures that were open and transparent, without making the process cumbersome. It was further agreed that the default procedure would become effective January 1, 2008, in the absence of actions by the schools before that date.

The motion was made by Professor Cy Cantrell. Marilyn Kaplan seconded, and the motion carried.

8. AMENDMENT OF PM 75-III.22-3: FACULTY PROMOTION, REAPPOINTMENT AND TENURE

Continuing the discussion of the previous motion, the Speaker offered the motion to Amend PM 75-III 22-3. In discussion, the wording in the text circulated in the agenda packet was modified, with Speaker Leaf accepting the agreed changes as maker. The agreed-upon amendment was then as follows (changes to the original policy are the insertions indicated by underling; there were no deletions):

Also, for tenure and promotion reviews, tenured faculty members of rank higher than the faculty member under review are charged with reviewing the ad hoc review file and shall offer collective as well as individual judgments. In accord with each School's policies, the collective judgment will be in the form of a secret ballot by the above-rank faculty in favor of or in opposition to the promotion and/or tenuring of the faculty member under review. If school bylaws do not provide a policy on voting, the faculty voting shall be the faculty of the school or department in which the person under review has teaching and/or administrative responsibilities. The vote must take place after the ad hoc review file has been assembled, including the ad hoc committee's written report, and before the file is forwarded to the Dean. No one shall vote who has not read the ad hoc review file. All votes must be accompanied by signatures of everyone who has voted attesting to the fact that the above-rank faculty member has read the file. All faculty voting will sign a letter reporting the vote and summarizing the discussion. The letter will be written by a member of the faculty who will be chosen by the faculty present at the time of the vote. Any written recommendations of any kind added to the file must be signed by all those participating in the recommendation.

Robert Keischnick seconded the motion. There was no opposition. The motion carried.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Pervin moved to adjourn. There were multiple seconds. The motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker of the Faculty

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



Academic Senate meeting  
February 21, 2007

## **APPENDIX 'A'**

**To: Murray J. Leaf, Speaker of the Faculty**

**From: John J. Wiorkowski, Chairman Ad-Hoc Calendar Committee**

**Re: Recommendations**

The Ad-hoc Committee addressed itself to policy issues involving the scheduling of the Academic Calendar. Its deliberations were conducted under two restrictions.

The first restriction is found in the Texas Coordinating Board Rules. We were able to find two sections which pertained to the Academic Calendar. Section 4.5(c) states:

“A semester normally shall include 15 weeks for instruction and one week for final examinations or a total of 16 weeks instruction and examinations combined. Every fall semester will end before Christmas, but not later than December 23.”

Section 4.6(a) states:

“Traditionally-delivered three-semester-credit-hour courses should contain 15 weeks of instruction (45 contact hours) plus a week for final examinations so that such a course contains 45 to 48 contact hours depending on whether there is a final exam.”

The second restriction is the self imposed UTD restriction that all three credit hour classes provide the same number of contact hours irrespective of the day(s) of the week on which the course is taught and irrespective of the frequency per week that the course meets.

For comparison, we began our deliberations by looking at the UTAustin academic schedule for calendar year 2007. UT Austin begins its 2007 Spring Semester on Tuesday January 16, takes Spring Break from March 12 till March 17, and finishes classes on Friday May 4. It then schedules two dead days on Monday and Tuesday May 7 and 8 and has one week of exams from Wednesday May 9 until Tuesday May 15. Spring commencement takes place on Saturday May 19. This schedule does not conform to either the Texas Coordinating Board rules or the UTD restrictions since classes with Monday or Saturday class meeting times will be short of the required 45 hours. A class meeting three times per week, and including one of these days) would be short 1 contact hour (or 2.2% of the requirement) and a class meeting twice a week, and including one of these days, would be short 1.5 contact hours (or 3.3% of the requirement). A class meeting once a week on either of these days would be short 3 contact hours (or 6.7% of the requirement).

**The UT Austin Summer semester of 2007 begins on May 31 and ends August 10. There is a holiday on Wednesday July 4. Only two days of exams are scheduled on Saturday May 11 and Monday May 13. There is no university wide commencement in the summer semester. Focusing on courses taught only once per week, only classes taught on Thursday and Friday meet the coordinating board criteria. Courses taught once per week on Monday, Tuesday and Saturday would be short 4 contact hours (or 9.1% of the requirement) and courses taught once per week on Wednesday, would be short 8 contact hours (or 18.2% of the requirement).**

**The UT Austin Fall semester of 2007 begins on August 29. There are holidays on Labor Day September 3, and Thanksgiving and the subsequent day on November 22-24. The semester ends on December 7. Dead days are taken on Saturday till Tuesday December 8 – 11, and exams are scheduled from Wednesday December 12 through Tuesday December 18. There is no University wide commencement in the Fall Semester. The college of Natural Sciences schedules a commencement on December 10 which is prior to final examinations! Honors graduates in the fall semester are not certified until early in January of the next year and official transcripts are not available until January 8 of 2008. Again focusing on courses taught one day per week, only classes taught on Wednesday meet coordinating board requirements. Course taught on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday are short 3 contact hours (or 6.7% of the requirement) and courses taught on Monday and Saturday are short 6 contact hours (or 13.3% of the requirement).**

**Although the UT Austin calendar seems to be quite at odds with the State Coordinating board requirements, our estimate is that the problem may not be that serious at that institution, since, unlike UT Dallas, UT Austin probably has very few courses that meet only once per week. Thus most of their requirement deficiencies are probably well within the manageable 1 to 2 hour contact hour loss. However, with the large number of once per week classes offered by the School of Management, it is clear that the UT Austin calendar could not work at UT Dallas without seriously undermining the pedagogical integrity of academic programs. It is also unreasonable to think of shifting the School of Management's successful one night a week paradigm at the Master's level since it seems to coordinate well with the needs of urban part-time graduate students, a major student constituency for UT Dallas and probably a minor one for UT Austin.**

**Although it is the committee consensus that the UT Austin academic calendar could not work at UT Dallas, there is much to be learned from it. In particular, UT Austin has completely decoupled the timing of commencement activities from the rest of the academic calendar. We assume they have done this by allowing all candidates for degrees and honors to participate in the commencement ceremonies and later determining which candidates actually received their degrees and at what level of honors. In fact, in the UT Austin Fall semester of 2007, official transcripts are not available until January 8 of 2008 presumably giving records personnel time to enter all grades and determine who in fact had completed their degree requirements. Also, UT Austin holds only one University Wide commencement at the end of the Spring**

Semester with some individual units holding commencement activities at the end of the fall semester (It is not clear if there are any commencement ceremonies at the end of the summer semester).

The ad-hoc committee found much merit in decoupling commencement ceremonies from the academic calendar. The tradition at UT Dallas has been to finish the semester completely by the day of the semester commencement ceremony. By this I mean all grades have been entered; it is conceptually possible to know if an individual student has met all of their degree requirements; and it is known which graduating seniors are eligible for honors and the level of undergraduate honors that they had attained. This procedure worked well when the University was much smaller in enrollment, but the growth of UTD has resulted in increasing problems with this model. Earlier in the history of UTD, the student was actually presented with their diploma at commencement. This practice had to be abandoned as it became increasingly unwieldy and inaccurate. The next modification was to abandon limiting participation only to those students who had completed their degree requirements. More and more students who failed to meet a degree requirement, but had invited family and friends to the graduation ceremony were allowed to participate. At present, anyone who has filed for graduation is allowed to participate in the program. The only residual from this model is individuals who are being awarded the doctoral degree and students receiving undergraduate honors. The doctoral students present no problem since all requirements for their degrees (including their defense) must be completed at least three weeks before the end of the semester. This leaves only the group of students eligible for undergraduate honors as requiring complete vetting of their academic records before the commencement ceremonies.

Some committee members suggested awarding “provisional” honors based on information up to but not including the student’s final semester. Others felt, however, that this would so alter the “honors” concept as to make it meaningless. In the end, the committee recommends a compromise, which if it proves workable, would seem to satisfy all requirements. Specifically, the committee recommends:

**Recommendation 1 The Faculty Senate endorse the concept of providing early grades for graduating undergraduates.**

Although the attendant details of this recommendation would have to worked out, both the representatives of the UTD Records Office and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, (members of the Ad-Hoc Committee) proposed a rough outline of how the process might work. At the beginning of the semester, a separate roster of undergraduates who have filed for graduation in that semester would be provided to instructors in affected undergraduate courses. The instructors would then make arrangements to provide a final grade for these students approximately one week before the commencement ceremony for that semester. The mode of determining the grade would be left up to the instructor. Depending on how assessment is done in the course the instructor could base the grade on course work done to date or could give the affected students a final exam earlier than the other students, etc. In any case the

grade would be final and be used in the computation of the students grade point average and thus be used to determine honors.

At present, a major problem exists in that courses with final exams on the last Monday of a semester are often required to have their final grades in by Wednesday of the same week in order to have all grades in by the day of the commencement ceremony. This has placed undo burdens on faculty teaching large undergraduate and masters courses and one member of the ad-hoc committee indicated that the pedagogical structure of his course had to be altered in order to meet this requirement. If the senate endorses Recommendation 1, above, there is no longer a need to have such a short time between the final examination in a course and the day they are due in the records office. Representatives of the records office felt that simply giving a later deadline would simply delay when grades were submitted. Accordingly, the ad-hoc committee would make the following recommendation:

**Recommendation 2. The Faculty Senate endorse the concept that excepting grades for graduating seniors, final grades for a course are due in the records office four days after the scheduled final exam for the course.**

The effect of this recommendation is to remove a single due date for grades and replace it with a rolling due date. The effect of this would be to more effectively distribute the submission of grades across time and ease the deadline “crunch” presently experienced by the Records Office. Note that this is not an instructor deadline but a course deadline so that an instructor with final exams on different days would have differing deadlines for each of the courses.

In the course of the committee’s deliberation, a student member pointed out problems with the current examination schedule. In some cases there were differences of as short as two days between the last class and the final exam to a period of more than eight days. This has lead students to request “dead days”, i.e. days on which no classes or exams are held between the last day of classes and the beginning of the exam period. The committee is sympathetic to this issue but has not studied the current algorithm for scheduling final exams and feels it would be precipitous to make a recommendation for implementation of this concept. Instead, we recommend:

**Recommendation 3. The Faculty Senate charge either the current Academic Calendar Committee (not the Ad-Hoc Committee) or a new Ad-Hoc Committee to specifically examine the current algorithm used for the scheduling of final examinations for courses and make recommendations to the Faculty Senate concerning changes to the algorithm.**

Except for the case of classes that meet only once per week, this issue is quite complicated involving not only time issues but also physical space availability for the administration of examinations. Also in contrast with campuses with a greater percentage of on-campus resident students, time shifting of exams both within and across days may be more problematic at UT Dallas.

In the interim, the Ad-hoc committee feels that the following recommendation should be implemented as soon as possible:

**Recommendation 4. The Faculty Senate should urge the University to adopt a formal rule that no student be required to take more than two mid-term or final examinations on the same day. The rule should further state that a student in this situation may, in a timely fashion, contact either the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and/or the Dean of Graduate Studies (as appropriate) who will work with the student and the faculty of the courses involved to determine a mutually satisfactory examination schedule for the student.**

This proposed rule has been in the folklore of UT Dallas for a long time but surprisingly is not stated in any formal university documents. The suggested intervention of the Undergraduate and Graduate Deans is necessary to remove the student from the position of having to broker any disputes between course instructors regarding who will reschedule examinations.

The committee addressed the issue of the timing of semester breaks. A student representative brought up the issue of introducing a “winter break” analogous to the traditional spring break. The consensus of the committee was that a week long winter break introduced into the existing requirements for the Fall semester would make the Fall semester so long as to further inroad into the month of August. Accordingly, the committee did not endorse the concept of a “winter break”.

The discussion of the timing of the traditional “spring break”, however was quite extensive. UTD faculty and staff, especially those with children living at home, have always preferred the UT Dallas Spring break to coincide with the time that the local school district took its spring break. In the early days of the University, this essentially meant looking at three school districts: Dallas, Richardson and Plano. Population growth in North Texas has expanded this list to include the Frisco school district, the Rockwall district, the Garland district plus other school districts in the Metroplex area. These districts do not always coordinate the time at which they take their Spring break. Further, student input to the committee indicated that students are unconcerned with the date of school district Spring breaks and are more interested in coordinating UTD’s Spring break with that of other universities. Again, these times are not coordinated between universities. Since no algorithm based on the timing of organizations external to UTD could be identified that was satisfactory to most parties, the Ad-Hoc committee voted to endorse the Standing Calendar Committee’s algorithm which set the Spring Break as the ninth week of the Spring semester. This algorithm is based on pedagogical grounds allowing faculty time to grade mid terms exams and provides feedback to undergraduate students through the posting of mid-term grades.

Finally the ad-hoc committee addressed the impact of recently passed state legislation which requires local school districts to start their fall semesters at the end of August. This has the effect of shifting the end of the subsequent school district Spring

semester back several weeks. It must first be stated that this legislation does not apply to universities in Texas. Accordingly the effect on UTD is only indirect in that local elementary and high school teachers who might wish to take courses at UTD during the summer semester might enroll at other Metroplex universities if the beginning of the UTD summer semester overlapped with the end of the local School district Spring semester. In fact the UT System was queried by a Texas State legislator on the issue of starting times of the summer semester. The UT System response noted that UTD was starting the summer semester approximately two weeks earlier than other UT component schools. Since the UTD summer semester has four different types of sessions: a twelve week long term session, two six week sessions and an eight week session, it might be possible, if pedagogically sound, to accommodate this group of students by only scheduling courses primarily taken by elementary and high school teachers in the eight week and second term six week sessions. Such accommodation would require the eight week session to start at least two weeks later than the 12 week session. Alternatively, if legally possible and assuming that Proposals 1 -5 above have been endorsed by the Faculty Senate, it is possible to revise the timing of the 2007 Summer and Fall Semesters so that they start one week later (starting two weeks later would result in final fall exams scheduled on Christmas eve which is prohibited by Coordinating Board rules). Thus the committee suggests:

*Suggestion 1. The Faculty Senate recommend that, if legally possible, the University should adopt the attached modified academic calendar for the summer and fall sessions of 2007 .*

Having addressed the issues requested by the Faculty Senate, the Ad-Hoc Calendar committee having no further business should now be dissolved.

Academic Senate meeting  
February 21, 2007

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	
Jan	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<b>Spring Semester 2007</b>							
	<b>Start</b>						
Jan	8	9	10	11	12	13	
	15	16	17	18	19	20	MLK Birthday
	22	23	24	25	26	27	
Feb	29	30	31	1	2	3	
	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	12	13	14	15	16	17	
	19	20	21	22	23	24	
March	26	27	28	1	2	3	
	5	6	7	8	9	10	Spring Break
	12	13	14	15	16	17	
	19	20	21	22	23	24	
April	26	27	28	29	30	31	
	2	3	4	5	6	7	Easter Sunday
	9	10	11	12	13	14	
	16	17	18	19	20	21	
	23	24	25	26	27	28	Exams
	30						
	<b>End</b>						

May		1	2	3	4	5	
	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	14	15	16	17	18	19	
<b>Summer Semester 2007</b>							
	<b>Start</b>						
	21	22	23	24	25	26	
	<b>28</b>	29	30	31	1	2	<b>Memorial</b>
June	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	11	12	13	14	15	16	
	18	19	20	21	22	23	
	25	26	27	28	29	30	
July	2	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	5	6	7	<b>July 4th</b>
	9	10	11	12	13	14	
	16	17	18	19	20	21	
	23	24	25	26	27	28	
August	30	31	1	2	3	4	
	6	7	8	9	10	11	<b>Exams</b>
	13	14	15				
			<b>End</b>				
				16	17	18	
	20	21	22				



Fall Semester 2007						
Start						
August				23	24	25
	27	28	29	30	31	1
	3	4	5	6	7	8
Sept	10	11	12	13	14	15
	17	18	19	20	21	22
	24	25	26	27	28	29
Oct	1	2	3	4	5	6
	8	9	10	11	12	13
	15	16	17	18	19	20
	22	23	24	25	26	27
Nov	29	30	31	1	2	3
	5	6	7	8	9	10
	12	13	14	15	16	17
	19	20	21	22	23	24
Dec	26	27	28	29	30	1
	3	4	5	6	7	8
	10	11	12	13	14	15
	17					
End						

	18	19	20	21	22	
24	25	26	27	28	29	Xmas
31						

## Academic Senate meeting

February 21, 2007

To: Senate, U T Dallas  
From: Murray Leaf, Speaker  
Re: Calendar items

The attached memorandum from the ad hoc Calendar Policy Committee describes their deliberations. They were able to agree on some changes in scheduling priorities that can be directly acted on. In general, they agreed that the Fall term should begin in about the last week of August and end between Thanksgiving and Christmas—starting and ending about a week later than it has in the last two years. Further, more detailed, adjustments will depend on changes from present policies that will affect the way we turn in grades and compile student records.

There were four recommendations, each with their attendant summary of the ad hoc Calendar Policy Committee's considerations. The Academic Council has considered them, and is only forwarding two of them to the Senate for consideration at this time. There is also one "suggestion." The difference is that the suggestion reflects a lesser degree of agreement in the ad hoc Calendar Policy Committee. The Registrar (who was on the committee) opposes this suggestion. Her memorandum is also attached.

The action taken by the Council was as follows

**Recommendation 1 The Faculty Senate endorse the concept of providing early grades for graduating undergraduates.**

The Council is forwarding this to the Senate for consideration. The Council noted in discussion that an alternative to this approach is to make the awarding of Honors provisional, pending completion of work, as we do with graduation itself.

**Recommendation 2. The Faculty Senate endorse the concept that excepting grades for graduating seniors, final grades for a course are due in the records office four days after the scheduled final exam for the course.**

The Council noted that this has complex implications with regard to test security, record-keeping, and course organization. Since all of these are matters of educational policy, the Council has referred this to the Committee on Educational Policy for its opinion.

**Recommendation 3. The Faculty Senate charge either the current Academic Calendar Committee (not the Ad-Hoc Committee) or a new Ad-Hoc Committee to specifically examine the current algorithm used for the scheduling of final examinations for courses and make recommendations to the Faculty Senate concerning changes to the algorithm.**

The Council has referred this question directly to the Standing Calendar Committee

**Recommendation 4. The Faculty Senate should urge the University to adopt a formal rule that no student be required to take more than two mid-term or final examinations on the same day. The rule should further state that a student in this situation may, in a timely fashion, contact either the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and/or the Dean of Graduate Studies (as appropriate) who will work with the student and the faculty of the courses involved to determine a mutually satisfactory examination schedule for the student.**

The Council is forwarding this to the Senate.

**Suggestion 1. The Faculty Senate recommend that, if legally possible, the University should adopt the attached modified academic calendar for the summer and fall sessions of 2007.**

The Council is forwarding this to the Senate, but notes that the present calendar has not only been established in our documents but also approved at the System level. It would be very awkward to argue for a change at this time. For subsequent years, the Registrar says implementing the new calendar will not be a problem.

Academic Senate meeting  
February 21, 2007