



STUDENT GOVERNMENT  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Office of the Vice-President • 1 University Station, Suite 4.206 • Austin, Texas 78712-0180  
(512) 471-3166 • fax (512) 471-3408

October 31, 2007

William Powers, Jr.  
President  
The University of Texas at Austin  
Main 400  
Austin, Texas 78712

Dear President Powers,

As the university's transition into flat-rate tuition is in full force, the Student Services Budget Committee (SSBC), previously known as the Student Services Fee Committee has also undergone a period of transition. The perception of the committee's purpose has transferred from one charged with *setting* the student services budget to one charged with *allocating* predetermined funds to units. This perception must be recognized and understood that it does not coincide with our understanding of the biennial tuition setting process. We believe that the SSBC has a defined role in recommending an appropriate incremental growth in tuition. As a result, we have acted on the belief that our tuition recommendation would be combined with the TPAC recommendation for consideration by you and the University Budget Council. I thought it was important for you to understand that we have acted with this principle in mind.

The 2007-2008 Student Services Budget Committee comprised of nine voting members, five of them students, is the avenue for non-academic student services to advocate for student needs and concerns. It is important to note that an important element in determining our recommendations was listening to the needs of student service units. After hearing requests from 24 individual student service units, the Student Services Budget Committee has prepared initial recommendations for FY 2008-09 and 2009-10. As Chair of the committee, I would first like to preface our recommendations with the following information:

*Thought Process*

This year's committee was forced to make crucial decisions in determining the major priorities for student services at this institution. In response to the annual increases proposed by the Tuition Policy Advisory Committee, the SSBC has chosen to recommend concentration of resources on sustaining the current level of basic functions within student services. Doing so required a significant amount of budget discipline in affirming that this fiscal biennium would be seen as a "no-growth" period in terms of new programming. As a result, the priorities of stabilization and sustainability of our current student service units are reflected in this request.

*Challenges*

While considering the units' requested budget increases, it came to the committee's attention that fundamental areas needed attention. Below is a very brief summary of these challenges.

1. Utilities- Within the portfolio of the Student Services Budget Committee, many of the units must include the cost of utilities within their own budget. Covering these costs provides little flexibility to units in prioritizing what should be their service to students versus what keeps them sustainable. This issue became even more evident when it was determined that 56%, or \$599,239, of our FY 2009-10 recommendation is attributed to an estimated 15% increase in the cost of utilities. The committee is currently not setting forth a solution to address utilities but would like to make apparent the impact that these costs have on student service units.
2. Communication- As stated before, the role and expectation of the Student Services Budget Committee has been redefined since the implementation of flat-rate tuition. As a result, the lines of communication between the central administration and this particular committee must remain strong, if not stronger. If the SSBC is going to have a voice in the financial support of student service units, it is essential that the committee be aware and conscious of the university budget priorities in order to make comprehensive decisions. It is the committee's intent to address building stronger lines of communication with other budget entities in order to facilitate efficiency and transparency in the entire budget-setting process.
3. Units to Question - Our committee questioned the appropriateness of two areas which are currently receiving SSBC funding. The first area of concern is the Registration Fee budget. The committee questions the inclusion of this fee in our cluster of accounts. This budget was added to the mix in 2005 when flat-rate tuition was implemented. Since registration is a core fundamental service of the university, it seems inconsistent to include this budget within the SSBC budget. Therefore, while we support the Registrar's request for new funds to pay for an overhaul of the 20 year old registration system, we do not believe that these funds should come from the Student Services budget. We recommend that the Registrar submit a request for funds through different channels.

The second budget in question is one that provides funding for Services for Students with Disabilities, a core service of the University whose purpose is mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Several past committees have questioned why the SSBC funds a mandated service such as this one. The committee suggests that the university consider assuming responsibility for this core service.

There are three other funding requests that were questioned as we believe they should be totally or partially supported by University funds. First, the Ombudsperson requested funding for the second time for a new full-time, professional Ombudsperson position. Again this year, we recommend funding one-half of the requested salary contingent upon UBC providing the funding for the other half.

Second, the committee considered a request for a new full-time B-CAL position. This position did not receive committee support as it provides core safety services for

students, faculty and staff. Likewise, we did not approve a request for a new position in Student Judicial Services. We feel that the funding for these two areas deserves further consideration by the University due to the fundamental nature of the services provided.

*Recommendations*

The Student Services Budget Committee understands the budgetary difficulties of the University and has recommended increases close to the initial recommendation of TPAC. With TPAC's input and a 'no growth' setting year in mind, the committee recommends an increase of \$760,000 for 2008-09.

As for FY 2009-10, the committee recommends an increase of \$1,079,043. Once again, it should be acknowledged that \$599,239 or 56% of these funds are attributed to an estimated 15% increase in Utilities costs and a 4% increase for the Shuttle Bus primarily attributed to escalating gas costs. Please refer to the attachment which describes our recommended increase in terms of budgetary categories.

I must express that it has been an honor and privilege to serve as chair of this committee. Moreover, it has given me an enriched exposure to the many and varied needs of students across the University. When addressing university priorities, you have often emphasized the importance of a rich undergraduate and graduate experience. While a student's academic and classroom experience is highly valuable, one cannot thoroughly succeed in those areas without the support provided for student services. The Student Services Budget Committee graciously appreciates your support in having students included in this budget process. It is even more critical that there be support for the actual voices of students along the way. We ask you to give full consideration to our request. Should you have questions, I am more than happy and willing to meet with you.

Thank you for your time and consideration. With all my best, I am

Sincerely yours,



Nicole E. Trinh  
Chair, Student Services Budget Committee

cc: Mr. Kevin Hegarty  
Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

Juan C. González  
Vice President for Student Affairs

Attachment

2008-09 SSBC Recommendation		% of Total
1 Salaries/Wages/Equity Adjustments	363,309	39%
2 Fringes	72,504	8%
3 Operating Expenses	188,087	20%
4 Travel	4,500	0%
5 Utilities	230,103	24%
6 Administrative Fee	83,537	9%
7 Total Funds	942,040	
8 Funds Re-distributed by SSBC	(182,040)	
<b>New Funds Recommended</b>	<b>760,000</b>	
<u>Itemized Detail:</u>		
1 Salaries/Wages Equity Adjustments		
Texas Union		
•Student Affairs Administrator for GLBTQ Committee		
Student Government		
•20% of Staff position for Campus Environmental Center		
Ombudsman		
•One-half of full-time Ombudsman position (contingent on UBC funding of remainder)		
Recreational Sports		
•Financial Analyst		
University Health Services		
•Equity salary increases for Physicians and Nursing staff		
Counseling and Mental Health Center		
•Psychologist III (VAV program)		
•Counseling Specialist IV		
UT Learning Center		
•Increase in appointment tutoring assistance (wages)		
5 Utilities	230,103	
Shuttle Bus		
SSBC Reserves Allocations to Agencies:	236,578	

2009-2010 SSBC Recommendation		% of new funds
1 Salaries/Wages/Equity Adjustments	289,708	27%
2 Fringes	45,293	4%
3 Operating Expenses	51,000	5%
4 Travel	500	0%
5 Utilities	599,239	56%
6 Administrative Fee	18,970	2%
7 Reserves	74,333	7%
<b>New Funds Recommended</b>	<b>1,079,043</b>	
<u>Itemized Detail:</u>		
1 Salaries/Wages Equity Adjustments		
Texas Union		
•Event Manager Position		
•Student Affairs Administrator for ECC and Resource Center		
•Equity salary increases for SAA title		
Student Government		
•10% of Staff position for Campus Environmental Center		
Recreational Sports		
•Fitness/Wellness position		
University Health Services		
•Equity salary increases for Physicians and Nursing staff		
Counseling and Mental Health Center		
•Counseling Specialist IV		
UT Learning Center		
•Increase in appointment tutoring assistance (wages)		
5 Utilities	107,539	
Texas Union		
Recreational Sports	213,896	
Shuttle Bus	245,804	
Student Services Building (UHS portion)	32,000	
SSBC Reserves Allocations to Agencies:	130,000	