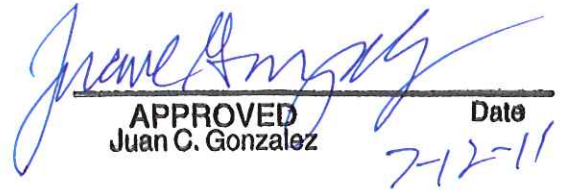




STUDENT GOVERNMENT
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

1 University Station, A6210 • Austin, TX 78712-0180
(512) 471-3166 • Fax: (512) 471-3408 • <http://www.utsug.org>


APPROVED
Juan C. Gonzalez
Date
7-12-11

To Dr. Juan C. Gonzalez:

As Chair of the Student Services Budget Committee, it is with pleasure that I submit to you a summary of the committee's comments and recommendations from the 2010-2011 academic year. The committee was placed in a critical position this year as the University's budget faced its most disheartening challenges to date. The fiscal climate, coupled with SSBC's unique relationship with the Tuition and Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC), forced us to use a unique methodology in evaluating the SSBC portfolio.

The University's turbulent and waning financial state affected some of SSBC's units more severely than others. The lack of new monies allocated from TPAC meant that SSBC needed to take a fresh approach in prioritizing and assisting needy units. The committee invited nearly all units to give a presentation and educate committee members on how the legislatively mandated budget cuts had affected their work and to what extent SSBC's allocation supported their endeavors. From these presentations, committee members identified a few units as top priorities.

This year's committee discussed numerous topics, including but not limited to: the consequence of spikes in utility costs, the relationship between TPAC and SSBC, the committee's ideal structure for student representation, the idea of using one-time allocations as seed money for pilot projects, and SSBC's overall place in the University's budgeting landscape. Many of these conversations are detailed in the attached report, though it is worth noting that the discourse on these issues must continue.

If asked for a single conclusion from this committee's conversations, I would identify this: students must play a critical role in the University's budgeting processes. Critics argue that student turnover and inexperience with delicate and complex matters are cause for exclusion when big financial questions must be answered. SSBC and the newly created College Tuition and Budget Advisory Committees (CTBAC) are proof that students are indeed capable of intelligently prioritizing their own needs. Without such sincere input, the University would be hard-pressed to make important budgetary decisions that are truly in the interest of students.

I thank you for all that you have done to support SSBC and hope that you accept our thoughtful recommendations.

Sincerely,



Muneezeh Kabir
Chair, Student Services Budget Committee, 2010-2011
Student Body Vice President, 2010-2011

2010-2011 SSBC Committee Membership

Ms. Donna Bellinghausen	Advisor, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs
Ms. Muneezeh Kabir	Chair, Student Body Vice President
Mr. Tom Dison	Director, Recreational Sports
Dr. Karrol Kitt	Department of Human Development and Family Sciences
Dr. Soncia Reagins-Lilly	Senior Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Dean of Students
Mr. Don Aleman	Senior Financial Analyst, Budget Office
Mr. Austin Carlson	Student Government Appointee
Ms. Khushbu Joshi	Student Government Appointee
Mr. Scott Parks	Student Body President
Mr. Daniel Spikes	Student Government Appointee

Overview & Methodology

In years past, the committee has been able to solicit budget requests from all individual units, hear presentations, and allocate accordingly. Due to the University budget crisis and the lack of new monies allocated to the committee by TPAC, we were not allowed this luxury. We did, however, recognize the need for a portfolio evaluation so as to familiarize ourselves with current student service practices and identify needy units that might be supported by one-time allocations. The committee chose to reserve recurring funds only for units that expressed a critical need.

The committee invited all units to make presentations before the committee members. For the sake of time, however, members allowed units within larger organizational umbrellas to be represented by their leadership. Presentations were delivered in the following groups (in chronological order):

- Campus Environmental Center
- Forensics Program
- Childcare Center
- Office of the Ombudsperson
- Student Government
- Texas Student Media (The Daily Texan, KVRX Radio, Cactus Yearbook, Texas Travesty)
- Office of the Registrar
- Senate of College Councils
- Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (Services for Students with Disabilities, Volunteer Service & Learning Center, Gender & Sexuality Center, Multicultural Engagement Center)
- Parking and Transportation Services (Shuttle Bus)
- University Unions
- Office of the Dean of Students (DoS Central plus: Student Activities & Leadership Development, Greek Leadership & Intercultural Education, Legal Services for Students)
- Recreational Sports
- Counseling and Mental Health Center
- Graduate Student Assembly
- Sanger Learning & Career Center
- University Health Services

In addition, Office of Student Financial Services¹ asked to submit a second request for non-recurring funds for the Bevonomics program.

Units were asked to identify how University-wide budget cuts affected their work, what percentage of their annual budget was comprised of SSBC funds, to what specifically did their SSBC allocation contribute, and how their overall mission contributed to student services. Committee members then asked questions to gain a better understanding of a

¹ During the presentation process, the Office of Student Financial Services submitted a request for a one-time allocation for their Bevonomics financial literacy program; the committee granted a brief presentation period for Dr. Tom Melecki and his staff.

given unit's financial situation. In so doing, the committee prioritized three units: Counseling & Mental Health Center, Gender & Sexuality Center, and Forensics.

New Allocations

After identifying three areas of priorities in need of additional funding, the committee voted for the following allocations to be taken from the SSBC Reserves account:

Counseling & Mental Health Center

\$20,000 – non-recurring for ProtoCall bridge funds

\$150,000 – non-recurring over 2 years to pilot a new Triage program
(distributed in total upfront in September 2011)

Gender & Sexuality Center

\$10,000 – non-recurring, distributed in \$5000 increments in next 2 fiscal years to support student staff

Forensics Program

\$25,000 – non-recurring to offset budget reduction and out-of-pocket student costs to participate at the national championship tournament

Office of Student Financial Services

\$17,650 – non-recurring to support Bevonomics financial literacy program

The committee voted to take the following allocation from the annual allocation to SSBC Reserves:

Gender & Sexuality Center

\$6,000 – recurring to reclassify an Administrative Associate as a Program Coordinator

Counseling & Mental Health Center (CMHC)

Under Dr. Chris Brownson's leadership, CMHC has grown into a well-respected and heavily utilized service on campus. Staggering statistics show that UT students are above the national average in terms of need for mental health services. These statistics coupled with the September 28th campus-shooting incident increased the number of students seeking CMHC services, both in person and by phone. CMHC's phone counseling provider, ProtoCall, saw a record increase in the number of callers from UT Austin. The committee voted to allocate \$20,000 in non-recurring funds in order to offset the cost increase for ProtoCall's services.

Additionally, the committee recognized the need for CMHC to triage student appointments. Students are currently being seen on a first-come, first-served basis whenever appointments are made, leaving students in urgent need of counseling with the possibility of not being seen in relevant time. In conjunction with the committee's newfound desire to provide seed money for pilot programs, committee members voted to allocate \$150,000 in non-recurring funds over two years to support staff who are dedicated to triaging

appointments. The committee also voted for this allocation with the understanding that triage duties will be budgeted into permanent funds once the two-year period has ended.

Gender & Sexuality Center (GSC)

The controversial nature of the GSC's dedicated mission—to support services and resources for women and LGBT communities and their allies—has led to various instances of harassment on campus as well as legislative activity down the street. This legislative session had an amendment authored by Representative Wayne Christian (R-District 9) stipulating that LGBT Centers on college campuses supported by public dollars must also be matched by a contrasting “traditional family values center.”

Director Ixchel Rosal informed the committee that the GSC's funding is comprised of several components, including allocations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement as well as a grant supplied by a foundation to specifically support the “Peers for Pride” program. The majority of GSC funding, however, comes from SSBC. Unlike other units who have staff dedicated to development efforts or have access to alternative sources of funding, the GSC relies most heavily on SSBC funds.

The GSC has also faced the challenge of moving spaces from the Student Services Building to the new Student Activity Center. With the larger space and increase in student traffic, the GSC is short-staffed and unable to serve students to their fullest capacity. SSBC committee members voted for a \$10,000 non-recurring allocation over 2 years to support students who will staff the reception area and keep the space open for longer hours, per student demand. Student organizations seeking programming assistance have also been underserved as the Administrative Associate has served a dual capacity as a programming advisor as well. In order to ensure fairness and maximize the GSC's ability to serve students, committee members voted to allocate \$6,000 in recurring funds to reclassify the Administrative Associate position as Program Coordinator.

Forensics Program

The Forensics Program is one of the University's shining beacons of unparalleled student excellence. With a plethora of championship titles, forensics students have also garnered so much national attention that Communications Studies textbooks use their work as examples. Students travel to national tournaments on an almost weekly basis throughout the school year, bringing the University national prestige everywhere they compete. Many of the program's students qualify for the national championship tournament; this year, however, all students who qualified were unable to attend the tournament as funds fell short.

The committee was disheartened to learn that the program's other sources of funding—the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Communication—had slashed the program's funding. The program lost a total of \$30,000 in recurring funds over the year despite their continued tradition of absolute excellence. SSBC members voted to allocate \$25,000 to the program to offset some of their budgetary reductions and to prevent students from having to pay out-of-pocket costs to compete at tournaments for which they had earned the privilege to attend (such as the national championship).

Committee members also discussed strongly encouraging Deans Diehl and Hart to reinstate funding to such an important program. While SSBC is pleased to fund such excellence, committee members had a difficult time understanding why academic units—especially the College of Communication under which the program is housed—were actively inhibiting the program from continuing their excellent tradition.

Office of Student Financial Services

Dr. Melecki's request for additional non-recurring funds to support the Bevonomics program fell within the committee's philosophy to provide seed money for pilot projects. Bevonomics, while not brand new, is still in its infancy. Funds provided were allocated to student staff members who facilitate the financial literacy workshops. The committee recognized a need for students to become more educated on personal financial management. Committee members also encouraged Dr. Melecki to seek permanent funds within his budget to support such an important program—ie, printing promotional materials without dates so that they remain useful over an extended period of time.

Shuttle Bus Reserves

Committee members learned that PTS has managed their monies conservatively and wisely and have a balance of \$1,715,969. Bobby Stone recommended that they return all but \$500,000 to the SSBC; he recommended that the \$500,000 remain in-house as a reserve or cushion for operating budget deficits caused by increased fuel prices or labor costs.

The committee recognizes the efforts of PTS to manage their resources so effectively. The committee agreed with Mr. Stone's recommendation and voted to return \$1,215,969 to the general SSBC Reserves account with the understanding that PTS is welcome to ask the committee for assistance in the future, should fuel prices spike once again. In the past, the Shuttle Bus balances were returned to a specially created "SSBC-Shuttle Bus" reserve account; however, the committee prefers to hold the \$1.2 million in the general reserve as a way of sheltering funds to help off-set future spikes in natural gas prices.

With the one-time allocations totaling \$217,650, the shuttle bus reallocation essentially accounts for a net \$1million back to the general SSBC Reserves account.

Green Fund

The committee briefly discussed its role within the newly instated Green Fund process and decided that it did not want to play a 'middleman' role. The Green Fund's student majority committee, as outlined by a Student Government resolution², will serve as the main council of decision-makers for the funds collected by the new student fee with which SSBC will play no formal role.

² AR 7 - In Support of Establishing a Student-Majority Committee to Oversee and Delegate the Newly Created Green Fund

Committee Structure

Committee members discussed the need for a new, more representative committee structure. To address the issue of graduate representation, committee members voted to add a 6th student member who must be a graduate student, bringing the total number of committee members to 10. This position is to be appointed by Student Government with consultation from the Graduate Student Assembly.

And to ensure positive, continuous, and effective communication between SSBC and TPAC, the committee also voted to add a 7th student member who must be the TPAC at-large student member, bringing the total number of committee members to 11 (if both recommendations are adopted). The committee agreed that of all student members on TPAC (Student Body President, Senate of College Councils President, Graduate Student Assembly President, At-Large Student Representative), the most appropriate addition to SSBC would be the At-Large Student Representative. Committee members also agreed that the process for selecting this position must be revamped to become more transparent and diverse in its approach; the current list of organizations and committees—one of which the at-large must be a member—is not representative of the diverse student population, nor does it guarantee a true at-large position. (That is, the vast majority of organizations and committees are in some ways affiliated with or appointed to by the three Legislative Student Organizations who are already guaranteed representation on TPAC.)

Towards the end of the committee process, however, committee members learned that adding 2 more committee members would be in violation of the statute that created SSBC in the first place. In order to be in compliance, then, the committee recommends that 1 of the 3 Student Government staggered appointments be guaranteed to a graduate student, and that the TPAC At-Large Representative serve as an ex-officio of SSBC. Taking legislative action on the committee's composition ought to be looked into in the future.

Committee Purpose

SSBC members identified the following as critical to the committee's mission:

- Managing SSBC reserves accounts
- Allocating to units in the event that new monies are available
- Providing seed money for pilot projects for which units will seek permanent funding should the initiative prove successful
- Serving in the decision-making role for the creation of new optional fees
- Advising the Vice President for Student Affairs on budgetary matters, specifically during budget cuts
- Supporting units in the event of utility cost spikes
- Reevaluating unit allocations to ensure proper use of funds
- Prioritizing needy units based on student interests
- Maintaining an open dialogue with TPAC to provide student input on University-wide budgeting processes
- Making one-time allocations for special programs or initiatives
- Allocating recurring funds to units who demonstrate a significant enough need

It is also worth noting that SSBC ought to maintain a constant level of self-evaluation to always execute its mission in the most effective and efficient manner possible. Evaluation methodologies are one such aspect of committee activities that ought to be varied in their approach. Establishing a culture of continuity—not just through staggered appointment terms and Advisor Donna Bellinghausen, but also among SSBC Chairs—is highly recommended as a method of best practice. The Student Services Budget Committee has always played an integral role as part of the University's budgeting process and will continue to be a strong voice so long as student leaders remain at the helm.
