

Student Government Association

The University of Texas at Tyler

- I. Call to Order**
 - a. Time: 5:21 pm**
- II. Roll Call**
- III. Approval of Minutes**
 - a. Approved unanimously**
- IV. Open Forum**
 - a.**
- V. Speakers Podium**
 - a. Dr. Kim Laird- VP of Finance**
 - i.** I am the VP Finance. I wanted to give you a brief overview and context about our proposed fees. I like to start every conversation about fees with a broad discussion about the state of Texas. When we compare the quality to the cost, we increase both. When we improve efficiency, the cost doesn't increase as much. Everything we do is looking at ways to improve our back office operations, etc. The largest cost is the faculty and staff costs.
 - ii.** When we look at the tuition and fees, the percentage of state versus parent contribution in tuition has changed dramatically.
 - iii.** Similar environment in the state. Previously, Texas invested 75% whereas now they invest 58%.
 - iv.** For the UT Tyler budget, tuition and fees are the largest percentage. The operating expenses, the student led fees and support at a significant portion of our expenses. Salaries, wages, benefits, etc. are almost 60% of our total budget. Utilities are about 5% and then scholarships.
 - v.** In higher education, the types of funding are all treated different as far as how we can spend them. As we go further down, we get more and more restrictive on how we can spend them.
 - vi.** This year, the Board of Regents changed how we do our bi-annual tuition and fee proposal process. They consider all of it as bigger part of the needs of the institution. They consider the needs to retain faculty, build programs, etc. Tuition rates also need to be predictable for students.
 - vii.** All sources of revenue are considered before decisions are made. A new financial planning process was put in place in spring 2019 so that we could communicate closer with the system. Since then, we've been working on the 2 year tuition and fee approval system. They approved our proposal in November of 2019, including 2 that require student referendum approval. We proposed a \$2 increase for the athletic fee and we established a 2.6% tuition increase.
 - viii.** The 2.6% increase is based on the total academic cost. The proposed fees would add an additional \$85. The total increase proposed would be \$231. Then the second year would be \$240 in total increase.
 - ix.** Each of these fees go toward specific areas, such as the technology, instructional support, athletic fee, etc. The recreation center fee is proposed to increase from \$45-\$50, as we previously could not adjust this fee to reflect increasing costs. Student success will benefit through counseling, etc. Student engagement will benefit through expanded events, facility improvements, etc. 27% will be for new faculty, etc. Then, finally, hardware, technology, etc.
 - x.** We are 27 out of 37 for tuition and fees in the state of Texas. We fall below that average as well as the average for all of the institutions in the University of Texas system.
 - xi.** If we look at SFA, their tuition and fees are quite a bit higher than our's.
 - xii.** Senator Forster: As UT Tyler expands, I imagine that our fees will go up?

- xiii. Sometimes, they will help us through grant funding, but there are definitely costs to consider when we have construction on campus.
 - xiv. Treasurer Rawashdeh: So the overall purpose is to help students graduate and be retained; why add on to the fee when you could build a new fee?
 - xv. We're restricted how we spend money, because it may be related to multiple different areas. When we talk about increases in fees, some of those are things that we can't necessarily control.
 - xvi. President Menhennett: How is the best way to receive this information so that we can share it?
 - xvii. I think we should let the other two presenters speak and then we will discuss what will be most helpful. We want to considerate and intentional with this information so that it doesn't get blown out of proportion.
- b. Dr. Howard Patterson- Director of Athletics
- i. For those of you that haven't been here a long time, this program has been born during your lifetime. None of this stuff was built when I was here. We used to be an NAIA school, and we have added all of these supports in order to be division 3. In 2018, we got accepted into the division 2 provisional membership. One of the things that I have wanted since day 1 is to make sure that our student athletes are students first. Our GPA, persistence rate, etc. are all higher than the average students. The majority of our student athletes go on to graduate and have successful careers. Our new conference is very spread out. Our conference is 950 miles across and 700 miles wide. The travel increase has been huge, technology has increased, there's a four camera replay system, scholarships have increased. Last year was our first year, so we were in a different conference and couldn't offer scholarships. Previously, we did not have off season. Now, our athletes work out almost every day. Wear and tear on equipment has increased. Some of our division 3 athletes have not made the cut when it comes to D2. In order to be competitive, we have had to increase salaries for staff. We have to continue to make adjustments, up into the area where we can keep our coaches as long as we can.
 - ii. This is a breakdown of scholarships. As you can see, we're increasing that to be competitive as well. In 2016, our baseball team were national champions. The light blue represents where we were when we were in division 3. When you get to provisional year 2, you can see the jump in each of these areas, especially operating expenses. When you look at operating expenses for baseball, there are more and more fees as we increase scholarships, travel, operating, etc.
 - iii. Baseball travel increases, just by itself, is significant. It increases meal costs, transportation, and lodging. Those expenses have gone up as we switched over to D2. There's a 3x increase in the amount of miles that we've traveled. Where our \$12 fee previously covered everything that we need, now the projected cost is a lot.
 - iv. Senator Williams: There needs to be a fee increase and a lot of our students support this because they want our programs to succeed.
 - v. President Menhennett: One thing that the students might say is that they want to see something. What am I going to see that's different based on this new fee that I'm paying.
 - vi. Dr. Patterson: We're going to have more to the game than the game. It'll be more of an experience. We're developing a step program, etc. There's hopefully more ideas to have more to the game than the game. I appreciate your time.
- c. Rick McGill- Director of Recreational Sports and HPC
- i. Just a little of backstory, we have not been able to raise that fee previously. Our recreational fee is at \$40 currently. The state average is \$103. We're open about 100 hours per week. We have 150,000 visits per year, 100,000 of which are students. Our fitness program offers 35 classes per week. We're averaging about 7000 per week. We're doing wellness Wednesdays, special event programming, some different things to get students in the building. Then, we have our intramural sports. All of those programs are offered free of charge; some schools charge but we have been able to avoid that. Our volleyball team just

went to Austin two weekends ago to compete. For outdoor adventures, we offer regional trips for about \$10 per student. We offer quite a few trips for students per year. We had about 300 students participate last year in an outdoor adventures program.

- ii.** The retention and recruitment of students is directly related to the recreational facilities. As far as student engagement and experience, like I said, 100,000 students come in every year.
- iii.** Students on this survey experienced higher levels of wellbeing and felt that they had gained skills from their experiences in the recreational facilities.
- iv.** When we talk about this fee... we do an end of year survey, and these are the things that students said that they would want:
 - v.** Extended hours, more fitness classes, updated equipment (industry standard shows a recommended life of 3 years, we have treadmills that are 10 years old), more space on fitness floor, climbing wall, increased gym open time, more outdoor adventure trips, etc.
 - vi.** One potential consideration for more open gym time would be making the PHE open to students for a few hours a day. We currently have one person over outdoor adventures, aquatics, and summer camps, so it would be great to address that.
 - vii.** Extended weekend hours, if we added a couple of hours to both days of the weekend, it would be about \$5000.
 - viii.** If we opened the PHE, added recreation times for the IM field, and added an outdoor recreation professional staff member, all of those would cost money. This might also allow us to remove the fees associated with these trips so that more students can participate.
 - ix.** Our wellness currently focuses on physical wellness, but we want to take a more holistic approach. We don't really have the ability to start that at this time.
 - x.** We also need to spend a lot to update our equipment and make sure that it stays up to par.
 - xi.** Our average overall addition is going to cost \$250,000. The new fee would give us \$303,000.
 - xii.** Some uses for this surplus include front desk renovation, resurfacing our HPC pool. Finally, we would look at gender neutral locker rooms for families, etc. We want to be able to put a locker room down there to alleviate the issues for families and people that don't identify as male or female.
 - xiii.** If this does come about, we have a plan in place to use the funds appropriately.
 - xiv.** Senator Forster: When the HPC was made, was there no thought about being able to change out the equipment?
 - xv.** The number of staffing hours we have to keep the building open limits our budget a lot. There a lot of things we also have to address immediately. If you think about the fact that our fee has not been raised, the cost of everything 50 years ago was much cheaper.
 - xvi.** Senator Forster: How much are students paying and how much are community members paying?
 - xvii.** Students pay \$40 and everyone else pays \$50 per semester.
 - xviii.** Senator Forster: What would be a good number to get what you want done completed?
 - xix.** What's being proposed would be a \$15 increase per student to upgrade the facility, equipment, etc.
 - xx.** President Menhennett: What would be your recommendation for students, how to communicate to them how this benefits them?
 - xxi.** I think the biggest thing is the people that we're not able to serve. We're going to be able to remove some of those barriers for students. Now, we will be able to make our facilities and programs more accessible. Maybe it is that we aren't doing the right programs, but this will also allow us to expand what we're doing so that there's something that you'll want to participate in. We have a mobile app and there's a feedback button so that students can contact us. If you want something changed or have a recommendation, you let us know.
 - xxii.** Senator Ray: The average rates are so different and that shows how well y'all are doing with the costs, so thank you.
 - xxiii.** We try to keep the costs low so that students can participate.

- xxiv. Kim Laird: Y'all can identify questions that you think your constituents will ask and we will try to address them.
- xxv. President Menhennett: The fee increases will be on our ballot and students will be able to vote. Our goal is to communicate the benefits effectively so that they can be knowledgeable about how it affects them and why it could be a good thing.

VI. Officer Reports

- a. The Menhennett Minute
 - i. I just got back from UTSAAC, I did not get an officer position, but it's a lot of fun. I may be back up there in May if our chair cannot attend. I'm not sure.... Im going to be working on the fee increases and work on like an FAQ for students on the SGA page so that they can communicate their concerns.
- b. Vice President Cooper
 - i. I also went to UTSAAC. Two students from each institution get to go and discuss issues with our campuses. In the two committees that I sit on, we did our final drafts to create a task force to help non-traditional students get appropriate advising. We also created a proposal for sustainability, student engagement, mental health, etc.
 - ii. I'm also still on the search committee for the assistant director of student engagement.
 - iii. President Menhennett has tasked me with researching the commencement practices during the summer for colleges similar in size to our's.
- c. Secretary Jennings
- d. Treasurer Rawashdeh
 - i. On Friday, I will be sitting in on the commencement committee for Josh, as he will be unable to attend. Hopefully, I will be able to bring up any student concerns with diligence. This week, I had 2 SGAC requests and the next one will be talked about during committee reports.

VII. Student Voice Reports

- a. Freshman Senators
 - i. **Senator Reid-** Senator Astbury asked me to bring up that a student slipped on the stairs and see if we could get that fixed. One thing that I was going to say is that the facilities workers that drive their golf carts through the Harvey Lake area have been driving very quickly. Hopefully I can meet with Bonnie Davis in the next few days so that we can address that.
- b. Soules College of Business
 - i. Senator Rodriguez- There was a meeting with the Soules College of Business ambassadors. There is going to be a Soules College event to thank John Soules for his contribution on February the 20th.
 - ii. Senator Forster- If the golf carts had horns, that might be good. On Monday, there was an incident that brought a fire truck and an ambulance.
 - iii. Senator Rodriguez- There was a man in our class that was completely asleep, but he was okay.
- c. Student Body at Large
 - i. Senator Bauder- I've been spreading a good word about commencement, and a lot of people are glad that it's going to be in the morning. There has been talk about a potential parking lot by Liberty. A lot of people have felt that this is not going to solve the parking situation.
 - ii. President Menhennett- Do you guys know if the sidewalks have been approved for grant funding?

VIII. Committee Reports

- a. Student Life
 - i. VP Cooper- All of the committees have had minimal attendance. Please submit an excuse form or at least text us to let us know. My committee discussed upcoming events, talked about the details of Midnight Breakfast on March 25th. We won't have to worry about shirts, it is a mandatory event, and the website. If you can't make it, submit an excuse. We will not have a GA Meeting that night.
- b. Communications

- i. **Working on banquet and awards**
- c. Rules
- d. SGAC
 - i. **Treasurer Rawashdeh-** I had two requests and had to move one of them to next week. If you have an excuse, please let us know. I can't be in there and decide alone. I have to have people in there as witness. Had I been able to approve this last request, that would have been great. Please, please, please show up to committees.
- e. Infrastructure
 - i. **Senator Ray-** We have less productive meetings because we take care of business as needed. We made some goals and set up some ideas for things that we want to do. First thing that I would say is that lots of people have those little cars. It could have been any number of groups.
 - ii. The COB crosswalk has been mentioned to me. Painting a stripe that clarifies where students should cross would help.
 - iii. A few students have had an issue at Omen with signage at the red light. We might consider clarifying the signs so that drivers know what they need to do.
 - iv. Senator Barakat- Is there a way to request that they completely change what is at that light?
 - v. VP Cooper- They just sent out the video on how it's supposed to work. There's not really a good way to change it right now.
 - vi. Senator Ray- The facilities people could probably take care of it. Also, lighting, is something that we're working on. Especially in this room. Hopefully, it will be taken care of by next time.
- f. Environmental Sustainability
 - i. **Senator Reid-** We had our first meeting today, it's right there before our meeting for GA. First and foremost, we have to have the students invested in sustainable initiatives. We really want to get students talking about our committee and sustainability on campus.
- g. Housing
 - i. Senator Roberts- We have our first meeting at 1 pm on Friday in the SGA room.

IX. Old Business

- a. Appointment of New Parliamentarian
 - i. **Motioned by Secretary Jennings, seconded by Senator Barakat**
 - ii. Omar Barakat- I'm Omar Barakat from the College of Engineering. I have a few things to point out: 1) I've been the only name mentioned at all of the committee meetings, which gives you an idea of how much time I have to get the parliamentarian things done. I know I'm the new guy, but I have the passion and the time to get it done. Thank you for taking the time to listen to me.
 - iii. David Bauder- Much like Andrew Yang, after speaking with Josh, my boss, etc, all the conflicts that I have, I feel like there are more candidates that would be more successful in the parliamentarian position. I am officially resigning my candidacy and throwing my support behind senator Ray.
 - iv. Robert Ray- I am Robert Ray. I'm a Master's student here, pursuing mechanical engineering. I'll be here for a long time. I've been a senator for about a year. I'm proud to be apart of this organization. I've seen it grow from the ground up. It's an honor to be nominated for this position; I have asked him to speak with me if I ever needed help. We have new government documents that have been really changed and fantastically edited. Usually, we would have 3 documents and the house rules have been updated, which are something that won't have to really be worked on. Nonetheless, there are things that I've made notes on and really looked at it closely. There also things that could be improved and make everything flow a lot better. I am also Infrastructure chair; we now have a great relationship with the Infrastructure and they are glad to have students communicating their concerns to them.
 - v. Jennifer Stavinoha- I represent the CoEandP. I'm also in the Honors Program and SAAHA. My job would still be to represent the students, which I would be able to do so. I've been a

senator for 4 semesters, for UPines and CEP. I've participated in the Student Life and Communications committees. I have some personal ideas on how to make SGA more accessible and effective, based on my experience. I would like to make sure that all of our seats are filled, and colleges are well-represented.

- vi. Discussion, Senator Williams, Senator Rodriguez, and Senator Long all spoke on Senator Stavinoha's behalf.
- vii. Senator Long brought up how good Senator Ray is in the Infrastructure committee.
- viii. Senator Bauder and Senator Rodriguez both agreed.
- ix. VP Cooper- I do find that Senator Ray would make a good Parliamentarian, just because he is a graduate student, so he brings an entirely different perspective. He already has one degree under his belt. The visibility is different when you're on the board, because of the name recognition and the board position.
- x. Treasurer Rawashdeh- I want to talk about VP Cooper's point. As you can see, we all know what's going on right now. Not only is Senator Ray passionate, he is dedicated.
- xi. Motion to vote by Senator Rodriguez and seconded by Senator Forster.
- xii. Senator Ray is elected as Parliamentarian by a majority vote, Advisor Neaves reviewed and announced the results.
- xiii. Senator Barakat motioned to reveal the results, no one seconded.
- xiv. **Senator Ray is sworn in.**

X. New Business

- a. Senator Barakat motioned to appoint a new senator. It was seconded.
- b. Brandon Burke- I'm a freshman at UT Tyler. I'm not super familiar with all of this but I am interested in representing the Soules College of Business. I'm a finance major with a minor in economics. I'm super excited for the opportunity.
- c. Senator Bauder- You show up a little bit late, why is that?
- d. I have a class from 4-5:20
- e. Senator Forster- How many classes are in COB?
Currently 0, but all of them in future semesters
- f. VP Cooper- Are you in any other organizations?
- g. FMA, ATO, etc
- h. Treasurer Rawashdeh- How do you plan on talking with COB students?
- i. I will make runs over there, make conversation, and talk to them
- j. Senator Williams- Do you have friends that are business majors?
- k. Yes, I do, yes ma'am
- l. Senator Bauder- Do you live on campus?
- m. Yes, that's my RA
- n. Senator Ramirez- Are you a CAP student?
- o. No, I'll be here all four years
- p. Senator Forster- A freshman seat or general seat would be better
- q. Treasurer Rawashdeh- He's in a wide variety of classes so it might be nice to have a COB senator who talks to more students
- r. Senator Williams- I think he would be a good fit for this position because he could learn about what to do from the older students who have experience
- s. Senator Rodriguez- I came in late last semester from my class as well, so I really can't blame him for that
- t. Senator Bauder- He shows initiative about wanting to get more involved. How would we suggest that he be a Senator for the Student Body at Large?
- u. President Menhennett- We would just vote for what we think
- v. Senator Reid motioned that we appoint him to student body at large. It was seconded by Senator Bauder.
- w. It was approved. Senator Burke was appointed and sworn in.
 - i. We lost Quorum as of 7:27 pm

XI. Advisor Comments

XII. Announcements

- a. Headshots – Feb. 13th
- b. Arbor Day – Feb. 15th
- c. Focus Groups
 - i. Monday, Feb. 24th from 5:30-6 pm on Zoom. The meeting ID is 641-085-818.
 - ii. Tuesday, Feb. 25th from 7:30-8 am in the UC 2nd floor seating area around Honors
 - iii. Wednesday, Feb. 26th from 12:30-1 pm in UC 3322

XIII. Next Week's Student Voice Reports

- a. College of Education and Psychology
- b. College of Engineering
- c. College of Nursing and Health Sciences

XIV. Second Roll Call

XV. Adjournment