

Provost Council
Dec. 16, 2009
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM
MB 3.106 Regents' Room

AGENDA

COORDINATING BOARD VISIT & DISCUSSION COMMISSIONER PAREDES

Commissioner Raymund Paredes and Dr. Romo visited the Provost's Council to discuss various issues facing higher education.

House Bill 51 (Emerging Research Universities to Tier One Status): Dr. Paredes stated that he has met with several legislators and has attempted to convey to them the importance of the legislators providing sustained commitment to universities who are attempting to reach the goal of tier one status. He further stated that this goal is not one that can be reached in a few years, but may take as long as 20 – 30 years. Dr. Paredes compared the current funding per FTE with the seven emerging institutions to our aspirant institutions and right now Texas is about \$100 million behind in funding.

Dr. Paredes stated that with the current economic climate, reaching tier one status seems to be a daunting goal—however we need to continue going forward. He went on to state that he has been told to expect at \$9 -\$15 billion budget deficit in the next biennium. He does not know how this will affect higher education, but we need to learn how to do more with less. Dr. Paredes also stated that the 2011 legislative session will also include redistricting and in his years of experience that has always affected higher education funding.

Dr. Paredes was asked how HB 51 and the state's budget deficit may impact our ability to add graduate programs, as one of the conditions of realizing top tier status is having more graduate programs, especially doctoral programs. Dr. Paredes mentioned that it will be more difficult to get doctoral programs approved by the Coordinating Board than it has been in the past. He stated that a good proposal will demonstrate not only national need, but also regional needs. Also, you need to look at how these graduates will contribute to the economy. Dr. Paredes mentioned two recent proposals that UTSA submitted, one in mechanical engineering and the other is psychology. He stated that both proposals needed work and had been given suggestions on how to improve so that they could be approved.

All of the Deans had a chance to speak on behalf of their programs, whether they were new programs or ones they were hoping to get approved. Dr. Paredes mentioned that he likes partnerships and collaborations and cited our partnership with Southwest Research Institute, the joint program in science with UT Brownsville. However, he stated that instead of creating new tracks, we should be concentrating on strengthening existing

programs. He also stated that he would look at the quality, productivity, sustainability (other sources of revenue besides the state) and the market when he is making a decision on a proposal.

Dr. Paredes further stated that he is not in favor of expanding Ph.D. programs when you have low producing programs—again he reiterated strengthen the existing programs. He also stated that we are also in the business of producing baccalaureate degrees and not just Ph.D. He wanted to know what we were doing to strengthen our undergraduate programs. He cited an example of Texas needing more engineers, but our universities are not graduating students with undergraduate degrees in engineering and putting them in the marketplace—we cannot weaken our undergraduate programs.

Dr. Paredes concluded his visit by discussing that the Coordinating Board is seeing more students apply to community colleges and the University of Phoenix—an on-line university. He stated that all universities need to look at other models for delivering classroom instruction, such as podcasts, on-line, telecampus, etc. He stated that we are seeing more “non-traditional” students at our universities and we need to accommodate their needs. The non-traditional student is one that has to work 20 – 30 hours a week while attending school or one that is a little older than the typical student who matriculates to college right out of high school.