

University Executive Council  
January 17, 2017 | BA 290 | 1:30 p.m.

Minutes

- Century as Lions Update (Noah Nelson & Jill Mobley)
  - Celebrating 100<sup>th</sup> year as a state institution on Friday, March 10, 2017
    - Our Century as Lions Committee is coordinating the celebration details
      - Comprised of representatives from various departments across campus
      - Drs. Bill Kuracina and Jessica Wranosky from the Department of History working with Archives to show “where Commerce fits in the world”
      - Andrea Weddle of Archives has been instrumental in this endeavor
    - Celebration will also include the groundbreaking of the Nursing & Health Sciences Building
  - Kicked off 100<sup>th</sup> year with Mayo Gravesite ribbon cutting
  - Almost 1100 “Our Century as Lions” t-shirts have been handed out
    - More to be handed out at “Fill the Field House”
    - See Jill Mobley if you would like one
  - Walking Mall banners will run chronologically from the Journalism building down the walking mall
  - Science Building may serve as rain location
  - Lion History Tour
    - 14-17 permanent fixtures on campus and around the city
    - Sponsorship opportunities being considered (student organizations, Greek, community organizations, etc.)
    - Some markers will be placed at locations that no longer exist
    - Their look will be similar to the existing blue signs
  - Invited Speaker Strauss
  - Media
    - Original artwork by Josh Ege
    - Original music composition by Dr. Davies
    - Commemorative program booklet which will include a self-guided tour (visit all the permanent markers)
    - Video explaining our history, place in the System, name change, etc. to be used in fundraising
    - UEC RESPONSE: video requires editing as the university does receive some federal grants (video only mentioned state funding)
    - UEC RESPONSE: campus attendance could be boosted if Sodexo could serve food outdoors (on meal plans) for those not invited to the luncheon
  - Jay Mason Brewer event on January 30, 2017
- Infrastructure Committee Report (Travis Ball)
  - 966 responses to survey
  - Suggestions
    - Hwy 24 President’s Home: partially demolish and create a Welcome Center
    - Regional Events Center: repurpose Berry/Smith Halls
    - Nursing Building: Let Provost’s Office decide; move Career Services into that building along with other departments; discuss uses with President’s Advisory Council
    - UPD: include in the Welcome Center; expand into Social Work area and move Social Work into Nursing Building; move into the Northeast Texas Children’s Museum (they are considering moving, and the university cannot grant them a long-term lease)
    - KA House: demolish for parking

- Legislative Update (Alicia Currin)
  - 85<sup>th</sup> Legislature convened Tuesday, January 10, 2017, and Drs. Keck and Humphreys were in Austin for the swearing in of Representative Flynn and Senator Hall
  - January Activities
    - Governor Abbott delivers the State of the State Address
    - Comptroller Hegar issues a revenue estimate for 2018-2019 (estimated \$104.87 billion will be available in general revenue for next budget which is significantly less than last session when the estimate was \$113 billion)
    - Lt. Governor Patrick and Speaker Straus organize committees
    - Hearings on base appropriations bill
      - Dr. Keck will testify before the Senate on January 25<sup>th</sup>; our governmental affairs specialists have suggested focusing on the 4% reductions and the impact on students
      - A&M-Commerce will have a written testimony (up to 8 pages), which the System will review
  - Sine Die is Monday, May 29, 2017
  - The two chambers have vastly different priorities
    - House: public education and school finances
    - The Senate: social issues
  - Budget
    - Revenue estimate: down 2.7% from last biennium
    - Gas and oil revenue has dropped due to price decreases
    - Sales tax revenue up
    - Prop. 7 passed by voters (directs additional sales tax and other funding, up to \$5 billion, to TxDOT highway projects)
    - The two largest sections of the state government are education and healthcare. Healthcare has federal funding attached, so for every state dollar cut, Texas would lose \$2.50. The Center for Public Policy Priorities believes this will leave education funding vulnerable.
  - Gun rights: House Bill 375, “constitutional carry,” would give all Texans the right to openly carry a firearm, with or without a permit
  - Public education: school vouchers, fixing the complicated public funding system, marijuana legalization, property taxes, insurance coverage for abortions, funding Child Protective Services, border and immigration, and ethics
  - Have not yet heard discussion of tuition regulation, outcome-based funding, Hazlewood legacy tuition exemption, student financial aid and tuition set-aside, and research funding
- University Updates (Ray Keck)
  - MAC court
    - UEC RESPONSE: due to weather delays, it is a couple weeks behind schedule
  - Athletics
    - Jim Thrower Center rededication on March 4<sup>th</sup> @ 9am, which he will be attending
    - Student-athlete average GPA is higher than 3.1
  - Hall of Languages naming ceremony is April 18<sup>th</sup>
    - Andrew Young will be in attendance for the dedication of the Hall of Languages, which will be named after Dr. Talbot
    - Changes inside will include a general facelift and the creation of a seminar room and a terrace on the south side of the building in the lounge area
  - Sam Rayburn Speaker Series continues on February 7<sup>th</sup> with Diane Ravitch
  - Brent Iverson lecture was well-attended and received
  - Higher Education Commissioner Paredes visit to A&M-Commerce, regarding the B.S. in Electrical Engineering degree offering denial

- Commissioner Paredes believed that flagship institutions could handle the educational needs and output of electrical engineers but was unaware of the regional need
  - L-3 and Oncor were present at the meeting and shared with Commissioner Paredes their need for paid interns and individuals with a regional background and skillset
  - Dr. Keck forwarded Dr. Donham's electrical engineering report to Commissioner Paredes who has promised to have his staff reconsider the proposal
  - A faculty member has been offered a position and has accepted, pending approval of the program
  - THECB is looking to see cost savings (competency-based or otherwise) or a K-12 partnership when reviewing new program applications
- Announcements
  - Spring Enrollment: 12,219
    - Students will be dropped for non-payment on February 6<sup>th</sup>
    - UEC RESPONSE: Drop in international (graduate) students
      - Most recent figures show 747 students enrolled
      - The largest drop is in Indian students. This is due to a partnership ending in Fall 2015 which caused an enrollment spike. Attempts are being made at diversification of the student body to prevent this from happening again.
      - Some student are experiencing difficulties with getting visas
      - Small growth in Nepalese and Nigerian student enrollment
      - Usually only get 25-35% of those that enroll
    - UEC RESPONSE: Large graduation numbers
      - Largest graduation ever just occurred, and those students are difficult to replace
      - Large CSCI group just graduated; enrollment was large, but did not replace
      - Scholarships brought 50% enrollment in CoSE
      - We have a huge CSCI group that just graduated
      - A lot enrolled but not enough to replace
      - Scholarships brought us up to 50% enrollment in CoSE
    - UEC RESPONSE: More money will not be added to the formula, so enrollment figures are a concern
    - UEC RESPONSE: Extended University concerns
      - Increased enrollment: Navarro College dual credit and UCD
      - Decreased enrollment: Navarro College and Corsicana
    - UEC RESPONSE: consider reaching out to students who are not returning to find out why they are not coming back or where they are now attending
  - Housing: more traditional housing to be built
  - Fill the Field House on Saturday (January 21<sup>st</sup>); tickets are free