October 14, 2011

Dear Provost Leslie,

On behalf of students at the McCombs School of Business, we would like to thank you for your commitment to student success and quality of education at The University of Texas. Over the past month, the McCombs College Tuition and Budget Advisory Committee (CTBAC) has worked extensively with our Deans and students to understand our school’s priorities in creating a world-class business education. The following report provides student input on Dean Gilligan’s tuition increase proposal.

Summary of Proposal

Dean Gilligan’s report asks for 79% of the proposed 2.6% in-state and 3.6% out-of-state tuition increases to raise $2.18 million to be used for twelve new tenure-track faculty in the McCombs School at a cost of $2.16 million.

Student Input Methodology

In order to educate undergraduates and gather input about the proposal, our committee actively engaged students by (1) consulting the Undergraduate Business Council, (2) collecting general student input via tabling and comment cards, (3) hosting an open tuition forum, and (4) facilitating a stakeholders’ meeting for the presidents of all McCombs Affiliated Student Organizations; reaching over 150 students in the process.

Student Recommendation

The McCombs CTBAC strongly supports Dean Gilligan’s proposal to use 79% of the proposed increase in tuition to hire twelve tenure-track faculty for the undergraduate program at the McCombs School.

Below are further insights we gathered from talking to students and student leaders across our school:

1. Increasing faculty lines is key to undergraduate education – In spite of our administration’s well-executed response to budget cuts, we have seen first-hand the challenges currently facing the McCombs School: a 56.9% four-year graduation rate, 44 sections of classes cut, fewer faculty teaching undergraduate classes, the highest student-to-faculty ratio on campus, and a substantial fall in the most recent BusinessWeek rankings. We believe the Dean’s proposal addresses these key issues and serves our University’s core purpose by putting our tuition dollars where it matters: in the classroom.

2. Lecturer vs. tenure-track faculty – In addition to providing more course offerings for our sizable student population, tenure-track professors will add to the McCombs School’s distinguished reputation as one of the best public business schools in the nation. At the same time, because of the trade-off between semester credit hours taught and research, some students believe that a mix of tenure-track faculty and lecturers would best serve our school’s teaching needs. We hope to discuss this topic in further detail at the college level.

3. National competitiveness – One final issue that McCombs students expressed concern about was the disproportionate increase of out-of-state tuition of 3.6% (or $1,284) in 2012-13 and its potential effect on our school’s ability to attract the best and brightest students from across the nation. One potential solution to this problem is to allocate an increased amount of scholarships to out-of-state students.

The McCombs CTBAC hopes these insights will provide you with further context in making decisions that directly affect business students. Again, we thank you for your commitment to the students of The University of Texas, and we look forward to our continued work together this year. If you would like to discuss this report in further detail, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

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