To: AS&E Executive Committee  
From: David Garman, Chair of the Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid Committee (UAFAC)  
Date: November 24, 2014  

Re: UAFAC Review of Reorganization Proposals for AS&E Admissions from Provost Harris

The UAFAC held four meetings in September and October to consider the implications of the Provost’s reorganization proposals for AS&E admissions. The discussions were wide-ranging but the primary issues were: the administration of admissions and financial aid budgets, where primary policy-making responsibilities should reside, and the role of the administrative position currently identified as the AS&E Dean of Admissions and Enrollment Management.

The committee benefited from the participation of many administrators with intimate knowledge of the relevant issues. Vice Provost Kevin Dunn participated in the first two meetings as an invited guest. Dean James Glaser and Dean Linda Abriola each attended a meeting as invited guests. Dean Bruce Reitman attended several meetings as an invited guest. Dean John Barker, Dean Lee Coffin, Dean Carmen Lowe, Director of Financial Aid Patricia Reilly, and Associate Provost Dawn Terkla are all ex officio members of UAFAC and actively participated in the discussions. The student members of the committee were not appointed by the TCU Senate until after this set of four meetings and their views were not solicited for this report. The faculty members on the committee thank each of the administrators above for their willingness to give forthright and thoughtful answers to our questions about the strengths and weaknesses of the current organization.

During the AS&E committee bylaw revisions of two years ago, the Executive Committee changed the status of the ex officio members from nonvoting members to voting members. This was a surprise to all current members of UAFAC since it had not been requested by the committee chair of that year. The ex officio members generally felt that it would be inappropriate for them to vote on any resolutions related to their administrative or supervisory roles and behaved accordingly.

At the end of the committee’s information collection and discussion, committee members were polled on the primary issues. This allowed members to respond privately and to elaborate in a way that would not have been possible on up or down votes on formal resolutions. The questions and a brief summary of the responses follow.

1. Should the AS&E Dean of Admissions be responsible for “coordinating” or “improving” admissions practices in schools other than A&S and E?

All respondents were opposed to expanding the role of the AS&E Dean of Admissions to cover any aspects of admissions practices at the other schools. It was thought AS&E admissions, especially undergraduate admissions, is too important to Tufts and too large a responsibility to take the risk of disrupting an organization and process that is currently working so well. One respondent suggested that one of the current vice provosts could be assigned to work on coordinating or improving graduate and profession school admissions (as one part of his or her overall responsibilities.)

2. Should the budgets for AS&E admissions and financial aid be set and controlled by the Provost’s Office or by the Deans of A&S and E?

All but two of the respondents felt the budgets should be set and controlled by an equal collaboration of the Dean of A&S and the Dean of E. It was deemed important to keep the decision making in the hands of the two deans directly responsible for A&S and E, and to allow those deans to have the budget authority to make spending trade-offs or to use the saving from improved efficiency. One respondent felt that budgets should be decided by an equal collaboration of the Dean of A&S, the Dean of E, and the Provost – with the qualification that the authority should remain within AS&E “if equal voting power is not enforceable.” One respondent felt that central budget control in the Provost’s Office would be better if the new process had: transparency and accountability to the two schools, some “rules or law” on how the budget would be allocated, and an enforceable prohibition on diverting the savings from any reduced expenditures to cover the needs of other schools.
3. Should the AS&E Dean of Admissions report to the Deans of A&S and E (solid lines to both deans and dotted “informational” line to the Provost’s Office) or to the Provost’s Office (solid line to the Provost’s Office and dotted “informational” lines to both deans)?

All respondents felt that the AS&E Dean of Admission should have a solid line reporting relationship to both the Dean of A&S and the Dean of E. All felt that adding a dotted line representing “informational” reporting to the Provost’s Office would be acceptable if it improved the flow of information without adding unnecessary complications or added interference in AS&E policy making. Several respondents noted that Dean Coffin has always acted “as if” he had solid line reporting relationships to the Deans of A&E and E and that this system has worked very well. One respondent suggested that major policy changes should be carried out in joint consultation among the Dean of A&S, the Dean of E, and the Provost’s Office.

4. What other points should be covered in the report to the Executive Committee?

Only three members of the committee responded to this question. Two members asked that future proposals from the Provost’s Office be vetted by the relevant school administrators and the Executive Committee in advance of being sprung on the AS&E faculty-at-large. This would allow concerns to be raised and proposals to be modified in a way that might avoid the rush and frenzy of this semester. One member admonished the committee to see through strategic considerations and to focus on the best interests of the university.