Advisory Council
Strategic Planning Task Force
Report and Recommendations:
March 2014

Task Force Members:
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Following the release of the Dean Hicke’s strategic plan for the College, Glenn
Rogers recommended to the Dean that the council consider undertaking a
strategic plan of their own. They would consider the purpose and mission of the
council; explore its size, membership, structure, actions, and activities to ensure
that the council is in alignment and supports the college’s new strategic plan.
Dean Linda Hicke formed the Strategic Plan Task Force in during summer 2013
and appointed Glenn Rogers and Susie Jastrow as co-Chairs. The task force met
4 times between August ’13 and January ’14. They identified 2 key areas and
formed sub-committees to look more closely at council membership, committee
structure, and fundraising responsibilities. To provide additional information, they
examined what other councils were doing, including McCombs School of
Business, College of Fine Arts, School of Architecture, Cockrell School of
Engineering, College of Liberal Arts, and the School of Human Ecology. They
also revisited the 2005 CNS Advisory Council Strategic Plan. The College’s new
strategic plan served as the compass in guiding and directing the decisions of the
task force. There was much deliberation covering all areas of the council. What
follows is a brief summary and recommendations from these discussions.

Membership

  Size
  The Advisory Council currently has 88 members (64 members, 20
  Honorary Life; 4 Ex Officio) After much discussion, the Task Force feels
  there is no strong reason for recommending a limit to the council’s size,
  but recommends focusing on membership representing the size and
  diversity of the College and that our members are engaged in the efforts of
  the council and the college.

  Member Categories
  There are currently 3 categories of membership. Active Member,
  Honorary Life Member, and Ex Officio Member. The Task Force
  recommends adding another membership category -- Senior Advisor. The
  Committee suggests that having this member category will:
- keep a connection with those who have served and given faithfully but are either tired, unable to travel, or have moved on to other interests
- keeps them aware of what is happening in the college
- keeps open the opportunity for an annual gift or planned gift to the college
- communicates that we appreciate and value the relationship with the member and that we do not want to lose the connection with them

Suggested wording for the By-laws:

*Advisory Council members who have served with distinction, usually for at least two terms, but ordinarily longer, may be nominated by the Membership Committee to the Senior Advisor membership category. The primary responsibility of Senior Advisors shall be to make available to the Chair and other council members the wisdom of past experiences and to provide assistance in promoting the stability and well-being of the Advisory Council. Senior Advisors will be invited to attend all council events and have the privilege of the floor without vote.*

The Task Force further recommends using groups such as the Texas Exes 1883 Council to find young members who could participate on task forces or ad hoc committees to gauge their interest or be used as a stepping-stone for membership.

**Terms**

*Invitation to membership on the Council is for 1-3 year term with consideration for renewal in the 3rd year. There is no limit as to how many terms you may have. The Task Force recommends no limit on terms for members.*

**New Members:**

*Nominees for new members may be submitted by current council members, faculty, and staff. Candidates for membership do not necessarily need to be graduates of our college, but should have a passion for the college and science. We can benefit from including in our membership individuals from industry and the community. The benefit is not only their input from their industry experiences, but also the connections that could provide possible employment opportunities for our graduates.*

The Task Force believes that it is particularly important that incoming members fully understand the expectations of membership on the Council. Two new documents are recommended to help facilitate this information to potential members; ‘Roles and Responsibilities’ and ‘Council Opportunities’. The Task Force further recommends that this same document be signed by all current members upon their renewal and a
copy provided annually to assist them in self-evaluating their participation and engagement.

Committee Structure

Executive Committee
The Task Force recommends that there be a limit to the size of the Executive Committee. To be effective, it should not be too large. The Executive Committee should be comprised of the Dean, Chair, Vice Chair, immediate past Chair, active task force Chairs, Membership Chair. The Dean may also appoint an additional 3-4 members at large with specific term limits.

Membership Committee
The Task Force recommends that there be a limit to the size of the Membership Committee. To be effective, it should not be too large. The Task Force recommends that the chair of the Membership Committee be an elected position with a term limit of at least 2 years but no more than 4 years. The Membership Committee chair should be elected by the Nominating Committee and recommended to the Executive Committee. In addition to the elected chair, it is suggested that the Membership Committee include the Dean, Chair, Vice Chair, and immediate past Chair. The Dean may also appoint an additional 3-4 members at large who would also have 2 year staggered terms limits.

Nominating Committee
The Nominating Committee meets once every-other year to elect and recommend a Vice-Chair candidate to the Executive Committee. The task force recommends that the Nominating Committee also be responsible for electing the Membership Committee chair.

Fundraising
The task force wants to ensure that all members understand that donating to the college with an annual gift is vital, but equally as important to assist with overall fundraising efforts for the College. The task force recommends that the College clarify how council members can assist with its fundraising goals and efforts. Some of those opportunities are now included in the ‘Council Opportunities’ document, but include activities such as hosting or assisting with relationship building events; accompanying a gift officer on a visit with potential donor; writing thank you notes for gifts; identifying prospects.