COMMITTEE REPORT – ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

May 22, 2012

To: John Stallone, Speaker, Faculty Senate
Executive Committee, Faculty Senate

From: Brian Perkins, Chair, Academic Affairs Committee

Subject: Learning Objectives in Minimum Syllabus Requirements

Background:
In the 2011 legislative session, the Texas State legislature passed SB 1726, which requires all institutions of higher education to “identify, adopt, and make available for public inspection measurable learning outcomes for each undergraduate course offered by the institution other than: (1) a course with a highly variable subject content that is tailored specifically to an individual student, such as an independent study or directed reading course; or (2) a laboratory, practicum, or discussion section that is an intrinsic and required component of a lecture course.”

The Texas A&M minimum syllabus requirements currently do not learning outcomes/objectives, suggesting we may not be in compliance with state law. In an effort to improve syllabi across Texas A&M, to bring us into compliance, and to be proactive about syllabus requirements following the SACS evaluation, the AAC voted unanimously (7-0) to the following recommendations:

Recommendation:
The AAC recommends the following changes to the minimum syllabus requirements currently on the Faculty Senate website and that these requirements be enforced by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Graduate Curriculum Committee, and Core Curriculum Committees before approving any new course.

Current wording:
Learning outcomes or course objectives [Recommended]
(Learning Outcome = a statement of what students will be able to do or know upon completion of the course. The outcomes may include competencies developed in the course. Learning outcomes are measurable and define what students need to do to show mastery of course materials. Additional assistance with learning outcomes is available through the Center for Teaching Excellence http://cte.tamu.edu and the Office of Institutional Assessment (http://assessment.tamu.edu/resources/resources_index.html).

Proposed wording:
Learning outcomes or course objectives [Recommended]
(Learning Outcome = a statement of what students will be able to do or know upon completion of the course. The outcomes may include competencies developed in the course. Learning outcomes are measurable and define what students need to do to show mastery of course materials. Additional assistance with learning outcomes is available through the Center for Teaching Excellence http://cte.tamu.edu and the Office of Institutional Assessment (http://assessment.tamu.edu/resources/resources_index.html).