

Tammy introduction

My name is Tammy Montgomery and I am the chairperson of the Staff Advisory Council. On behalf of all representatives of the council I would like to welcome you to our annual staff forum.

I want to take a moment to make a few announcements before we get started. As a reminder I would like to have you all silence your cell phones and pagers so that they will not be disruptive during the presentations and the Q & A session. The panel has prepared answers to any presubmitted questions. Afterwards we will open the floor up for questions and answers session. Any questions submitted before 11:45 will be asked to the panel by one of our representatives. For the sake of time, if multiple questions are submitted regarding the same topic, we will summarize the question. If we are running out of time and your question has not been asked or answered, we do have a follow up system in place and we will get back to you if you put your contact information on the form. Please note that no parking questions will be taken at today's forum.

We are all aware of the parking situation on campus and we ask that all parking questions be directly emailed to the parking office manager at [mabry@uta.edu](mailto:mabry@uta.edu). Also, we will be transcribing today's questions and answers therefore they will be available on the SAC website as soon as possible. Located in the foyer, we do have a SAC table set up with additional information about Staff Advisory Council, please feel free to stop by and visit with one of the SAC representatives. We do have our SAC brochures, Fast Fact brochures about the university. As a note, the table centerpieces are a collection of items that have been donated by several departments on campus. Those will be door prizes. You must stay until the end of the event and then we will do our door prize at the end. Our meetings are regularly scheduled on the second Tuesday of each month and I would personally like to invite everybody to attend. They are held in the Student Congress Chambers in the lower level of this building, University Center at 3:00 PM.

If you have any ideas or suggestions you would like to see developed or implemented on campus, please let your representative know. To locate your representative or for more information about SAC, you can visit our website at [www.uta.edu/sac](http://www.uta.edu/sac). At this time, I would like to introduce the university's administration. Would you please stand as I call your name: Mr. James Spaniolo, our president; Mr. John Hall, Vice President of Administration and Campus Operations; Mr. Rusty Ward, Vice President of Business Affairs and Comptroller; our newest member Dr. Donald Bobbitt, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs; Dr. Ron Elsenbaumer, Vice President of Research and Federal Relations; Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President for Human Resources; Mr. Jerry Lewis, Vice President for Communications; Mr. Jim Lewis, Vice President for Development; Ms. Suzanne Montague, Vice President for Information Technology and our Chief Information Officer; Dr. Frank Lamas, Vice President for Student Affairs and he could not be with us today but we are sure glad that he is part of our administration. At this time I would like to turn the podium over to our president, Mr. James Spaniolo.

[James Spaniolo] Thank you very much Tammy and thank you to the Staff Advisory Council for organizing this great forum and this great lunch today. Did everybody enjoy lunch today? All right! And it was healthy too! Well, it could have been healthy. I want to start out today the same way I start out every talk these days whether I am talking to students or we had a great retiree dinner on Saturday night and I wanted to see how you do. We are doing a sort of a little test. HELLO MAVERICKS! (lots of cheering in background) Okay, we get to do over. That was a good warm up. Let's try it one more time. Let's make this building shake with that maverick spirit. Okay, let's try it one more time. HELLO MAVERICKS! (lots more spirit and cheering) Alright, alright!! Okay. I love it. The maverick spirit is spreading on this campus and well beyond. I just want to say that it's great to be with all of you today and to see, I think this is the biggest attendance at the staff advisory forum in my time here. I think this is my fifth year in doing these forums. But I want to say even though we are going to do question and answer, that our goal in this in terms of being here and being with you is to engage in a conversation. I also would like to say that in talking with Jean Hood, our Vice President of Human Resources, we are also going to work with Staff Advisory Council and others on campus to do more forums open kind of conversations on campus so that we can all kind of be in touch and engaged and as informed as possible with what is going on on campus. What's on your mind? And even though we put parking as an off limits topic today, it's not because it has not been talked about in some detail. There isn't anything on our campus that we can't talk about. Now,

we may not all have answers that everyone agrees with, but that is just the way the world is. I think what we can all do is to try to talk openly, honestly. What I sense here today on July 1, 2008 is that there is a great spirit on this campus and it is not a superficial spirit. It is a spirit that says we have a great university. This is a great place to be and we all want to help it to become better for all of us. For our students, for our faculty, and our staff, for all of us, because this is something that we are engaged in a joint enterprise together in making this university the best university it can be. The strongest academically, research wise, but also a great place to work and to spend time on every day. Or at least for the next six weeks. Some of us may be able to spend just four days to work and save some money on those escalating gas prices. But the point is that when you think about it, and I just asked you to think about this as you reflect on where we are today. If you think about this university, how it has changed and how it has progressed, how it is built on the foundation of those who went before us. Can you think of a better place to work, to be part of than a university? I am not just talking about UT Arlington although that is the place that we all are. A university has the opportunity to be all kinds of people. Have interesting visitors and speakers. Students keep us all lively and young. The chance to use facilities like we now have in the MAC and in this building. When you think about all the places to work, how many corporations or organizations the facilities that a university has to visit intellectual and any other way? I mean if you work at a university and you aren't feeling stimulated and engaged in something well then you are missing a great opportunity. When I walk across this campus and I see the people in this room, I see energy. I see commitment. I see determination and I want you to know I find inspiration and courage in the people who work here at UT Arlington. People who are in this room today as reflective of the mavericks that are throughout the university and it makes me very proud.

We introduced some of our leadership team who came here today and I just want to in particular make you all aware that today, July 1, is the first day on the job for our new provost, Don Bobbitt and you acknowledged him and I would just like to acknowledge him again and welcome him to UT Arlington, our new Provost, Don Bobbitt. We also have some other new Vice Presidents who joined our team here at the university in the last year since this event was held. I am going to ask them to stand one more time. I know some people are already getting confused with these two people because they have the same last name. We have Jerry Lewis (no jokes now) who is Vice President for Communications and his younger brother Jim Lewis who is Vice President of Development. Please stand up the Lewis brothers. And you heard earlier we have Jean Hood, Vice President for Human Resources.

I just want to say one thing about these four individuals. It is something we can all be proud of. Every one of them has chosen to join us. They moved to UT Arlington. Jean joined us from the East Coast, Massachusetts, Rhode Island. Jerry Lewis came to us from the University of Miami. Jim Lewis came to us from way up there in Sherman, Austin College and Don Bobbitt is joining us from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. What they all have in common is they were attracted to UT Arlington because they liked what they saw in the terms of people here. Students, faculty, and staff. And I am excited that they are here and they are excited to be here to work with you and all of us to build a stronger, better university that we can all be even more proud of. Now, I want to wrap this up quickly because we want to get to your questions. I do want to say that there is one thing we are going to do that we have not announced this yet but I will just give you a headline. We have been talking for several years about how we make the educational opportunities at UT Arlington even more available to those who work here, work with us. And so, beginning this fall, we are going to have a 50% discount on tuition for employees. I don't know about you but I think it is about time for me to go back to school. So that is the first step and I think an important one. We will be sending out the announcement and the details on this but I think the goal is to try to make our educational resources even more available to our employees. I am going to stop on that note and I will just express one more thought to you. That is where I began and is once we have this conversation I hope you will leave this room with this feeling, GO MAVERICKS!

[Tammy M.] Thank you, thank you very much Mr. James Spaniolo. At this time, I would like to turn the podium over to Suzanne Montague. She has a presentation and I will let you introduce your director.

[Suzanne Montague] I am one of those who have been around here since dirt was created. I have been here for 26 years. We chose to stay here because just like Jim said, we truly do love it. We love the people we work with and we love the location. I would also like to introduce (Larry, if I can get you to stand up)

Larry Elmer who is the Director of Enterprise Operations and Services. Now you don't get to see Larry very much because he is actually at the Arlington Regional Data Center in Fort Worth that is kind of close to 820 and Interstate 30. We have a wonderful facility out there that we are very proud of. The reason I have been asked to come here is that we have something new that we would like to present to you. Before I get going, I would like to ask a question. How many of you have had trouble with your university email because the mailbox is too small? (looks at audience response) I am so surprised. We have heard the message loud and clear and we have finally had the opportunity to do something that we think is going to be extremely valuable to you. It's kind of two pronged and so I am going to first tell you what we are doing for students and then we will talk about what we are going to do for faculty/staff as well. So hang on one second. Sorry about that I didn't print it off so I am going to try to see if I can go from here. Okay. First of all I wanted to explain to you if you are not already aware that mavmail which is the email we provide for students has been anointed as one of the official means of communication for campus. But, we have not felt that it has been an effective means of communication because the students have too small of an email box and because of that they do not use it very much.

What we have done is that we have signed on with Microsoft. I don't know if you have been reading about this and some of the other universities across campus but they are now providing a free email service to students. In fact we were approached early on and chose not to participate initially because we felt that it was too early and we were not sure that Microsoft was going to stay committed and we didn't want to move our email off campus only for them to make a business decision that was not working and then to turn it back over to us.

So we feel now that it is very mature product and it is time for us to actually consider using that email. But please keep in mind that this is only for students. El Paso and Pan Am were actually one of the early adopters but we feel as I have mentioned that it has reached maturity. We will be using instead of the hot mail that El Paso and Pan Am have been using we are actually going to be using exchange which is the same thing that you all use when you go to the web version of outlook. So I think you probably use that when you go home or whatever. So this is what the students have been using here all along and they are going to still be able to keep it instead of moving to something like hotmail.

So, what is the value for students? They are going to get the same service that they have except it is going to be the upgraded version, which is exchange 2007. So they will get a lot of the same look and feel but it will have some additional functionality. Look at this folks, 5GB, that is 125 times the size of what the students currently get which is only 40 MB. So this is a huge difference and we actually think it is going to make it extremely appealing to the students. In the past with only 40MB, and the fact that they knew that it was not going to be around once they graduated, they just simply have not used it.

Their email address is going to change from the abc123 format at exchange.uta.edu to the same address but at mavs.uta.edu. And, it will be advertisement free. When they first provided the product, they actually said we will give it to you free but you will get all the advertisements and most of the higher Ed schools said we simply can not do that. The nice thing about this is that we have spoken with the alumni office. We hope to also after we get this going, this will be a second phase is to also offer this same thing to the alumni and if so they will have the option of staying with staying at whatever the name is or go with alumni.uta.edu but it would include advertisement. Although we will tell you so far that they have not figured out so far how to do it so you probably would be free of advertisements for quite some time.

What it provides to us is the value to finally be able to reach our students. We do feel as if the students are finally going to have an opportunity to deal with 5 GB and I must have missed it or something Larry but they get to keep this email address for life. This is not something that is going to be here for them just while they are here as students. So we actually have the ability to tap these students for as long as we want to and as long as they keep that email address. So this is going to provide us with not only the capability to reach them while they are students but we even can reach them after they are students which is going to be a great resource for alumni, development etc.

Of course, I have some other things down here like the emergency communications and things like that. Anything we really want to get out to campus because we think we will have a greater chance. And just to

tell you what El Paso did when they went with the hotmail version earlier, they went from somewhere in the 20% model of students using the university provided email to about 70%. So you can see how that has really increased their ability to stay in touch with the students. They are now working on trying to get the remaining 30%. I am hoping we will see the same thing here for us.

So, how does this work? We are going to be rolling this out to students around August 1. So we are about a month away. We will update mymav with these new email addresses. We will keep the old email system active until the end of fall because we think they are going to need time to notify their contacts. If they are truly using this email address they need to tell them this is the new email information they are going to have. But we will automatically forward any email they are getting at the old email address forward to the new email address so they should not lose anything either way.

We do own the data. Even though Microsoft hosts it, we will have access so anything dealing with acceptable use or anything that goes on with that, we do have the ability to act if we need to just as if we hosted it here. They will be able to get to it by any web access. It is guaranteed delivery. Some of the problems students have if they use gmail and they try to forward something we are not sure if it will arrive. We do have the guaranteed delivery with this. And the difficult thing that El Paso ran into with their hotmails that the faculty and staff because the university kept the student and the faculty/staff email addresses on campus, they could see students but because the hotmail only had the student address book, they could not find faculty/staff. With this new exchange version, we will be able to populate to where both sides will see the other.

One other thing that we wanted to tell you about, this is an additional benefit that comes when you sign up with a Microsoft email is the ability to use something that they call windows live. With that comes something they call skydrive which gives the students 5GB of network storage. I am not seeing a response. Are you guys shocked? This storage is you can set it where there is a private portion just for the student, they can share it with whoever they choose to or they can make it public. They get a personal blog. They can store photos. They can create web lists like to do lists. They can create events and they can even invite friends to see their space. There is a whole lot more that comes with it.

So, what about you? What are we going to do for you? We provide students with 5GB email and 5GB of storage; we feel that we also need to address your needs. So, what are we doing with email? The first thing that we have to do is we do need to keep the email system housed here because you do have sensitive information and things that we need to make sure that we protect. And even though we would own it if we had it at Microsoft we do not feel comfortable nor does the UT System Office of General Council. So, we will be keeping employee email here. But we also recognize the need for you to have a larger mailbox size. Right now you have 160 MB but we realize that if we are going to try to start communicating with the students your 160 MB is simply not going to help you if they start corresponding like crazy and you are trying to send things back and forth with that student. As well as we think email has continued in its increased use for business.

So the first thing we are going to do is we are going to upgrade our email system from Exchange 2003 to Exchange 2007 which is the same thing the students will have. When we plan to do it if everything goes well, no promises, but we are shouting for the beginning of the fall semester 2008. You will be darn close to what the students are getting. So what do we anticipate to be the changes? Exchange 2007 is very similar to 2003 as I mentioned. What we are going to start off with is an initial goal of having 2GB of space for your inbox, for your mailbox size. Now for those of you, who have had this 160MB limit, this is going to be a huge increase as well. It is not the 5GB that the students get but this is huge. The folks at El Paso only worked with 1GB for their faculty/staff. Can I get some sort of reaction? Are you guys excited? I think that this is absolutely awesome. Everybody is continually facing the problem with their inboxes getting too large or they are not able to send email. You know I think it is just like anything else. When I moved into my house from a smaller one I had all of this storage. But guess what happened? I started saving more and more stuff and I still started running into "I still don't have any place to put things". So as you start getting this increased size, please still be cognizant of how you manage that.

On storage, what I have put here is that the amount of storage that you currently have that is assigned to you personally. So you have a J drive of 200 MB, mav space of 800 MB and you actually have space to have your own web page. I don't know that many faculty/staff are using that right now. Unfortunately, we are not able to do anything at this moment but we are having lots of discussions about storage and how we try to match the same things that are going on for students. I am curious. Can I have a raise of hands that are actually using mavspace? Okay, about 40% I would say. Of those who are using it, are you finding it difficult to use? If we were to provide you mavspace where it looked like a drive just like your c-drive and your J-drive but still mavspace would that make things a little bit easier and make you more conducive where you might actually use it? Give me some nods. So okay, that is one of the options that we have is to be able to. There is an additional product that we just aren't sure quite yet what we are going to do and how we are going to approach it so we may be coming to SAC or someone in order to figure the route if we have these options what would be your preferences.

I am at the question and answer part. I would love to see, Tammy, if we could do the questions related to this topic now because Larry does need to go to another meeting if that is acceptable. Any questions about the email and what we are doing, storage for students? We did show the email system to the students last spring so at least the student leaders are aware of this and very excited about the capabilities it is going to provide for them. Does anybody have a question?

**Q: So when someone graduates it will convert to an alumni email?**

It will not automatically. We have not worked it out with Christina and the troops but the idea is to give them the option of switching to the alumni.uta.edu.

**Q: But if someone has already graduated say a year or two ago, they won't have that option to go?**

Again I think, but there are no promises, this is just one of the lines of thinking is that we wanted to be able to go back in the circle and get the past alumni and get them to sign up for the services. Is that correct, Christina? Yes.

**Q: It sounds like a good marketing tool to contact the alumni?**

Exactly, anything else?

**Q: I just use a folder system and put the old emails in folders. That would not change that?**

No, it would not change that.

Well, thank you very much. How about a cheer? This is the most awesome thing we have done in a long time. We do look forward to working with you and we could go in other directions but I think this is something that is going to help everybody. So thank you very much.

[Tammy M.]Okay at this time I would like to have the VP's that are at our head table to come on up and get into the hot seat. It is not going to be that bad. Okay, I have the resubmitted questions and I am going to read them and then one of the VP's will be answering it. Once we are finished with the presubmitted questions, we have two SAC representatives that will be asking the questions that have been submitted during today's luncheon. The first question is:

**Q: I believe our president has already addressed it but I will go ahead and read it. Will the administration consider offering up to six credit hours of free tuition for staff employees and their immediate family? The majority of the jobs on campus require a degree therefore shouldn't the university be more flexible with tuition in regard to its staff attaining a higher education?**

[Tammy M.]However, I believe our president surprised us and gave us some information regarding our tuition discount this coming fall so we will just go ahead and bypass that question.

**Q: Why does the university have the travel card program that the employee is personally responsible for paying this credit card from home and out of their pocket? Can it not be set up similar to the procard? This is difficult on employees who have to front the costs and wait while processing the payment paperwork for reimbursement.**

[Rusty Ward]I don't like that program either but we really don't have a choice because it is a state-mandated program. We have looked at trying to break away from the states program and do our own but there are some complications with doing that and some costs. Any program that we would design or do on our own the costs. Our companies have almost insisted that we make the individual responsible. Part of that has to do with some trouble that they have had with this program all over the state. The answer to the question right now unfortunately is that we can't do anything about that.

**Q: What is the step the university is taking to make domestic partner benefits a reality on campus?**

[Jean Hood]I know that this is a question that comes up from time to time at not only this university but at many universities and we certainly will continue to look at this in conjunction with what the state legislation says about domestic partners. It is certainly something that we are not going to ignore on the other hand; we are always reminded that there are state laws in the legislature that also impacts decisions on domestic partner benefits.

**Q: With the limited parking availability and the cost of gasoline on the rise, would it be possible for the university to establish bus routes along Arlington and maybe even Mansfield to pick up and drop off employees for a nominal fee?**

[John Hall]That is something that we can certainly take a look at. You just have to realize that it will be treated as an auxiliary enterprise. Which means it basically has to be self-supporting. And so if there is a sufficient amount of demand for something like that. We did a year or so ago start running a shuttle operation from Centerport so that folks that were taking advantage of the Trinity Rail Express could be picked up at Centerport and brought back to the campus. Initially, the ridership was pretty high and then it dropped off significantly. Something like that could certainly be supported as long as there is sufficient demand and the cost is recovered for providing the additional service.

**Q: What is the university's policy in regards to telecommuting?**

[Jean Hood]Right now, in fact Rusty and I had a conversation about a week ago to look into what is the possibility of telecommuting and what are the regulations in respect to the state on telecommuting? I think it is something that we certainly can look at department by department to see does it make sense, how would we implement it. As part of our mission, we are here to serve the students so we would have to look at what the impacts might be of telecommuting. But I am certainly very open to taking a look at what areas that might make sense. So, if you have any interest in telecommuting, please send me an email and we can have further conversation.

[Rusty Ward]The state has, Texas makes it difficult to do business with the state sometimes. So a lot of the stuff that we give these answers on, our hands are tied sometimes and this is a good example. Several years ago in the appropriations bill, telecommuting was actually against the law. That has been changed. One of the things that has not been changed is that you can't accrue compensatory time with telecommuting. So there are some issues that have to be worked out there. Also it's the types of jobs that lend themselves to telecommuting are probably different than a lot of the jobs that we have at the university because we interact with the students and faculty and staff. That is difficult to do with telecommuting but it is something that we are certainly willing to look at and study.

**Q: I have heard that other universities are closing their campus on Fridays to help schools save money and to help provide some gas relief for the rising prices of gas to the employees. I know we have had a memo come out recently to the four-day workweek this summer. What is the possibility of having that year round?**

[Jean Hood]Thank you Tammy. Yes all of you should have received the memo yesterday on the compressed workweek and see if it works in your areas. What we want to do is try this pilot program for the summer and then assess the success and the impact of the program when it ends. And we will continue to look and see if it is something that could continue during the academic year. But then again the challenge during the academic year is our students are here five days a week. So in many cases the faculty may come and go to teach their classes. It is a very different situation during the academic year than in the summer time. So, let's try this program, let's assess the impact and the success of it and then we can look and see if there is any way we can continue it or modify it or take other approaches.

**Q: When the first of the month falls on a weekend date, what is the possibility for employees to get their payroll checks on the Friday before?**

[Rusty Ward]Sorry to sound like a broken record here but the state dictates to us our payroll policy. I know there was another question that I heard about recently where people were asking why we can't get paid on the last day of the month instead of the first day of the month. Several years ago and again I am an accountant by trade so I can make fun of accountants. Several years ago a bean counter in Austin decided that the state could save a million dollars or so by just moving the payment date from the end of the month to the first of the month. So they just waived their hand and blessed it so thou shall now pay everybody from the end of the month to the first day of the month following when you earn the money. So we can't change the payment dates of the payroll system unfortunately. Now we can do that with our semi-monthly payroll. So we do have some flexibility on the hourly payroll but we don't on the monthly payroll.

[John Hall]If on your payroll it is direct deposit, a lot of times it will be credited on that Friday. So for those of you who don't direct deposit your payroll checks, you may want to try that because if the first falls on a weekend or a holiday is on a Monday, your account is credited on that Friday.

**Q: There are numerous reasons, environmental reasons not to use leaf blowers on campus. With the president's sustainability being created, what is the possibility of banning them?**

[John Hall]The leaf blower question – we have around 30 grounds keepers on campus which for a campus our size is really a minimal amount of grounds keepers for a campus this size. I think you all have probably seen over the last several years not only are we maintaining the campus but we are adding a lot of enhancements to the campus. Those are maintenance intensive and if we are going to maintain a sufficient operation, we really need to use the tools that are available for commercial type uses such as leaf blowers and the like versus handing our grounds keepers brooms and the like. That would be a very inefficient way to try to maintain a campus this size. We are very much aware of trying to reduce emissions. Our president's sustainability committee has ten different work groups. One of those work groups is looking at

carbon foot print analysis and working with the city of Arlington in that regard. Much of what we can do to improve our emissions are related to our buildings. We just incurred about \$18 million dollars in expenditures on an energy performance contract all looking at more efficient mechanical equipment like lighting systems and the like all to reduce our energy consumption. We will have a much larger more significant impact on the quality of air around the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

**Q: What is happening at UT Arlington to make the campus friendlier to those who want to walk and/or bicycle to work? Can more bicycle paths or bicycle lanes be added to campus and what is the possibility of having additional bike racks on the south side of Davis Hall?**

[John Hall]We have been working very closely with the City of Arlington in trying to create additional bike lanes. The only bike lane that currently exists is over on pecan. The city does have plans to include a bike lane on Abram Street. Also, I don't know if you have all heard but the Center Street Trail System which is under construction up at Randall Mill will come down the western side of Center Street all the way down to Johnson Creek. That is another bike lane and jogging path that will be creating a trail system in Arlington that is underway. I should also add that we are in the process of additional road abandonment's, obtaining the ownership of some of the roadways around the campus. We obtain ownership of more of the roadways around campus then we can create additional bike lanes.

**Q: Flooding issues around the University Center have been consistent for the last few years, with the City of Arlington granting funds for the improvement of Greek Row, what about first street?**

[John Hall]It is a real issue and this came up I think last year and so we have been looking at ways to address the flooding on 1<sup>st</sup> Street. Unfortunately, Southwestern Bell has a very large duct bank that is in South Oak Street that runs north and south. To try to put a storm drain system in that would then connect to the existing system down at Pecan or Center Street would require that we capture the water up on 1<sup>st</sup> and take the system east to either Pecan or Center. Unfortunately this large duct bank is fairly near the surface and several feet deep and would prevent us from being able to put a storm system in on 1<sup>st</sup>. Now what we are doing though as part of our engineering research building, which will break ground in July, we are going to be capturing rain water from that side. We will have large tanks buried in the courtyard under the ground that will capture the rainwater. It will also capture the HVAC condensate for irrigation purposes. But capturing some of the water before it gets to 1<sup>st</sup> will certainly help. We are still looking at other engineering approaches to try to elevate the amount of water coming down 1<sup>st</sup> street or at least create some type of a bridge element or elevated walkway that would allow the water to run underneath. in order to resolve that problem. It is a big problem and we have some problems like that over on West Nedderman and we will be putting in a storm drain system there this summer, which will elevate that problem. It is something that we are aware of and we are working towards a resolution.

**Q: What is the status of the building of a campus landmark such as the Bronze Horse or a clock tower?**

[John Hall]The Regents approved our master plan last May. It was an update to the plan that they approved in May 1999 and it does include a clock tower in the Central Mall area. It is something that we would look for a private donor to step forward to fund. So, that is very much part of our master plan. We have also kicked around the idea of some type of Bronze Maverick or something and it could be placed in front of the MAC. That was one of the reasons that the area in front of the MAC is so large. We may want to put some type of fountain element or some type of Bronze Horse statue or something there in front of the MAC.

**Q: What is the status of the Special Events Center?**

[James Spaniolo]Let me try to answer that one. First, the Special Events Center we have been talking about it for two or three years. There is no question that it continues to be a top priority of the university to develop and build a Special Events Center. It is one of my personal priorities because I think it is one of the missing pieces here at UT Arlington. We have been working very hard, quietly behind the scenes to try to put together a financial package for building a Special Events Center. The recent economic turmoil in the credit markets has not made it any easier and in fact it has delayed us some. What I can tell you is that both personally and on behalf of the university we are committed to building a special events center that we can all be proud of where we can play athletics events, where we can hold convocations, commencements and where we will have a building we can all be proud of. Putting the finances together including private contributions is a major task. We will continue to work very diligently on that. I hope sometime by this fall to at least be able to talk more definitively about exactly what our plans are. We are not forgetting about it. It is very much on the agenda and I think about it every day.

**Q: I am hearing from a fairly large number of coworkers that their doctors are no longer taking Blue Cross Blue Shield patients including those with UT Select. Is our future with BCBS in jeopardy?**

[Jean Hood]We researched this question when you submitted it to us and Robert James checked on this. There is nothing that we are aware of through BCBS or any of our other Texas Institutions that suggest that doctors are not going to take BCBS.

**Q: The next question is with the increase of campus thefts, what is the possibility that the university creating a community watch program on campus?**

[John Hall]We actually have one on campus that we implemented last year in our residence halls. We plan to extend that to our apartment community this fall. We will continue to allow that program to grow and gain momentum but we do have that in place and we are looking to expand that this fall.

**Q: What is the university doing to assist employees in organizing a car pool for their daily commute?**

[John Hall]Part of the presidents sustainability committee, one of the work groups is our Transportation Work Group and they have been recently discussing car pool opportunities with the *T* over in Fort Worth. The *T* serves all of Tarrant County and so we are looking into that program in more depth as we speak and hopefully we will be able to give you all more information about that program very soon. It does appear as though there is a car pooling program already in place and that it would serve all of Tarrant County. So, look for more to come on that.

**Q: What is the university doing to insure that higher salaries, regarding merit increases are given to those who deserve them?**

[Jean Hood]One of the things that we have been doing in the time that I have been here and I am talking about the Office of Human Resources working with the other Vice Presidents, Deans and Provost Office is to look at from a university wide perspective our salaries. We know that the metroplex is a very competitive area. We know that clearly we want to be able to, along with a very excellent benefits package we have to offer, salaries that are competitive as we can be. We will continue that work and with respect to rewarding outstanding performance, we will be, the HR team will be pulling together with members from the community in the next weeks a committee to look at the whole performance management process to insure that we have the process that works across the university to be able to identify and reward the outstanding performance.

**Q: I believe you have already answered part of the next question but I will go ahead and pose it. IN the past, the lower wages at the university were offset by better benefits. During the past fiscal year, the merit increases seem to be lower while the expenses of benefits have increased, parking and medical insurance for example. Therefore, employees were effectively taking a cut in pay even though a merit increase was received. What is the university doing to increase the benefits at a lower price and maintain competitive salaries?**

[Jean Hood]Going forward this year there is no premium share increase for employee's medical benefits. Also my understanding is that there will be no increase in the parking fee this year either. This year the overall, you know the merit pool was 3%; there was also a 1% equity increase. So the overall pool this year was 4%. We will continue to strive to look at the costs and to look at again what is possible with our merit pool. Sometimes with our medical insurance, that is based on a formula or a utilization for the whole university system and it really depends on, in a very simple way I won't spend a lot of time explaining this, (happy to on a one on one) depends very much on the claims that come in. This year we were very favorable so there was no increase in the premium.

[Tammy M.]This concludes the presubmitted questions. At this time, I have Amber Zukerman and Beth Ballard who have the questions that you wrote today. We are going to go ahead and move on those.

**Q: This next question follows up to what Jean was just speaking about. Can you explain how the university goes about determining who will get raises and how the cost of living raise is to be implemented on campus? How would that come down from the state?**

[Jean Hood]On the cost of living that is mandated or approved by the state, I am going to let Rusty talk about cost of living because I have not been here when that has happened.

[Rusty Ward]We can't lobby the legislature, none of us can. But, if you know some of your neighbors they can. We have been left out the last two legislative sessions. State employees have for statewide pay increases. The rest of the state employees have gotten some but university employees have been specifically exempt. When the state does give university employees a raise and we have to fund about 35% of it, as opposed to 100% of it. The last two sessions in four years we have been excluded. Now hopefully during this upcoming legislative session it will come up again. All universities in Texas will have a united front trying to get this piece of legislation passed and hopefully because we have been over looked the last couple of sessions; they will look favorable on us this time.

[James Spaniolo] One clarification; Over the last four or five years, we have been in a position but like Rusty said the university has had to come up with all of the funds to pay any increases. There is no such thing as a cost of living increase. All raises unless it is an equity issue like we have begun to address this year, the pool of money set aside for the raises are based on merit. We are going to each year and going

into the future we are going to try to make sure that it is true that the people who receive merit increases are those who deserve merit increases based on performance. Please know unlike some employers there is no cost of living increase and that is just one of the realities but it is also one of the things that we are committed to is trying to reward good performance. With the limited resources we have but I think if you look around the country right now, look around at the employers, even in Texas that UT Arlington, University of Texas System, the package that includes benefits and salaries is one that is very competitive compared to many other employers. Particularly when you look at what has happened in the private sector. When the economy goes down, people lose their jobs. That can happen at 6 universities too and I hope it never happens here but it can sometimes also be a reality. Less so than in the private sector and I think that is something to remember.

**Q: First, I would like to introduce Doug Kuykendall. He is our assistant vice president for Student Affairs as well as the Director of Campus Recreation. We are going to talk about the MAC. Is there any chance that the MAC dues or cost could become a benefit? Perhaps make it a benefit after a few years of service as part of the benefit package?**

[Doug Kuykendall]I love talking about the MAC. Just so you know, charging fees for the MAC is relatively new. We started this in 2004. Students passed a referendum in 2002 to fund the building of a Campus Recreation fields complex and legislation dictated that we charge a whopping fee of \$24 a year. We charge the students \$24 a year and faculty/staff \$24 a year. That was the first time we ever did that. With the opening of the MAC, legislation also dictated that we charge faculty/staff at least the same amount that we charge students. Students pay \$225 a year and so we charge faculty/staff \$240. Do to legislation that is the reason we came up with that. In an attempt to make it as painless as possible, we came up with a number of ways that you can pay. You can pay by payroll deduction, you can pay on the average of \$20 a month, you can pay cash every month, you can pay by the semester or you can pay the annual fee.

As far as becoming a part of a benefits package, I can't speak to that. Again it would have to, because of legislation; it would have to have a value of at least what we charge students.

**Q: Is it possible to get payroll deduction for spouses and or family members who are also utilizing the MAC services?**

[Rusty Ward]Sandy Elliott said the deduction is handled by the people at the MAC center.

[Sandy Elliot]They handle that screen. I know of no reason why they could not make that deduction.

[Rusty Ward]We will take a look at it.

[Sandy Elliot]If we can do it, we will do it.

**Q: What is the university doing with the gas lease?**

[Rusty Ward]It is in an account, just sitting there. The president has appointed a group of people to make recommendations to him.

[James Spaniolo]Let me just give you a brief summary of where we are on the gas drilling. We have now drilled six wells but we have not completed the process just yet. The next step is we have got to have a, if you notice if you look over on Pecan Street, there is a water line being built. This line will enable us to do the fracturing process on these wells without trying to get too technical about it. That is the essential

procedure in actually drawing the natural gas out of the ground. That will take place sometime in the next couple of months.

Then we can hope to raise that natural gas from the Barnett Shale into a pipeline that would go to market. Now that pipeline has not yet been put in place either. So, we are hoping best case sometime early fall there will be production of natural gas and that we would begin to receive revenues from it. But at this point, we don't know how much it will be. I am very reluctant to speculate about what might be received from it.

I can say this, that we are thinking very carefully about the wisest and most strategic use of those funds whatever they are. If we are fortunate, there will be a revenue stream of some size that will go on for ten or fifteen or twenty years. It may be more in the early stages than at the later stages. All of that is yet to be determined and of course technology changes. We are hoping that this will be a resource that will help to strengthen the university over time. We will probably use those funds in several different ways but what we are going to try very much to avoid is putting them in the operating general fund. We want to do something strategic, invest for the future, but also use those funds to make a difference on the campus for students, for faculty, for staff so that there will be a tangible benefit that would not otherwise be available if we did not have this natural resource that we are hoping to draw upon from this natural gas revenue.

I am hopeful. I am optimistic about what we are going to be able to do and how much might be there for us. But, there is no way for us to know until we actually begin production. Then, we will have a chance to talk more explicitly about how we might use those revenues.

**Q: What will it take to get a new Central Library Building?**

[John Hall]Jean says a donor. I was going to say about \$85 million. In our master plan it does provide two different options. One is a new icon building that would be constructed where science hall is currently. That could become the new central library building. If not, and if that building is used for other purposes, then there are plans to expand the existing central library building in our current campus master plan.

**Q: Why don't employees, especially the lowest paid employees receive discounts on continuing Education programs like HVAC certification, insurance or real estate courses? I was told there is no discount for these courses that could actually help someone move up.**

[John Hall]There are actually discounts available for staff wishing to take continuing education programs. What I would do is that any of you all that have specific questions in that regard is to contact Theresa Madden-Thompson to see what discounts are available to staff wishing to take classes in continuing education.

**Q: Can we have an on campus dining option on Fridays? The Plaza and university club are only open for three or four days a week.**

[John Hall]That question sounds like it is talking about the summertime hours. Because certainly during the fall and spring they are open throughout the week. Again, this is based on supply and demand if you will. University Club the use was down considerably for the summer. We have some expenses that we have to meet with the sales revenue and we weren't able to do that with the reduction in use for the summer so we made the decision to close it for Monday s and Fridays but leave it open Tuesday through Thursday. And much can be said of the dining service facilities in this building. Typically demand is way off on Fridays. So we have reduced the operation in order to align better with the revenue stream. These are all auxiliary enterprises and we have to approach it from a business perspective. They have to be self

sustaining, self supporting enterprise. Certainly if the demand was more, we would be happy to provide additional services on Fridays for example during the summer months.

[James Spaniolo]Let me just add to what John has said. I would just encourage every one who is considering buying their lunch off campus to use the University Club or to use the facilities here at the university center. I think we have some of the best on campus dining facilities around. At the risk of sounding provincial or chauvinistic, eat on campus. Use the University Club. The University Club is a great place. We are very proud of it. Our visitors are very proud of it. It is for faculty and staff. It is for faculty and staff primarily even though we have opened it to retirees and alumni. We are proud of that too. The reason the university club exists is to be available to faculty and staff and I hope that you will use that facility and our on campus dining to an even greater extent. Because they are good and you all need to help support the university. To the extent that we create the demand, we will have them open.

[Tammy]On a personal note. You can put money on your maverick ID cards. If you use those ID cards and purchase your lunch, you do get a percentage of a discount. I think it is like 10% or something so that is another way you can purchase your lunch on campus and save money.

[John Hall]That is true and I was just going to add that the Subway will be opening in July. We have been working on a national contract that is finally in place and so the equipment is on order and we will be opening up a Subway sandwich shop in the University Center in July.

**Q: We had a question regarding the outside courtyard area, outside the university club. Evidently they are being run away if they have not purchased lunch from the University Club. They are looking for options for a nice outside eating area where they will not be run off while they are trying to eat their lunch.**

[John Hall]They should not be getting run off. I eat at the University Club quite often and unfortunately I never do see too many people taking advantage of the seating that is out there in the courtyard. But certainly let me talk with our food service folks and make sure that no one is being run off from that area. We are also looking to provide a nice seating area on the patio deck area between Texas Hall and Davis Hall. We are getting prices on some tables, umbrella's and plants to make that area more appealing also so that would be yet another area where folks could go out and sit down and have lunch on a nice day.

**Q: Is there a book on how to do things as an Administrative Assistant or clerical staff? This is from a person who has been employed for six months.**

[Tammy]I am going to address that one. With the staff advisory council we are initiating a mentor program. I would ask all employees who are Administrative Assistants and need to have access to define or have a general question on how to get through the computer system on campus to visit our website. We have mentors to help you out. We also have some brochures on the outside in the foyer area regarding that I believe. Please contact Staff Advisory Council and we will assist you as far as getting you the assistance you need.

[Jean Hood]Also if I could add if this is coming from a new employee, please take advantage of the wonderful services that the Staff Development, Shawn Dumond and Eunice who are parts of my team. You can look on the website we have very many programs available and always invite suggestions from everyone about what kind of things they might like to see. It is a very rich and robust development program that I just wanted to give a little commercial for that. Thank you.

**Q: My last question from this side of the room is has the administration ever considered a child care facility on campus?**

[John Hall]There actually is a child care facility on campus. We have a long term ground lease with YWCA of Tarrant County. It is just south of Mitchell Street over by the Continuing Education Work Force Development Center. There are some scholarships available. That childcare facility is available for faculty, staff and students.

**Q: Many departments on campus are able to have Spirit Fridays while others are not. President Spaniolo encourages Spirit Fridays and even his own staff will just wear jeans and a spirit t-shirt. I understand that it is up to the department but I think at a minimum we should have the choice to wear khakis slacks and a UTA polo colored shirt. This look is tasteful and professional. Then it is up to the department whether they want to allow jeans or t-shirts. Some of us would like to represent our university. What could be done to encourage spirit day participation across campus in all departments?**

[James Spaniolo]I would like to thank you for that question and just to say I am delighted to see just how much spirit there is on campus Fridays, Thursdays, Wednesdays, Tuesdays and Mondays and over the weekends. I think that on Fridays, you ought to be able to wear slacks and a blue UT Arlington blue colored spirit shirt of some kind. I am seeing more and more of that on the campus. I just wish that could do it more often but sometimes I am not in a position to do so and I get a lot of teasing from my colleagues over in Davis Hall when they are wearing their t-shirts and I'm not. I think it is a great idea and I would encourage everybody to do so. If there are questions about it, I think they should go directly to Jean. But I don't think it should be controversial. I think this is part of what we do. We are mavericks, we show our spirit, and we love that blue, white and orange.

[Tammy]Okay, thank you. This concludes our question and answer session. If everyone will remain seated for just one moment we will let our VP's go back down.

[Jean Hood]I just wanted to tell everyone this is my first time to be at the forum. This is a wonderful setting for exchange of ideas and conversation. I had the privilege of working with the Executive Committee for a couple of meetings where they shared with me the format of this. I think you want to just give a round of applause to the Executive Committee who put this together.