Dave Patel began the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking them for their service on the board. He then asked the members to introduce themselves. Following introductions, Patel noted the requirements of the board charter to review allocation of differential tuition and to provide recommendations to the dean. He provided members with a document noting categories of allocation for FY17, and asked members to discuss the allocation.

Patel noted that the majority of allocation is for faculty salaries, due to the large gap in salaries between business faculty versus non-business faculty. The Huntsman School has hired 34 faculty members in the past five years, accounting for an increase in allocation of differential tuition for faculty salaries. He also noted that employee benefits, which, per USU policy, are 45% of salary, are included in this accounting.

Sterling Bone noted the tradeoffs involved in using differential tuition for faculty salary, noting that many faculty can easily go elsewhere if salaries are not competitive.

Patel stated that the Huntsman School falls between the 50 and 60 percentile for salaries, noting that HSB does not offer top dollar. Responding to a question about exactly which faculty are on differential tuition and how much of their salary is on differential tuition, Patel noted that allocations are fluid from year to year based on availability of resources and competing needs.

Bray Beck stated that the real concern is the other parts of where it is going, such as program support and administrative infrastructure.

Patel stated that the program support category includes support for extracurricular programs that can help students differentiate themselves in the marketplace for placement. In response to a question from Ben Coffin, Patel noted that this support in not allocated per specific academic program, but rather available to all students.

Kathy Chudoba noted that this support covers the recruiting, outreach, placement functions for the Masters in MIS Program, including staff salary, travel, student workers, workshops, lunches, and other activities.
Patel then added that for the administrative infrastructure category, support includes such items and activities as research databases that faculty use for research, marketing of the HSB, and student wages. He noted that the school weighs student employment versus hiring full-time staff on a continual basis to try to find the most efficient allocation of resources. Kathy Chudoba noted that having student employees all across the school is an opportunity to inform and educate them about how differential tuition is used, and allows the students transparency because they are able to see the uses of differential tuition. She encouraged the faculty members of the board to use this opportunity to educate the student employees in their respective departments. Jeff Doyle commented that perhaps the school could put together a video about how differential tuition is being used.

Hadley Sargent asked that the school spend differential tuition carefully. Ruth Harrison responded that she communicates with her staff on a regular basis on the importance of how they spend differential tuition resources. Patel reiterated that strict financial controls are in place at Utah State University, and that the Huntsman School’s budget is reviewed quarterly by the university. The philosophy of the school is to be wise stewards of resources, regardless of the source of the money.

Patel noted that the essential challenge seems to be one of communication. He provided data of online traffic for November, 2017, for the differential tuition webpage, which showed 103 page views for the differential tuition webpage, from an overall 16,000 page views for the Huntsman School website. He noted that the school pushes out a lot of information, and yet, students do not take advantage of the information. He asked for help from the students on the board in figuring out how to better disseminate information, not just about differential tuition, but about the myriad activities and opportunities provided by the HSB.

Hadley Sargent noted that faculty are under-utilized in filling communication gaps, and asked the faculty members of the board for their opinion on how to engage more faculty. Kathy Chudoba responded by noting that she requires her students to acquire 10 points through participating in career development activities. At least 25% of her students have less than 3 of those 10 points. Their explanation is that they are working on Fridays because they don’t have class. This is the 3rd semester that she has done this, and she feels she is getting less push back, and hopes over time the culture will change.

Sterling Bone stated that he is seeing the impact. He would like information to come to students earlier on in their time at the HSB. Reference points have changed a lot, what we offer and what he hears from recruiters is of a private school experience, an elite experience, from a career services front, career exploration trip front. He does not believe students know what the price points are comparatively.

Hayden Hubbard noted that he talks to his fellow students all the time about the Huntsman Scholar Program, and most have never heard of it. This communication gap exists across the school. Brae Beck asked that the school hold open town halls every semester to provide
students the ability to bring up any issues and discuss them with the administration. He also asked that the administration meet with student club leadership on a regular basis to gather and provide feedback.

Ruth Harrison responded by noting that the school provides a lot of information on their website, and challenged the assumption that the school was being reactive to the differential tuition issue due to media coverage. She noted that the differential tuition webpage, which provides more comprehensive information, has been online for several years.

After some conversation about communication gaps, Ben Coffin stated the need to move past whatever did or did not happen in the past, and focus on the way forward. He noted that he is amazed at the amount of resources available at this university, and suggested that the school create a campaign noting different activities as “Differential Tuition at Work,” and a message of “We are all in this together. We are using funds wisely. We want to build a better school.”

Ruth Harrison asked how we get the message across. Dave Patel noted that the Focused Fridays initiative came about partly because students couldn’t attend events because of classes, and yet now, after the HSB created a class schedule without classes on Fridays, students still do not attend Friday events.

Sterling Bone stated that he wanted to avoid this being a 4-year reoccurrence, and suggested that the school inform and educate students about all of the opportunities available to them, communicate the value proposition, including the need and use of differential tuition, in 1000 and 2000-level courses, so students understand the value proposition earlier.

Justin Larson noted that he understood the value proposition of the MHR Program from day one from Steve Hanks, the director of the MHR Program. He stated that he knows that he has opportunities and knows the history from day one.

Hadley Sargent asked if the group could do a student survey. Ruth Harrison noted that it takes time to shift culture. Kathy Chudoba noted that this has been a great conversation. We need better communication between students and the administration.

The group was in general agreement to 1) develop an actionable communication strategy regarding the value proposition provided by the Huntsman School, to include communicating the use and need for differential tuition, 2) the need to hold regular town halls, and 3) provide more detailed accounting of the allocation of differential tuition.