ACADEMIC COUNCIL 1  
Texas Tech University

Meeting of  
September 20, 2016

MINUTES

Present: Stefanie Borst, Bobbie Brown, Adrienne Carnes, Savannah Chambers for Cindy Akers, Todd Chambers, Claudia Cogliser, Vicki Coverstone, Cathy Duran, Genevieve Durham DeCesaro, Keith Dye, Birgit Green, Jamie Hansard, Saif Haq, Melanie Hart, Sheila Hoover, Lynn Huffman, Patrick Hughes, Jorge Iber, Darryl James, Michelle Kiser, Mitzi Lauderdale, Robin Lock, Justin Louder, Andrew Martin, Felicia Martin, Pat McConnel, Garrett McKinnon, Alison Myhra, Seshadri Ramkumar, David Roach, Ben Sharp, Rob Stewart chair, Kevin Stoker, Patricia Vitela, Janessa Walls, Vicki West, Aliza Wong

Guests: Dennis Arnett, Jennifer Hughes, Brenda Martinez, Kristina Mitchell

Stewart called the meeting to order and introduced the minutes from the August meeting. A correction was requested for the minutes (updating percentages for response rates from students on the electronic course evaluation platform). Ramkumar moved to approve the minutes as corrected, Chamber seconded, and the motion was approved.

McKinnon introduced the proposed preliminary academic calendar for CY2021. After a brief discussion, Huffman moved to approve the calendar as proposed, Haq seconded, and the motion was approved.

Prior to reviewing the course approval summary, Durham DeCesaro noted a new policy regarding approval of core curriculum courses. She said that courses would be approved at Academic Council first, then via the core curriculum committee.

After McKinnon introduced the course approval summary, Stewart questioned the inclusion of the GEOL 4355/5355 tandem courses and asked for a review of the syllabi to ensure adequate academic rigor for the graduate portion of the course. He suggested tabling the courses so the review could be performed. Additionally, SOC 5312 was tabled pending a review by the College of Education to ensure such a course did not already exist. After further discussion of these courses, Ramkumar moved to approve the courses that were not tabled, Wong seconded, and the motion was approved.

Roach introduced a proposal for a B.A. in Political Science to be offered via distance delivery. Mitchell noted that a minor in the area already existed at the Waco campus, and that the university wanted to expand the program. Louder noted that the new degree would not be a full bachelor’s degree, but rather a bachelor’s-completion
program. Chambers moved to approve the program as proposed, Wong seconded, and the motion was approved.

Stewart discussed the small class report, noting that for fall 2016 there were 209 total small classes reported, 163 (or 77.99%) of which were kept open after a review. He compared that with fall 2014, during which 170 small classes were reported and 148 (or 87.06%) were kept open. He noted that an increasing number of small classes were being captured each year, meaning the small class portal was doing its job of capturing data on small classes. He was encouraged that the percentage of kept classes was declining year over year, but noted that more small classes could be converted to independent study. Roach noted that the small class portal often reports data for “Maymester” and intersession courses after those classes are almost completed, and also said that some Study Abroad courses were being flagged by the system. Wong noted that many Study Abroad courses only have eight to nine students and requested continued exceptions for those courses to be offered. In response to a question regarding core courses, Durham DeCesaro noted that core curriculum courses could not be offered via independent study.

James provided an update on the Strategic Planning Initiative, noting that President Schovanec wanted to finalize the strategic plan by January for submission at the February Board of Regents meeting. James said 10 to 12 focus group meetings would be held across campus, and that the President’s Office was trying to solicit as much feedback as possible before developing the strategic plan.

Louder touched on video captioning, an important accessibility issue. He noted that the University of California-Berkeley had recently removed much of its online video content because the content was not subtitled. Louder asked the council members to have their colleges and departments review YouTube videos with Texas Tech University tags to ensure they were subtitled. He said his staff could assist with faculty training on how to make online documents and videos meet accessibility standards.

Durham DeCesaro relayed an announcement regarding supplemental instruction and tutoring by the Math department. She noted that the department had developed supplemental instruction for specific courses that reviewed course content.

Additionally, Durham DeCesaro noted that THECB had approved Hill College as a recognized teaching site.

Stewart discussed plans for the pending Thursday night football game scheduled for September 29. He said a formal statement from the Athletic Department regarding scheduling for the game was pending, and that Human Resources was working on a formal statement regarding release off staff. He reiterated that instructors retained discretion to hold or cancel classes held that night.
Stewart also provided an update on the Electronic Course/Instructor Evaluation project. He noted the project was preparing to launch focus groups regarding the evaluation process, and that instructors could voluntarily adopt the system during the fall semester.

The council next discussed the issue of recognizing club sports as a university-sponsored activity for the purpose of missed classes. Stewart noted that the council had touched on the issue in prior semesters without coming to a formal consensus on the issue (though the council had previously agreed that fraternity- or sorority-based activities would not be recognized as university-sponsored). He noted that unless an activity was sanctioned by the Student Government Association of Texas Tech University athletics, it was up to the discretion of faculty whether or not to grant leave, and that a unified policy was needed. Duran volunteered to chair a committee to investigate the matter further and provide a recommendation to Academic Council. Sharp, Akers, Chambers, Cogliser, Iber, Martin, and Lauderdale also volunteered to serve on the committee.

Martinez provided an update on the Curriculog platform, noting that proposals for new courses, course changes, course deletions, new programs, program changes, and program deletions were available. She said the Registrar's office had dedicated training resources and help contacts available for faculty who wanted to begin using the system.

In other business:
• Lauderdale update the committee on the practice of recording grades of X or I in Banner, and noted that the university was exploring software options that could provide a solution to the problem.
• Duran called for faculty and student volunteers to participate in training in order to sit on a variety of conduct panels. She said graduate and undergraduate students were especially needed.
• McKinnon noted that the deadline for submitting courses effective with the spring 2017 semester would be the Friday prior to the October 2016 Academic Council meeting.

With no other business raised, Stewart adjourned the meeting.