

ACADEMIC COUNCIL
Texas Tech University

Meeting of
December 20, 2016

MINUTES

Present: Cindy Akers, Ashlee Brown, Adrienne Carnes, Todd Chambers, Claudia Cogliser, David Doerfert, Genevieve Durham DeCesaro, Cathy Duran, Keith Dye, Gary Elbow for Aliza Wong, Sheila Hoover, Jorge Iber, Darryl James, Lesley Mellinee, Justin Louder, Andrew Martin, Felicia Martin, Pat McConnel, Garrett McKinnon, Julian Olivas for Jamie Hansard, David Roach, Lori Rodriguez for Saif Haq, Brian Shannon, Brian Steele, Rob Stewart chair, Kevin Stoker, Patricia Vitela, Janessa Walls

Guests: Eric Bernard, Fethi Inan, Brenda Martinez

Stewart called the meeting to order before taking a moment to commend Martin for accepting a vice presidential position with the NCAA in Indianapolis. Shannon also commended Martin for her work with the university's athletic department.

Stewart then introduced the minutes from the November meeting. With no corrections suggested, Huffman moved to approve the minutes as submitted, Doerfert seconded, and the motion was approved.

McKinnon introduced the summary of course approvals. Doerfert moved that the course changes/additions be approved as submitted, Akers seconded, and the motion was approved.

The Council heard a proposal for a new Bachelor of Arts degree in Digital Media and Professional Communication from the College of Media and Communication. Chambers noted that the degree was a "generalist" degree in the same vein as the Bachelor of General Studies degree in the College of Human Sciences, where students would complete blocks of electives in various areas once their core curriculum has been finalized. He said the college had seen a large demand for graduates with communication skills and digital media literacy and knowledge, and he also noted that the college expected growth in the degree through the university's regional sites. After a brief discussion, Doerfert moved to accept the degree as proposed, Akers seconded, and the motion was approved.

The Council also heard a proposal to reduce the semester credit hours required for the B.S. in Environmental Engineering degree to 123 from 124, a move made in order to streamline the degree with hours approved by THECB. Chambers moved to approve the hours reduction, Iber seconded, and the motion was approved.

Bernard led a discussion on a proposal to reduce the semester credit hours required for a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (B.L.A.) degree to 120 from 148. He noted that the accrediting body with whom the Department of Landscape Architecture works had visited the campus a year earlier and suggested revisions to the program's hours and curriculum. He noted that the program had been losing students in recent years because more students were opting to pursue four-year degrees in complementary fields such as civil engineering rather than five-year degrees in landscape architecture. Further, he noted that peer institutions had recently begun revising the degree to four years. Bernard noted that multiple new classes, as well as new learning outcomes, had been introduced as part of the effort, which ultimately consisted of a reduction in the time required for the program, but not its overall content. After a brief discussion, Doerfert moved that the hours reduction be approved as proposed, Stoker seconded, and the motion was approved.

Chambers discussed a new graduate certificate offered by the College of Media and Communication named Communication for Center Directors in Institutions of Higher Education. He noted that Luke LeFebvre, director of the Communication Training Center, had championed the new certificate that would provide professional communication skills at the graduate level. Chambers said the 15-hour certificate would be the first program of its kind in the nation, and in response to a question noted that there were no current plans to offer the certificate or associated classes online, though the possibility existed. Huffman moved to approve the certificate program as proposed, Cogliser seconded, and the motion was approved.

The Council also heard a proposal from the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership for a new 15-hour graduate certificate in eLearning and Online Teaching. The certificate would assist faculty in teaching online courses, allowing faculty and graduate students to be more effective online instructors and more competitive in job markets. It was noted that a recent change to the university's operating policies allowed faculty to take up to nine hours per year of courses at no charge in support of a certificate (but not a degree). After a brief discussion, Akers moved to approve the certificate program as proposed, Doerfert seconded, and the motion was approved.

Durham DeCesaro provided an update on core curriculum and multicultural course submissions. She said that 15 courses had been submitted to the core curriculum committee, with about half having been approved and the remainder sent back for revisions. Final decisions were expected in early January, with recommendations from the core curriculum committee expected to be submitted to Academic Council in time for the Council's January meeting.

Durham DeCesaro also reminded those in attendance about communication literacy proposals, noting that they were due February 6, 2017. She indicated that space in the online and printed catalogs for the 2017-2018 academic year would be reserved so that finalized plans could be submitted.

Roach noted that the Department of Political Science had recently approved five new or updated graduate concentrations: Environmental Policy & Administration, Public Management, Healthcare Administration, Nonprofit Management, and American Politics.

Durham DeCesaro announced that the THECB had approved an increase in semester credit hours for the Bachelor of Music in Music degree, as well as consolidation of the Zoology degree into Biology. In response to a question from James, she noted that the Zoology degree's termination date would be extended to allow students currently enrolled to finish the degree, though the final date had not yet been announced pending a departmental review.

Stewart lauded the recently conducted commencement ceremonies, particularly the music. James noted that certain colleges did not have significant faculty representation, and inquired about the possibility of the Provost's Office urging more faculty attendance at commencement. Stewart also said that one question often asked of the President and Regents regarded the number of graduates, and that he would be seeking a per-college breakdown of the number of students both graduating and "walking" at commencement in order to funnel that number to the President and Regents.

Stewart commended Council members and their colleges for their diligence in submitting textbook orders to the University's bookstore, noting that as of December 19 (the contractual 30-day deadline) 97 percent of textbook orders had been submitted. He said that he hoped that such success could be continued into subsequent semesters.

In other business:

- Doerfert noted that the Graduate Council was working on a number of semester credit hour adjustments.
- Huffman noted that the Curriculog online curriculum management system was "smoothing out" from a user perspective.
- Louder said a pilot program for 24/7 support of eLearning courses and programs was set to launch Dec. 22.
- James discussed the moratorium on accelerated bachelors-to-masters programs initiated by SACSCOC. He said colleges could submit programs to be reconsidered, though programs would have to be considered individually. He indicated that colleges would have to submit justification for double-counting courses that reduced the overall hours below the 120 undergraduate/30 graduate total threshold. He also said that the response time from SACSCOC regarding requests was four to five months, and that a new formal policy regarding accelerated bachelors-to-masters degrees was expected by Dec. 2017.

With no other business raised, Stewart adjourned the meeting.