

**Texas Tech University  
Academic Council**

**Meeting of April 21, 2020  
1:30 PM, Skype**

**Attendance**

**Present:** Cindy Akers, Dennis Arnett, Kathy Austin, Andrea Bilkey, Bobbie Brown, Todd Chambers, Joseph Dannemiller, John Dascanio, Mayukh Dass, David Doerfert, Cathy Duran, Dottie Durband, Genevieve Durham DeCesaro, Kristi Gaines, Greg Glaus, Birgit Green, Lindsay Hallowell, Jamie Hansard, Melanie Hart, Bret Hendricks, Sheila Hoover, Patrick Hughes, Jorge Iber, Darryl James, Michelle Kiser, Amy Koerber, Mitzi Lauderdale, Justin Louder, Brenda Martinez, Shirley Matteson, Pat McConnel, Sukant Misra, Alison Myhra, Dee Nguyen, Reagan Ribordy, David Rivero, David Roach, Brian Shannon, Rob Stewart, Carol Sumner, Annette Uddameri, Janessa Walls, Lesley Nall Washington, Dana Weiser, Vicki West, and Aliza Wong.

**Guest:** Hunter Heck

**Action Items:**

1. Associate Deans are asked to continue to reinforce to all area faculty and instructors of record the following:
  - It is critical to continue consistent engagement with students. Even though courses have moved online, they should not be administered as correspondence courses.
  - IoRs should be considerate of student challenges such as lack of access to internet when needed; inadequate or inconsistently available equipment; and an unfamiliarity with online learning.
2. Associate Deans are asked to work on college-specific communication related to grades of CR/NC.

Stewart called the meeting to order by presenting the minutes from the March Council meeting. Several members noted that they were in attendance but were not listed in the minutes. Stewart assured the members that the minutes would be amended to show all attendees. With no additional discussion, Chambers moved to approve the minutes, Doerfert seconded, and the minutes were approved with amendments.

The next item of business concerned the course and program proposals. Hallowell explained that the terms in green had been moved forward so we do not make changes to courses or programs that students have already begun registering for. However, Durham DeCesaro clarified that the informational program proposals could be moved back to their original implementation dates of fall 2020, and that any program director wishing to do so should contact Hallowell. Programs that choose to do this should ensure that they are accommodating any students who might have already registered for the Fall 2020 term and could be negatively affected by the change. Durham DeCesaro emphasized that the voting item to increase the semester credit hours for the Petroleum Engineering BS could not be moved back to fall, as it requires THECB approval.

With no additional discussion regarding the course or program proposals, Akers moved to approve, Roach seconded, and the motion passed.

Durham DeCesaro then brought the Council's attention to the attachment regarding Kinesiology and Sport Management courses. Due to an unforeseen delay after the department submitted the proposals, the courses in the document failed to reach the March AC agenda, so Durham DeCesaro and Heather Eaton in the Registrar's Office made the administrative decision to push them forward so that the changes could be implemented prior to the first day of advanced registration. This decision was made after Dr. Lumpkin indicated all currently declared KIN, ESS, SPMN, and SMPT majors, minors, and interdisciplinary students with concentrations in these areas would be accommodated. The change was to add a general restriction to the list of courses so that only Kinesiology and Sport Management majors could enroll in the courses.

Hughes asked whether the new restrictions will prevent students from declaring a minor or concentration area in these programs. Durham DeCesaro explained that to her knowledge, students should still be able to declare minors or concentrations in those programs. Iber clarified that, per his conversation with Dr. Lumpkin, students with minors or concentrations in these areas would be allowed to take these courses. Stewart asked if the "majors" element of the restriction included minors and concentrations as well. While the coding does not automatically allow students in the minors and/or concentrations to register, Dr. Lumpkin has indicated that all of those students will be issued permits by her advising staff.

Dr. Iber explained that this request for course restrictions is in response to Kinesiology and Sport Management students who had fallen below the required GPA threshold to continue in the major but continued registering for the major courses. Students minoring or having concentrations in these programs will need to contact the Department of Kinesiology and Sport Management and request permits to enroll in these affected courses.

Martinez added that another reason for the restriction is to ensure that students in the minors or concentrations take the correct courses. Lauderdale asked for clarification that every student who has a minor or concentration in these areas must be manually permitted into the courses, and Durham DeCesaro confirmed that the Department of Kinesiology and Sport Management will take on the task of manually permitting every student into these courses. Stewart asked whether the Council approves prerequisite changes or is just informed of them. Durham DeCesaro clarified that pre- and co-requisite changes are informational items that do not require a vote.

With no other discussion, Stewart brought the Council's attention to the next item on the agenda, concerning COVID-19 updates. Durham DeCesaro described the various resources available on the [Provost's COVID-19 Resources Page](#) on the assigning of grades of CR or NC during this time and the implications of doing so for future coursework. This Resources page now has information for both undergraduate and graduate students. Durham DeCesaro asked for Council members to send her any questions so we can keep the page current as additional information is available. A recent update concerned the deadline by which non-graduating students must submit requests to change a grade to CR or NC. The deadline has been moved from noon to 5pm on May 20<sup>th</sup> to be consistent with original guidance submitted to the university community. Durham DeCesaro mentioned that each college has been asked to decide whether academic advisors should submit the requests for grade changes or whether these requests should be handled at the college level.

With no immediate questions or concerns, Durham DeCesaro moved to the next item.

Durham DeCesaro explained that the best thing colleges can do is to provide timely guidance to students on changing final grades to CR or NC that is tailored to each college. Students need to have the opportunity to review this guidance in advance of the publication of their grades, and they should be able to discuss their options with the advisors to decide what is best for them. Our goal is to avoid a last-minute rush on academic advising right before the end of the term. To assist in advising, there is a checklist provided to all faculty and staff advisors with questions to ask students who are intending to request grades of CR or NC.

A decision has been made that students transferring to TTU at the undergraduate level who completed courses in spring 2020 with grades of pass or similar will be allowed to apply those courses to major or degree requirements. This policy is in alignment with decisions our peer institutions have recently released. Roach asked whether the information could be shared with department chairs. Durham DeCesaro clarified that this information could be shared throughout the university and added that this information is available on the [Provost's COVID-19 Resources Page](#) and that all affected offices are aware of the new policy. Durham DeCesaro also clarified that this policy only applies to courses taken during the spring 2020 semester. Uddameri asked if a grade of P will still apply to courses that require grades of C or better, and Durham DeCesaro confirmed that it would.

James sent out to the Chair's Council the list of the instructors of record who have yet to submit the instructional continuity plan required by SACSCOC. As a reminder, instructors must submit a plan for every unique course they are teaching, not for every section. We are currently at 76% of plans returned, but we would like this to be 100% for audit purposes. Stewart pointed out that 24% is a significant number of courses.

The next item of business concerned final exams. As a reminder, the final exam period will remain as scheduled. For synchronous exams, instructors need to honor the original period of time allowed, regardless of how long they expect the exams to take. Hart explained that asynchronous exams should have a minimum of a 24-hour period to take the exam. Stewart asked for clarification on asynchronous exams. Hart explained that synchronous courses should have their final exams on the original date and time published on the final exam schedule, and that instructors should be free to choose whether to make their final exams synchronous or asynchronous. However, if instructors choose to provide asynchronous exams, they must allow a 24-hour window during which students can take the exam. Stewart clarified that the 24-hour window is to allow for students to take any other exams within that same window. Louder recommended that courses scheduled as online before the COVID-19 change should also allow 24 hours for their final exams. Durham DeCesaro emphasized that every student taking a synchronous exam must be allotted the full 2.5 hours to finish the exam, regardless of how long the exam is intended to take.

The Council then moved to the next item of business. Stewart highlighted that the Office of the Provost has offered an extension to faculty members who are on the tenure track. So far there have been roughly 25 faculty members who have requested extensions. Stewart reminded Council members that those requests are due in August.

With no questions or comments, Stewart brought the Council's attention to the next item of business. Overall, Office of the Provost has received positive responses from faculty about the change to online instruction, considering the uncertainty of the situation. Many students seem to be handling the adjustment well and are still meeting course requirements. There have been some negative reports about faculty who do not appear to be adjusting well to remote teaching, and colleges are urged to ensure their faculty are equipped to provide the best educational experience for our students.

Hart explained that right now we have flexibility for instructors to have somewhat less interaction with students, but in the summer, faculty will be required to provide that regular and substantive interaction with students. However, James clarified that we do not have flexibility now because we are required by SACSCOC to prove that our instructors are providing regular and substantive interaction with students or we risk subjecting the entire university to probation or sanctions. Wong mentioned that a strong message from the Office of the Provost to department chairs might be necessary to ensure that faculty are doing what they need to do.

Stewart agreed with all the points made and added that the bottom line is that students deserve best quality in time and content that can reasonably be delivered. Stewart offered for the team in the Provost's Office to work on some messaging to send to faculty members. Louder shared resources in the chat about eLearning preparing trainings with TLPDC and IT on good online teaching practices. These trainings will begin on Monday. James pointed back to the [Provost's COVID-19 Resources Page](#), which states that all learning objectives must be the same but the process of achieving those objectives may need to change to accommodate the change in modality. Sumner pointed out that these faculty may be trying to provide accommodations for students and may not be intentionally changing their courses into effectively correspondence courses.

Stewart summarized that the overall situation is receiving positive responses and that both faculty and students who may have not enjoyed or wanted to try online instruction in the past are providing positive feedback and even excelling in this new instructional climate.

Durham DeCesaro asked for department chairs and directors to look at the courses that are scheduled face-to-face for Summer II and August Intersession and consider which of those can be moved online in the event that this COVID-19 situation continues through the summer. Chairs and directors are also asked to identify courses that cannot fulfill learning objectives in an online modality, whether because of needed unique spaces or equipment. As no decision has been made yet for Summer II or August Intersession, Stewart reiterated that this is contingency planning. This should not be interpreted as a chance to teach as many courses on campus as possible. Faculty should prepare for a predominantly online curriculum for the Summer II and August terms, with the exception of a very small number of courses that are clearly best delivered in a face-to-face modality. There are concerns about space availability to accommodate social distancing, meaning a normal 20-seat room may not fit 20 students.

Chambers asked how the decision to move Summer II and August courses online will be made and if there is an expected timeline for summer II. Stewart clarified that the hope is for a decision about Summer II be made sometime in early to mid-May. Hart mentioned that a memo eLearning sent out regarding Summer I courses provided links to some alternatives to lab facilities that could be used for face-to-face instruction for the sciences in Summer II. Hart then called attention to the

chat and the trainings that Louder posted that will begin on Monday. Trainings are in collaboration with eLearning, TLPDC, and IT, and more information will be provided about these courses as they are developed. Hart also urged for faculty members to be flexible with students as restrictions begin to lessen. It is possible students will return to work and may have job interviews that may interfere with synchronous courses.

Stewart thanked the Council members for their work to get us through the semester and to plan for upcoming terms in the midst of this COVID-19 situation.

Stewart then asked for Durham DeCesaro to give a commencement update. The virtual commencement ceremony will be available on May 23, which will include opening remarks from the President, Provost, Chancellor, a Regent, two selected student speakers, and introductions by the deans of all colleges. The ceremony will recognize each student with a slide that includes their picture and a personalized message. There will also be a montage of student-submitted photographs of themselves around campus. Individual college ceremonies will be available at the same time that the long ceremony is released. Colleges will provide special messages to their students in these individual ceremonies, which Amiee Dixon and her team have already begun filming. Graduate students will be recognized in a special graduate ceremony, but they will also be recognized in their college ceremonies. Durham DeCesaro pointed out that colleges still need readers to read the names of their graduating students, and the deadline to submit those names is approaching. Durham DeCesaro reminded members that graduates are welcome to participate in the virtual ceremony as well as return to walk in the August ceremony.

Wong asked which colleges students who plan to walk in the August ceremony should join. Durham DeCesaro clarified that students will walk in their respective college ceremony. Sumner added that Durham DeCesaro has been working with the special interest groups to create special ceremonies for these populations. Durham DeCesaro clarified that it is Amiee Dixon who is working with various divisions across campus on these smaller ceremonies, and she will have more information on those ceremonies.

Wong then asked if it would be possible to open one of the dorms to students and their families who may not be able to secure hotel rooms to stay in for the August commencement ceremony. Stewart explained that we should be tentative or cautious in considering dorms as an option because of concerns about dorm access before the semester begins in the fall. Durham DeCesaro added that once we have an idea of the number of students returning for the August ceremony, we can get in contact with the City of Lubbock and the Lubbock tourism department to let hotels know to expect larger crowds for the August ceremony. Louder mentioned in the chat that another consideration in terms of the August ceremony is that the K-12 schools are also considering moving to July/August graduations.

In other business, Wong highlighted the various colleges that have collaborated with the TTUHSC and community members. As a result, the West Texas COVID-19 Relief Consortium has distributed over 2,500 face shields and over 150 intubation chambers across West Texas.

With no other business or announcements, Stewart adjourned the meeting.