

**Texas Tech University
Academic Council**

**Meeting of October 20, 2020
1:30 PM, Skype**

Attendance

Present: Cindy Akers, Dennis Arnett, Kathy Austin, Jeffrey Belnap, Andrea Bilkey, Cristina Bradatan, Donna Brasher, Bobbie Brown, Jenn Burns, Jaclyn Cañas-Carrell, Todd Chambers, Hyojung Cho, John Dascanio, Mayukh Dass, David Doerfert, Cathy Duran, Dottie Durband, Kristi Gaines, Greg Glaus, Jason Hale, Lindsay Hollowell, Jamie Hansard, Kaelene Hansen, Melanie Hart, Stephanie Hart, Hunter Heck, Bret Hendricks, Sheila Hoover, Patrick Hughes, Wendy-Adele Humphrey, Jorge Iber, Darryl James, Michelle Kiser, Amy Koerber, Mitzi Lauderdale, Justin Louder, Dave Louis, Brenda Martinez, Shirley Matteson, Randy McBee, Pat Mcconnel, Sukant Misra, Reagan Ribordy, David Roach, Brian Shannon, Rob Stewart, Stacy Stockard, Carol Sumner, Suzanne Tapp, MaryAlice Torres-Macdonald, Annette Uddameri, Patricia Vitela and Janessa Walls.

Action Items:

1. Associate deans are asked to review the attached 2026 calendar and to contact Lindsay Hollowell with any questions or suggested revisions.

Stewart called the meeting to order by presenting the minutes from the September Council meeting. With no comments or revisions, Stewart called for a motion. Akers motioned to accept, Chambers seconded, and the minutes were approved.

For the next item of business, Stewart introduced the summary of course proposals. Hollowell summarized the proposals and explained that the College of Human Sciences contacted her before the meeting and requested to table item 11, HRM 3315, pending discussion with the College of Media and Communication. Chambers then requested to table item 8, GERM 5322, pending discussion of the use of “professional communication” in the course description with Professional Communication department chair, Kelli Cargile Cook. Roach motioned to table item 8. Humphrey seconded the motion, and item 8 was tabled. Doerfert asked if we should vote to table item 11 as well, and Stewart agreed and called for a motion. Torres-Macdonald motioned, Doerfert seconded, and item 11 was also tabled.

Humphrey asked about the effective date for item 15, LAW 6074 and clarified that the effective date should be spring 2021, not fall 2021. Hollowell offered to confirm the date that was submitted in Curriculog. With no additional discussion, Stewart called for a motion to approve the remaining course proposals. Doerfert moved to accept, Chambers seconded, and the course proposals were approved.

Cañas-Carrell then introduced the program proposals, beginning with several new programs. The new programs included a new doctoral track in Mathematical Finance; a new undergraduate concentration in Spanish for the Professions; five undergraduate minors in Environmental Toxicology, Health and Society, Applied Music Studies, General Music Studies, and Popular Music Studies; and an Undergraduate Writing Certificate. Stewart asked

for clarification of the distinctness of the three music minors. Bilkey explained that the Applied Music Studies minor is designed for students with prior music and instrumentation practice. In contrast, the General Music Studies minor is designed for students who have never played an instrument but are interested in music. Then the Popular Music Studies minor is a general survey of popular music.

Louder explained that the Undergraduate Writing Certificate is an online certificate which will allow students in our interdisciplinary programs, both online and at regional sites, the ability to complete the certificate as part of an English concentration and only lack one English course to complete the concentration. Stewart called for a motion regarding the new programs. Humphrey motioned to approve all new programs, Roach seconded, and the new programs were approved.

Cañas-Carrell then introduced the semester credit hour reduction proposal for the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies. Doerfert explained that the M.S. in Interdisciplinary Studies is already at 30 hours, and the Graduate School has noticed that students refrain from applying to the M.A. because it requires 36 hours. Since the Graduate School has no justification for keeping the M.A. at 36 hours, it requests to reduce the hours to be equivalent to the M.S. Stewart asked what the 6-hour difference was. Doerfert explained that he believed the programs were originally designed to include three concentrations at 12 hours each but that the programs were self-designed by students and could be reduced to meet the students' needs. Therefore, the reduction to 30 hours would not affect the integrity of the M.A.

Cañas-Carrell then introduced the degree modality change to offer the B.B.A. in Management at the Costa Rica campus. Louder clarified that the degree modality was not changing, rather the proposal is to add a new modality at the Costa Rica campus through a combination of synchronous online and face-to-face courses.

The remaining voting items were title changes for programs in the College of Human Sciences, following the Human Development and Family Sciences department name change.

Stewart called for a motion for the remaining program proposals. Akers moved to approve all proposals as presented. Koerber seconded, and the remaining program proposals were approved.

Cañas-Carrell then introduced the informational items, which were curricular changes to the undergraduate minor in 3D Studio Art, and the undergraduate concentrations in Literatures and Cultures of the Spanish-Speaking World and Spanish in a Global context.

The next item of business was a presentation of updates to the Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM). Cañas-Carrell explained that the updates were attached to the meeting agenda and include what was covered at the Academic Course Guide Manual Advisory Board meeting that Genevieve Durham DeCesaro attended earlier in October. One item of interest was the core curriculum feasibility study that The Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) is conducting. Cañas-Carrell also introduced some new developments related to Open Educational Resources (OERs) that THECB released on September 1. Another item of note concerned community colleges' new ability to create programs, to include baccalaureate degree programs, tailored for regional workforce needs. The fields of study approved as of September include business administration, computer information, cybersecurity, and early childhood education.

Hoover asked if anyone had been in contact with the Library about the OERs. Louder said that he had been visiting with the Library about the new developments. In addition, James added that he would send additional information from THECB about an OER seminar scheduled for October 28.

Uddameri asked if the fields of study information was separate from the ACGM meeting. Stewart asked Cañas-Carrell if information on fields of study was included in the meeting, and Cañas-Carrell did not recall Durham DeCesaro mentioning that topic.

Stewart then turned the floor over to Martinez to discuss spring 2021 course modalities and classroom scheduling. Martinez thanked Stewart for his assistance in scheduling. Martinez noted that there are roughly 180 sections that have requested scheduling but have not been assigned space. There is minimal space available for classes of more than 25 students during peak teaching hours on both TR and MWF. There are about 6-7 slots available in off-peak hours. There is also space for small sections of 24-25 students in the classroom at a single time, which would be a good option for hybrid-type delivery. We are nearly at capacity, so the Registrar's Office is looking for additional and unconventional areas for instruction. Martinez requested that departments request spaces for smaller classes during off-peak hours on a normal meeting schedule (MWF or TR rather than once a week).

Stewart added that additional hybrid or face-to-face sections scheduled during off-peak times are eligible for the summer teaching rate. Chambers asked for clarification on the off-peak times, specifically the 6-9 p.m. slots. Martinez clarified that the 6-9 p.m. slots are also filling up.

Hendricks asked if Saturday slots are available, and Stewart and Martinez agreed that Saturdays are open, and departments are highly encouraged to schedule classes on Saturdays. Stewart added that Saturday courses are also eligible for the incentive pay.

The Council then heard a proposal regarding the drop limit extension for spring 2021. Brown explained that the discussion is whether to extend the drop limit for students this spring to continue what has been done since March 2020. James asked if there was an operating policy or permission from THECB to modify our drop policies to avoid any negative repercussions from SACSCOC, and Brown clarified that the drop policy is a state law and that the state law gives institutions the ability to make exceptions to the drop limit.

Duran expressed favor of extending the drop exception on behalf of Student Affairs. Interactions with students and parents detail that students are experiencing stress and academic pressure to persist in their degrees, while still dealing with stress and anxiety from the pandemic and personal circumstances. Extending the drop exception would remove some of that pressure by giving students a safety net if they are not doing well in their classes. Heck expressed her agreement and added that many students have still been struggling with the transition to online instruction, so extending the drop exception would benefit the students.

Akers moved to approve the extension, and Brown seconded. Sumner pointed out that there should be additional guidance in advising so students understand the impacts of drops and withdrawals. Stewart asked Hughes for input on the matter and how STRIVE might be used to aid in advising. Hughes explained that alerts in STRIVE can be used to notify students and their advisors when students are approaching their drop limits. Stewart added that there should be careful consideration by students on the possible impacts of dropping courses.

Stewart voiced Chambers' question in the chat about grades of CR/NC and explained that the prior decision stands to not allow for the extension of changing grades to CR/NC. Chambers mentioned that students have expressed unique stressors caused or heightened by the pandemic. Heck added that she retains her prior position on the matter to not extend the deadlines for CR/NC as a blanket policy, but that Student Government Association recommends working internally with college deans for specific situations. Stewart thanked Heck for her input from a student perspective. Brown then added a link in the chat for additional information from THECB about drop limits.

For the next item of business, Stewart explained that it had been decided that students would not be required to return to face-to-face instruction for class days after the Thanksgiving holiday. Martinez asked for clarification about how finals would be offered if a student or a faculty member chooses to have an in-person final. Stewart clarified that a faculty member cannot require students to take an in-person exam. If a student wishes to take an in-person exam, it is up to the faculty member's discretion whether to offer that student the ability to take the exam in person. Stewart also added that final exams offered synchronously are to be offered at the time originally scheduled. To answer Martinez' concern about common exams, Stewart expressed that there should not be any in-person common final exams.

With no additional concerns or comments, Stewart moved to the next item of business, concerning commencement. Stewart asked for James to give an update on commencement. James explained that as of this morning, there are two commencement ceremonies planned. A virtual program will be scheduled for December 19, and there will be modified in-person programs scheduled for the current dates of December 11-12. Stewart added that the ceremonies will be spread out to allow for social distancing, and attendance will be restricted. In addition, faculty will not be required to attend. This decision is intended to model other institutions' decisions to offer in-person ceremonies.

Stewart mentioned that Amiee Dixon will be in contact with the colleges for the video components of the virtual ceremony, which will include all graduates. Akers asked in the chat if students could do both or if they would have to choose. Hart clarified that students could do both. Sumner mentioned the special interest graduation ceremonies and said she would contact Amiee so that those students can be represented as much as is possible.

Chambers asked whether advising and staff would have a presence at the ceremonies. Stewart explained that these are the details Amiee is working out but that the staff present at the ceremonies would largely be the Convocations Committee members. All other attendance by staff would be limited. (N.B. Dixon has since indicated that college advising staff may be called on to assist at the respective college ceremonies with graduating students' information cards and with seating and lining up students.)

James added that the floor of the USA can only hold 300-400 for each ceremony, so there would need to be 7-8 ceremonies to hold everyone. But since many students will likely not return after Thanksgiving, he is anticipating that the number of students present at the commencement ceremonies will be smaller than the USA's capacity.

Sumner asked for verification that these in-person ceremonies will be limited to only fall graduates and will not be available to students who graduated in spring and summer. Stewart confirmed that. Stewart then voiced Lauderdale's question in the chat about special departmental events related to commencement and whether they would be permitted if protocols are followed. Stewart said that departments should follow event guidance regarding

COVID-19 protocols but that the question might be brought forward for further discussion.

Stewart then moved to the next item of business, explaining that there is a proposal on the President's desk to cancel 4 days of Spring Break and to only have the Friday of Spring Break as a holiday. To make up for these 4 days, we would move the start date of the spring semester back to January 20. The idea is to provide extra time for people to get here in January and extend the move in date for housing. It will also keep the end of term schedule intact. This would affect many areas that need consideration. Stewart added that while staff might be used to working through Spring Break, faculty and students who have children or family members in school might be negatively affected if other schools do not also cancel Spring Break.

Stewart then asked Hallowell to discuss the 2026 calendar. Hallowell explained that we are mirroring the 2025 calendar as much as possible. The main difference is the May Intersession, which is supposed to be 16 days but has been on the calendar as 15 days previously. Hallowell and Stewart both asked for Council Members to review the calendar and reach out to Hallowell with any questions. We will consider the calendar for a vote at the November AC meeting.

Austin pointed out some questions in the chat regarding events at the beginning of the spring semester, including New Faculty Orientation. Another question, posed by Glaus, concerned how moving the first day of classes might affect Financial Aid. Shannon added that student athletes may be negatively impacted if Financial Aid funds are withheld until the new start date. Hansard explained that Admissions and Financial Aid are in contact with the President's Office about how revising the spring calendar will significantly impact Financial Aid disbursement.

Stewart then moved to the next item of business. It has been decided to move summer 2021 registration to January rather than its original schedule in November. Stewart added that we will likely be offering more classes online this summer than we have historically due to the success we had this last summer. However, the Provost's Office will not be setting a target percentage for online instruction for summer 2021. Rather, the goal is for units to choose the modalities that best serve their courses and their students' progression in their degree programs. Stewart asked for Brown to discuss the advance registration aspect of summer 2021.

Brown explained that, currently, we have moved summer 2021 advance registration to January. However, Brown is concerned that departments might not have schedules ready in January because of the standard busyness of the end of term after Thanksgiving break. Brown proposed that departments consider approving the moving of advance registration for summer 2021 to April, when registration for fall opens. This would allow for the time between January and March to finish preparing the schedules for summer. Brown pointed out that this is how advance registration used to be handled but that it changed. Stewart explained that advance registration for summer changed when summer budgets began being allocated to departments in September.

Akers expressed support in postponing advance registration for summer 2021. Chambers added that postponing summer registration would also allow departments more time to promote summer courses. Stewart asked if there was any opposition to the plan. Hearing none, Stewart asked for there to be additional discussions between the Registrar's Office and the Provost's Office for consideration of a vote in the future.

Stewart then asked for items of other business or announcements.

With no other business, Stewart adjourned the meeting.

TEXAS TECH ACADEMIC CALENDARS 2021 - 2026

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**Approved
Nov. 2018**

2022

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**Approved
Feb. 2019**

2023

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**Approved
Feb. 2019**

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**Approved
Feb. 2020**

2026

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March	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
April	29	30	31	1	2	3	4
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
May	26	27	28	29	30	1	2
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
June	31	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
July	28	29	30	1	2	3	4
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Aug.	26	27	28	29	30	31	1
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Sept.	30	31	1	2	3	4	5
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Oct.	27	28	29	30	1	2	3
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Nov.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	29	30	1	2	3	4	5
Dec.	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	27	28	29	30	31		

**Proposed
Oct. 2020**

SPRING 2025

MWF = 43 contact hours
TT = (30x1.5) = 45

SUMMER 2025

SSI = (22x2) = 44
SSII = (22x2) = 44

FALL 2025

MWF = 41
TT = (29x1.5) = 43.5

SPRING 2025 INTERSESSION

15 Days

FALL 2025 INTERSESSION

14 Days

WINTER 2024-2025

INTERSESSION
15 Days

SPRING 2026

MWF = 43 contact hours
TT = (30x1.5) = 45

SUMMER 2026

SSI = (22x2) = 44
SSII = (22x2) = 44

FALL 2026

MWF = 41
TT = (28x1.5) = 42

SPRING 2026 INTERSESSION

16 Days

FALL 2026 INTERSESSION

14 Days









WINTER 2025-2026

INTERSESSION
15 Days

Note: Faculty on duty day is same day as first day of class in second summer session CY 2022-2024.

Calendar Requirements:

- 15 weeks of instruction plus one week for final exams in fall/spring semesters; aim for 45 hours of instructional time
- Summer terms should be no less than 5 weeks, including finals
- 15 days for spring intercession
- 14 days for fall intercession
- 15 days for winter intercession (period between Dec. 24-Jan. 1 is typically a TTU staff holiday)
- Travel day (no classes) after Easter
- Travel day (no classes) Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving holiday
- Fall semester MUST end no later than Dec. 23 per THECB
- THECB Common Calendar start dates:
 - 2020-2021: Aug. 24; Jan. 18; Jun. 7
 - 2021-2022: Aug. 23; Jan. 17; Jun. 6
 - 2022-2023: Aug. 22; Jan. 16; Jun. 5
 - 2023-2024: Aug. 28; Jan. 15; Jun. 3
 - 2024-2025: Aug. 26; Jan. 20; Jun. 2
- Can start within 7 days (before/after) of THECB start date without waiver

 faculty on duty
  holiday
  final exams
  class day
  day of no classes
  commencement
  Carol of Lights (possible)
  Intercession