

**Texas Tech University
Academic Council**

**Meeting of November 17, 2020
1:30 PM, Skype**

Attendance

Present: Cindy Akers, Dennis Arnett, Kathy Austin, Jeffrey Belnap, Andrea Bilkey, Bobbie Brown, Jaclyn Cañas-Carrell, Todd Chambers, Hyojung Cho, Mayukh Dass, David Doerfert, Cathy Duran, Kristi Gaines, Greg Glaus, Jason Hale, Lindsay Hallowell, Kaelene Hansen, Melanie Hart, Stephanie Hart, Hunter Heck, Bret Hendricks, Sheila Hoover, Wendy-Adele Humphrey, Jorge Iber, Michelle Kiser, Amy Koerber, Mitzi Lauderdale, Justin Louder, Brenda Martinez, Shirley Matteson, Reagan Ribordy, David Roach, Brian Shannon, Rob Stewart, Stacy Stockard, Carol Sumner, Mary Alice Torres-Macdonald, Annette Uddameri, Lesley Nall Washington, Patricia Vitela and Janessa Walls.

Guests: Ryleigh Carson, Amiee Dixon and Michael Carter.

Action Items:

1. Associate deans are asked to encourage interested faculty members to volunteer as ushers at the in-person Commencement ceremonies.

Stewart called the meeting to order by presenting the minutes from the October Council meeting. Stewart took the lack of discussion as a motion for approval. With none opposed, the minutes were approved.

The next item of business concerned the December Commencement ceremonies. Stewart noted that the plan is to proceed with the eight in-person ceremonies that have been planned and mentioned that the university is working with local authorities to ensure safety guidance is followed. Stewart asked for Amiee Dixon to give an update on the response rate. Dixon explained that 1,208 students have sent in RSVPs, and the largest ceremony is currently the CoMC and CASNR ceremony with 209 RSVPs. Stewart noted that with students and guests, there will be roughly 1,000 people in the facility at a time, which will allow for social distancing.

Stewart mentioned that there is a need for ushers for the ceremonies in addition to the Convocations Committee members and SGA volunteers and asked for associate deans to propose to interested faculty the option of participating in ushering during the ceremony to fill that need. Serving as ushers will allow those faculty members to interact with students rather than merely sitting in the stands. With no additional discussion, Stewart moved to the next item of business.

The next agenda item was a discussion of final exams and the end of the fall semester. There have been various questions regarding COVID-19 and its effect on students' ability to take final exams. Stewart mentioned the possibility that faculty members may see more requests for grades of incomplete than usual.

Akers mentioned that some students have brought forward the concern that many professors have moved their exams to a 24-hour period so that students have several different classes with exams due in the same 24-hour period. Akers asked how that situation should be handled. Stewart explained that exams should be due within the originally scheduled exam period. Louder added that eLearning has recommended that faculty members provide a 24-hour window for students to start their exams but that the exams should have the original final exam time limit once started. In addition, that 24-hour window should close when the originally scheduled final exam period for that class would close. The goal is for the policy to limit the burden of thousands of students logging into Blackboard at once to take their exams. Akers requested that a reminder of this policy to be sent to the university. Louder explained that messaging will be sent out to chairs and associate deans with information on Proctorio and final exams.

Stewart then moved to the next item of business, concerning course modalities and scheduling. Stewart explained that advanced registration for the spring semester is well underway, and there have been a few course modality changes already. We started with roughly 30% of classes online and the remaining 70% as a combination of face-to-face and hybrid instruction. Modality changes that have been approved were a result of faculty members having COVID-related reasons not to teach face-to-face or space limitations. Stewart emphasized that changes are not being approved because students or faculty simply prefer it.

Stewart mentioned that registration for summer is postponed until April 1 when fall 2021 registration opens but encouraged departments to start planning for summer schedules. Stewart reminded the Council members that the Provost's Office will not be setting a modality proportion for summer courses, but departments should make the best judgments for their units that will best serve their students and help them progress through their degree plans.

Stewart then mentioned that the Registrar's Office is already considering fall scheduling and asked for a representative to give an update. Martinez reiterated that registration begins April 1, so the Registrar's Office is getting ready to work on the fall schedule. They would like to get working on the schedule before the end of January to ensure there is time to get it done.

Stewart added that in a Big 12 Provost meeting, many universities mentioned waiting until after the first of January to make final decisions on the fall 2021 semester as new guidance comes out about COVID and vaccinations. Stewart then asked what the easiest way to plan for the fall schedule would be that would allow us to pivot to a different schedule if needed in the future. Martinez recommended planning for the most restrictive guidelines because it is easier to relax restrictions than it is to add additional restrictions later. Stewart asked for Council members to begin discussing options with their schedulers.

Akers asked in the chat how Junction courses would be handled this summer, and Hart explained that Junction is planning to offer face-to-face classes.

Chambers asked if other colleges have experienced issues with the short time between classes for faculty to walk between buildings because some classes have been moved from their normal locations. Stewart asked if that situation could be handled by not scheduling the faculty in back-to-back classes. Chambers explained that they cannot always coordinate class scheduling when faculty members teach for multiple departments. Uddameri explained that Engineering has also dealt with similar situations because courses had to move classrooms.

Uddameri explained that in some situations, they shuffled the schedule so faculty will teach face-to-face, then online, then face-to-face to give them more time between sections. Martinez added in the chat that departments should alert the Registrar's Office to these situations, and they will try to help find a solution.

For the next item of business, Stewart turned the floor over to Drs. Hart and Louder to discuss TPD and TDE course sections for spring 2021. Hart explained that courses that originated as face-to-face sections but were changed to online for various COVID-related reasons are given the TPD designation, which is a pandemic section. Only Lubbock students may register for TPD sections. A problem has arisen where departments have canceled TDE (traditional distance) sections of certain courses and consolidated those sections into the TPD sections. This means that online and regional site students are no longer able to register for the classes they need. Hart requested for departments in that situation to add a TDE section taught by the same instructor of the TPD section. The TDE sections only need five to ten seats available. Then, the two sections can be merged but retain their individual designations so our online and regional site students can enroll in the classes.

Hart added that some departments have requested removing the campus restriction from TDE courses. Hart then explained that it would be helpful if departments would offer two TDE sections, one with a small number of seats and one with a regular number of seats. Then, the restriction can be removed from the larger section for Lubbock students to register for, leaving the restriction on the smaller section for the online and regional site students.

Sumner mentioned the implications of the TDE and TPD designations for veterans planning to use their benefits for their courses. While the VA has allowed for online instruction to be covered by the benefits at present, that allowance may not continue long-term.

Stewart requested that associate deans encourage their department chairs to offer the TDE sections Drs. Hart and Louder are recommending. Stewart clarified that this is not actually adding more teaching load as it is basically only providing a few more seats.

Louder added that having the TDE sections are necessary to allow for accurate reporting of the number of students enrolled in online and distance programs to both the Department of Education and THECB. Louder explained that because the TPD courses are not true online courses, they interfere with accurate reporting.

Stewart brought the Council's attention to some comments in the chat. Kiser asked if someone could confirm the technology that will be available in the SUB. Austin mentioned that there is a computer lab in the basement. Louder added that there is a mobile cart available that may be deployed to the SUB but will need to confirm that.

For the next item of business, Louder led a discussion of a new online civility statement and syllabus insert. Louder explained that there have been some concerns in synchronous classes. Attached to the agenda were two attachments: Civility in the Online Classroom and Syllabus Addendum Regarding Expectations for Student Participation in Online Synchronous Course. Both attachments have been reviewed by General Counsel and additional sub-groups. Louder specifically thanked Chambers for the CoMC faculty member who brought this issue to attention.

The syllabus insert is designed to give students guidance on how to properly participate in synchronous online classes. Louder explained that students have attended synchronous

classes while at work, while ordering food, and while driving. The attachment will set the standard on what eLearning recommends for handling these situations and also has guidance on possible consequences for students not meeting these expectations.

Next, Louder explained that the civility document reiterates language eLearning has provided in the past for asynchronous classes and discussion boards but adds additional language applicable to the various multimodal classes we have been offering. The document outlines how students can be civil in the online classroom. Louder asked if the other parties involved in creating these documents would like to give additional information. Roach added that the jump to online instruction is new for many faculty members, and many people assume students know what to do. The reality is that online instruction is new to many students as well, and they also need guidelines. These documents are an opportunity for both teachers and students to learn how to operate in this new environment. Louder asked if Council members had any questions or concerns.

Sumner mentioned that we should be balanced in our approach to handling disruptive behavior in online classes compared to face-to-face classes. In reference to the classroom expectations, Sumner added that COVID has interrupted many childcare and schooling sessions, and requiring students to have their cameras active at all times during class could be an invasion of students' privacy if they have children at home. Stewart asked if specifying examples of disruptive behavior in an online class would clarify the context. Sumner agreed and added that we are unable to take action on certain behaviors in face-to-face interactions, so there needs to be a balance on what we take action on in online interactions. Louder asked if they can meet to discuss suggested changes to the attachments.

For the next item of business, Stewart introduced the summary of course proposals. Hallowell summarized the proposals and explained that there are several proposals that had original effective dates of spring 2021 that have been moved forward to summer 2021, since summer registration has moved to April. Hallowell also noted that there are a series of course deletions from the Department of Landscape Architecture for courses that have been inactive in their curriculum. Hallowell also brought the Council's attention to a separate document regarding a batch change of course prefixes in the Department of Hospitality and Retail Management. The department has requested to change the current prefix of RTL for all undergraduate retail courses to match the graduate prefix of RETL. With no further discussion, Stewart called for a motion. Torres-Macdonald motioned, Akers seconded, and the course proposals were approved as presented, to include the batch change for the RTL courses.

Cañas-Carrell then introduced the program proposals, beginning with the voting items. The first voting item was a new undergraduate minor in Archaeological Studies, which is a collaborative interdisciplinary minor with the Classical and Modern Languages and Literatures and Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work departments. Roach explained that both departments are excited to offer the minor and expect it to be a great opportunity for students. The second voting item was a new graduate concentration in Commercial Banking. Dass explained that the concentration will be within the Master of Science in Finance program. Many students in the MSF program have expressed interest in taking specialized commercial banking courses, so the college has proposed the new concentration to meet that need.

Hallowell pointed out that item 8 has multiple changes, including a title change to a concentration within the Bachelor of Arts in Spanish program and that the title change should

also be considered with the voting items. Stewart called for a motion on the voting items 1, 2, and 8. Chambers motioned to approve the items, Humphrey seconded, and the program proposals were approved.

With no discussion of the informational items, the Council moved to the next item of business.

For the Other Business item, Stewart asked Hallowell to revisit the 2026 calendar. Hallowell reiterated that we are mirroring the 2025 calendar as much as possible, specifically starting the semester on a Monday to allow for extra time for move in. Hallowell then highlighted the difference in the May Intersession. Hallowell reminded the Council that the May Intersession has been expanded from 15 days to 16 days as our guidance recommends. The Intersession will include both weekends and holidays to ensure the classes are able to meet the required 45 contact hours.

With no additional discussion, Stewart called for a motion. Chambers moved to accept the calendar, Doerfert and Brown seconded, and the calendar was approved.

Stewart then asked for items of other business. Hearing none, Stewart mentioned that, at this time, we plan to have a December Council meeting the week after the in-person commencement ceremonies. Stewart then asked for any announcements.

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