ACADEMIC COUNCIL
Texas Tech University

Meeting of
November 17, 2015

MINUTES

Present: Katherine Austin, Stefanie Borst, Bobbie Brown, Claudia Cogliser, Todd Chambers, Claudia Cogliser, Cathy Duran, Genevieve Durham DeCesaro, Paul Goebel, Melanie Hart, Shelia Hoover, Patrick Hughes, Jorge Iber, Darryl James, Michelle Kiser, Mitzi Lauderdale, Savannah Leonard for Cindy Akers Lesley Mellinee, Robin Lock, Justin Louder, Pat McConnel, Garrett McKinnon, Ron Milam, Audra Morse, Alison Myhra, William Pasewark, David Roach, Brian Shannon, Brian Steele, Rob Stewart chair, Kevin Stoker, Patricia Vitela, Janessa Walls, Aliza Wong

Stewart called the meeting to order and presented minutes from the October meeting. He also called for a change to the minutes, which was noted and made to the official minutes. With no further corrections suggested, Morse moved to approve the minutes as amended, Roach seconded, and the motion was approved.

Durham DeCesaro presented a pair of graduate certificates, one from the College of Arts and Sciences entitled English Language for Academic & Professional Communication and one from the College of Media and Communication entitled Advanced Digital and Social Media. She noted that both were beneath the hours required for THECB approval. Roach addressed a question regarding faculty support of the certificate, noting that it had been presented to faculty. Stoker questioned the title of the English Language certificate, noting that the College of Media and Communication had courses in “professional communication.” Roach replied that the focus of the new certificate was on graduate students who did not speak English as a native language, and thus would not overlap with the Media and Communication courses. With no further discussion, Lock moved to approve the certificates as presented, Roach seconded, and the motion was approved.

The council heard a proposal for three Master’s of Science online degrees from the Whitacre College of Engineering. Specifically the college would offer master’s degrees in Civil, Industrial, and Mechanical engineering online, in addition to the currently offered face-to-face programs. Morse noted that industry was moving toward requiring a master’s degree in order to become a licensed engineer, and offering the programs online would meet a need for existing engineers to continue their education. Louder briefly discussed the dual modalities involved. With no additional comments, Pasewark moved to approve the degrees as presented, Lock seconded, and the motion was approved.

McKinnon introduced the course approval summary. A brief discussion of hours changes for CHE 4122/4322 and 4555/4455 (items 1 and 2 on the approval
summary) ensued, and Morse noted that the net hour change would be zero. Hughes requested that items 17 and 18 (proposed INTS 5100 and INTS 5300 courses) be tabled pending further consideration of an advanced integrative studies program. Wong raised an issue with the course descriptions for the tandem course pairing of VPA 4335 and 5335 being identical. Stewart noted that the course could be approved as submitted, and a modified description for VPA 5335 submitted at a later date and changed administratively. (Note: Subsequent to the meeting, the College of Visual and Performing Arts submitted a revised course description for VPA 5335, and the change was made administratively.) With no additional discussion, Wong moved to approve the courses as amended, Morse seconded, and the motion was approved.

Morse raised the topic of international student registration, proposing to allow international students to begin registering on the second day of advanced registration since they often have difficulty getting into classes and do not have the option of staying in the country for extra semesters due to visa issues. Brown noted that international students are already allowed to register on the third day of advanced registration, and reminded the Council that a few months prior the advanced registration system had been reworked due to the fact that a majority of students were able to register early, and cautioned against a return to such a scenario. Stewart suggested holding a certain number of seats open in each class for international students.

Stewart reminded the Council of an ongoing discussion, initially started during the October Academic Council meeting, regarding university-sponsored groups and exemptions from class participation and exams. The agreement in prior meetings had been that the exemption would not apply to certain groups, but questions had been raised regarding club sports and how far the university was willing to take the concept of “university sponsored.” He noted that club sport teams do represent the university at intercollegiate competitions, and the OP governing the policy did not specify exactly what was meant by the term “university sponsored.” Roach noted that there should be some minimum criteria regarding intercollegiate competition and funding versus organizations that are primarily social in nature, and that SGA funding might also need to be taken into account. Stewart called for volunteers to form an ad hoc committee to discuss the issue in more depth and present recommendations regarding the clarification of the definition and to address issues of attendance. Duran, Chambers, Morse, Iber, Cogliser, and Lauderdale volunteered to serve on the committee.

Stewart also addressed notifications regarding the necessity to reapply for admission to the university sent to returning students who have opted to sit out a semester. Morse noted that additional notifications posted at the time of eRaider login or on the registration portal would be nice. Austin indicated she would draft a proposed policy to address the issue.
Stewart raised the issue of grade change procedures and possible enhancements to the procedure that would ensure all colleges, departments, and units were on the same page regarding the tracking of grade changes. He noted that the university would be changing the word “remarks” to “rationale” on the grade change form in order to require faculty to better explain the reason for a grade change. Also, he noted that the Graduate School was investigating an electronic grade change process, which could be adopted institution wide. He noted that grade changes should always be initiated by the instructor and vetted by the dean’s office, and that the Provost’s Office would be clarifying both the grade change form and Operating Policy regarding grade changes.

Finally, Stewart addressed the issue of bookstore orders from outside vendors, and noted that Texas Tech is contractually obligated to place all textbook orders with the on-campus Barnes & Noble bookstore. He cautioned that faculty should ignore outside solicitations for book orders, and reminded Council members that Texas statutes require book orders to be due a minimum of one month prior to the start of each semester.

Durham DeCesaro discussed notifications received from THECB regarding approval for a graduate certificate in Global Food Security, approval of a Master of Science degree in Chemical Biology, and approval for a name change to the Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Information Technology.

In other business:
• Louder noted that faculty teaching online classes who require a proctored final exam must note said requirement on the syllabus, or else they cannot require it. He noted that distance students cannot be required to come to campus and/or take a proctored exam if the requirement is not on the syllabus.
• Wong announced that the Texas Women in Higher Education meeting was coming to Texas Tech University on January 29th, 2016, and would feature multiple panels and lectures. She encouraged faculty attendance at the conference.

With no other business raised, Stewart adjourned the meeting.