

**Texas Tech University
Academic Council**

**Meeting of June 16, 2020
1:30 PM, Skype**

Attendance

Present: Cindy Akers, Dennis Arnett, Kathy Austin, Jeffrey Belnap, Andrea Bilkey, Bobbie Brown, Todd Chambers, Hyojung Cho, John Dascanio, Mayukh Dass, David Doerfert, Cathy Duran, Dottie Durband, Genevieve Durham DeCesaro, Kristi Gaines, Greg Glaus, Birgit Green, Jason Hale, Lindsay Hallowell, Kaelene Hansen, Melanie Hart, Hunter Heck, Sheila Hoover, Patrick Hughes, Jorge Iber, Darryl James, Michelle Kiser, Amy Koerber, Mitzi Lauderdale, Justin Louder, Dave Louis, Brenda Martinez, Pat McConnel, Sukant Misra, Alison Myhra, Dee Nguyen, Reagan Ribordy, David Roach, Brian Shannon, Brian Steele, Rob Stewart, Carol Sumner, Annette Uddameri, Patricia Vitela, Lesley Nall Washington, Vicki West, and Aliza Wong.

Action Items:

1. Associate Deans are asked to distribute the mandatory syllabus insert regarding absences due to illness to their academic units. The contingency statement concerning F2F and hybrid courses moving online will be distributed in July.
2. Associate Deans are asked to continue to use the Enrollment Campaign Dashboard to review current student re-enrollment.
3. Associate Deans are asked to distribute the THECB's call for OER grant applications as the submission deadline has now been extended.

Stewart called the meeting to order by presenting the minutes from the May Council meeting. With no additional discussion, the minutes were approved as presented.

For the next item of business, Hughes gave an update on retention and re-enrollment rates. First-year rates are currently at 84.6%, compared to 85.25% this time last year. Hughes explained that we are about 160 students away from our goal of 87%, which Student Success and Retention believes is attainable if the current growth rate persists. Second year and subsequent rates are above the rates from the same time last year. However, the overall re-enrollment rate is at 71.9%, which is lower than last year's 77.6%. Most students contacted about re-enrollment have expressed the intention to re-enroll but are waiting for various reasons.

Hughes then encouraged Council members to look at the Enrollment Campaign Dashboard as more than a way to document enrollment contact. The dashboard can also be used to create a strategy to contact students or analyze re-enrollment patterns. Stewart emphasized that the dashboard can serve as a way for colleges to be involved in re-enrollment and encouraged Council members to continue to do so.

The Council then moved on to course approvals. Hughes motioned to table the SPCM 0324 proposal, pending further review. Doerfert seconded the motion, and the course was tabled. Durham DeCesaro then explained that the remaining two courses were prerequisite changes that would be held until the spring term because registration had already begun for the fall.

Hallowell asked if those changes could be implemented for fall if they make the courses less restrictive. Durham DeCesaro clarified that if making the changes for the fall would require the Registrar's Office to drop and re-enroll students, then we will make the changes effective in spring.

Chambers asked for a clarification of what prerequisites were being removed. Kiser and Hughes explained in the chat box that instructor consent was being removed. Chambers moved to approve the remaining course proposals with that clarification, Doerfert seconded, and the courses were approved.

Durham DeCesaro then introduced the program proposals, starting with the new articulation agreement for a dual degree program with TTU's M.B.A. and TTUHSC's M.S. in Nursing. Dass explained that certain courses would count for both degrees, as other dual degree programs with the M.B.A. work. Stewart called for a motion to approve the program. Lauderdale moved, Wong seconded, and the proposal was approved. Durham DeCesaro explained that dual degree programs do not require THECB approval but will be sent to the Board of Regents and then to SACSCOC.

The other two items consisted of degree modality changes to offer two degrees at the Austin College campus. Roach moved to approve, Doerfert seconded, and those proposals were also approved.

Stewart then introduced the Costa Rica Academic Calendar and opened the floor to Dean Belnap to discuss. The main differences in the Costa Rica calendar and the Lubbock calendar concern local holidays in Costa Rica. Stewart asked if the Registrar's Office verified the dates, and Belnap confirmed. Chambers asked how different the calendar was compared to the Seville calendar. Misra explained that the difference is that Sevilla does not have an Academic Calendar as they do not offer degree programs, only study abroad courses.

Louder expressed concern about the difference in calendars for synchronous online classes offered from Lubbock to Costa Rica and vice versa and how the local holidays would affect students in those classes. Belnap clarified that Costa Rica students are made aware that courses offered online via the Lubbock campus must adhere to the Lubbock calendar. Belnap then asked if there should be a policy put in place to state that explicitly. Louder said that it should be somewhere in writing, such as a note in the syllabi, so students and faculty members can have clear guidance. Belnap agreed and offered to draft that language. Belnap requested that drafting such a policy not delay the approval and publishing of the Academic Calendar. Stewart called for a motion. Akers moved to approve, Durband seconded, and the calendar was approved. Louder and Belnap will follow up on that language.

The next item of business concerned the extended deadline for THECB Open Education Resources (OER) Grant Programs. Durham DeCesaro mentioned that Justin Louder and Laura Heinz have extensive experience with and knowledge of this grant program and that those who are interested may contact them with questions. Durham DeCesaro asked that the Council forward this information to their academic units and make note of the deadline extension. Louder explained that THECB has added this as a yearly item in their budget moving forward, so if those who are interested are not able to get to it this year, it will be available next year as well. Stewart reiterated Louder's point and said that THECB's adding these grant programs as permanent budget items shows the value the state is placing on this kind of resource and that these grants provide a number of benefits. He encouraged the Council to discuss it with their faculty and chairs.

Stewart then introduced the next item of business, regarding COVID-19 updates. The first item was a syllabus insert for illness-related absences, which has been vetted by associate deans and chairs and has received positive feedback. Stewart asked the Council to approve this as a mandatory syllabus insert for all fall courses. The insert is intended to prevent a student who might be symptomatic or ill from feeling compelled to attend class because they are fearful of losing credit and thereby putting themselves and the entire class at risk. Stewart further explained it is a no-fault absence policy with respect to illnesses. While there will be a few students who will abuse this policy, the Provost's Office considers this risk less than the risk of infecting an entire class.

Uddameri asked if there should be an end date to this policy, knowing that COVID-19 has a long incubation period and can last two weeks or more. She expressed concern that this could turn into an indefinite absence, and students could miss so much work that they are unable to catch up. Stewart said this had been discussed, and it was determined that since a student could be ill for an indefinite period of time, they should be accommodated as much as possible through an online section of the course, for example. It was determined that avoiding an end date would allow for absences to be managed case by case.

Myhra explained that the Law School's attendance policy is set by the ABA and asked if they could modify this policy to adhere to the new guidelines but still be in accordance with the ABA attendance policy. Stewart said yes, as long as students do not feel compelled to attend class if they are sick.

Uddameri asked what the policy would be for a student who may want to drop a course due to COVID-19 and whether the Registrar's Office would be able to process backdated or administrative drops. Martinez explained that a student's being out with a documented extended illness would meet the qualifications for extenuating circumstances and justify such a drop. She cautioned against backdating drops to the beginning of the term and said that they should be backdated to the date the students were no longer able to continue in the course. Durham DeCesaro suggested incompletes could also be an option if there are a small number of students who would be able to complete the work in a subsequent term. Uddameri expressed concern about higher infection rates. Stewart said that this policy seems like it will fit most cases most directly and efficiently.

Stewart suggested instructors could use the language in Summer II sessions to test its applicability. Chambers shared an experience where the language did seem to work for a student and instructor. Stewart called for a motion to accept the language as a mandatory syllabus insert. Chambers moved to accept and Doerfert seconded.

Glaus asked if this policy could be a place to add wording for people mandated to quarantine through contact tracing, even if they are not feeling ill or have not tested positive. Stewart suggested that would probably be handled by a separate contact-tracing protocol instead of in this policy, which is specifically for students who feel ill. Duran added that this had already been discussed but was too uncertain to put in this statement. Instead, it was left to other types of absence situations that Student Affairs is accustomed to working with. There is an avenue for students in this situation to report this with the Dean of Students, which will trigger the necessary notifications. Shannon suggested including an additional statement in syllabi to provide guidance for students mandated to quarantine through contact tracing. Stewart referred to Duran's comments and also suggested that we should wait for official guidance from the System and the President's Office about how contact tracing will work on

campus. Stewart returned to the motion and opened the floor for any dissensions. Hearing none, the motion was approved. Stewart said there would be further discussions about how to distribute the policy to faculty and about the issue of contact tracing.

The next item was a syllabus insert about contingency planning for face-to-face and hybrid courses. This would notify students that in certain circumstances, such as going into Phase IV, the course would be moved online. Louder suggested that a statement be added to the insert that if a course moves online, instructors may implement the use of remote proctoring services. Stewart agreed that such language would be beneficial. Hart noted in the chat box that syllabi should also include hardware requirements, such as webcams and microphones, that might be required if the course moved online. Based on the discussion, Stewart decided to table this item for now. Austin agreed.

Stewart then turned to a discussion of the first day of classes and what that might look like. There is a general consensus that the first day of classes should spend a considerable amount of time explaining safety protocols and a culture of responsibility and prevention. The Chancellor and President are considering making a video to show on the first day of class to share their perspective on the safety of the university community. Heck shared that SGA would like to work on a video campaign to help destigmatize the use of masks and social distancing. Stewart agreed to the need for positive messaging and elaborated that there is a leaning toward requiring masks inside and in high-traffic areas, but it has not been affirmed yet. Heck confirmed that from a student standpoint, this would be wise. In the chat box, Wong suggested asking Faculty Senate and Staff Senate to collaborate with SGA on this initiative, and Shannon pointed out that UT and A&M are requiring masks in classrooms and buildings, except for individual offices and dorm rooms. Chambers asked about a timeline for these policies in the chat box, and Stewart said potentially by early July.

Stewart then asked Durham DeCesaro to give an update on course modalities for the fall. Currently there are only two sections that have been identified as significantly over the percent fill capacity of 50%. If courses are required to change modality of any sort, every affected student will receive an automatically generated email, explaining what a modality change is and telling them to ask their academic advisors for assistance. Advisors should be made aware that they might be receiving these questions. Martinez clarified that the modality change messaging will be specifically targeted to face-to-face courses moving to online and vice versa but not hybrid courses. These messages will not be sent for courses that have already been changed this summer, but will be implemented for changes that occur from this point forward. Lauderdale asked in the chat box if they would have advance notice of these emails, and Martinez confirmed.

Chambers suggested that this messaging might be better received if coming from a student face rather than from an impersonal email address. Durham DeCesaro mentioned that Duran and the RRO team have been working on putting a face to this messaging for RRO students. Durham DeCesaro also suggested using college-specific messaging.

Durham DeCesaro addressed Kiser's question in the chat box about how classroom space will be configured. Once class scheduling is finalized in the next few weeks, units will be advised to look at where courses will be housed for the fall and bring forward any questions about equipment or seating. Martinez elaborated that if classes are held in auxiliary spaces, such as the SUB, questions should be directed to the Registrar's Office, since they are in charge of scheduling courses in those shared spaces. She also noted that academic units interested in using SUB spaces should not contact the SUB directly; all space requests for course-based

instruction should go through the Registrar's office. They will look for an academic area first before considering the SUB as a possible solution. Louder added that he had been working with IT and others to outfit classes for synchronous video delivery of courses and asked that people not move equipment out of classrooms during this time.

Stewart mentioned concerns from parents about students' schedules showing numerous online courses. We want faculty and departments to emphasize that we are looking for a balance of online and face-to-face instruction. Stewart pointed out that face-to-face interactions do not only have to happen in the classroom. He suggested the possibility of offering study sessions for small numbers of students or having office hours outside to observe social distancing to increase interactions between students and professors.

Durham DeCesaro returned to academic scheduling to clarify that extracurricular activities should not be scheduled through the Registrar's Office but through the SUB or other auxiliary staff, as in previous semesters. The Registrar's Office is only handling formal academic instruction. Durham DeCesaro mentioned that there is also a group working to provide guidance in July about how to use outdoor spaces for instruction, as well as regarding students gathering in common areas between courses.

Durham DeCesaro also gave an update about August commencement, which will be virtual and will look very similar to the May commencement ceremony. She will be following up with deans' offices with information about videos and securing readers.

Wong asked in the chat box if there had been discussions about TA shared offices and grad lounges. Stewart said that would need to be considered.

Stewart turned to the next item of business and asked for the support units to update the Council on their areas. Green shared that Academic Outreach and Engagement has been working on a portal called Engage at Tech Central that consolidates Outreach and Engagement activities and, more recently, projects and activities related to COVID-19. The portal also provides information about summer camps, lifelong learning, and engaged research opportunities to keep the community informed for the summer and fall. Green also described their progress on pursuing a Resilient Communities Initiative, where they reach out to communities and discover their needs, especially related to COVID-19, then work with departments and units to get faculty and students involved. They are planning to have a soft launch this fall. This initiative has the potential to be integrated into courses designed to provide hands-on experience, such as capstones. Lastly, they are working on a nonprofit support center. Green reminded the Council that Academic Outreach and Engagement is available to identify community partners for grants or courses with community components. Stewart emphasized that there are many opportunities for community outreach due to COVID-19 that academic units should be considering.

Stewart then asked McConnel for an update on the testing Center. McConnel said Academic Testing Services is open and offering exams, mainly CLEP and TSI. They are doing testing by appointments only to observe social distancing, so they cannot accept walk-ins at this time. Most testing agencies have been offering at-home options, except for the CLEP, which does not have an at-home option. The testing center is one of the few places in the state offering CLEP exams, although they are not advertising it to prevent people from traveling. There have been some students who were unable to complete the TSI requirement before RRO due to scheduling difficulties, so the testing center is working with them diligently to help them get tested. McConnel emphasized for academic units to contact them about

students needing testing.

Austin gave an update on Institutional Research, which has largely been unaffected. The main factor affecting IR is moving to college entrance exam optional admittance. They anticipate there will be an affordance by publication houses that use those scores to rank institutions, as well as for the data they are required to submit to the state. Other than that, all reporting dates and deadlines have remained the same. Stewart asked if other institutions were having the same issues. Austin said yes and that they had been in discussion with other universities.

Brown then reported that the Registrar's Office had completed 15,602 grade changes to CR or NC. They are still accepting some requests that missed the deadline due to university error. The Registrar's Office sent Dean's and President's Lists notifications as e-certificates, and students really enjoyed them and posted them on social media. More students received those than previously because of the removal of the hour requirement.

Martinez gave an update on sections and scheduling. The Registrar's Office has been busy assisting with modality reviews and updates to ensure sections are scheduled in rooms that meet capacity guidelines. They are also analyzing and researching seat availability for a sizable potential incoming class to provide a great experience for incoming first-year students. Martinez also described a new transcript history website they created to report information they would typically post to the back of a transcript for other institutions to have context for academic records. The information grew to such a volume that they created the website because there is no more room on the back of the transcripts. The Registrar's Office also updated the registration system to provide a better indicator of a course's modality. Martinez also reported that they have been able to resume the reissued diploma orders with the return to campus, which was the only service they had to suspend.

Stewart expressed appreciation for the support units and what they do. He said SOAR and other units would be able to provide input next month.

With no other business, Stewart thanked the Council members again and adjourned the meeting.