

**Texas Tech University
Academic Council**

**Meeting of August 17, 2021
1:30 PM, Skype**

Attendance

Present: Faisal Al-Hmoud, Dennis Arnett, Nurcan Bac, Mario Beruvides, Stephanie Borst, Chance Brooks, Bobbie Brown, Todd Chambers, David Doerfert, Cathy Duran, Dottie Durband, Kristi Gaines, Lindsay Hallowell, Jamie Hansard, Kaelene Hansen, Melanie Hart (Presiding), Stephanie Hart, Bret Hendricks, Sheila Hoover, Patrick Hughes, Wendy-Adele Humphrey, Jorge Iber, Catherine Jai, Darryl James, Michelle Kiser, Amy Koerber, Rodney Lackey, Katie Langford, Mitzi Lauderdale, Justin Louder, Peter Martens (for Andrea Bilkey), Brenda Martinez, Shirley Matteson, Pat McConnel, Ashley McPherson, Kuhn Park, Raegan Higgins, Randy McBee, Raegan Ribordy, David Roach, Pradip Sahu, Brian Shannon, Rob Stewart, Carol Sumner, Suzanne Tapp, Clay Taylor, Annette Uddameri, and Janessa Walls.

Guests: Sandra Addo, Arthur Durband, and Suhas Pol.

<p>Action Items:</p>

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| <p>1. None</p> |
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Hart called the meeting to order by presenting the minutes from the June Academic Council meeting. With no discussion or corrections, Chambers motioned to approve the minutes. Roach seconded, and the minutes were approved.

For the next item of business, Hart invited Hallowell to introduce the course and program proposals. James added that he is taking over for Jaclyn Cañas-Carrell for the next academic year and then turned the floor over to Hallowell. Hallowell began by explaining that with the semester starting next week, all courses with an effective date of Fall 2021 had been moved forward to Spring 2022. Hallowell then summarized the course proposals needing a vote. With no questions or comments, Louder moved to approve the course proposals, Doerfert seconded, and the course proposals were approved.

Hallowell then introduced the program proposals, beginning with the new programs. The first new program was an accelerated bachelor's to master's program in Sociology. Roach added that Arts & Sciences is looking forward to offering the program. The next proposal was for an undergraduate certificate in Commercial Real Estate. Arnett explained that Commercial Real Estate is an expertise within the Finance department, and they are anticipating that students majoring in other areas in the college will benefit from the certificate. Louder asked if this certificate was related to a former real estate exam prep program, and Arnett clarified that this certificate is not related to that former program, which is no longer offered.

The next group of proposals were graduate certificates in Energy Commerce, Law and Policy, Oil and Gas, and Renewables for the Interdisciplinary Studies, M.S.: Energy Concentration. Doerfert explained that these certificates will have premium tuition and are designed for industry professionals. Doerfert added that the Energy concentration allows students to choose coursework in three of these areas, but many students are expressing interest in all four fields. These

certificates will allow students to take coursework in that additional field that is not included in their master's degree coursework. Chambers asked for clarification on the premium tuition. Doerfert explained that, similar to the professional M.B.A. program, the Board of Regents has approved a higher tuition rate for this program.

The last new program proposal was for a Master of Science in Ranch Management. Brooks added that this will be a non-thesis, 36-hour master's program. Brooks explained that the concept came from the advisory board, and the program design is based on survey work that was conducted within the industry. There are only two similar programs offered in the state of Texas; one has highly restricted enrollment, and the other is a certificate program. Louder asked if there were plans to offer the program at a distance, and Brooks clarified that the program is designed for face-to-face delivery, and there are no plans to offer a distance modality.

The remaining voting item was a semester credit hour change for the Equine Science Undergraduate Certificate. James explained that the proposal is a correction to the original proposal. Brooks added that the credit hours and coursework had conflicting information when the program was originally approved, so the proposal is to correct those errors and simplify the program.

With no additional discussion, Hart called for a vote on the program proposals. Doerfert moved to approve the programs, Chambers seconded, and the program proposals were approved. Hallowell added in the chat the missed informational items, which consisted of curricular changes. Hart brought these proposals to the Council's attention later in the meeting.

For the next item of business, Lauderdale introduced the topic of missing and incomplete grades for students nearing graduation. Lauderdale began by explaining that this is a common hiccup departments face. The proposal is to enact an official process for handling these types of issues. Lauderdale turned the floor over to Martinez to explain the proposal in the document attached to the meeting agenda.

Martinez clarified that these issues only need to be resolved for students in their final semester. Up to this point, these issues have been handled on a case-by-case basis, but the Registrar's Office wants a policy in effect to ensure consistency in handling these issues. The proposal states that if the college and department have been unable to determine by their records what a grade should have been or are unable to contact the instructor of record to obtain the grade, the student will either receive credit (CR) or no credit (NC): CR if there is some evidence that the student has completed enough work to receive credit for the course, or NC if there is not evidence that the student has completed enough work to receive credit for the course. Martinez added that neither designation carries a grade penalty.

Martinez continued by saying that this policy will allow those students to have an official grade on record, which will allow their graduation and degree to be posted without issue. Martinez highlighted the pros and cons of each grade option that were included in the attachment. Martinez specifically pointed out the concern that the student will have paid for the class, and it is the university's responsibility to ensure they have a recorded grade for that class. However, the students also bear some responsibility for ensuring they receive a complete record for their courses. Martinez applauded the colleges for the smaller number of missing grades this year than in previous years. Martinez concluded that they believe the CR/NC option is the simplest and cleanest way of resolving the issue of missing grades.

Lauderdale added that the majority of the time, the courses with missing grades are not needed to

fulfill a graduation requirement. In addition, the CR/NC option will not impact a student's GPA. Martinez added that this option will prevent the inflating of a student's grade when there is not evidence to support a grade of A, or similar situations. Lauderdale asked the Council members for any comments or concerns. Iber added in the chat that the policy sounded reasonable. James asked if this policy would apply to students who have received grades of Incomplete. Martinez clarified that this applied to missing grades, which are given a grade of X on the record. Lauderdale asked what would happen if there was a grade of I on record. Martinez explained that based on current policy, the grade of I would change to a grade of F if it has been more than a year since the grade of I was recorded. Hendricks added in the chat that this sounded like a good solution.

For the next item of business, Hart asked Louder to provide a TopHat update. Louder shared that messaging regarding TopHat is forthcoming from the Office of the CIO, and wanted to share some updates with the Council members. Louder explained that President Schovanec and former Provost Galyean asked a group representing students, faculty, and staff to review classroom engagement products in response to SGA raised concerns about those classroom engagement technologies in use. The group was requested to submit a competitive RFP. The university selected TopHat as the preferred vendor, which is paid for by the university and provided as a free service for faculty and students to utilize starting this fall. Louder explained that TopHat has already been integrated with Blackboard, Banner, and the eRaider system, and the bookstore is also using the system. Louder voiced some complications some students have experienced when attempting to create TopHat accounts and getting errors about trial memberships. The issue has been resolved, and Louder informed Council members that students and faculty can ignore any emails regarding trial memberships. Louder reiterated that TopHat is free for students and faculty to use.

Chambers asked for clarification about faculty still listing a \$30 fee for TopHat in syllabi and whether the messaging from the CIO will get to faculty before next week. Louder said he would work with the Office of the CIO to get the messaging out Tuesday or Wednesday. Al-Hmoud asked if "no" cost means no added cost in tuition. Louder clarified that there is no direct cost or separate fee to students but that the fee is being paid by the university. Al-Hmoud then asked if students may have non-financial reasons to prefer using other resources, and if so, would there be any academic penalty. Louder added that faculty who use other tools have been asked not to charge students for those resources. The goal is to have all faculty use the centrally provided TopHat so there is no cost to students.

Louder explained that TopHat can provide attendance, tracking, and polling/quizzing in class, and can also capture responses in real time, so TopHat will benefit students academically. Al-Hmoud expressed interest and gratitude in the university's centralizing the technology being used in the classrooms. Hart voiced Shannon's comments in the chat about the positive experiences with TopHat being used at the Law School.

Hart then turned the floor over to Stewart to discuss small course reporting. Stewart explained that the small course reporting process is underway, and the app is open for department chairs to indicate intentions for under-enrolled classes. Stewart emphasized the option of converting qualified under-enrolled classes to independent studies or research courses, which can be taught under their original numbers. This would prevent the need for changes to the students' schedules.

For the next item of business, Stewart introduced the Provost's Planning Calendar, which was distributed last week. There were a few needed corrections, which were included with the meeting agenda. Stewart summarized the corrections and asked for any questions.

Hart voiced a question in the chat about small course reporting for study abroad courses. Stewart explained that the process should be the same as for any small course, and to look at the circumstances and where the courses are being taught and the condition of enrollment. Stewart mentioned that there tends to be more leniency in study abroad courses to prevent canceling an under-enrolled course and sending students back home. However, Stewart added that departments should not let the leniency prevent them from pushing for additional enrollment by other students already in that place. Stewart summarized that departments need to give a justification of why the course needs to be taught. Stewart then voiced Roach's question in the chat about whether courses can be canceled before students go abroad, and answered that, yes, courses can be canceled before students leave, but that travel arrangements are often made weeks in advance. Stewart recommended working with International Affairs about canceling study abroad courses and watching the enrollment in those courses much earlier than departments might think necessary.

Stewart then introduced items of other business, beginning with the last-minute enrollment push. Stewart mentioned that some students have holds preventing them from registering, and other students may be employees who just need some encouragement to re-enroll. Stewart then asked for Hughes to speak of some strategies to use for this push. Hughes reiterated Stewart's call for departments to continue reaching out to un-enrolled students about their intentions to enroll and address any registration obstacles. Hughes also mentioned the importance of reaching out to under-enrolled students who are registered for fewer than 12 or 15 hours. Hughes encouraged departments to discuss the opportunities with those students to take additional courses to stay on track as much as practical for the students. Hughes added that regardless of the outcome of the contact to please document that contact in Strive. The Strive documentation allows the university to address enrollment patterns to our leadership.

Stewart thanked Hughes and reiterated the point of documenting those contacts in Strive, explaining that the President, Provost, and CFO rely on that enrollment information when considering operational and salary funds and the revenue generated from tuition.

Stewart then asked the Council members to respond with any observations, comments, or questions based on the President's guidance provided on Friday regarding COVID-19. Shannon asked if the university would reinstitute the reporting dashboard as students return. Stewart did not know. Shannon mentioned that it is a helpful tool and asked if there are contingency plans in place if the case counts continue to rise. Stewart explained that faculty have been asked to prepare for the possibility of needing to pivot to alternative means of instruction. Shannon asked if there were benchmarks used in making that decision, and Stewart said there are currently no benchmarks at the institution or System level. Stewart said that the decision is going to have a number of factors.

Stewart clarified that masks are welcome and encouraged, but we cannot require them or compel people to wear them. Stewart added that anyone who wishes to wear a mask should feel free to do so, and that people should continue to practice social distancing as much as is possible. Stewart also added that the general spirit of the matter is that people want things to be as normal and as safe as possible, and that is a difficult balance to keep. Chambers asked what faculty members should put in their syllabi regarding masks and vaccinations. Chambers mentioned encouraging faculty members in CoMC to use as much of the language from the guidance in their syllabi as they feel comfortable using. Stewart agreed and added that we cannot know anyone's vaccination status who does not want to tell us, just like we cannot know of any other medical condition they might have because of HIPPA laws.

Al-Hmoud added that SGA initially anticipated negative responses to the messaging to students about the vaccine, but the feedback has been overall positive, especially among students involved

in Greek life. Al-Hmoud recommended keeping the messaging positive and highlighting the benefits rather than focusing on the number of deaths. Stewart thanked Al-Hmoud for the comments and mentioned that there is a vaccination clinic in Holden Hall where students can get vaccinated while completing the rest of their paperwork.

Al-Hmoud asked if there is any way to know how many people are presenting vaccine cards in order to enter into the incentive program. Stewart said we do not have those figures yet, but the CFO's office is monitoring that. The drawings will not begin until September 15. Stewart mentioned that students are required to upload their vaccine information in order to enter into the drawings, but faculty and staff only have to present proof of vaccinations to receive a prize.

Higgins mentioned that the incentives seem counterproductive by encouraging people to be congregating in spaces rather than socially distancing. Higgins asked if other incentives for faculty and staff had been considered. Stewart offered to ask if there are alternatives to the current incentives. Al-Hmoud added that many of the incentives were targeted toward students who generally do not socially distance even when given the opportunity. In addition, Al-Hmoud mentioned that for students not interested in getting vaccinated, smaller incentives are unlikely to convince them otherwise. Because of this, larger prizes were decided on and designed to target students. Higgins added that the student incentives were understandable, but the concern was regarding the faculty and staff incentives.

Stewart voiced Shannon's comment in the chat regarding shot clinics at the football tailgate events. Stewart explained that Emergency Management and Athletics are discussing options for providing clinics at ball games. The City of Lubbock has asked for a list of high-attendance events besides ball games where they can set up a tent, and while there are not specific plans in place, the opportunities are under development. Stewart added that the next testing and vaccine clinic on campus will be available between August 31 and September 8.

With no further discussion Stewart called for announcements. Lauderdale began with a Save the Date for the Transfer Summit between TTU and South Plains College on October 29. Lauderdale explained that additional details are forthcoming.

Sumner added that construction has begun on the Black Cultural Center. The goal is for the center to open January 2022. There will be a branch library available in that facility, and they are coordinating with Dean Dukes to provide academic support and resources in that space. The library will have a special collection from African American and black scholars.

Sumner also mentioned that work has begun on the Intercultural Center, which will be located in the SUB. Sumner asked for anyone interested in getting involved in this project to reach out to DE&I. They will need faculty and staff to provide resources and support. In addition, Sumner explained that as a Hispanic Serving Institution, we will be reimplementing the Hispanic Serving Institution Committee and that HSI week is September 13-17, which is the first week of Hispanic Heritage Month.

Stewart asked for Tapp to give an update on the New Faculty Orientation. Tapp explained that they have revised the New Faculty Orientation, and they have a customized approach in which our colleagues can choose which sessions are of interest to them. Instead of the mandatory day-and-a-half session, there will now be a morning approach that is more focused on connections and collaboration between colleagues. This makes for a shorter orientation but a longer opportunity over the semester to participate in professional development just for new faculty. Tapp mentioned that 107 faculty are enrolled, and connection experiences this week include yoga, running, and

cycling. Tapp asked for Council members to encourage their new faculty to participate.

Stewart then asked for Roach to give an update on the TA workshop. Roach explained that they have the greatest number of students registered than ever before. They are excited to kick off the semester with fresh new graduate students.

Stewart asked for other announcements. Hart mentioned that the American Heart Association Heart Walk is October 16 at Mackenzie Park and to let her know if anyone would like to put together a team.

Sumner added that work is progressing on additional resources for military and veteran students, and that recent news and images coming out of Afghanistan may be causing stress in those populations. DE&I is working with the MVP office to get some additional resources available.

With no additional items or announcements, Stewart thanked Hart for presiding over the first half of the meeting, and also thanked the Council members for their work in preparing for the start of the semester. Stewart then adjourned the meeting.