

**Council of Academic Deans Meeting  
August 24, 2021**

**Summary and Action Items**

**1. Faculty Development: New Department Chair/School Director Training and Next Steps: Charting Your Path Pilot Program** – Dr. Debbie Thorne and Dr. Candace Hastings provided the Council with information on initiatives to 1) enhance the community of practice for department chairs and school directors and 2) support faculty seeking to develop, innovate, and invigorate their professional plans and goals, especially after the effects of COVID-19. Dr. Hastings described the first initiative as a partnership with the Council of Chairs that includes a series of workshops on budgeting, hiring, leadership, supervision, inclusive excellence, and operational necessities in a new chair's first 90 days. She indicated the second initiative begins with a keynote address on September 24, 2021 (noon) open to all faculty and will evolve into a competitive cohort program under development by the Faculty Development Advisory Committee. Dr. Hastings asked the Council for feedback and input on both initiatives. The Council recognized the outstanding efforts of Dr. Hastings and Faculty Development.

**2. Undergraduate Admissions Report** – Ms. Gary Ray provided the Council with an undergraduate admissions report.

For fall 2021, \$40M is available for one-time Bobcat Cares emergency aid grants. All students are eligible to apply. The application opened on August 23, 2021 and 12,200 applications were received in one day, including international and undocumented students. Financial Aid and Scholarships is communicating frequently with students about the grants. Applications close September 7, 2021 and students will be notified of awards within two weeks of the closing date. Awards will be prioritized based on exceptional financial need, as demonstrated by the FAFSA.

The university is 15 days from fall census day or the 12<sup>th</sup> day of class (September 8, 2021)

- Last Friday, 772 students were dropped for nonpayment vs. 990 in fall 2020 (218 fewer this year)
- The Daily Registration Report for Tuesday, August 24, 2021 shows total enrollment of 37,872, an increase over fall 2020 by 139 or +0.4%.
- Credit hours are down 0.5% or 2,353 – our state funding is determined by credit hours and not headcount
- In fall 2020, registration headcount increased for the next six days to peak at 37,948 on August 29, 2020. At noon today, the registration count is 37,915

**Freshman Class**

After the first drop for nonpayment, there were 6,631 freshmen enrolled as of Monday, August 23, 2021. Freshman withdrawals are lower than fall 2020 withdrawals. Residence Halls are at 100% capacity. The university is on track for a record freshman class. As of Tuesday, August 23, 2021, there are 6,639 freshmen registered. This headcount compares to 5,855 first-year students on census day in fall 2020.

## New Transfers

There were 3,095 new transfers registered on Monday, August 23, 2021. As of Tuesday, August 24, 2021, there are 3,128 new transfer students registered, an increase over the fall 2020 census day total of 3,059. Withdrawals are low. Transfers with 0-29 hours are up 8% (57), which suggests these transfer students are more traditional in age and may prefer in-person classes.

## International

New International first-year students are up 7 from 11 to 18 or 64%, with new international transfers up from 18 to 20. This outcome is remarkable considering travel and immigration restrictions.

**3. Graduate Admissions Report** – Dr. Andrea Golato provided the Council with a graduate admissions report. Graduate student registrations for fall 2021 are stronger than fall 2020, due to continuing master’s students, continuing doctoral students, and new doctoral students. The number of new master’s students is down from fall 2020. Plans are underway to grow student interest and enrollments in master’s programs, including online programs. The Graduate College is hosting a welcome event for graduate students on the Round Rock Campus on Wednesday, August 25, 2021.

**4. COVID-19 Updates** – Dr. Bourgeois announced that the university is currently reporting a small increase in positive COVID-19 cases, with approximately 30 per day, and a 4% testing positivity rate. On-campus testing is available at the Curative kiosk in San Marcos. There is a Curative kiosk near the Round Rock Campus. There are other options in the San Marcos and Round Rock areas. The university’s Roadmap has information on [testing, reporting, and response steps](#).

Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson vaccinations are available at the Student Health Center as well as through special events. The Pfizer booster (third dose) for immunocompromised persons will be available August 27, 2021.

Dr. Cynthia Hernandez alerted the Council that all students are being asked to sign an acknowledgment entitled, “Keep Texas State Safe: Steps to Stop the Spread,” prior to August 27, 2021. This acknowledgement includes steps to protect the university community from COVID-19.

Students are invited to a special, virtual town hall on Thursday, August 26, 2021 to hear updates on COVID-19 transmission patterns, the Delta variant, health and safety measures for fall, mass vaccinations, and how to communicate with faculty about student quarantine or isolation. The town hall will include a question-and-answer session.

Health and safety reminders and messages will continue to go out to the university community. Dr. Mary Brennan recommended the use of positive reinforcement in these messages.

University Marketing provides downloadable posters, photos, digital signs, graphics, and other items related to the university’s health and safety plans on a [SharePoint site](#). Some items included recently updated phrases, “Please Put Your Mask On,” and “You Should Wear a Mask.”

## 5. Fall 2021 Classes

Members of the council shared observations and perspectives of the first two days of the fall 2021, including the percentage of students, faculty, and staff wearing face coverings, crowding in hallways, faculty concerns, student concerns, and classroom management techniques. The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the [Teaching and Research webpage](#) of the university's Roadmap will be updated in response to this discussion.

Dr. Bourgeois reminded the Council that the emails students receive from Bobcat Trace and provide to faculty are an acceptable notice for student absences. Deans are asked to email their faculty about the official nature of Bobcat Trace notifications. The FAQ related to student absences on the [Teaching and Research webpage](#) will be updated in response to this discussion.

Dr. Bourgeois described the role of the Office of Disability Services as the university office that make recommendations on ADA student accommodations. Faculty may consider, but are not obligated, to meet student requests for class modifications, such as individualized instructional modalities. This information is in a FAQ on the [Teaching and Research webpage](#).

Dr. Lynn Ledbetter discussed the "Faculty Senate Statement on Minimum Health and Safety Procedures for Return to Campus" being circulated to all faculty and librarians. Currently, there are 507 signatures to the statement. President Trauth and Provost Bourgeois will engage in further dialogue with Faculty Senate on the statement, practices, and protocols at the President's Academic Advisory Group (PAAG) meeting on September 1, 2021.

6. **Budget Planning** – No discussion was held on this item.

## OFF AGENDA

- Dr. Vedaraman Sriraman and Dr. Bourgeois mentioned the formation of two working groups to explore the development of new undergraduate minors in Data Science and Innovation and Entrepreneurship.
- Dr. Bourgeois announced the Department of Geography was approved to change its name to the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at the August 2021 Board of Regents meeting.
- Following President Trauth's retirement announcement on August 20, 2021, Dr. Bourgeois indicated Dr. Brian McCall, Chancellor of The Texas State University System, will be providing more information on the search to replace her, including the formation of a search committee.
- Dr. Debbie Thorne announced the search for two positions, including the Director, Faculty and Academic Resources and Assistant Provost.
- Dr. Chris Hailey and Dr. Bourgeois indicated the search for a Chief Research Officer is moving forward, with candidates expected to visit campus in late September 2021.