

**Joint Council of Academic Deans and Faculty Senate Meeting  
March 9, 2021**

**Summary and Action Items**

1. Faculty Senate – At the March 3, 2021 PAAG meeting, the Provost indicated that he is encouraging/allowing department chairs/directors flexibility in terms of scheduling classes for Fall 2021 to be online or hybrid. We would like to have a discussion about what "flexibility" means so that we are all on the same page in terms of establishing expectations. Dr. Bourgeois would also like to discuss Spring Break and Summer and Fall 2021 Classes.

Dr. Bourgeois began this discussion by noting that in September 2020 and January 2021, he announced that the class schedule for summer 2021 would look similar to that of summer 2020 and the class schedule for fall 2021 would look similar to that of fall 2019, as starting points.

Based on vaccine availability and advice from the university's chief medical officer and public health officials, the university is planning for a return to mostly normal operations in fall 2021. This includes class schedules, services, activities, office staffing, and other campus operations. The university will continue to implement enhanced cleaning protocols, encourage proper hand hygiene and related measures, and will make a decision later regarding face coverings. At this time, physical distancing is not expected to be in force in fall 2021.

Summer 2021 would likely continue with the health and safety guidelines we have been adhering to at TXST. The President's Cabinet will allow modifications to rollover into summer 2021 for faculty and students at this time because of the timely decisions needed as registration begins March 29. A decision about staff will be communicated later. While the summer 2021 schedule of classes will reflect summer 2020, having the vast majority of the Texas State community vaccinated against COVID-19 by May and June may increase in-person courses, services, activities, office staffing, and other operations in summer 2021, as well.

Further information will be provided based on assessments from the university's chief medical officer and public health officials, including the management of individual health circumstances and modifications. Texas State will continue to follow its [scenario-based decision](#) model to determine the university's operational status.

University leadership will be engaging departments and offices in conversations about appropriate telecommuting options in the post pandemic environment.

Faculty and students may still need some flexibility, which should be addressed/handled by the department chair/school director for individual cases.

If the current plan for fall 2021 has to be modified, then quick action can and will be taken by Faculty Development, Distance and Extended Learning, Information Technology, and others to ensure faculty have support for making necessary instructional adjustments.

Spring Break 2021 – TXST will not pivot completely to virtual instructional modality for the week following Spring Break. Faculty members, in consultation with their department chair/school director, can make the decision to move to an online modality for one week after Spring Break.

Due to the significant disruption of the February winter storm, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) indicated that Texas public institutions of higher education are not required to adjust their semester end dates if three or fewer contact hours of classes have been canceled (week of February 15, 2021). Based on THECB guidance, faculty were asked to ensure missed contact hours on Monday, February 22 and Tuesday, February 23 are compensated by providing students with sufficient supplemental materials/assignments or scheduling make up class sessions. Thus, the spring 2021 calendar, including Spring Break, final exams, commencement, and semester end dates have not been altered.

2. Faculty Senate – QEP Program: there have been numerous presentations in the past two months related to the QEP program. One question that has consistently arisen is if there will be funding for workload release for faculty who supervise undergraduate research in the program. We understood from Beth Wuest that there will be release time provided to the faculty who are teaching the two required research courses. We would like to discuss the possibility of providing release time for faculty who supervise research, as we have heard from faculty that it is a barrier to participation.

Dr. Wuest provided the group with a detailed overview of the QEP, which offers a pathway for undergraduates from any academic discipline that leads to mentored research and creative expression. She reviewed the learning outcomes, the IDEA Center, and timeline for the QEP. Dr. Wuest also reviewed the expectations for the upcoming SACSCOC virtual accreditation visit and discussed existing workload adjustment codes, including individual instruction and undergraduate mentoring, available to recognize the workload of faculty who supervise undergraduate research.

3. Faculty Senate – We would like to hear from the Deans about how they think their faculty are doing after a year of teaching in the pandemic and after the budget cuts. We feel that morale is low and that faculty may be contemplating career change or early retirement. The Senate would like to discuss how we can address this situation proactively if we believe it is a concern at Texas State.

Dr. Bourgeois asked each dean to discuss challenges, morale issues, and other concerns they have heard from faculty and staff over the past year due to the pandemic. Deans and council members acknowledged the tremendous efforts and commitment of faculty and staff while facing uncertainty, stress, and changing workloads over the past year. The council also discussed the importance of efforts to replenish and rejuvenate the campus community as the university normalizes operations. Dr. Bourgeois asked Faculty Senate to collaborate with deans to bring ideas and recommendations forward.

The university is pleased to offer the 3% bonus and President's Cabinet will continue to prioritize permanent increases in faculty and staff salaries. As part of its legislative priorities, the university is asking for \$25 million over the next biennium for institutional enhancement funds to bring funding parity with other Emerging Research Universities.

4. Undergraduate Admissions Report – Mr. Gary Ray provided the Council with an undergraduate admissions report. Mr. Ray announced that there is a downward enrollment trend at community colleges, except Collin College.

TXST is third in the State of Texas for the number of applications received (29,979).

41% of the Texas high school seniors in the class of 2021 have completed a FAFSA. This is a decline of 8.3% or over 13,000 students from last year.

TXST was awarded a \$1.5M Texas Reskilling Support Fund Grant to provide essential emergency educational support to students who have been most significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and aid in their education and economic recovery. This includes Texas students who previously stopped out of higher education without receiving a postsecondary credential. TXST is working with the OWLS programs and targeting 1,000 undergraduate students to receive from \$500 to \$2,500 for tuition and fees. Students must be senior in classification and must file a FAFSA.

The TSUS Board of Regents approved TXST to temporarily use a test-optional approach for admissions requirements for spring, summer, and fall classes of 2022 for freshman and transfer students with less than 15 transferrable hours.

Mr. Ray announced that 15,284 students were eligible for the Bobcat Cares Emergency Grant and 8,125 students will receive \$800. There will be another opportunity for students in summer and fall 2021.

Freshman applications crossed 28,000 last week. Hispanic freshman applications are down 10.6% or 1,641 for week 11. African Americans applications are also down by 14.4% or 523 to date. First-year students of color are experiencing significant impact by COVID-related economic hardship.

TXST has awarded merit scholarships to 1,839 test-optional students and 5,040 overall first-year students.

Bobcat Day is scheduled for April 13-14. The Bobcat Day in February had to be canceled due to the inclement weather.

5. Graduate Admissions Report – Dr. Andrea Golato provided the Council with a graduate admissions report. For summer 2021, Dr. Golato pointed out that there is an increase in doctoral applications due to the physical therapy summer cohort. There is a decrease in master's applications of 5.9% or 18 for summer.

For fall 2021, there is a significant increase in doctoral and master's applications and acceptances. The College of Education has an increase of doctoral applicants mostly due to the programs in school improvement and developmental education. Colleges experiencing increases in master's applications include Applied Arts (Social Work, Child Life, and Agricultural Sciences), Business Administration (MBA, Data Analytics, and Quantitative Finance & Economics), Liberal Arts

(History and Creative Writing), and Science and Engineering (Computer Science, Biology, and Construction Management).

## **OFF AGENDA**

- Dr. Bourgeois announced that TXST may be receiving 800 doses of the COVID-19 vaccines to administer at TXST; 300 doses will be the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, allocated by the Texas State Department of Health Services, and 500 doses will be Pfizer, provided by Hays County. An announcement to campus will be sent soon. These vaccinations will be administered on March 12, 2021 at the LBJSC Ballrooms. Dr. Carranco and his team at the Student Health Center have developed a portal that determines who is eligible for vaccination based on DSHS vaccine priority guidelines. This service will not be available at the Round Rock Campus for the first couple of weeks. Dr. Carranco expects TXST to continue to receive doses weekly going forward. Dr. Bourgeois reiterated that Dr. Carranco shared with President's Cabinet that conditions are improving dramatically and quickly. The TXST positivity rate is 2.3-2.5%.