

**Council of Academic Deans Meeting
September 8, 2020**

Summary and Action Items

1. **Undergraduate Admissions Report** – Mr. Gary Ray provided the Council with the undergraduate admissions report.
2. **Graduate Admissions Report** – Dr. Andrea Golato provided the Council with the graduate admissions report.
3. **COVID-19 Updates** –
 - Dr. Bourgeois provided a brief overview of last week’s Faculty Senate meeting in which he presented to the Senate the guidance and plans for spring 2021 (pending President’s Cabinet approval).
 - Dr. Bourgeois mentioned that most units have reported that they will be able to have schedule changes completed by September 18, which is when the Schedule of Classes is currently scheduled to go live. Dr. Thorne provided a reminder to the deans that linked courses, such as labs, need to be considered as well.
 - Dr. Bourgeois announced that a request to The TSUS Office has been submitted to Dr. John Hayek, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Health Affairs, regarding the current policy on tolling the tenure clock. TXST is seeking a change in the Regents Rules regarding the exclusion of countable service toward tenure be changed from two years to three years. Dr. Bourgeois also mentioned that extraordinary circumstances (e.g., pandemics and hurricanes) have been requested to be added to the list of exigencies or hardships leading to a request for tolling a third year.
 - Discussion was held amongst the Council regarding the Faculty Senate continuing to be uncomfortable with the notification process for students who have tested positive for COVID-19 that have recently been in the classroom. The Senate believes that all persons in the classroom be notified and not just those who were in close contact with the COVID-19 positive student. Issues such as confidentiality and releasing information on a need-know basis were discussed as to reasons why this has not been recommended. Dr. Carranco does not support a change in our notification process, based on public health guidelines and practices.
 - Dr. Mary Ellen Cavitt made a call for individuals who would like to serve as contact tracers. More contact tracers are needed for turn-around/efficiency purposes.
 - Dr. Cavitt briefing mentioned that surveillance testing is not as successful as would’ve hoped and they are researching ways/incentives to be offered to students.
 - Brief discussion was held regarding the COVID-19 dashboard, releasing information such as the positivity rate between symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals, how many tests are being conducted per day, and the cost of the COVID-19 test. Currently, COVID-19 tests at the Student Health Center cost \$75. If a person is symptomatic, insurance will cover the cost of the test; but, insurance does not necessarily cover the cost for those who are asymptomatic/surveillance testing. The cost of the test is expected to decrease over the coming weeks.
4. A question was raised by Dr. Bezner regarding whether TXST will participate in deferment of the payment of the employee’s share of the Social Security portion of FICA tax from 9/1/2020 to 12/31/2020 (President Trump recently signed this executive order). Dr. Bourgeois mentioned that this would be something that would need to be asked of Mr. Eric Algoe.

- Captioning – Mr. Dana Willett provided the following update:
 - The university does not currently have a contract with a captioning vendor. Rev is the recommended vendor and departments have been purchasing service “off-contract” at about \$1.25 per minute of captioning.
 - Even without a pool of funding available, various departments spent nearly \$45,000 with Rev for captioning and transcription services last year. This is at a level where a contract is appropriate.
 - It’s estimated that a contract would save 20-30% in per minute captioning/transcription fees.
 - In addition to our obligations related to course materials, the university must provide captioning or transcriptions on any audio or video file placed on any one of the 400 public web sites sponsored by the institution.
 - Currently 33 students have been approved for accommodation under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) who would require captioning, transcriptions, or interpretation in their courses.
 - If all 33 students were in eight courses during the academic year and all those courses had 90 minutes of recorded audio or video per week, this would require over \$300,000 annually in professional captioning services using the current vendor pricing.
 - An available pool of up to \$199,999 annually for transcription/captioning would likely provide a sufficient resource when combined with auto-captioning and when supplemented by some use of electronic course fees when the captioning and transcription is for an online or hybrid course.
 - As likely the most significant users of the service, the Office of Disability Services and Office of Distance and Extended Learning could jointly sponsor a request for proposals and establish a campus contract for the service.
 - Dr. Bourgeois recommended that Mr. Willett work with the appropriate TXST constituents to move forward for contracting.
 - Discussion was also held on faculty options for using scripts and other tools to enable transcription and other principles of universal design for learning.

- **FY 2021 Budget Planning** – Dr. Thorne announced that she has been receiving requests for faculty hiring for fall 2021 to replace faculty who have recently retired, left the university, were approved for a VSIP, etc. She reminded the deans that another round of budget reductions is likely to occur in the near future and units need to keep this in mind before making hiring/search decisions. In some cases, units may want to defer searches until after the legislative session of 2021.

OFF AGENDA

- Dr. Bourgeois announced that an initiative has begun to collect real time up-to-date local contact information for students. Students will receive a message before they are able to register for classes that they must confirm their local contact information.