

**Council of Academic Deans Meeting  
October 27, 2020**

**Summary and Action Items**

1. **Undergraduate Admissions Report** – Mr. Gary Ray provided the Council with an undergraduate admissions report. He also provided the group with some national trends:

- nationwide, undergraduate enrollment has decreased 4% and graduate enrollment is up 2.7% over the last year; post-secondary students have decreased by 3% and first-time freshmen have also decreased by 16.1%
- According to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board preliminary enrollment data for fall 2020, Texas enrollment is down 47,509 compared to last year, which is a decrease of 3.35%; there are nearly 63,000 fewer students enrolled in community colleges across the state

Mr. Ray also discussed our collaboration with Enrollment Research, a consulting firm assisting TXST in making us more competitive, especially with our scholarship programs.

2. **Graduate Admissions Report** – Dr. Andrea Golato provided the Council with a graduate admissions report.

3. **COVID-19 Updates** – Dr. Bourgeois provided an update from Dr. Emilio Carranco:

- national and state trends are becoming worrisome
- last week the State of Texas reported an average of 6,000 cases per day
- Texas has a positivity rate that increased from 8.3% to 9.1%; more significant increases are occurring in El Paso, the Panhandle, and rural parts of the state
- Williamson County – slight decrease in the positivity rate – 2.5% to 2.2%
- Hays County – slight decrease in the positivity rate – 16.3% to 15.8%
- TXST – the Student Health Center and Curative Inc. administered 1,356 total COVID-19 tests last week; 12 positive results, which is a decrease in the positivity rate from 1.6% to .9%
- Dr. Carranco reports that to date, based on contact tracing efforts, there is no evidence of transmission of COVID-19 in residence halls, classrooms, offices or other places on campus
- there are two students currently in isolation and one student is in quarantine
- messaging to students will continue from Student Affairs regarding cautions and safe practices for the upcoming holidays
- Dr. Bourgeois stressed that faculty should keep to the final exam schedule; otherwise faculty have discretion during the last week of classes
- Dr. Mary Ellen Cavitt distributed the final draft of the Planning Events and Meetings During COVID-19, which is a guide for planning safer social gatherings.
- Dr. Carranco will be creating a workgroup that will evaluate how TXST will administer the vaccine across our campuses once it is available.
- Dr. Bourgeois spoke about an update to the CDC guidelines regarding close contacts. If someone has been around an individual who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes in a 24-hour period they may be considered a close contact. Contact tracers will be asking more questions regarding the nature of the close contact.
- TXST's COVID-19 dashboard was ranked #1 for universities and colleges in the State of Texas

- Dr. Sriraman provided a brief commencement update, including the announcement that titles of thesis and dissertations would no longer be listed in the commencement program. From the commencement survey sent to all faculty and staff on October 15, 2020, 22% of faculty and 30% of staff said they would attend an in-person commencement ceremony outdoors at Bobcat Stadium, whereas 85% of fall candidates and 80% of spring/summer graduates said they would attend.

4. **Budget Planning** – Dr. Thorne announced that Ms. Cindy Waggoner will be meeting with budget specialists to ensure the spring 2021 changes are approved as quickly as possible. Dr. Thorne also announced that she recently sent each dean a specific dollar amount for each college's summer 2021 budget.

5. **Spring, Summer and Fall 2021 Classes** – Based on faculty feedback regarding dwindling student engagement in fall 2020 classes as well as student interest, class sections scheduled with the face-to-face modality for spring 2021 may benefit from adherence to required attendance policies. Departments and schools are encouraged to move as many face-to-face class sections as possible into larger classrooms for spring 2021. These moves will increase the number of face-to-face classes offered in a traditional format and reduce complexity and fatigue associated with the A/B model (i.e., not all registered students can attend face-to-face at the same time due to 50% capacity limits).

#### **OFF AGENDA**

- Faculty may wish to discuss with students the upcoming election, elections results, and provide a message of unity, calm, and peace. There will be a Boko's watch party with a limit of 199 people, which will provide education and celebration of community.
- Ms. Yvonne Rhodes, University News Service, is seeking positive stories about unique and compassionate teaching methods and instructional approaches during the pandemic. The Council and others are encouraged to send story ideas to Ms. Rhodes.