

**Council of Academic Deans Meeting  
September 14, 2021**

**Summary and Action Items**

1. **Time and Leave Reporting Responsibilities** – Dr. Debbie Thorne reminded the Council of the importance of discussing and managing time and leave reporting requirements with all faculty and staff in their units. She mentioned three emails recently sent from the Provost to faculty, deans, and department chairs/school directors regarding the following policies: 1) overtime and compensatory time; 2) time and leave policy – supervisor responsibilities in Academic Affairs; and 3) time and leave policy – faculty sick leave reporting requirements.

Dr. Thorne asked the Council to remind all supervisors about time and leave reporting requirements, including reminders to faculty about reporting sick leave, which is more comprehensive than “sick” leave. Sick leave may be taken for annual physicals, dental appointments, care for dependents, time taken to receive the COVID-19 vaccination or testing, and eight hours each fiscal year to attend educational activities of children in grades pre-kindergarten through 12. Faculty are to be reminded that because they earn sick leave, they are expected to report it. [UPPS 04.04.30, University Leave Policy](#), provides timelines for entering and approving time. Each unit should have training/documentation to ensure faculty and staff are aware of procedures.

2. **Undergraduate Admissions Report** – Mr. Gary Ray distributed a handout that described preliminary fall 2020 data compared to preliminary 2021 data. Preliminary fall 2021 enrollment is 37,910, which is a 0.2% increase (+61 students). He noted that Round Rock Campus enrollment is up 4.2% to 1,587 students. First-time freshmen who ranked in the top quarter of their high school classes increased by 40.4% to 2,676 students.

Mr. Ray stated that 43% of freshmen applicants did not submit test scores during the application process.

21,003 applications were eligible to receive an award from Bobcat CARES for \$40 million in COVID-19 relief funding assistance. 135 applications were submitted from students who were not enrolled in fall 2021, a requirement for the funding. There are four award ranges depending on expected family contribution (EFC) per the FAFSA; these awards ranged from \$1,100 to \$2,600. There will be another \$6M to disperse to eligible students for the spring 2022 semester.

3. **Graduate Admissions Report** – Dr. Eric Paulson provided the Council with a graduate admissions report.

4. **COVID-19 Updates** – Dr. Bourgeois provided an update that Dr. Emilio Carranco presented to the President’s Cabinet on September 13, 2021. Dr. Carranco will be sending a message later today to the campus community. There is general improvement in all COVID-19 metrics across the state and nation with a decline in case counts and positivity rates, although the positivity rate for the state of Texas increased. The positivity rate at TXST has declined to 3.5% as of this morning; there were 58 positive cases out of 1,648 tests conducted. Dr. Carranco also mentioned that hospitalizations are slowly declining and there should be a stronger supply of ICU beds soon.

TXST will increase capacity for COVID-19 testing and a second testing site has been added at the Student Recreation Center. MD Diagnostic Labs from San Antonio is providing COVID-19 PCR testing using an oral swab. No appointments for testing are necessary. Testing is available Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and participants should bring their TXST ID, driver’s license, and health insurance card.

Faculty are reminded to alert learning assistants, tutors, peer mentors, and others about Bobcat Trace notifications for a particular class, since the notifications only include the instructor of record and enrolled students. Learning assistants, tutors, and peer mentors are also asked to alert faculty if they report to Bobcat Trace or have orders for quarantine/isolation.

The university recently hired eight additional contact tracers, bringing the total to 20. These staff prioritize reports to Bobcat Trace based on risk factors and also examine the number of cases in specific locations to look for transmission clusters. Thus far, there is no evidence of transmission on campus beyond transmission between roommates in the residence halls. The highest risk of exposure is outside of the classroom.

The [Bobcat Family Portal](#) provides COVID-19 emails and information to parents and other parties who sign up for the service.

5. **Fall 2021 Classes** – Dr. Bourgeois discussed the university’s decision to allow faculty flexibility regarding online course delivery during the first few weeks of the semester. This flexibility recognizes the unique needs and goals of a wide variety of academic disciplines. The flexibility must be consistent with the definition of instruction modes, including the percentage of time spent in-person or online/remote.

The spring 2022 semester will be similar to the fall 2021 semester as a largely residential experience, with course and service delivery methods consistent with the norms and traditions of academic and administrative units. The Council discussed the importance of strategic discussions and intentionality for the online and hybrid delivery of courses and programs. There are university policies and requirements from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for programs where students can obtain 50% or more of credit hours via online or hybrid modalities.

The Distance and Extended Learning Steering Committee is conducting a review of online and hybrid classes to ensure faculty-driven substantive engagement and interaction, which is required to meet federal regulations as well as student expectations for education from Texas State University.

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

## **OFF AGENDA**

The university’s strategic planning timeline will remain on the same schedule, but the Master Plan timeline has been slightly delayed. In spring 2022, the new strategic planning cycle will begin with a review of the university’s mission, vision, and values.

Electronic course fees will remain a separate fee at the university and will not be subsumed into general tuition.