

Undergraduate Council Meeting Minutes
November 29, 2023
2:30 PM-4:00 PM

Zoom Link: <https://twu-edu.zoom.us/j/82379564004>

- I. Welcome - Chair, Dr. William Benner: 2:31 pm
 - a. Review and Approve minutes of the last Undergraduate Council Meeting
Motion to Approve minutes: Elisa Na Second: Kyle Biggerstaff

- II. Guests:
 - a. Accelerated Programs Policy – Dr. Carolyn Kapinus, Dean of Graduate School:
Dr. Kapinus is representing the Academic Standards Committee and Graduate Council and is sharing the proposed changes to the Accelerated Degree Policy, which is a shared policy with the Graduate Council and Undergraduate Council. The policy is about allowing units to create programs where students can start taking graduate courses as undergraduates and apply to both the undergraduate degree and graduate degree, as long as both councils have approved both courses. This allows students to reduce the cost of their graduate degree and keeps the student enrolled here at TWU. The changes to the policy are to reduce the credit hours to 60 credit hours with at least 15 credit hours from TWU to apply, and then students can start taking graduate-level courses when they reach the 72 credit hour mark. This change will give the units some flexibility as some units have practicum/student teaching during the senior year and cannot take graduate courses during the senior year. This was presented at the Graduate Council meeting on November 15th, and there was no vote.
K. Biggerstaff: How many students will this impact? Kapinus: Great question; I do know that we have a program that is not in compliance with our policy now. It is the Accelerated Bachelor of Mathematics into Mathematics Teaching Master's degree, which allows students to start taking graduate courses at 72 hours, which is not the current policy and is not in compliance and to note both councils approved and Dr. Gray Scott caught it while he was reviewing for SACSOC. There will not be a big impact on a lot of students only a few.
J. Hoermann-Elliott: The second bullet it states the minimum of 15 hours of TWU credits, so does that mean non-TWU dual credit classes? Because our dual credit classes are TWU courses. That is a point of clarification. Kapinus Yes that is a great point and we will look into that as the TWU dual credit courses taught at our affiliates are TWU courses/credits.
W. Benner: In regards to retention, how does this affect the junior and senior students? Will this improve retention as some of the coursework will be a bit spread out or the balance will look different? Kapinus: This is not for everyone as



they are high-performing courses. Also, these are minimums, and it is up to the departments to set higher limits and when students will take the senior-level courses. They can also set their own GPA, and the policy is broad enough that each department can set its preferred standards. This is also still newer, and we have 17 programs that are just starting, and the great thing is that the policy can be changed and revised based on recruitment. We, of course, want to be open to new programs.

S. Martin: A comment on how many students this would impact. There is a new program in the cue, Accelerated BS in Education with EC Course Subjects with Special Education Emphasis, leading to the M. Ed in Special Education. The program requires student teaching and their final semester, and that is all they are allowed to do. So this limits the student from taking graduate level courses to the spring semester and will only allow them to take nine hours and if they allow students to start their junior year to take the max of twelve hours while completing their undergrad.

J. Figueroa: I have a comment. I want to praise the collegiality that existed between the Graduate Council and Undergraduate Council in dealing with this policy and how we are going to work together to make this policy happen. Since day one Dr. Kapinus has been working with me and informing the chair and co-chair of the changes in the policy and Dr. Matt Brown has also been informed. We are looking forward to engaging in conversations and make it happen to better service our students as well. Also, this is a great possibility for Dual Credit students to continue with TWU.

W. Benner: I understand that this is just informational and we will not take a vote.

b. Legislative Updates – Mr. Kevin Crusier, Director of Governmental Relations, Office of the Chancellor and President

There is not a lot going on at the Texas level and the federal level is in the usual state of gridlock. I am the sole government relations person for TWU; my job is to be a voice at both the TX legislative and TWU levels. Background: Over ten years of experience in the State Legislative area as Chief of Staff for several Texas House Representatives and working for Denton County elected officials. I have been with TWU for nine years now, and my job is to be a voice at the Texas legislature for TWU and at TWU for the Texas Legislature, a two-way street. I am here to discuss the importance of registering to vote and voting in the primary elections. The primary elections are the elections that determine who is elected and what party is going to be for your district. About 95% of the district are already claimed as either a Republican District or a Democratic District, so the primary is when the candidate is already decided. So please participate and vote in March, as this is when the election is decided.

Education – the federal government has not passed a budget; they have passed a continuing resolution that funds the budget at last year's level and is currently going through to January; this is due to the government shutdown as they cannot



agree on the new budget, this will hold for a few months until they can vote on the budget. There are 12 budgets at the federal level, including the one that deals with education, the Senate has passed its version of the budget, but the House of Representatives in DC brought it to the floor, and there were not enough votes to bring it to consideration so it was sent back down to committee and is at square one.

At the Texas Legislature, we are on our fourth call of a special legislative session; the governor has declared that one of his biggest priorities is education savings accounts or vouchers. This is one of the rare bipartisan areas where rural Republicans do not want their school funding and tax dollars to go to other parts of the state to fund private school education, as the rural areas are usually financially dependent on the local school district. This has been a big defeat for the governor, and he will take this battle to the Republican primary. So this will be decided in March.

W. Benner: Thank you Kevin for attending today and the updates and encouragement to get out and vote in March.

- III. Updates from Undergraduate Council Committees and Chairs - Dr. William Benner
 - a. Course Proposal Committee - Dr. Ana Louise Keating
 - i. Revisions: Psych 3743 Global Blackness and Psychology for Global Perspectives will be part of the core and will alternate with another psychology course.
 - ii. Notification – UNIV 1231 Name change and slightly modifying the outcomes to reflect what is actually happening in the course
 - iii. No vote is needed by the Undergraduate Council for these revisions.
 - b. Program Review Committee - Dr. Jerry Burkett
 - i. No updates at this time.
 - c. Assessment Committee - Dr. Jennifer Flanagan
 - i. No updates at this time.
 - d. Academic Policy Advisory Committee - Dr. Matt Brown
 - i. Handbook: Yes, we will be working on updating the handbook this Spring. We are currently working on drawing up the sections and will continue in the spring so no update at this time.
 - ii. Dr. Brown did mention in the executive meeting about seeing the photos of students in Canvas but having their student ID photos to help get to know the students in courses. Currently, the photos in Canvas are not linked to the student's TWU ID photo, and the photos that are there are not always of the student's face. It would be helpful when you have a large class to be able to see their face and this could help with building relationships and the feeling of belonging. How can we import into Canvas/rosters? I feel that this could help with retention.
- IV. TWU Undergraduate Updates - Mr. Scott Martin and Dr. Jorge Figueroa



- a. Dr. Figueroa: Chancellor Feyten has signed the Houston Guided Pathway to Success project (GPS), and this is part of our expansion into the Greater Houston area and Gulf Region. Through this partnership, it includes seven community colleges and seven four-year institutions in the Greater Houston Area. We will engage in conversations that will create seamless pathways for transfer students in addition to conversations about Meta-Majors, projects with advising and participating in several collaborative opportunities. This will be successful as we expand into the Houston area and provide more opportunities to future TWU students.
- V. Other Business - Dr. William Benner
- a. Updates on Initiatives-Workshop on Belonging Nov. 3rd

We started last year as Inclusive Excellence and are continuing this year with the theme to Belonging. We invited Dr. Elisa Na from the psychology department and Dr. Aimee Myers and Dr. Ashley Bender were facilitators for this workshop with Dr. Na and two other members from the psychology department. We are looking at ways to update the language in the syllabus in high-enrolled courses.

Dr. Na, I loved this workshop, and really helped me re-do my syllabi and able to make it welcoming and more inclusive as well as allow the students to understand my perspective on teaching. Many of my students are FTIC and are freshmen so they are unable to read and use the syllabus. I used Dr. Figueroa's 3 R's - Rethink, Regroup, and Relaunch and this total applies to how we think about syllabi, we do have to rethink and regroup and to relaunch our syllabi so that we can be more inclusive to our population. Moving forward is to invite Dr. Bender and Dr. Myers to the psychology department to talk to our GTA (Graduate Teaching Assistants) as they teach the majority of our large population classes, and we can have them implement some of these strategies into their syllabi to be more inclusive to our students and give them that sense of belonging. Once we have successfully trained the psychology GTA the goal is to move forward to extend that invitation to other departments.

Peggy L.: Can these trainings be recorded?

W. Benner: Yes, that is a great suggestion. We will keep you updated for Spring semester on the continuing of this workshop.
 - b. Aimee Laun – Please have your graduating seniors to complete the First Destination Survey. This will gives us critical data for accreditation and data for our records.
- VI. Meeting adjourned at 3:22 pm
- a. Motion to adjourn: Peggy Landrum Second: Ana Louise Keating

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, January 24, 2024



CURRICULUM &
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY