



# UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

## Texas Woman's University Undergraduate Council Academic Year Theme: Advocacy

March 26th, 2:30 PM-4:00 PM

- I. Welcome: Dr. Jorge F. Figueroa, VP-Curriculum and Strategic Initiatives (CSI)
- II. Opening Remarks and Quorum Check: Dr. William Benner
- III. Review and Motion for Approval of February 26th Meeting Minutes: Dr. William Benner
  - a. Motion by: Ms. Sarah Gamblin
  - b. Seconded by: Dr. Matt Brown
- IV. General Updates by the Chair and the Vice Chair
  - a. Undergraduate Council Handbook: Dr. William Benner
    - i. This document has been in the works for a while and is intended to support the transition of leadership within the executive council. It is a living document that can and will evolve over time. Since it serves as a supplemental document, it does not require a vote.
  - b. General Education Advisory Committee: Dr. Aimee Myers
    - i. The Advisory Council will engage in exploratory discussions regarding the needs of TWU's general education courses and curriculum, ultimately making recommendations to the Provost's Office. All members have been confirmed, including their respective Foundational Component Areas (FCA). A key priority is ensuring faculty ownership and agency throughout this process.
  - c. Creating a Well-rounded Syllabi Workshop: Dr. Aimee Myers
    - i. Registration deadline 3/30; Workshop 4/15
- V. Introduction to Guest speakers: Dr. William Benner
  - a. First-Year Experience: Dr. Shawnda Smith and Dr. Jackie Hoermann-Elliott, Co-Directors

Summary: The First Year Experience consists of five key components: Learning Communities, Academic Advising, Core Curriculum, Supplemental Instruction, and Developmental Education. In this meeting, we will focus on Learning Communities. Our goal is to create programs that are not only financially sustainable but also impactful – helping students persist in their studies while fostering a transformative educational experience. This is a pilot program. If you have any questions or feedback, please feel free to reach out via email [at jhoermannelliott@twu.edu](mailto:jhoermannelliott@twu.edu) or [ssmith115@twu.edu](mailto:ssmith115@twu.edu)

**Kyle Biggerstaff:** What does FIG stand for?

**Dr. Shawnda Smith:** First-Year Interest Group

**Ms. Sarah Gamblin:** The symbols on the arch slide for the Learning Communities are people on their computers. I wonder what other ways we could represent Learning Communities besides people on their computers.

**Dr. Jackie Hoermann-Elliott:** Thank you for catching that; I appreciate the feedback.



b. Undergraduate Enrollment: Dr. Javier Flores, Vice President for Enrollment Management

i. Undergraduate Admission:

**Summary:** A year ago, when I became Vice President, I decided to separate undergraduate admissions from graduate admissions to create focused teams for each. The goal was to speed up application decisions and share them quickly with Dr. Hamner for merit scholarships. Adam Pitts, now Executive Director of Undergraduate Admissions, and his team have been working closely with various departments at TWU. We're starting new student orientations in June for FTIC students and after this Spring for transfer students, with opportunities for faculty involvement in these programs. We've also made improvements in financial aid by sending award letters during Spring break, providing a clear breakdown of financial aid, and auto-packaging Texas grants. Additionally, we're working to correct miscoded out-of-state students to ensure they're charged the correct tuition rates.

**Ms. Agatha Beins:** When students commit to enrolling at TWU in order to get financial aid they have to declare a major. Is that correct? How might that shape the ways in which we approach recruitment and work with students? I'm curious to learn more about how students needing to declare a major so early on may affect this process?

**Dr. Javier Flores:** The federal government has made it very clear to us that when we are awarding federal financial aid that students have to be degree seeking and can only be working on their first undergraduate bachelor's degree.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to reach out via email  
[jflores48@twu.edu](mailto:jflores48@twu.edu)

VI. UG Council sub-committee's update: Dr. William Benner

a. Program Review: Dr. Jerry Burkett

i. B.S. in Family Studies (Mental Health Emphasis)

**Dr. Jerry Burkett:** This is similar to the programs that have pre-occupational therapy and pre-physical therapy tracks. This will be a proposal for a pre-mental health track as an additional option for the BS in Child Development and the BS in Family Studies. The committee has one question for Dr. Vittrup: Where will this programming be different for a mental health focus versus what is currently being offered?

**Dr. Birgitte Vittrup:** Do you mean what is currently being offered for the Family Studies degree?

**Dr. Jerry Burkett:** Yes.

**Dr. Birgitte Vittrup:** The track has 6 additional courses. The ones within Human Sciences are Foundations of Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Foundations of Marriage & Family Therapy, and Development of Psychopathology. These courses are not currently on the degree plan; it's an introduction to graduate studies in each field. So, students would not start this type of coursework until the graduate level. This is a way to introduce them to that and hopefully get students interested in the mental health field, which is a huge need in the state of Texas.

**Dr. Jerry Burkett:** The committee reviewed it and found it to be timely and extremely important. No additional faculty is needed. It passed out of our committee 6-0.

**Approved by Council**

ii. B.S. in Computer Science (Cybersecurity)



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**Dr. Jerry Burkett:** This proposal responds to the growing industry demand for cybersecurity. There is a student interest developing to become experts in this field. This track will streamline a path with a Computer Science major seeking cybersecurity knowledge. Since the minor in Cybersecurity is already approved this modification simply adds a specialized track for Computer Science majors to earn a Computer Science degree with a specialty in cybersecurity. It passed out of our committee 6-0.

**Ms. Tina Gumienny:** Any new faculty required?

**Dr. David Gardner:** No, we already have the Cybersecurity minor, and we have the Data Science major with a Cybersecurity track; we just didn't have a Cybersecurity track for the Computer Science major. This is just an official definition of a track for the students who already wanted the cybersecurity emphasis but had a Computer Science major instead of a Data Science major.

### Approved by Council

- b. Academic Policy Advisory: Dr. Matt Brown - No updates
- c. Assessment: Dr. Jennifer Danley-Scott
  - i. Backwards Design Workshop Update
  - ii. Workshop is on 3/28 – 17 active faculty not receiving stipends are participating, and 9 adjuncts are participating and will receive stipends.
- d. Core Course Proposal Review: Dr. Joy Spadachene
  - i. ENG 1013 Composition I

### Approved by Council

## VII. CSI Updates- Dr. Jorge F. Figueroa and CSI team

- a. Higher Ed Bills in the 2025 Texas Legislature
  - i. Remind the UGC that higher education bills are being developed in the Texas legislature.
  - ii. <https://aaup-texas.org/blog/f/higher-ed-bills-in-the-2025-texas-legislature>
- b. Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair for 2025-2026 Undergraduate Council
  - i. You will receive an email to nominate the next Chair and Vice Chair for the Undergraduate Council for the 2025-2026 academic year.

## VIII. New Business - Dr. William Benner

- a. Next and last UG Council meeting for AY 24-25: 4/23/2025
- b. Announcing the winners for the Undergraduate Council awards.

## IX. Adjourn at 3:26 pm

Motion by: Tina Gumienny

Seconded by: Dr. Jackie Hoermann-Elliott