



**Undergraduate Council Meeting Minutes**  
**October 22, 2025**  
**2:30 PM-4:00 PM**

- I. Welcome and Opening Remarks and Quorum Check: Dr. William Benner, Chair
- II. Review and approval of September Minutes: Dr. William Benner, Chair
  - a. Motion by: Dr. Joy Spadachene
  - b. Second by: Dr. Zachariah Davis
- III. Introduction of Guest Speakers: Dr. William Benner, Chair
  - a. Dr. Nikkole Stewart, Director, University Academic Advising – [nstewart4@twu.edu](mailto:nstewart4@twu.edu)
    - i. We are located in Old Main building on the third floor.
    - ii. Our office currently advises the pre-nursing students, students who are in academic recovery, probation, suspension, and oversees the Early Alert program. We work all colleges here at TWU.
    - iii. Currently TWU has a decentralized advising structure and is coordinated through the University Academic Advising Office called CALM Group – College Academic Leadership Meeting and consist of all the senior advisors from all the colleges as well as the Associate Director of Advising and the Director of University Academic Advising.
    - iv. Dr. Bauer is creating a centralized advising hub and will be housed on the first floor of ACT where admissions was before they moved to Brackenridge. Our move is slated for Spring 2026. It will house 30 advisors from University Academic Advising team and the College of Arts & Sciences.
    - v. We have been preparing for this move and part of that is, some of the advising staff was able to join me on a three week advising tour, where we were able to visit a few of our neighboring universities and their advising center. We visited UT Dallas, Johnson School of Engineering & Computer Science, UT Arlington's First Year Advising Center, and two different advising centers at UNT (University of North Texas). All of the centers we visited are comparable in size to what we are envisioning for our new center and see their model and structure of setting up and running a large advising center. With most FTIC advisors in one location it will provide students with easier access to drop in for a quick question or visit with their advisor and another way of having the students feel welcomed to TWU.
    - vi. Advising is getting their own software and is to launch in 2026. "STELLIC is an AI-driven student-centered approach to create pathways to graduation" This software was created by former students and advisors



from Carnegie Mellon University. Stellic will empower students to take charge of their academic career, while advisors and administrators will have the tools to support student success. Currently, our advisors utilize multiple software and platforms to perform their tasks. Stellic will allow students to see their degree plan and keep them on track for graduating but it will also assist advisors in managing caseloads, submit referral to campus services, run reports to identify either unenrolled or under-enrolled students, and provide data for predicting demand for certain class/sections. Another feature I am excited about that will impact our faculty is the Early Alert Program, this will make it easier to send notifications of students who are struggling. Currently, we are only able to support the Early Alert Program in long-semester courses. In Stellic, we will be able to use it in all terms, even in summer, all year. We will be able to lift and place flags.

1. Implementation: We are preparing for a kick-off in November, with the Fall 2026 students beginning to use Stellic. For year number two, we will start working with the Graduate School to implement Stellic with them.
- vii. Transfer Student Initiatives: We are going to be focusing on our transfer students and working with the Director of Transfer Initiatives, Terrell Shaw. A few of the issues are that our transfer students are not required to meet with an advisor in their first semester or attend orientation. We are working on a strategy that will address this issue going forward. This will also help the transfer students feel welcome and set them up for success.
- viii. Retention Strategies: This is another area that we focus on in Advising. There are three areas that advising does that impacts the retention of our students:
  1. Expand parallel planning initiatives for students enrolled in competitive 2<sup>nd</sup> admit programs
  2. Continue work with Students with Balances Committee
  3. Increased emphasis on Academic Advising at FTIC Orientation
- ix. We are in advising season. Registration starts October 28<sup>th</sup> and FTIC students can start register on November 11<sup>th</sup>. How to help, encourage students to schedule an advising meeting. We are in Old Main on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. [advising@twu.edu](mailto:advising@twu.edu)
- x. Question: Dr. Benner: When advising distant learners, what are some strategies that have been useful when trying to reach distance learners?  
Dr. Stewart: Within advising, utilize all the available technology. Use Ring Central to text with students, of course check to see how they would prefer the mode of communication.  
Dr. Hoermann-Elliott: Should we expect training or faculty support on learning how to navigate Stellic?  
Dr. Stewart: Absolutely. We will have all the training that you will need. As soon as we are fully trained and ready to launch out to faculty we will start inviting faculty to the necessary training. We will not be limited on



the number of licenses so we can and will train all who advise and help with advising.

Dr. Biggerstaff: Are we losing the advisors that are embedded in our departments?

Dr. Stewart: You will not lose all of them, not all will move to the advising center. We are working with the colleges and deans to see who will/should move and who/should stay in their college spaces. Again as of right now we are only focusing on the advisors that work with the first-year students, and we are starting with College of Arts & Sciences (CAS), between CAS and University Academic Advising that is already about 25/26 people. We would like to have representation from each college in the Advising Center, so some will remain in the colleges and some will be based in the new center.

Dr. Myers: Will the four programs that will stay on their own use Stellic? Education, Health Sciences, Business and Nursing.

Dr. Stewart: Yes, everyone will be brought online because the current platforms we are using will not be renewed, and all will be discontinued. We will work with the faculty advisors individually to get them off the current platforms and over to the new as the contracts are ending.

Dr. Gamblin: For faculty that are not advisors we are able to view/use the planning platform and view the students GPA and see what they are enrolled in and help with providing substitutions and send our notes via the Notes App to the advisor, will that platform be going away?

Dr. Stewart: Yes, the Self-Service platform will eventually go away. It will not be immediate as we will have one foot in Stellic and one foot in Self-Service. However, Stellic will have the same capabilities in that you will be able to view GPA, what courses the student is planning, enrolled and registered for. It will actually be better as it is more user friendly and all in one platform. Stellic will be connected to Canvas, so this will give the advisor the access to track their engagement and data.

- b. Dr. Jackie Hoermann-Elliott, College of Arts & Sciences Public Affairs Forum – [jhelliott@twu.edu](mailto:jhellott@twu.edu)
  - i. I come today in a different capacity as I Co-Chair the Public Affairs Forum for the College of Arts & Sciences. Historically we have held a speaker or panel event in the Fall and Spring semesters that have been a bit controversial in topics but meet with civility. Over the last few years we have struggled with this event as each topic has been like a lightning rod and due to the waters that we are all navigating it has become harder to bring speakers and panelist to these events and have it be a safe environment for our students, staff, faculty and guest. My request is for some ideas on topics, dates (to stay away from) or thoughts as the council has representation from across the institution. Here are a few ideas I have: common read, like “Unspun” or news media and then invite the author to come and speak. Select a pedagogy topic and collaborate with CFE, but that does not appeal to students very much. We are also open to going out



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into the community and potential community project or not just an academia speaker/author but more public facing person/topic.

- ii. Dr. Jennifer Danley-Scott – March 26<sup>th</sup> (date to avoid) Jamieson Series (collaborate?)

Dr. Benner: Maybe a theme that is adjacent to the Jamieson Speaker and atopic that could merge, almost like a thematic for this academic year.

Dr. Danley-Scott: Yes, I can reach out to the committee and see if there is a chance of some cross-collaboration.

- IV. Undergraduate Council Bylaws Revisions First Reading: Dr. William Benner, Chair
  - a. The changes that were made were the name in office from Curriculum & Strategic Initiatives to Office of Undergraduate Studies, the leadership title from Vice Provost to Dean, and formatting changes to the document.
  - b. Dr. Kyle Biggerstaff had one small change in V. L. 3. – updated in the Google Doc.
- V. Sub Committee Introductions and Updates
  - a. Course Proposal Sub-Committee: Dr. Joy Spadachene, Chair – no updates
  - b. Program Review Sub-Committee: Dr. Jerry Burkett, Chair - one program will be ready for the next meeting.
  - c. Assessment Sub-Committee: Ms. Aubri Thurmond, Chair – working on something and will be ready for next meeting.
  - d. Academic Policy Advisory Sub-Committee: Dr. Matt Brown, Chair – nothing this meeting. We will be meeting as a subcommittee in the next few weeks and will report back at the next meeting.
- VI. TWU Undergraduate Studies Updates: Dr. Falley – no updates.
- VII. Other Business – no other business
- VIII. Adjourn 3:20 pm
  - Motion by: Dr. Sarah Gamblin
  - Second by: Dr. Ashley Bender

**NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, December 3, 2025**