



Undergraduate Council Agenda

April 22, 2026

2:30 PM-4:00 PM

- I. Welcome and Opening Remarks and Quorum Check - Dr. William Benner, Chair
- II. Review and approval of March Minutes - Dr. William Benner, Chair
 - a. Motion – Dr. Jennifer Danley-Scott
 - b. Second – Dr. Kyle Biggerstaff
- III. Faculty and Program Awards Notification - Dr. William Benner, Chair
 - a. Undergraduate Council Service Award – Dr. Ashley Bender
 - b. Undergraduate Council Innovative Programming Award
 - i. Undergraduate Certificate in AI Literacy
 - ii. B.B.A. Sports Management
- IV. Introduction of Guest Speakers - Dr. William Benner, Chair
 - a. Dr. Mark Hamner, Vice Provost for Institutional Research & Improvement, and Dr. Michael Stankey, Director of Data Science
 - i. Persistence Effects: Dr. Hamner and Dr. Stankey shared new findings on the persistence effects of the First-Year Interest Group (FIG) program in which the same group of 20-23 students enroll in two or three courses together to promote a greater sense of shared experience and increased engagement and belonging. For Fall 2025, there were 12 two-way and 4 three-way FIGs, with 13 unifying themes. The outcome of interest for the analysis was whether FIG participants returned for classes in Spring 2026 (P0.5). The analysis revealed that P0.5 has been fairly stable over the past 10 years for merit-award students living on-campus and for non-merit-award students living on-campus. The group that showed the biggest difference and variation in P0.5 were non-merit-award students living off-campus. This was the group for which the FIG program worked the best. The P0.5 rate for off-campus non-merit non-FIG-participants was only 81%. By contrast, the off-campus non-merit-award students who participated in a FIG returned at a 92% rate, a statistically significant difference. Implications for the expected larger-than-normal entering FTIC class of Fall 2026 were shared along with a call for increasing FIG participation.
- V. Sub Committee Introductions and Updates
 - a. Program Review Sub-Committee - Dr. Jerry Burkett, Chair
 - i. B.B.A. Sports Management
 1. This program was designed to cultivate high achieving women leaders in a growing global sports industry. It addresses the documented underrepresentation of women in sports



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administration and executive roles. This is going to be a powerful recruitment tool, appealing to top student-athletes by offering a competitive business degree track instead of the traditional kinesiology track.

Questions from the Sub-committee:

Increasing faculty cost?

If this program supports the Provost's cost cutting measures that may impede other programs?

Dr. Pushkala Raman: Yes, the Provost has supported by providing funding for a visiting assistant professor that we are currently interviewing for. And if the program takes off as we plan, then we will convert the visiting assistant professor to a tenure-track line in the future. We also have a lecture line and plan to hire an industry professional to strengthen our partnership with industry. I want to also note that the visiting assistant professor will also be able to help support our other programs by teaching our Principles of Management and Principles of Marketing.

2. Approved by the council

ii. B.S. Food and Nutrition in Business and Industry

1. This program will provide students with a background in both Nutrition and Food. Graduates will seek employment in Food, Nutrition, Quality Control, Quality Assurance, Food Product Development, Food Service Management, Food and Nutrition Management Software and Sales, Marketing and Research. They can also focus on government agencies focused on food safety. Very clear and well written, the edits were streamlined and course content was easy to follow. It was design to make it easier for students to follow.

2. Approved by the council

b. Course Proposal Sub-Committee - Dr. Sarah Gamblin

i. READ 2713: Inside-Out Prison Exchange: Literacies for Rhythm, Rhyme, and Rhetoric

1. This course is also listed as DANCE 2713. As part of a 500K Mellon Foundation Higher Education in Prison Grant that was awarded to Haley Zitner, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at UNT and TWU was awarded a sub-award which is a result of a collaboration between UNT and TWU professors, Drs. Charmine Wells and Aimée Myers. This award requires developing a core credit bearing course in Arts, Culture and Multi-culture Studies at TWU. This course will be delivered to 15-18 TWU students and 15-18 incarcerated students at the Bridgeport Correctional Center. The outcomes are really clear as well as the alignments with the FCAs are clear. Even with the arts component, there is a language, philosophy, and culture course, and how ideas, values, and beliefs of culture affect the expression of human experience.



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Questions: Since this is tied to the core, is this a long-term course and how does that apply to the grant?

Dr. Aimée Myers: Yes, so the grant was awarded to create this consortium of instructors and professors across the state of Texas who are trained to work with incarcerated students. The grant is for the training as this is a national training that is expensive as well as go through the Department of Justice and do their program. So the funding is mostly for training and a small stipend to work on the curriculum over the summer.

Question (clarify): What happens if we are no longer in collaboration with the prison program? Then what happens to the Inside-Out piece?

Thank you Dr. Falley for clarifying. So, we do not have to stay with the Inside-Out/National program. They only provide the training and once we are trained, we can continue to teach/offer the course as long as we want to. We can also teach the course at any other prison as the course will stay a TWU course. If, for some reason, either Dr. Wells or I are unable to teach the course, we would need to find internal funding to get another instructor or professor trained for the program. The main point of the grant and program is to ensure that the person teaching the course has been trained to interact with incarcerated students who will be interacting with traditional students.

Question: Because this course is cross-listed with a course that is not yet been created, DANCE 2713, but neither is this one as well.

Scott Martin: Yes, both courses were proposed simultaneously as a joint cross-listed course and are being approved together and are being submitted to the core once the inventory update sometime around July.

2. Approved by the council

- c. Assessment Sub-Committee - Ms. Aubri Thurmond, Chair
 - i. Under the leadership of Drs. Benner and Myers, the Undergraduate Council has been reenvisioning the Assessment Committee and give its work structure and continuity. Over the past academic year, the Assessment Committee focused on programmatic assessment by launching a faculty survey on workforce readiness, leadership, and program activities. We have developed a partnership with the Faculty Commons and Dr. Nancy Chick, and are establishing the Undergraduate Council Pioneer Program Award to honor existing innovative programs. Heading into next year, the committee will collaborate with the Faculty Commons to host fall workshops and evaluate award submissions to recognize a winning program in the spring.
- d. Academic Policy Advisory Sub-Committee - Dr. Jackie Hoermann-Elliott, Chair
 - i. No Updates



VI. TWU Undergraduate Studies Updates - Dr. Brandi Falley

- a. Aviation Courses
 - i. They have combined two courses, one was a two-hour course, and the other was a one-hour course, and now it is a three-hour course. It is align with the US Aviation FAA approved training course outline that is following their accrediting body/the formatting that is used to stay caught up with their curriculum.
- b. COPE's CBE
 - i. The Competency-Based Education track will be starting in the fall. This does not come through the Undergraduate Council, since it is an existing program; we are now offering a different track.
 - ii. They do plan to offer this in Fall 28 for the BS in Early Childhood
 - iii. Others programs will offer the CBE track as we continue.
- c. Dallas Come To Believe (CTB) Opportunity
 - i. We have been in talks all academic year and are currently in a feasibility study. The idea is that we embed a two-year associate's program into our four-year degree program. There are a lot of ins and outs that go into this type of program, and there are still a lot of questions to be answered, so we are pushing through with the feasibility study. This may also be on the agenda for the August Board of Regents meeting.
 - ii. As of now the BBA program will be offered on the Dallas campus since they are starting to offer the 3000 and 4000 level course on the Dallas campus starting this Fall. If we continue with CTB the projected start would be Fall 2028 with the first cohort starting the first two years in the associate program before they advance to the upper-level BBA.
- d. Gen Ed Committee – May 5th & 6th forums
 - i. Continues to meet, and there will be two forums on May 5th and 6th, hosted by Provost Bauer.

VII. Administrative Update Processes for UG Council 2026-27 - Dr. William Benner, Chair

- a. Undergraduate Council Members ending their terms

Name	Term	Name	Term
Dr. William Benner (Chair)*	2 nd	Dr. Aimée Myers*	2 nd
Dr. Jackie Hoermann-Elliott*	2 nd	Dr. Sarah Gamblin*	2 nd
Dr. Addison Babineau**	2 nd	Dr. Matt Brown (Dr. Jamie Barker) **	2 nd
Dr. Tanya Synar*	2 nd	Dr. Cynthia Warren*	2 nd
Dr. Kyle Biggerstaff*	2 nd	Dr. Wen Xu	1 st
Ms. Aubri Thurmond	1 st	Dr. Jennifer Danley-Scott	1 st
Dr. Damien Hagen (Rebecca West)	1 st	Dr. Deborah Testerman	1 st

*Completed two full terms

**Completed two full terms but replaced a former member during the second term



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- VIII. Elections for Chair and Vice-Chair - Dr. William Benner
 - a. Chair Nominee
 - i. Dr. Jerry Burkett – Approved by the council
 - b. Vice Chair Nominee
 - i. Ms. Aubri Thurmond – Approved by the council
- IX. Other Business
 - a. Bylaws and Handbook: Dr. Benner
- X. Closing Remarks
 - a. Dr. Benner: Thank you for the great time serving on this council since my first year of Fall 2019.
- XI. Adjourn at 3:42 pm
 - a. Motion – Dr. Jerry Burkett
 - b. Seconded – Ms. Aubri Thurmond