



**Undergraduate Council Meeting Minutes**

**December 3, 2025**

**2:30 PM-4:00 PM**

- I. Welcome and Opening Remarks and Quorum Check: Dr. William Benner, Chair
- I. Introduction of Guest Speakers: Dr. William Benner, Chair  
Dr. Jackie Hoermann-Elliott with Dr. Shawnda Smith, Co-Directors of First Year Experience: FIG Update
  - a. So far, a successful Fall 2025: 287 students enrolled, 31 faculty/staff teaching, 16 FIG groups, 16 peer mentors, seven trainings, 30+ events, and over \$80,000 (plus) given away in scholarships to FTIC students and mentors.
  - b. Spring 2026: no new original FIGs, but a few that are extending into the Spring semester. Fashion and Business wanted to stay together for a course in the spring so Fashion will take FT2113 and Business will take ENG 1023 (they all took ENG 1013 with Ryan Munthe). For Pre-Nursing we are offering a few Coreqs: MATH 1123/1703 and ENG 1001 & ENG 1013 so that we can hold those seats for just Pre-Nursing majors.
  - c. Changes Ahead: We started to develop this idea less than a year ago and hit the ground running, but now we are looking at some changes and adjustments:
    - i. Integration Hour – most FALL 2026 FIG courses will be scheduled for 11 am & 1 pm
    - ii. Peer Mentor Changes – Increase parity/decrease confusion, join spring and summer faculty training, plan social events, and attend UNIV class times.
    - iii. Faculty Recruitment – we need faculty who are excited to teach for a FIG and who work well with others.
  - d. FALL 2026
    - i. CAS - 8 FIGs – NEW Spanish, Computer Science /Informatics
    - ii. MAK COB - 1 FIG
    - iii. CHS - 2 FIGs
    - iv. CON - 4 FIGs – 2 Pre-NXT (not college ready) and 2 Pre-Nursing
    - v. COPE - 2 FIGs
  - e. Question – Sarah Gamblin – are all FIGs connected to an UNIV course, how are they connected as a FIG?  
While we would prefer to have the students enrolled in an UNIV course along with a Core freshman course, it is mainly connected through their major and, if they are also not already in an LLC. We did have some students who live on campus who were not in an LLC, like our students in the FAST Academy, and we also had a commuter FIG.  
Also, is there an application process?  
We meet with the Deans, they give us course projections, and then we create the FIG. As for students, we let the advisors know which FIGs we have for the semester, and the student can ask to be in a FIG or the advisor can advise the



student and provide the benefits of choosing a FIG. Some of the benefits of being part of a FIG include support from a peer mentor, small class sizes, faculty teaching the courses, and connections with fellow students in the FIG.

f. Dr. Woods – I appreciate the work of Dr. Smith and Hoermann-Elliott in this role, but I do have a question: with the increased number of applicants that we had during the free application week, and as these FIGs take off, do you see in placing students that are high risk into a FIG or will you focus more on the students that would be more successful in the programs/FIGs?

Dr. Smith: Great question, we will try to do both. But we also know that students who may struggle more or need a little more support at the university level will not be restricted; we want to see how we can help retain those students in the program through a FIG.

Hoermann- Elliott: I echo everything Dr. Smith stated, but we are also limited on funding, so if the colleges would like to help in peer mentor scholarships or faculty social events, as this is another challenge that we are exploring/facing.

Dr. Woods: The College of Nursing does receive money from the state of Texas – Nursing Shortage Reduction Funds, which is to help increase the number of nurses in the state of Texas, and I would love to explore FIGs with you and our nursing faculty and UNIV. I will be watching to see if the students in the Pre-NXT FIG get them competitive for the CON, and if not, if it takes them up to a higher level of performance maybe we can direct them to a community college so that they can get their associates and wrap back to us for a degree completion. Even though it will not be their ideal path it will still get them to their nursing career.

Dr. Delaney-Scott: So we're scheduling some core classes in the 11 am and 1 pm hour slots. Will the classes stay as their own sections, or are we integrating into small existing sections?

Dr. Smith: So we would like for them to stay in their own sections, at least as much as they can.

Dr. Delaney-Scott: are you thinking about increasing the cap to have bigger sections?

Dr. Hoerman-Elliott: No, we are going to keep the cap of the FIGs at 23, and it is protected.

- II. Review and approval of October Minutes: Dr. William Benner, Chair
  - a. Motion: Dr. Joy Spadachene
  - b. Second: Dr. Staphanie Woods & Dr. Kyle Biggerstaff
- II. Undergraduate Council Bylaws Revisions –  
Second Reading and Vote: Dr. William Benner, Chair: there are minimal revisions to the bylaws, changes to the Undergraduate Studies office name and Dean.  
Approved by the council
- III. Sub Committee Introductions and Updates
  - a. Course Proposal Sub-Committee: Dr. Joy Spadachene, Chair



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- i. PSY 3733: Psychology of Women
  - 1. The changes to the course description to add clarifying information about the content and theoretical underpinning. - Approved by the council
- ii. PSY 3743: Global Blackness and Psychology
  - 1. The changes to the course description to add clarifying information about the content and theoretical underpinning. - Approved by the council
- iii. ART 2713: Understanding the Arts – Visual Arts
  - 1. SLOs were added to the CIM system as they were not listed in the course description – Approved by the council.

b. Program Review Sub-Committee: Dr. Jerry Burkett, Chair

- i. B.S. in Biochemistry (Pre-Health Majors)
  - 1. This program will prepare students for graduate work in biochemistry and careers in the chemical and pharmaceutical industries. The idea for admissions is for medical-related professional programs. It will offer students flexibility in upper-division courses and, for those interested in medical-related programs, will lead to graduate work in biochemistry. - Approved by the council
- ii. Undergraduate Research Certificate in Chemistry and Biochemistry
  - 1. This is a certificate program that recognizes the students by credentialing them that are actively involved in chemistry and biochemistry research. This aligns with TWU's missions in the area of cultivating student leadership and creativity in scientific research. This certificate will promote the understanding of chemical processes, careers and advanced graduate professional training in chemistry and biochemistry. We did have two question (just curious) Some of the courses taken would count towards the certificate or would that be after the fact? Also will this certificate recognize students that have not only taken coursework but have also participated directly in specific research activities? These questions do not hold the committee from approving and recommending them to the full council- Approved by the council
  - 2. Questions answered after the meeting concluded: **Will some of the courses currently taken count towards this certificate? Dr. Yunxiang Li:** Yes, the research (CHEM 4981/4983), thesis (CHEM 4991), and seminar courses (CHEM 4001) currently or previously taken are counted into the research certificate program. “Is the certificate to recognize the student has not only taken coursework but also participated directly in research? Dr. Yunxiang Li: Usually, a student carries out research with one of the undergraduate research courses registered. If a student has participated with extensive research but not taken all the coursework, they can ask for an evaluation of their research



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outcome so that the program coordinator may find equivalence. We have not discussed this option with our colleagues yet, but I would like to make it as an open possibility.

- c. Assessment Sub-Committee: Ms. Aubri Thurmond, Chair
  - i. We are focusing on program assessment, identifying and exploring ways to recognize innovative programs. There are four criteria: workforce readiness, service learning, experiential learning and collaboration. We are currently developing useful descriptions of these criteria and looking at best practices in order to develop a tool that can identify innovative programs here at TWU. These tools can also be used to update their programs in the future.
- d. Academic Policy Advisory Sub-Committee: Dr. Matt Brown, Chair
  - i. No updates

### IV. TWU Undergraduate Studies Updates: Dr. Brandi Falley

- a. Expedited Curriculum Updates: We are currently undergoing a review of all courses; the process can sometimes be very lengthy, and we do not have a lot of time per the state of Texas. We have been working with Dr. Gray Scott and Scott Martin to find an expedited process to work in the CIM system to comply. The review of all courses is to ensure that the course titles, course descriptions, and SLOs are updated and align with what the courses teach. The expedited process is for the component to review and propose any updates on the courses that they own. Once submitted, it will go to a college-level curriculum committee; some colleges have already established these committees, while others have not, and the deans have been tasked with creating one. Once the college-level curriculum committee has reviewed it, it will then go to the ACA and then the Dean for approval and be in the system. With the new expedited process, it will skip the Undergraduate Council, Graduate School Council, and Curriculum Committee, but it will cycle back to the appropriate councils for review. If the councils have questions or if the requirements do not meet what we have, it can be pushed back to the component for updates.

### V. Other Business

No new other business

### VI. Adjourn at 3:20 pm

- a. Motion: Dr. Jennifer Danley-Scott
- b. Second: Dr. Jeffrey Williams

**NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, January 28, 2026**