UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

Undergraduate Council Meeting Minutes
September 23, 2026
2:30 PM-4:00 PM

I. Welcome to the Undergraduate Council 2026-2027 – Dr. Jerry Burkett, Chair
   a. Call to Order and Quorum Check
   b. Welcoming Remarks
      i. Welcome everyone to the new Undergraduate Council, I am the new chair. I want to thank Dr. Benner for his leadership over the last few years. I am also thankful for Dr. Falley as the Dean of Undergraduate Studies.
      ii. I also want to introduce our new Vice Chair, Ms. Aubri Thurmond.
   c. Welcome to New Members – Dr. Jerry Burkett, Chair & Ms. Aubrey Thurmond, Vice Chair
      i. Dr. Sierra Mendez – representing Communications – English, Speech, and Foreign Language
      ii. Dr. Gage Jeter – representing Language, Philosophy, and Culture – English, Speech, and Foreign Language
      iii. Dr. Michael Burris – representing Creative Arts - Dance
      iv. Dr. Brian Fehler– representing Global Perspective – English, Rhetoric, and Spanish
      v. Mr. Giovanni Valderas – representing College of Arts & Sciences
      vi. Ms. Angela Griffin – representing College of Health Sciences
      vii. Dr. Michelle Ferrer – representing College of Health Sciences
      viii. Dr. JaNiece Elzy-Palmer – representing College of Professional Education
      ix. Dr. Victoria Lavacca – representing College of Nursing
      x. Dr. Patrick Bynane – representing Faculty Senate
      xi. Ms. Nandita Khanna– student representative
      xii. Ms. Katelyn Grace– student representative
   d. Theme: Radical Pedagogy
      i. Ms. Aubri Thurmond and I have been in talks as we are moving into a new year and new leadership. As we were talking about all the things happening here at TWU, we have set a new enrollment record. We have also seen general undergraduate studies come under more scrutiny than ever before, and to me, it feels scattered. During uncertain times, when we hear the word "audit," it can be bad, but at my previous institution, I framed it for my faculty as a good thing: it can shine a light on the good things we are doing and help improve them. So, in that regard, reframing our thinking, we talked about some ways in which the Undergraduate Council can serve as a place for advocacy, information, support, and resources. The work that the Undergraduate Council does is very important, but it can often seem procedural. So, this year, I want the council to be more engaged in opportunities by having speakers who will not only share updates and information from across the institution, but also allow us, as a council, to ask questions and start dialogue. And we are starting today with a guest speaker, whom I will introduce in a bit. The

theme I came up with is 'Radical Pedagogy', which is a way for us to talk about the challenges we face as professors and how we can engage together as an Undergraduate Council community.

II. Review and approval of April Minutes – Dr. Jerry Burkett, Chair
   a. Motion: Dr. Ashley Bender
   b. Second: Mr. Giovanni Valderas

III. 2025-2026 Undergraduate Council Meeting Dates

Undergraduate Council Meeting Dates	Time	Location	Deadline for Course and Program Proposals
Wednesday, September 23, 2026	2:30 pm-4:00 pm	Zoom	Tuesday, September 1nd
Wednesday, October 28, 2026	2:30 pm-4:00 pm	Zoom	Tuesday, October 6th
*Wednesday, December 2, 2026	2:30 pm-4:00 pm	Zoom	Tuesday, November 3rd
Wednesday, January 27, 2027	2:30 pm-4:00 pm	Zoom	Tuesday, January 5th
Wednesday, February 24, 2027	2:30 pm-4:00 pm	Zoom	Tuesday, February 2nd
Wednesday, March 24, 2027	2:30 pm-4:00 pm	Zoom	Tuesday, March 2nd
Wednesday, April 28, 2027	2:30 pm-4:00 pm	Zoom	Tuesday, April 6th

*UG Council will meet one week later due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

IV. Sub Committee Introductions and Updates
   a. Dr. Falley, introduced the subcommittees and general expectations:
      i. Course Proposal Subcommittee: Chair Dr. Stina Soderling; reviews course proposals seeking core or Global Perspectives designations and presents to full council.
      ii. Academic Policy Advisory Committee: Chair Ms. Yolanda Fitzgerald; reviews and updates policy documents (some policies require two reads before voting).
      iii. Program Review Committee: Chair Dr. Katherine Cantrell; evaluates degree-level proposals (programs) and presents recommendations to full council. Council expects multiple program proposals in October and reminded members this is typical for the Program Review schedule.
      iv. Assessment Committee: Chair Dr. Jennifer Danley-Scott; refocusing on student success and launching the Pioneering Program Award for existing innovative programs (multidisciplinary collaboration, service learning, experiential learning, workforce readiness).

v. Executive coordination: finalized subcommittee rosters will be distributed to members so chairs can convene their groups and determine meeting formats.

b. Course Proposal Sub-Committee – Dr. Stina Soderling, Chair: No updates
c. Program Review Sub-Committee – Dr. Kathryn Cantrell, Chair
    i. B.S. Mechanical Engineering:
        1. We have reviewed the Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and are recommending approval. The School of Engineering was approved by the Board of Regents in August 2026, and Mechanical Engineering will be the school's first program, as it has gone through a meticulous benchmarking process. The program is planned to launch in August 2027; benchmarking and review were described as thorough. This will be a beautiful addition to the university, and the sub-committee has voted to approve it.
        2. Approved/Not Approved by the council
d. Assessment Sub-Committee – Dr. Jennifer Danley-Scott, Chair: No updates
    i. Assessment Committee reframed to focus on student success and faculty engagement. Launched the Pioneering Program Award to recognize existing innovative programs (criteria include multidisciplinary collaboration, service learning, experiential learning, workforce readiness). Committee plans to use past faculty surveys and NACE attributes to identify themes and develop faculty support offerings in spring; applications will inform future support priorities.
e. Academic Policy Advisory Sub-Committee – Ms. Youlonda FitzGerald, Chair: No Updates

V. TWU Undergraduate Studies Updates – Dr. Brandi Falley
a. General Review (Ad Hoc) work continues on component areas:
    i. Component Area 90 (formerly Women and Gender Studies) will be retitled Women in Society and courses reviewed for alignment.
    ii. Component Area 91 (currently first-year seminar / math / wellness) will shift to a three-semester-credit-hour first-year UNIV (e.g., 1233 or 1333 variants).
    iii. Members raised questions about transfer articulation for students with 1- or 2-credit Learning Frameworks courses; council noted this requires follow-up to determine how transfer scenarios will be handled.
    iv. Reminder: TCCN equivalencies exist for different SCH levels of UNIVs; implications for program planning will be examined.
b. Minor Policy Clarification:
    i. No formal policy change, discussion focused on interpretation and catalog language about double-dipping credits.
    ii. Catalog rule highlighted: no more than 3 SCH may be applied to both program and minor in the same prefix, and no more than 8 SCH double-dipping allowed when the prefixes differ - implications for students

minoring across closely related majors were discussed, ex Biology and Chemistry.

VI. Introduction of Guest Speaker – Dr. Jerry Burkett
   a. Dr. Diana Elrod, Director, Center for Student Research:
      i. Center for Student Research (CSR) overview:
      ii. CSR founded 2018, serves both undergraduate and graduate students across all campuses. Mission: support students in moving from consumers to creators of knowledge via faculty-mentored apprenticeship models.
      iii. CSR programs and supports: Student Research Grants: up to $500 for supplies/incentives (cannot pay student labor); competitive application with faculty and administrative sign-off. Presentation & Travel Grants: up to $500 to support conference participation; CSR also coordinates support for national conferences (e.g., NCUR) and typically budgets for roughly 12 students though more have been supported when possible. Monthly workshops (recorded) on research topics, grad school, imposter phenomenon, data analysis, etc. (held second Wednesday for five months each year; not in Dec, March, or summer). Annual Creative Arts & Research Symposium each spring and regular NCUR participation (TWU supports student travel costs but rising costs mean deans and units may be asked to assist).
      iv. CSR operations: CSR supports only faculty-mentored projects (apprenticeship model); the advisory board (staff and faculty across campuses) reviews grant proposals and decides funding, not the director alone.
      v. Dr. Elrod encouraged faculty to invite or refer students and to give students multiple chances to engage; she offers one-on-one student meetings and is approachable for faculty referrals.
      vi. Opportunities: publications, conference exposure, identity development (professional/academic/STEM identity), and pathways to graduate programs.

VII. Other Business
   a. Dr. Jerry Burkett: I'll ask the council if they know of anyone who is doing something really interesting in their classroom that would be worth sharing with the council. Please email me, jburkett@twu.edu, or the executive council at undergraduatestudies@twu.edu. We want to share and celebrate faculty across the institution.

VIII. Adjourn at 3:18
   a. Motion: Dr. Ashley Bender
   b. Second: Dr. Jennifer Danley-Scott

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, October 28, 2026