

**Academic Affairs Council Meeting**  
**February 20, 2024**  
**Summary and Action Items**

1. **Open Education Committee Updates** – Dr. Kelly Visnak and Ms. Isabelle Antes provided the Council with an overview and update on the work of the Open Education Committee. Ms. Antes also announced the openTXST grant opportunity. This led to a discussion about the importance of open educational resources and affordable learning materials, ways to engage more faculty, as well as issues faculty and staff are encountering with BookSmart. Provost Aswath noted his enthusiasm for cost effective and meaningful learning materials.
2. **Presidential Debate** – Dr. Mary Brennan, Dr. John Fleming and Dr. Cynthia Hernandez are co-chairs of the Student Engagement Committee for the upcoming presidential debate committee. They are encouraging involvement from all constituents on campus and if anyone has an idea for an event surrounding the debate, please contact Drs. Brennan, Fleming or Hernandez.

In conjunction with the debate activities, there is also interest in TXST hosting a 2–3-day summer conference for high school students. A call has been made for anyone who would be interested in serving as the program director for this conference as well as those interested in providing curriculum ideas and related expertise for the conference. Ideas may be sent to Drs. Brennan, Fleming or Hernandez.

3. **Undergraduate Admissions Report** – Mr. Gary Ray provided the Council with an undergraduate admissions report.
  - Mr. Ray thanked everyone for their support in this past weekend’s Bobcat Day, which broke two records for student pre-registrations and student attendance. At Bobcat Day, 190 students registered for NSO.
  - Mr. Ray presented a plan that University Marketing and Communications is working on to educate students on the FAFSA delay. Dr. Hernandez also mentioned that housing applications have decreased compared to last year, which may be due to the FAFSA delay.
  - The One Stop Center launch date is set for Monday, February 26, 2024.
  - Dr. Hernandez announced that Bobcat Village will have available occupancy for the fall semester. The Council discussed the need for housing options for international students.
  - Merit scholarship decisions have been extended to June 1 rather than the initial May 1 deadline. Residence Life will allow students to make a housing decision until June 1 without financial penalty.
4. **Graduate Admissions Report** – Dr. Patti Giuffre provided the Council with a graduate admissions report.
  - 20-30 applications per week are still being received for the summer semester; for the fall semester, TXST is receiving about 100 applications per week.
  - For the fall semester, the deadline for international students to apply is March 15; April 15 is the deadline for domestic students.

**OFF AGENDA**

It was announced that Dr. John Fleming and Dr. Michael O’Malley will serve as the deans’ representatives on the RCM Budget Operational Committee.

Dr. Aswath announced that a PMO will be requested from IT to work through a PCR optimization process. He asked that the deans propose a name to serve on this team and asked Dr. Natalie Ceballos to name two department chairs/school directors to serve.

Dr. Heather Galloway announced that they are seeking a keynote speaker for the upcoming Naturalization Ceremony on March 8, 2024. Ideas may be emailed directly to Dr. Galloway.

Dr. Debbie Thorne announced that her team is working on drafting an example of guidelines for the initial appointment ranks of instructional faculty. The example is designed to support college and department discussions.

Dr. Chad Booth announced that the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry has made a change to the prerequisite for students who are registering for CHEM 1334 and CHEM 1341; students either must complete a foundations course or take an online Aleks module.