

TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
LEARNING TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
Academic Quality and Workforce Division
1200 E. Anderson Lane, Austin, Texas 78752

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Division of Academic Quality and Workforce
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Learning Technology Advisory Committee

May 22, 2020

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

This meeting was held via a video conference.

Members present: Justin Louder- Chair, Patrick Pluscht- Co-chair, Ruth Chisum, Vicki Freeman, Mark Garcia, Rolando Garcia, Mary Gentry, Michelle Giles, Robert Greene, Joyce Langenegger, Jacqueline Mok, Carlos Morales, Pamela Morgan, Linda Murphy, Elizabeth Rodriguez, Tim Snyder, Charlene Stubblefield, Yun Wan, Erin Warham

Members absent: Ken Craver, Julie Delello, Glynnis Gains, Daniel Gonzalez, Jose Aguilar

Staff present: Andrew Lofters, Jessica Acton, Stacey Silverman, Christina Kelley

Guests: Commissioner Keller, Charles Wolf (TAMU), Kelly Brumbelow (TAMU), Randy McDonald (TAMU)

Summary Notes

1. Welcome, introductions, and call to order – Dr. Justin Louder, LTAC Chair

Dr. Louder called the meeting to order at 10:03am

2. Consideration of summary notes from the November 1, 2019 meeting – Dr. Louder

A motion was made to accept the summary notes from the November 1, 2019 meeting by Dr. Jacqueline Mok and was seconded by Dr. Yun Wan. The motion was approved unanimously and the minutes for the May 22 meeting were accepted as submitted.

3. Discussion of Texas A&M University's adherence to THECB distance education policy in the proposed delivery of its existing Doctor of Engineering (DENGR) degree with a program in Engineering – Doctoral Proposal Subcommittee Members/Institutional Representatives – Dr. Louder

Dr. Mok provided a brief description of the request from Texas A&M University (TAMU) to offer the Doctor of Engineering in Engineering (DENGR) program online. Dr. Mok then invited TAMU program representatives to comment on the proposal.

Dr. Charles Wolf described the rationale for offering the existing DENGR program online, indicating strong student interest in an online version of the program.

Dr. Vicki Freeman asked if internships would be required for online DENGGR students. Dr. Wolf explained that internships would be required and that online students would complete internship projects at their workplaces.

Dr. Freeman also inquired about the small cohorts described in the proposal. Dr. Wolf described strong student interest in the online DENGGR but listed a lower student enrollment in the proposal. Higher enrollments are expected for the online version of the DENGGR than provided in the proposal.

Dr. Wan asked if current DENGGR students take online courses. Dr. Wolf explained that some courses are offered online, but since the program is not approved for online delivery, the number of online courses available to students is limited.

Dr. Louder asked TAMU to explain the difference between a DENGGR and a PhD in Engineering. Dr. Wolf described the differences between the two programs, indicating the DENGGR focuses on industry applications while the PhD focuses on academic research. Dr. Louder asked if DENGGR graduates could work in academia. Dr. Wolf affirmed the possibility but stressed that the focus of the DENGGR is not on academic research.

Dr. Louder inquired about TAMU's focus on recruiting students from along the I-35 corridor, inducting that this recruitment strategy would leave out a large portion of the state. Dr. Wolf stated the program would be offered to anyone in Texas but noted the majority of engineers are located along the I-35 corridor. Dr. McDonald echoed Dr. Wolf's statements.

4. Consideration of recommendation regarding Texas A&M University's adherence to THECB distance education policy, subject to THECB review and analysis, in the proposed delivery of its existing Doctor of Engineering (DENGGR) degree with a program in Engineering – Dr. Louder

Dr. Louder clarified that the proposal was coming to the full LTAC with a recommendation from the subcommittee to approve the distance delivery of the existing DENGGR program. A motion was made by Dr. Jacqueline Mok to recommend approval of the TAMU DENGGR proposal on behalf of the doctoral proposal subcommittee. The motion passes unanimously.

5. Discussion with Commissioner Keller on Learning Technology and Distance Education in Texas – Commissioner Harrison Keller and Dr. Louder

Commissioner Keller expressed his appreciation for the work Texas institutions have done to move courses online during the COVID-19 pandemic. He highlighted some challenges institutions are facing, including declining enrollments and uncertainty with reopening campuses. He requested advice from the LTAC on addressing these and other critical issues impacting higher education as well as ways the THECB can support Texas institutions.

Dr. Freeman inquired about state level support for shared digital libraries and technologies. Commissioner Keller provided a brief update on the OER repository and stated the agency is interested in working with campuses to leverage better pricing for licenses and agreements with publishers.

Dr. Louder asked if institutions would need to seek approval from the THECB for programs that were moved online in the summer and will continue to be offered online for the fall semester. Dr. Stacey Silverman noted that the language in the THECB's Coronavirus Update for Higher Education FAQs

may need to be updated. Dr. Louder also inquired about international students impacted by the pandemic. Commissioner Keller assured the LTAC that issues impacting international students are recognized at the state and federal levels. Dr. Mok inquired about the THECB's involvement at the federal level to address issues impacting international students. Commissioner Keller stated the agency does not have a federal liaison person but is working with the Governor's office.

There was some additional discussion regarding the LTAC's role. Commissioner Keller asked the LTAC to compile a list of recommendations.

Dr. Ruth Chisum asked if online learning centers would be exempt from institutional budget cuts and inquired about employees of online learning centers working remotely on a permanent basis. Commissioner Keller stated campuses have discretion on budget plans and encouraged institutions to be strategic about budget cuts.

Dr. Carlos Morales inquired about creating an inventory of continuity plans for academics. Commissioner Keller offered to discuss the option with his leadership team.

6. Institutional Responses to COVID-19 – LTAC Members

Members of the LTAC discussed various challenges encountered with transitioning to online learning and shared best practices for addressing the issues. The challenges discussed included virtual labs, strategies for faculty training, and video sharing and storage platforms. Various members of the LTAC shared links via the Zoom chat feature.

7. Discussion of future agenda items and meeting dates – Dr. Louder

Future Agenda Items:

THECB Updates (OER)

Discussion on HyFlex practices

Discussion on Commissioner Keller's request for recommendations/guidance/ideas from the LTAC

Possible Workgroup Sessions

Next Meetings:

June/July (to review/discuss new online doctoral program)

September (regular LTAC meeting)

8. Adjournment motion by Ms. Charlene Stubblefield.

The meeting adjourned at 11:51 am.