

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

September 18, 2020

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

This meeting was held via video conference.

Members present: Justin Louder- Chair, Patrick Pluscht- Co-chair, Ruth Chisum, Vicki Freeman, Rolando Garza, Mary Gentry, Michelle Giles, Daniel Gonzalez, Robert Greene, Joyce Langenegger, Jacqueline Mok, Carlos Morales, Pamela Morgan (Phone), Lynda Murphy, Elizabeth Rodriguez, Tim Snyder, Charlene Stubblefield, Yun Wan, Erin Warham, Julie Dellelo, Mark Garcia, Rita Fennelly-Atkinson

Members absent: Ken Craver, Glynnis Gains

Staff present: Andrew Lofters, Christina Kelley, Kyla Torre, Sheri Ranis, Ray Martinez, Stacey Silverman,

Guests: Richard Boehm (Texas State University), Benjamin Zhan (Texas State University), Dana Willett (Texas State University), Micky Autrey (Texas State University), Joann Zadrozny (Texas State University), Robert Burghardt (Texas A&M University), David Kessler (Texas A&M University), Judy Abbott (Stephen F. Austin State University), Luis Aguerrevere (Stephen F. Austin State University), Stacy Hendricks (Stephen F. Austin State University), Alison Reed (Stephen F. Austin State University)

Summary Notes

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

Dr. Louder called the meeting to order at 10:02 am. The new student representative was introduced to the LTAC. Mr. Ray Martinez, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Workforce Education, and Dr. Stacey Silverman, Assistant Commissioner for Academic Quality and Workforce, addressed the LTAC.

Dr. Harrison Keller, Commissioner of Higher Education, addressed the LTAC, highlighted some of the new policy developments within the agency, and answered questions from the LTAC members.

2. Consideration of summary notes from the June 26, 2020 meeting – Dr. Louder

A motion was made to accept the summary notes from the June 26, 2020 meeting by Dr. Charlene Stubblefield and was seconded by Dr. Vicki Freeman. The motion was approved unanimously and the minutes for the June 26 meeting were accepted as submitted.

3. Discussion of Texas State University's adherence to THECB distance education policy in the proposed delivery of its existing Doctor of Philosophy (PHD) degree with a program in Geographic Education – Doctoral Proposal Subcommittee Members/Institutional Representatives – Dr. Louder

Dr. Jacqueline Mok provided a brief description of the request from Texas State University (TXSU) to offer the proposed PHD in Geographic Education through hybrid/blended delivery. Dr. Mok invited TXSU program representatives to comment on the proposal.

Dr. Richard Boehm, along with Dr. Joann Zadrozny, provided an overview of the proposal. He explained that the program is designed to address the needs of K-12 geography teacher-leaders in the state that are teaching full-time. The program is identical to the on-campus program at TXSU. Dr. Boehm provided some high-level employment data for graduates of the program.

Dr. Mok invited the Doctoral Proposal Subcommittee members to provide any additional comments.

Patrick Pluscht asked how many of the 43 elective courses in the program would be offered online. Dr. Boehm and Dr. Zadrozny stated that 10 of them are online now and they expect more to be offered online in the future. Mr. Pluscht also asked if there are any plans to offer the three core courses that are held during the summer online. Dr. Boehm stated that at least one of the courses is currently being taught online. He believes that all the elective courses will be offered online in the future.

Dr. Mok invited the Doctoral Proposal Subcommittee and LTAC members to ask any questions they have.

Dr. Ruth Chisum asked if the students will have access to any GIS or geospatial analytics software. Dr. Benjamin Zhan answered that TXSU allows students to have access to GIS software.

Dr. Louder asked if the seven faculty members assigned to the program are teaching the elective courses or are other non-program faculty teaching the courses. Dr. Zhan answered that faculty outside of the program may be teaching some of the elective courses. Dr. Louder asked if there should be an addendum included with the proposal that lists all the non-program faculty that teach the elective courses. Dr. Lofters stated that the addendum would not be necessary. Dr. Mok commented that if the modality of the elective courses changed, it would impact the delivery of the program. Dr. Lofters asked Dr. Boehm how many core faculty members are instructing the program. Dr. Zhan stated that there are four core faculty providing instruction to the program. Dr. Louder clarified that he was inquiring about the capacity of the faculty to instruct the large number of elective courses. Dr. Boehm stated that the Department of Geography provides instruction to three PHD programs. Within the department there are sufficient faculty to teach the elective courses. Dr. Zahn added that the large number of elective courses provide the students numerous options to satisfy the six-hour elective requirement. He does not see any issues with the faculty providing support to satisfy the elective requirement. Mr. Dana Willett added that the university's instructional design staff support the faculty in online course development to stay ahead of student demand.

Dr. Louder asked why the program has not gone online previously. Dr. Boehm answered that the previous efforts to provide the program to K-12 teachers through summer instruction were not adequately meeting their needs. The distance education option would address this need. Dr. Mok suggested that the program should clearly indicate which courses could be completed online.

Ms. Rita Fennelly-Atkinson recommended that the program solicit feedback from the students on how the program could improve the delivery of the online program to meet their needs.

Dr. Mok recommended approval on behalf of the subcommittee.

4. Consideration of recommendation regarding Texas State University's adherence to THECB distance education policy, subject to THECB review and analysis, in the proposed delivery of its existing Doctor of Philosophy (PHD) degree with a program in Geographic Education – Dr. Louder

A motion for approval was made by Dr. Mok as a recommendation from the Doctoral Proposal Subcommittee. The motion was seconded by Dr. Wan. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Dr. Jacqueline Mok provided a brief description of the request from Texas A&M University (TAMU) to offer the proposed PHD in Biomedical Sciences through online and off-campus instruction. Dr. Mok invited TAMU program representatives to comment on the proposal.

Dr. Robert Burghardt introduced Dr. David Kessler, who provided an overview of the proposed program. Dr. Kessler stated that the program is using multiple delivery methods to provide the program to students located at the Veterinary Education Research and Outreach Center on the campus of West Texas A&M University in Canyon, Texas. The program has two faculty members in residence at the location in Canyon, Texas. The program curriculum is identical to what is offered on the main campus in College Station. Dr. Burghardt stated that the location in Canyon, Texas provides the students access to livestock and research opportunities.

Dr. Louder then opened the discussion to full LTAC.

Dr. Carlos Morales asked for clarification if the program originated in College Station, Texas and will be delivered in Canyon, Texas. Dr. Burghardt confirmed that the program originated in College Station, Texas and will be delivered in Canyon, Texas. Dr. Morales asked what percentage of the program will be delivered synchronously and asynchronously. Dr. Kessler stated that a large percentage of the program is expected to be delivered synchronously.

Dr. Louder also asked for clarification of the program delivery locations. Dr. Kessler confirmed that the program is designed to be delivered at the Canyon or College Station locations only.

Ms. Fennelly-Atkinson also asked for clarification on the program's delivery locations. Ms. Fennelly-Atkinson asked how the program will address technology issues students may face in accessing the delivery of instruction. Dr. Kessler explained how the program is successfully addressing this concern as a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Mok recommended approval on behalf of the subcommittee.

6. 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 Philosophy (PHD) degree with a program in Biomedical Sciences – Dr. Louder

A motion for approval was made by Dr. Mok as a recommendation from the Doctoral Proposal Subcommittee. The motion was seconded by Ms. Erin Warham. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Louder called for a ten-minute break. The LTAC reconvened at 11:35.

7. Discussion of Stephen F. Austin State University's adherence to THECB distance education policy in the proposed delivery of its existing Doctor of Education (EDD) degree with a program in Educational Leadership – Doctoral Proposal Subcommittee Members/Institutional Representatives – Dr. Louder

Dr. Jacqueline Mok provided a brief description of the request from Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU) to offer its existing EDD in Educational Leadership through 100% online delivery. Dr. Mok invited SFASU program representatives to comment on the proposal.

Dr. Judy Abbott provided an overview of the proposed program.

Dr. Louder recused himself from the discussion and consideration of the proposal due to his mother previously being a faculty member at SFASU. He asked Mr. Patrick Pluscht, LTAC Co-Chair, to conduct the remaining activities for agenda items 7 and 8.

Mr. Pluscht opened the discussion to the LTAC.

Dr. Mok asked Dr. Abbott to confirm that the SFASU proposal is requesting approval to offer its existing EDD in Educational Leadership through 100% online delivery. Dr. Abbot confirmed that the program will be offered through 100% online delivery. Dr. Lofters added that the email provided by SFASU during the Doctoral Proposal Subcommittee review process was sufficient documentation to confirm the delivery of the program and no additional documentation was necessary.

Dr. Mok recommended approval on behalf of the subcommittee.

Dr. Charlene Stubblefield asked if she would need to recuse herself from consideration on this proposal because she is an alumna of SFASU. Dr. Lofters confirmed that Dr. Stubblefield's recusal was not necessary.

8. Consideration of recommendation regarding Stephen F. Austin State University's adherence to THECB distance education policy, subject to THECB review and analysis, in the proposed delivery of its existing Doctor of Education (EDD) degree with a program in Educational Leadership – Mr. Louder

A motion for approval was made by Dr. Mok as a recommendation from the Doctoral Proposal Subcommittee. The motion was seconded by Dr. Morales. Dr. Mok asked if there were any other recusals that were needed by members on this proposal, apart from Dr. Louder. Dr. Lofters confirmed that no other recusals were necessary. The motion passed unanimously.

9. THECB Updates - Dr. Andrew Lofters, Dr. Kylah Torre, Dr. Sheri Ranis

a. COVID-19 Distance Education Accommodations

Dr. Lofters shared that the THECB COVID-19 accommodations for online delivery of courses have been extended until August 31, 2021. Institutions may offer courses online without reporting them as online to the THECB. If an institution intends to permanently offer courses or programs online, the usual reporting process would apply.

b. State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA)

Ms. Jessica Acton was attending the NC-SARA SPE 2020 Meeting during the September 18th LTAC meeting. She will have an update for the LTAC during November/December 2020 meeting.

c. USDE Distance Education Regulations

Dr. Lofters provided an update on the new United States Department of Education distance education regulations. The Distance Education and Innovation regulations were released in August of 2020 and were posted to the Federal Register in September 2020. The new regulations ease the requirement for the approval and operation programs through online, competency-based education, and correspondence education delivery. The regulations also eliminated some of the federal financial aid barriers to students participating in these types of programs. The regulation clarified the definition of a correspondence education student, expedited the approval process for direct assessment programs, and clarified the definition of student interaction. The new regulation also provided accommodations for foreign students participating in distance education programs originating in the United States. Mr. Pluscht added that institutions could implement these new provisions prior to the date the new regulations go into effect.

Dr. Vicki Freeman asked how students in out-of-state preceptorships or mentorships were impacted. Dr. Lofters stated that he did not see any mention of preceptorships and mentorships in the new regulations. Mr. Pluscht stated that out-of-state preceptorships or mentorships would be addressed under SARA. Dr. Louder asked if Jessica could address this during the next LTAC meeting. Dr. Mok mentioned that there were good workshops regarding out-of-state preceptorships or mentorships that were produced by NC-SARA.

d. Open Educational Resources

Dr. Torre provided an update on the OER grant program and repository. She also presented a demonstration of the OER repository to the LTAC.

Dr. Chisum asked if an instructor could embed or link the Open Author tool to a specific online course. Dr. Torre indicated that there is a way for a user to connect and search the site through a learning management system. Dr. Chisum asked if elements added to the site have any ADA consideration. Dr. Torre stated that there are accessibility features included in the Open Author tool. She stated that the site is accessible. Dr. Chisum asked how information about the site is being disseminated and is there a way the site could be demonstrated to staff at an institution. Dr. Torre stated that they are reaching out to institutions directly and there will also be webinars conducted in coordination with the

vendor. She and Dr. Sheri Ranis will be presenting the site at the upcoming TxDLA conference.

Dr. Silverman thanked the members for providing information for the site and encouraged members to promote the site to the field.

Dr. Torre explained various methods for institutions to become involved with the OER site.

e. Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Funding

Dr. Torre gave background information on the GEER funding and the associated online learning support in the form of a digital learning clearinghouse and OER course implementation and technical assistance grants.

Dr. Louder asked about the timeline for implementing the grants. Dr. Torre stated that she is currently working on a timeline.

Dr. Mok asked about the process the THECB uses for soliciting RFA's and if there is a role for LTAC in this RFA screening process. Dr. Torre and Dr. Silverman stated that the THECB will follow the state's process to solicit for the RFA.

f. Community College Baccalaureate Degrees

Dr. Sheri Ranis explained the community college baccalaureate degree approval chart that she provided for the LTAC.

Dr. Freeman asked if LTAC reviews community college distance baccalaureate proposals. Dr. Ranis stated that community college baccalaureate proposals are not submitted to the LTAC. Dr. Louder clarified that only distance education doctoral level proposals are submitted to the LTAC.

Mr. Pluscht asked if the community college distanced education baccalaureate proposals must adhere to the Principles of Good Practice. Dr. Ranis confirmed that community colleges must certify that they adhere to the standards in the Principles of Good Practice in the proposal process.

Dr. Louder proposed that the LTAC amend the meeting agenda to address item 12 (Workgroup Sessions and Lunch). Items 10 and 11 would be moved to follow lunch. The LTAC went on a break for lunch and breakout sessions until 1:30 pm.

10. Workgroup Sessions and Lunch (previously item 12)

The LTAC returned from lunch at 1:28 pm. Dr. Louder proposed to address item 13 (Workgroup Session Reports) first, then return to items 10 (Discussion of LTAC Support of the Commissioner's Priorities) and 11 (Discussion on COVID Responses from Campuses), and finish with item 14 (Discussion of Future Agenda Items and Meeting Dates). There was no opposition from the LTAC members.

11. Workgroup Session Reports (previously item 13)

a. Inclusive Access Workgroup

Mr. Daniel Gonzalez stated that Dr. Lofters provided an overview of inclusive access to the workgroup. Mr. Gonzalez provided a summary of the discussion that ensued during the breakout session. The workgroup decided to conduct a study of the feasibility of a statewide inclusive access agreement. They plan to meet as a workgroup prior to the next LTAC meeting.

b. Distance Education and Learning Technologies Survey Workgroup

Mr. Pluscht presented a revised timeline for next administration of the Distance Education and Learning Technologies survey that was created by the workgroup. They plan to hold workgroup meetings on October 5th and 16th to discuss the survey. Mr. Pluscht asked Dr. Lofters if the newly revised survey were approved by the THECB Data Collection and Research Committee, would it need to be submitted to the LTAC for approval before it could be administered. Dr. Lofters stated that decision would be up to the LTAC. Dr. Louder stated he was comfortable with the decision of the workgroup. There was no objection from the LTAC members. Mr. Pluscht will be sending out a survey document to the workgroup for feedback. Dr. Louder asked if the same distribution process used in the past would be used in his administration of the survey. Dr. Silverman was comfortable with utilizing the same process that was done in the past.

c. 50-mile Radius Workgroup

Dr. Louder stated that the group had a robust discussion over the 50-mile radius policy. Dr. Louder asked if the 50-mile radius language is in Texas Education Code statute or THECB Texas Administrative Code rule. Dr. Silverman confirmed that the language is contained in Texas Administrative Code rule. The workgroup's discussion revolved around whether the rule needed to be revised to only address programs that had a clinical, externship, or practicum that utilizes resources in certain areas. They requested for Dr. Silverman or Dr. Lofters be present during the workgroup discussion at the next LTAC meeting.

12. Discussion of LTAC Support of the Commissioner's Priorities – Dr. Louder (previously item 10)

Dr. Louder stated that the Commissioner discussed his priorities with the LTAC at a previous meeting. He mentioned the THECB posting for an Assistant Commissioner for Digital Learning. Dr. Silverman commented on the impact of the new Assistant Commissioner position.

13. Discussion on COVID Responses from Campuses – LTAC Members (previously item 11)

Dr. Louder proposed that this item be moved to the next LTAC meeting. There was no opposition from the LTAC members.

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

Future Agenda Items:

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-THECB updates

- COVID responses from campuses

- Workgroup breakouts, reports
- doctoral program considerations

Next Meetings:

Mid-November/Early December (check November 13th or 20th)

15. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:03 pm.