**Academic Excellence Committee Summary Report**

**TCU Faculty Senate**

**2018-2019**

**Members**

Sean Atkinson (chair), Lisa Bashore, José Carrión, Shugofa Dastgeer, Stacy Grau, Omar Harvey, Till Meyn, Thomas Moeller, Jan Quesada (FSEC Liaison), Loren Spice, Barbara Wood

**Purpose**

The Academic Excellence Committee shall propose and monitor solutions to issues of rigor, innovation, and creativity in order to sustain academic excellence in the University.

**Standing Charges**

* + 1. Propose solutions to issues arising from policies, procedures, programs, and goals that affect the academic excellence of the University.

*Ongoing*. In addition to the committee’s extensive work on the DEI Core Emendation (see below under special charges), the committee explored several other areas related to the academic excellence of the university. We re-explored the idea of a campus-wide testing center, including reaching out to Dean June Koelker about possible space in the library (we concluded our work when the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee submitted a resolution which was passed by the Senate in February 2019).

* + 1. Act as a consultative body for the Faculty Senate (FS) representative to Faculty Advisory Committee for the John V. Roach Honors College and bring relevant issues to FS.

*Completed*. As a liaison to the Honors College, Sean Atkinson met biweekly with the Honors College Curriculum Committee (HCCC) as an ex-officio member and once with the Honors College Council (HCC). The HCCC embarked on a new program to solicit and vet courses for Honors Colloquia. The committee vetted over 40 courses that will now be available during the 2019-2020 school year. Many of these courses, for the first time, will have permanent course numbers and be additionally vetted by Undergraduate Council. Discussion also continued from last year on the relationship between Honors Cultural Vision courses and study abroad. This conversation is ongoing.

The HCC finalized new language for tenure and promotion within the college. The committee also ran a new method for selecting incoming freshmen to join the Honors college. The old “opt-out” system was replaced with an “opt-in” system that required writing two short essays. The old system was run in the background so that the results of the new system can be compared. The goal is to catch students who may have been missed by the old system and to increase diversity within the college.

* + 1. Propose strategies for innovation, creativity, and rigor in university programs.

*Completed*. In support of the Provost search, we worked on language describing the TCU teacher-scholar model. The committee also explored how the new final exam schedule (less time between exams and later exam starting times) has been working. Registrar Mary Kincannon has yet to survey students and faculty on this issue, but the committee feels that this is something to keep on the radar next year.

**Special Charges**

1. Revise and refine the final language to a DEI Core Emendation proposal and submit it to FSEC for consideration by the full senate by the end of 2018.

*Completed*. A proposal to include DEI as an Essential Competency to the TCU Core curriculum was first introduced in December 2018 for discussion in the full Senate. The proposal was approved by the Senate in February 2019 and subsequently passed by a vote of the entire faculty in March. The proposal was the result of nearly two years of work by both this committee and the Curriculum working group of the University-wide DEI committee. We encourage the FSEC to move quickly in the formation of the implementation committee that will work out the final details.

1. Monitor the formation of a Community Engagement Committee and a system to track and assess community engagement at TCU.

*Ongoing*. After reviewing the data collected by the AEC in previous years, it was decided to forward this information to the Committee on University Committees for their consideration. I hope that the CUC will take this under advisement and form this committee during the 2019-2020 academic year.

1. Determine the need to create a well-defined list of peer and aspirant universities. Additionally, determine if a single list for TCU is satisfactory, or if a separate list is needed for each school/department.

*Completed*. The committee discussed this issue and determined that a TCU-wide list is infeasible, given the diversity and unique mix of programs within the University. It was impossible to generate even a broad set of metrics by which to compare the whole university with other universities in a meaningful way. Separate lists for each school/department within the university would make for more useful comparisons, and it was the majority opinion of the committee that individual schools/departments create such lists as needed.

**Recommendations for the next academic year**

1. Monitor the progress of the DEI Core implementation committee and provide assistance when needed.
2. Follow-up with Registrar Mary Kincannon on the matter of the altered final exam schedule.
3. Work closely with the CUC, as needed, in the creation of the Community Engagement Committee by the end of Spring 2020.
4. Consider the issue of graduate studies at TCU and how increases in this area align with the first goal of the TCU Lead On campaign, Strengthen Academic Profile and Reputation. The committee might begin with two of the recommendations to achieve this goal, specifically, “Evaluate the progress of the university by comparing specific programs at TCU to specific aspirant programs, rather than aspirant universities” and “Enhance resources and infrastructure for faculty scholarship and creative activity.”