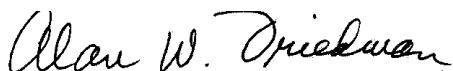


DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

**RESOLUTION FROM THE FACULTY COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONCERNING
FIELDS OF STUDY REQUIREMENTS PROMULGATED BY THE TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION
COORDINATING BOARD**

On behalf of the Faculty Council Executive Committee, Chair Charlotte Canning (Professor, Theater and Dance) submitted the following resolution concerning the fields of study requirements promulgated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) that threatens the authority and responsibility of higher education faculty to design curriculum. The Faculty Council will consider the resolution at its meeting on October 8, 2018.



Alan W. Friedman, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council
The University of Texas at Austin
Arthur J. Thaman and Wilhelmina Doré Thaman Professor of English and Comparative Literature

**RESOLUTION FROM THE FACULTY COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONCERNING
FIELDS OF STUDY REQUIREMENTS PROMULGATED BY THE TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION
COORDINATING BOARD**

Resolution on Fields of Study

The fields of study requirements promulgated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) threatens the authority and responsibility of higher education faculty to design curriculum. This requirement also threatens the ability of institutions to properly and adequately prepare students in their degree programs as a result of unintended consequences related to preparedness, certification, and accreditation.

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges are, respectively, the leading associations of higher education faculty, higher education upper administrators, and higher education governing boards. Their joint statement on governance lays out the basic and necessary division of responsibilities and authority among and between their respective constituencies: faculty, administrations, and governing boards. The faculty

sets the requirements for the degrees offered in course, determines when the requirements have been met, and authorizes the president and board to grant the degrees thus achieved. (*AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities, Section 5*)

This authority flows from the fact that the faculty teach their institution's courses. Courses should represent the state of knowledge in their respective disciplines, and they vary according to the type of institution, place of the specific course in the curriculum, student preparation, the program, and the faculty.

The Coordinating Board action on field of study requirements is inconsistent with the accreditation required of public higher education institutions in Texas by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). There are good reasons for SACSCOC to question THECB on fields of study. THECB is not a faculty body. Nor is it an educational institution. It is not authorized by an accrediting agency to offer a curriculum and it lacks the competence to be so authorized. Having institutions of higher education to send faculty to sit on committees to approve the fields of study does not provide them this competence. State control of curriculum is fundamentally inconsistent with American ideals of intellectual freedom and higher education law.

Accredited degrees are subject to review. Accreditation is evidence that scholars from comparable institutions recognize degrees as meeting national standards. The accreditation process, organized through regional accrediting commissions, is recognized by federal law as a requirement for all federal funding and by Texas law as a requirement for certain state funding.

We support coordination of requirements between Texas four-year institutions and community colleges; we support coordination of requirements among four-year schools as well. But such

coordination must be done by local agreements between institutions offering four-year programs and the community colleges. It cannot be done in a way that erodes the ability and authority of faculty in four-year institutions to design the curriculum that best benefits their students. Educational excellence is best advanced by providing many pathways from many starting points, without reducing standards for the sake of uniformity.