

# Improved Student Grades at Texas Woman's University



**Students experienced an uptick in final grades when taught by ACUE faculty in the year after they earned their ACUE credential.**

An analysis of 9,405 student grades from 640 course sections following up on prior findings at Texas Woman's University in the Dallas-Fort Worth area<sup>1</sup> finds that students taught by ACUE-certified faculty had significantly higher increases in grades in the year after earning an ACUE credential compared to course sections taught by matched faculty.

**The average course grades in course sections taught by ACUE-credentialed faculty were significantly higher in the year after faculty earned their credential when compared to the baseline period,  $p = .001$ .**

## Key Findings:

### ★ Average Grades:

Students in course sections taught by ACUE-certified faculty had significantly higher grades in the year after faculty earned their credential when compared to the baseline period,  $p = .001$ .

- The average grade for students of ACUE faculty increased by .15 points, on a 4.0 scale, between the 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 academic years.
- There was not a significant improvement among students of match faculty during the same time period,  $p = .136$ .
- This resulted in a significant interaction between faculty type and year,  $p = .021$ , meaning that the increase in grades for students of ACUE faculty was significantly greater than the increase in grades for students of match faculty.
- Adjusting for student and instructor demographics and overall improvements that occurred at TWU, average grades were .14 grade points higher in 2018-2019 among students taught by ACUE faculty than would have been otherwise—3.35 instead of 3.21 on a 4.0 scale.

## Methodology

This analysis focuses on the 16 TWU faculty who earned an ACUE credential during the 2017-2018 academic year, consented to participate in the evaluation, and who were still employed at TWU in the 2018-2019 academic year. For each ACUE-certified faculty, a matched faculty member was identified in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 academic years. Due to differences in courses and semesters taught each year, some ACUE-certified faculty were not matched with the same faculty member each year.

Course data were analyzed at the student enrollment level. The total sample of 9,405 student enrollments represents 1,684 non-unique student enrollments from 160 sections taught by ACUE faculty and 1,022 non-unique student enrollments from 98 matched sections during the baseline time period (2016-2017), 1,681 non-unique student enrollments from 99 sections taught by ACUE faculty and 2,054 non-unique student enrollments from 120

## Methodology (continued)

matched sections during the ACUE course (2017-2018), and 1,383 non-unique student enrollments from 83 sections taught by ACUE faculty and 1,581 non-unique student enrollments from 144 matched sections during the post-ACUE time period (2018-2019).

For this study, course grades were converted from an alphabetic scale to a numeric equivalent (A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, F = 0). However, since some students withdrew from a course before receiving a final grade or had grades that could not be converted to a numeric scale (e.g., P), there were 8,968 students in the analytic sample when using grade as an outcome. Specifically, 4,542 students received grades for sections taught by ACUE-certified faculty and 4,426 students received grades for sections taught by match faculty.

Student-level control variables included race/ethnicity, age, and class standing. Faculty-level control variables included gender, whether faculty were tenured/tenure track, and years of teaching experience. Analyses also controlled for whether the course was offered in the fall or spring semester.

1.ACUE. (2019, January). Research Brief 7. [https://acue.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ACUE\\_Research\\_Brief\\_7\\_TWU.pdf](https://acue.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ACUE_Research_Brief_7_TWU.pdf)