

OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

830 East Main Street in Ada, Oklahoma

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE**

Thursday, May 30, 2024

1. **ANNOUNCEMENT FILING OF MEETING NOTICE AND POSTING OF THE AGENDA IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OPEN MEETING ACT.** The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education held a regular meeting at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 30, 2024 at the State Regents Office in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Notice of the meeting had been filed with the Secretary of State on Wednesday, September 12, 2023. A copy of the agenda for the meeting had been posted in accordance with the Open Meeting Act.
2. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chair Jack Sherry called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and presided. Present for the meeting were State Regents Jack Sherry, Dennis Casey, Steven W. Taylor, Michael C. Turpen, Phillip Mitchell “Mitch” Adwon, and Courtney Warmington. Regents Jeffrey W. Hickman, Dustin J. Hilliary and Ken Levit were absent.
3. **STATE SYSTEM INSTITUTIONS.**
 - a. **NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY.** President Rodney Hanley of Northeastern State University (NSU) provided an update on various aspects of the university, including enrollment, the College of Optometry, and student demographics. He highlighted the progress on the College of Optometry’s new multimillion-dollar building, which is set to open in the summer of 2025. President Hanley also discussed NSU’s efforts to align with Blueprint 2030, emphasizing collaboration with local businesses to meet workforce demands. With funding from the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, NSU is developing a mechanical engineering program and using state funds to retain faculty in critical occupation programs. The university is enhancing workforce connections across all programs and engaging with stakeholders to strengthen these ties. NSU is increasing the number of embedded and stand-alone certificates across its academic programs, with plans to expand from 35 certificates to 50 by the end of the upcoming academic year. To improve student retention and graduation rates, NSU conducts assessments of student support services through educational benchmarking. The university is also developing an enrollment strategic plan to enhance recruitment and retention initiatives. In terms of concurrent enrollment, NSU has devised a plan to encourage concurrent students to enroll as full-time students upon high school graduation. The Provost and Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management have started meeting with high schools to expand concurrent offerings. NSU is also developing and offering certificates to high school students and has begun offering concurrent enrollment courses online.

Regent Jeffrey W. Hickman entered the meeting at 11:13 a.m.
 - b. **CONNORS STATE COLLEGE.** President Ron Ramming of Connors State College (CSC) provided an update on the institution's composition, enrollment, and retention activities. CSC has experienced notable growth in its nursing program, a key area of

expansion. Additionally, the Scholars Program, which supports students in the Child Development Program, has also seen increased enrollment. President Ramming highlighted the rise in their concurrent enrollment program and the significant growth of the Early College program with Muskogee High School. He also detailed CSC's collaboration with correctional facilities, specifically the Jess Dunn Correctional Center near Muskogee and the Eddie Warrior Correctional Center for women in Taft. The program targets inmates who are likely to be released within five years of enrolling in coursework, providing them with educational opportunities to aid their reintegration into society. Regent Warmington inquired about the eligibility of students in correctional facilities for Pell grants, to which President Ramming confirmed their eligibility through the Second Chance Pell program. He also mentioned that faculty members engage in face-to-face classes with these incarcerated students, ensuring they receive direct, personal instruction. Overall, CSC is making significant strides in expanding educational opportunities, both within the traditional student body and through innovative programs aimed at non-traditional students, such as those in correctional facilities. These efforts reflect the institution's commitment to broadening access to education and supporting student needs. Furthermore, President Ramming discussed CSC's participation in shared services through the OSU A&M Board of Regents, as well as collaborations with entities outside the A&M family of support services.

4. **INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS.** President Kayla Hale of the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (USAO) and President Jena Marr of Redlands Community College (RCC) provided an update on their partnership, which began in September 2022. President Marr highlighted the success of their shared services in several areas, including Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, Network Security, Canvas Specialist, Webmaster, and Printing Services. The partnership has facilitated various program collaborations, such as the implementation of an AA to BA pathway in Education and a certificate in Film Studies at RCC that leads to a BA in Digital Media & Technology at USAO. Additionally, they have launched a reverse transfer initiative that allows former USAO students with 64 or more college credit hours to earn an Associate of Arts degree from RCC. President Hale specifically mentioned the significant contribution of Kim Winters from RCC, who has excelled as the Canvas Specialist, designing the electronic framework for instructors. She also expressed gratitude to Chancellor Garrett and the OSRHE staff for their support in implementing these initiatives. Regent Hickman inquired whether USAO and RCC are collaborating to encourage local district teachers to pursue advanced degrees, which would enhance the ability to offer concurrent enrollment in high schools. Both President Hale and Marr indicated that their institutions have pursued this effort.

LUNCH. The Regents took a brief recess at 12:00 p.m. for lunch. The State Regents meeting reconvened at 12:25 p.m., and Chair Jack Sherry called the meeting to order and presided. Present for the meeting were State Regents Jack Sherry, Jeffrey W. Hickman, Steven W. Taylor, Michael C. Turpen, Phillip Mitchell "Mitch" Adwon, Dennis Casey, and Courtney Warmington.

5. **BLUEPRINT 2030.**

- a. **PRIORITY 1 AND 2 STRATEGIES.** Dr. Kylie Smith, Vice Chancellor for Administration, provided an update on the progress of Priorities 1 and 2 of Blueprint 2030. She highlighted several areas of success, including the development, promotion, and

advertisement of well-defined career pathways in critical workforce sectors through the statewide nursing articulation agreement with CareerTech. Additionally, efforts have been made to remove policy barriers that hinder state system colleges and universities from pursuing academic programs aligned with workforce needs. Other achievements include the creation of a new funding formula and the establishment of the Business and Employer Advisory Council. Further successes include implementation of FAFSA completion as a high school graduation requirement, the concurrent enrollment working group, the increase in micro-credential offerings through the UpskillOK initiative, and the implementation of dashboards. Dr. Smith noted that while significant progress has been made, the completion of many strategies outlined in Blueprint 2030 will take several years.

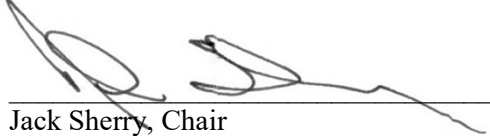
- b. **CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT.** Dr. Stephanie Beauchamp, Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, discussed the benefits of concurrent enrollment, highlighting its remarkable growth. Over the past five years, participation in concurrent enrollment has surged by an impressive 37%. In the 2022-2023 academic year, high school students attempted 161,173 concurrent enrollment credit hours, with nearly 92% of those hours successfully completed. Dr. Beauchamp outlined several key priorities for concurrent enrollment, focusing on increasing participation, ensuring quality, and maintaining affordability. Efforts to achieve these priorities include adjusting GPA admission criteria, revising policies, and redefining credit hour allocations. Additional measures are being taken to address quality and affordability concerns including an incentive system for State allocations. As the staff moves forward, the next steps for policy changes include drafting new policies, undergoing a legal office review, obtaining the Chancellor's review, securing approval from the Council on Instruction and the Council of Presidents, and ultimately receiving Regents' approval. The Regents discussed the benefits of moving forward and also expressed concern about sustainability of funding, rigor, and lowering admission standards for the program.

- c. **GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREAS.** Chancellor Garrett gave an update on the use of geographic service areas in the State System of Higher Education. She noted the absence of clear national trends regarding geographic service areas (GSA). She praised the strong collaboration between two-year and four-year institutions in the state. Chancellor Garrett reviewed existing statutes, particularly those pertaining to Tulsa, and highlighted that Langston University is specifically mentioned in 70 O.S. §§ 4666 and 4667, which constitute the "Statewide Plan for Langston University" established by the Legislature in December 1998, which is still in effect. She also shared the current service area maps that have been formalized in policy since 1994. Chancellor Garrett suggested three possible changes to policy: exempting online courses from GSA restrictions, addressing unmet local needs, and aligning GSAs for higher education with those of CareerTech districts, which currently do not match. She also highlighted GSA considerations for concurrent enrollment. Chancellor Garrett asked the Regents for direction moving forward. The Regents instructed the Chancellor to proceed with the three recommended steps and to consider removing the GSA maps from policy. Matt Stangl, General Counsel, emphasized to the Regents that the statewide "Langston Plan" must always be taken into account during discussions that could impact Langston University's position in Tulsa.

BREAK. The Regents took a brief recess at 2:05 p.m. The State Regents meeting reconvened at 2:15 p.m., and Chair Jack Sherry called the meeting to order and presided. Present for the meeting were State Regents Jack Sherry, Steven W. Taylor, Michael C. Turpen, Phillip Mitchell “Mitch” Adwon, Dennis Casey. Regent Warmington did not return. Regent Hickman re-entered the meeting at 2:18 p.m.

6. **BUDGET REPORT AND REVENUE UPDATE.** Mark Tygret, Vice Chancellor for Budget and Finance, presented the Regents with an update on the budget. Tygret announced that the final appropriated operating funds for FY25 appropriations will be \$1,023,746,221, of which \$56.25 million is for deferred maintenance projects for FY25. Senate Bill 1185 also mandates the submission of plan for projects by May 31, 2024. Fiscal will submit a broad view of a plan for allocations to be approved by the Regents.
7. **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE.** Dr. Jarrett Jobe, Vice Chancellor for Government Relations, provided the Regents with an update on legislative proceedings. Dr. Jobe announced that all higher education legislative priority bills were passed and signed by the governor. An unexpected bill, HB 4157 related to the Oklahoma’s Promise funding mechanism, was passed and sent to the governor. This bill would change the allocation of funds process, requiring funding to go through the budgetary process once again instead of being automatically allocated off-the-top as has been the practice for over ten years. This could be problematic for the program in lean budget years.
8. **PROPOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Matt Stangl, General Counsel, indicated that an executive session is not needed at this time.
9. **“BEST OF HIGHER EDUCATION.”** Regents received the update on institutional activities via e-mail on May 28, 2024.
10. **CALENDAR OF EVENTS.** The calendar of events was distributed in written form to the Regents.
11. **ADJOURN.** With no other items to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

ATTEST:



Jack Sherry, Chair



Steven W. Taylor, Secretary