

**OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**  
655 Research Park in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

**MINUTES OF THE  
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE**  
Wednesday, March 26, 2025

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 p.m. on Wednesday, March 26, 2025, at the OSU Hamm Institute for American Energy in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Notice of the meeting had been filed with the Secretary of State on Wednesday, September 11, 2024 and amended on January 8, 2025. A copy of the agenda for the meeting had been posted in accordance with the Open Meeting Act.
2. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chair Dennis Casey called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and presided. Present for the meeting were State Regents Dustin J. Hilliary, Courtney Warmington, Jack Sherry, Michael C. Turpen, Dennis Casey, Steven W. Taylor, and Phillip Mitchell “Mitch” Adwon. Regent Ken Levit entered the meeting at 10:36 a.m. Regent Jeffrey W. Hickman entered the meeting at 11:02 a.m.
3. **WELCOME.** Dr. Ann Bluntzer Pullin, Executive Director of the OSU Hamm Institute for American Energy, welcomed the Regents and attendees. She explained that the Hamm Institute’s mission is to advance American energy security by ensuring that domestic natural resources are available globally in the most economical way. The Institute partners with regional and international organizations to further this mission. Dr. Bluntzer Pullin shared highlights from her recent trip to Japan and Korea as part of Governor Stitt’s December 2024 delegation. She described it as an eye-opening experience that revealed significant opportunities for Oklahoma’s students, workforce, and energy sector. She noted that administrative transitions in those countries present key moments for engagement and partnership. Japan and Korea’s strategic priorities could align with Oklahoma’s strengths, offering potential for collaboration in areas such as manufacturing and job creation. She emphasized the importance of reciprocal relationships—not only what Oklahoma can gain from Japan and Korea, but also what the state can offer in return. One of the Institute’s goals is to provide a venue for international delegations to convene, exchange ideas, and inform Oklahoma’s legislators, educators, and families about current market demands and global trends. Dr. Bluntzer Pullin encouraged the Regents to consider these opportunities and explore ways to partner with the Hamm Institute to maximize the potential of this convening space. She also announced upcoming events focused on geothermal energy, nuclear energy, and natural gas—areas she believes are key to unlocking America’s energy future. Following her remarks, Regent Casey asked about workforce supply in the energy sector, specifically the output of graduates entering the industry and whether there is currently unmet demand. Dr. Bluntzer Pullin responded that there are gaps in traditional energy-related degrees, such as geology and petroleum engineering. While some institutions, such as the University of Oklahoma, are experiencing growth in these areas, others—including Oklahoma State University and Texas A&M—are seeing declines. She noted that increased use of artificial intelligence may contribute to reduced demand for certain roles in the industry moving forward.
4. **STATE REGENTS PERFORMANCE FUNDING FORMULA.** Discussion and update on progress toward the development of a new performance funding formula. Will Carroll and Tom

Allison with HCM Strategists provided an update on the development of a new performance funding formula for Oklahoma's public higher education system. They shared that over the past two years, they have worked on performance-based funding models in other states, gaining insight into best practices for aligning funding with state priorities and improving student outcomes. HCM reviewed Oklahoma's strategic priorities, including those outlined in Blueprint 2030, and was tasked with developing a "strawman" framework that incorporates those priorities. As part of their work, they have already analyzed Oklahoma's funding levels and distribution patterns and compared them to national best practices. HCM has examined major components and metrics of the proposed formula and evaluated how well it supports Oklahoma's goals. Next steps will include presenting key policy decisions that the State Regents will need to consider in designing the final model. HCM shared four principles of a strong postsecondary finance system: 1) Ensure a minimum level of funding for all institutions; 2) Be responsive to changing conditions; 3) Align with current state needs; and 4) Account for varying student needs. HCM then reviewed the five primary components of the proposed formula framework: 1) Operations and maintenance/core costs; 2) Enrollment; 3) Retention and student success; 4) Opportunity (equity and access); and 5) Workforce alignment. Regent Warmington asked whether these components are common in other states. HCM confirmed that they are, though rural institutions may require adjustments. She also asked about the implications of weighting each component differently. HCM recommended placing greater weight on student population to ensure institutions serving high-need student groups receive sufficient funding. The discussion concluded with further dialogue on national trends and approaches to performance funding.

5. **SYSTEM-WIDE ACEDMIC PLANNING.** Discussion on trends, function exceptions, and the board's role in system-wide academic planning. Dr. Terry Brown, Vice President of Academic Innovation and Transformation at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), provided a presentation on national trends and their implications for academic planning. Dr. Brown noted that following the 2025 academic year, the nation is expected to experience a significant decline in the number of high school graduates due to lower birth rates following the Great Recession. However, projections for Oklahoma do not indicate a steep drop in graduation rates compared to other states. She highlighted a shift in student enrollment trends, with more students enrolling at flagship universities and fewer choosing regional public universities and community colleges. To remain competitive, regional and community institutions are creating new programs and credentials. Between 2002 and 2022, higher education institutions across the country added nearly 20,000 new academic programs—a 40% increase—while undergraduate enrollment grew by only 8%. Dr. Brown cautioned that this imbalance stretches institutional resources and may lead to inefficiencies, especially when new programs are added without discontinuing others. As institutions expand their credential offerings, it can also create confusion for students who may struggle to identify which credentials align with their career goals. These trends, she explained, reinforce the importance of coordinated academic planning at the state level. Dr. Brown encouraged campuses to regularly monitor program viability and suggested that the State Regents consider setting enrollment thresholds for program continuation. Dr. Brown also addressed current shifts in program offerings: some two-year institutions are exploring the addition of bachelor's degrees, while regional universities are considering offering associate degrees. While she acknowledged the enrollment and workforce incentives driving these changes, she advised caution. First, she emphasized that institutions should only offer credentials they are best equipped and mission-aligned to deliver in order to maintain academic quality. Second, she warned of the risk of creating unnecessary competition among institutions, which can lead to inefficiencies and ultimately harm students. Instead, Dr. Brown advocated for increased collaboration among institutions to better serve the workforce needs of their respective regions. Chancellor Burrage asked about the underlying motivations for institutions seeking to offer degrees outside their traditional scope. Dr. Brown responded that both enrollment pressures and workforce alignment are key factors. The

Regents also discussed current recruiting trends and strategies. In closing, Dr. Brown reiterated that effective academic planning should prioritize understanding what students need and delivering high-quality credentials in the most efficient and coordinated manner possible.

6. **TUITION AND FEES.** Review of institutional organizational and financial health indicators. Vice Chancellor for Budget and Finance Mark Tygret provided an update on the State Regents' efforts to improve the tuition and fee decision-making process. His remarks focused on objectives to enhance the timeliness of data submission and review, improve the clarity and accessibility of financial and organizational information, support more comprehensive evaluations of institutional financial health, increase institutional engagement and accountability, and better align tuition and fee decisions with the State Regents' long-term strategic goals. Vice Chancellor Tygret noted that previous reviews had identified inefficiencies in the timeline for assembling institutional data. In response, the committee examined alternative timelines and identified the potential value of developing a concise institutional profile for each institution. He emphasized that this profile is a work in progress and intended to evolve over time. The institutional profile is being developed to include core data related to student outcomes, such as enrollment and retention; measures of affordability, including tuition and fees and participation in federal student loan programs; budget information; efficiency indicators such as student-to-faculty ratios; and financial health metrics, including reserve balances as a percentage of the operating budget and Composite Financial Index (CFI) scores. Vice Chancellor Tygret reviewed how to interpret CFI scores and provided an example to demonstrate how these indicators can inform the Regents' evaluation of institutional financial health and sustainability.
7. **GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREAS.** Discussion on institutional geographic service areas. Vice Chancellor for Government Relations Dr. Jarrett Jobe and Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Dr. Stephanie Beauchamp provided updates to the Regents. Dr. Jobe reviewed key differences between legislation – SB 701, which deals exclusively with the delivery of lower division courses at Northeastern State University in Broken Arrow and HB 2854, which more broadly removes all statutory provisions related to geographic service delivery for a period of five academic years. Dr. Beauchamp reviewed State Regents' policies that would need to be updates should either one of the bills be enacted.
8. **BUDGET REPORT AND REVENUE UPDATE.** Vice Chancellor Tygret presented the Regents with an update on budget and revenue. He reported that revenue year-to-date is right on schedule but he will continue to monitor comments and requests related to the budget development. The February certification by the Board of Equalization did not see many changes and the revenue available is on top of the amount of appropriations made for the year. There are other appropriations needed to be made in other areas, as well. Vice Chancellor Tygret is optimistic from a budget perspective that there will be continued positive discussion in the area of deferred maintenance.
9. **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE.** Dr. Jobe provided the Regents with an overview of current legislative topics. Over several committee meetings at the sub-appropriations level in the House and the Senate, the theme has been that some of the uncertainty at the federal level is trickling down into Oklahoma's budgetary process. It is causing some budgetary pauses. Current topics being discussed within the Legislature are the looming income tax conversation with other tax structures being considered and conversations about ad valorem taxes. The deferred maintenance request on accelerating those dollars has settled well and Dr. Jobe believes that the legislators in both chambers understand why it is being requested due to inflation and the need to get these projects done quickly. The question that still stands is what that structure looks like. The five bills that were filed on behalf of the state system of higher education made it out of their chambers and are headed to the other side. He reviewed SB 140, SB 28, SB 363, HB 2888, and HB 2903. Dr. Jobe provided a status

update on other ongoing bills. Regent Hickman urged the board to finalize statutory language needed to create an account for the extension dollars for Langston University in order to verify how that funding is being spent.

10. **PROPOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Mr. Chris Turner, Interim General Counsel for the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, advised the State Regents that an executive session was needed at this time pursuant to:
- a. 25 O.S. § 307(B)(4) for confidential communications between the board and its attorney(s) concerning: (a) Black Emergency Response Team, et al. v. Drummond, et al., Case No. 5:21-cv-01022-G in the United States District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma; (b) EEOC Charge # 564-2023-01525; (c) EEOC Charge #564-2024-02714, if the board, with the advice of its attorney, determines that disclosure will seriously impair the ability of the board to process the claim or conduct a pending investigation, litigation, or proceeding in the public interest; and,
  - b. 25 O.S. § 307(B)(1) for routine, periodic review and/or consideration and adoption, modification, or other action related to employment, including terms and conditions, of the Chancellor.

Regent Adwon moved, seconded by Regent Hilliary, to enter into executive session. Voting for the motion were Regents Warmington, Adwon, Taylor, Hickman, Casey, Levit, Turpen, Hilliary, and Sherry. Voting against the motion were none. Following the executive session, Regent Hickman moved, seconded by Regent Sherry, to return to the regular meeting. Voting for the motion were Regents Turpen, Casey, Taylor, Levit, Warmington, Hickman, Hilliary, Sherry, and Adwon. Voting against the motion were none.

13. **“BEST OF HIGHER EDUCATION.”** Regents received the update on institutional activities via e-mail on March 25, 2025.
14. **CALENDAR OF EVENTS.** The calendar of events was distributed in written form to the Regents.
15. **ADJOURN.** With no other items to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

ATTEST:



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Dennis Casey, Chair



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Steven W. Taylor, Secretary