

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

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE**
Wednesday, April 23, 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 a.m. on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at the Northeastern State University campus in Tahlequah, Oklahoma (Webb Tower, Room 608 – 610 N. Grand Avenue, Tahlequah, OK). Notice of the meeting had been filed with the Secretary of State on Wednesday, September 11, 2024 and amended on April 10, 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 Jack Sherry, Michael C. Turpen, Dennis Casey, Steven W. Taylor, Phillip Mitchell “Mitch” Adwon, and Ken Levit. Regents Jeffrey W. Hickman, Dustin J. Hilliary, and Courtney Warmington were absent. Regent Warmington entered the meeting at 11:30 a.m.
3. **PRESIDENT’S WELCOME.** Northeastern State University President Rodney Hanley gave welcoming remarks to the Regents and attendees. President Hanley mentioned three things that make NSU special and unique. The first was its high-quality academic programs with world-class professors. The second thing was having an affordable product for its students. The third was the connection that students build at NSU. President Hanley introduced a student speaker, Makiya Deerinwater, who is an art major from Tahlequah. She reflected on her experience at NSU.
4. **STATE SYSTEM INSTITUTIONS.**
 - a. **Northeastern State University.** President Hanley provided an update on institutional activities, beginning with a brief overview of the campus’s history and ongoing deferred maintenance issues, noting that nearly all of the legislative funding for deferred maintenance has been directed toward HVAC improvements. He reported that 96 percent of NSU graduates remain in Oklahoma, and total enrollment for the 2023-24 academic year was just over 8,000 students, including 1,222 transfer students. Of the degrees awarded, 92 percent were in critical occupations. NSU has been reclassified by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education as a 2025 “Professions Focused: Undergraduate, Graduate, and Doctorate – Medium” institution and designated as a “Student Access and Earning” institution, recognizing it as an opportunity college and university for high access and high earnings. For the 2023-24 academic year, 93 percent of first-time students received financial aid, and it is common for students to graduate with little to no debt. The average cost of attendance is approximately \$10,000 per year. Enrollment has increased over the last three semesters by 2, 4, and 5 percent, respectively, with summer 2025 enrollment trending neutral and fall enrollment showing a positive trend. NSU is the only institution in Oklahoma with a College of Optometry and is opening a new facility, which the regents will tour after the meeting. The university is actively partnering with businesses to develop education and training opportunities focused on upskilling, reskilling, and career advancement, including the creation of badges, micro-

credentials, and new academic programs to meet workforce demands. To support student success, NSU has hired staff to help students overcome barriers and stay on track to degree completion, and scholarships have been awarded to students who stopped out in critical fields to encourage their return. As part of its long-term sustainability efforts, NSU is establishing advisory boards for all colleges and programs to ensure continuous improvement in alignment with workforce needs and is developing plans to enhance its institutional structure to more effectively serve students and business partners.

- b. Tulsa Community College.** President Leigh Goodson provided an update on institutional activities at Tulsa Community College (TCC), highlighting the college's eleven-year engagement with the Aspen Institute's College Excellence Program for professional development. She noted that TCC has undertaken a thorough review of its academic offerings to eliminate unneeded programs and add high-demand initiatives, including the Onward Prep Program for health sciences, the Tulsa Achieves program, and the Strengthening Community Colleges Department of Labor initiative. The number of internship opportunities has also expanded. TCC invests approximately \$5.5 million annually in Tulsa Achieves Scholarships and \$1 million in TCC Foundation scholarships. A new initiative, TCC Advantage, offers first-year enrollment scholarships to students from select high schools. Regent Casey inquired about the accessibility of these scholarship opportunities. On the topic of sustainability, President Goodson shared that TCC offers Dual Credit University Transfer Degree Programs and supports over 170 bachelor's degree pathways in partnership with more than 15 universities. TCC is also among the first institutions in the nation to join the FAA's Enhanced Air Traffic Collegiate Training Initiative. She reported that both overall enrollment and retention have increased by more than seven percent compared to the previous year. The Metro Campus is slated for approximately \$70 million in renovations. President Goodson concluded by presenting a timeline of current programs and noted her intent to bring forward a proposal for a \$4 fee increase at the June board meeting.
- c. Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College.** President Kyle Stafford provided an update on institutional activities at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College (NEO), reporting that overall enrollment increased during the last academic year, including a 2.9 percent rise in concurrent enrollment. He noted that many students are transferring out before completing a degree, but programs like Early Childhood and Nursing are performing strongly. ARPA funding has significantly benefited the Nursing program, which now offers two FastTrack start dates to increase student access. While graduation numbers dipped following the COVID-19 pandemic, they have since rebounded. The Medical Lab Technicians program continues to thrive as one of the few of its kind in Oklahoma, and NEO now maintains clinical agreements with 24 nursing sites. As part of Blueprint 2030 goals, advisory groups have been established for each academic program. President Stafford shared that in 2010, Pell Grants covered 85 percent of NEO's total cost, but that figure fell to 59 percent by 2019; however, after holding tuition steady for several years, coverage has improved to 65 percent. He also announced a regional partnership serving 20 northeastern Oklahoma communities to create a nursing scholarship, in addition to twelve new scholarship endowments. The Annual Scholarship Gala raised over \$130,000 this year, contributing significantly to scholarship growth. The LPN Nursing program has expanded to the Northeast Tech campus in Kansas, Oklahoma. An Early Childhood Center on campus is funded through a partnership with the Peoria Tribe, and NEO also partners with Connors State College on a computer program. President Stafford concluded by noting that a modest increase in tuition and fees is expected.

Regents took a brief recess for lunch at 12:10 p.m. Regents reconvened the meeting at 12:53 p.m. Present for the meeting were State Regents Jack Sherry, Michael C. Turpen, Dennis Casey, Steven W. Taylor, Phillip Mitchell “Mitch” Adwon, and Courtney Warmington. Regents Jeffrey W. Hickman, Dustin J. Hilliary, and Ken Levit were absent. Regent Levit entered the meeting at 12:54 p.m.

5. **BLUEPRINT 2030.** Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs Dr. Stephanie Beauchamp provided an update on concurrent enrollment (Strategy #9C). She reviewed the rising cost of concurrent enrollment from FY16 to FY25, noting that current enrollment levels are outpacing the state appropriations. As a result, some institutions have had to cover the funding gap. Dr. Beauchamp highlighted a 22 percent decline in total unduplicated headcount from academic year 2014-15 to 2023-24, while concurrent enrollment headcount has increased by approximately 82 percent over the same period. The majority of concurrent students are enrolled at community colleges, although recent trends show growing participation at research universities. She also reviewed the updated concurrent enrollment policy, explaining that rather than revising the existing language, the policy was rewritten entirely to ensure clarity and alignment with current practices.
6. **TUITION AND FEES.** Vice Chancellor for Budget and Finance Mark Tygret provided an update on the review of institutional organizational and financial health indicators. He outlined ongoing efforts to improve decision-making timelines and processes, enhance the clarity and feasibility of data, ensure comprehensive evaluations of institutional financial health, increase institutional engagement and accountability, and better align tuition and fee decisions with long-term goals. It was previously determined that improvements were needed in the assembly and delivery time of institutional data. In response, the committee reviewed various timelines and identified the potential value of a concise institutional profile, which remains a work in progress. Key data categories include: (a) outcomes, such as enrollment and retention; (b) affordability, including tuition, fees, and federal student loan participation; (c) budget metrics; (d) efficiency, such as student-to-faculty ratios; and (e) financial health, including reserve balances as a percentage of the operating budget and Composite Financial Index (CFI) scores. Vice Chancellor Tygret reviewed the interpretation of CFI scores and provided an example for each institution.
7. **BUDGET REPORT AND REVENUE UPDATE.** Vice Chancellor Tygret presented the Regents with an update on the state budget and revenue. According to the last three quarters of the fiscal year-to-date, the budget is right on top of where it was a year ago. Vice Chancellor Tygret stated that he is now receiving the final updates on the deferred maintenance priority listings from the presidents and will compile them.
8. **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE.** Vice Chancellor for Government Relations Dr. Jarrett Jobe provided an overview of current legislative topics, emphasizing the importance of proactively shaping discussions at the Capitol, particularly on issues related to concurrent enrollment. He reflected positively on the recent Higher Education Day at the Capitol, noting strong student representation and support for combining the event with Oklahoma’s Promise Day, a format that is expected to continue annually. Dr. Jobe reported that all five OSRHE-supported education bills successfully passed their originating chambers and are now eligible for consideration in the opposite chambers. He also provided updates on other key legislation, including HB 2197, a food and dining bill that was kept out of committee following unified opposition from all 25 public college and university presidents. Additionally, the geographic service area bills—SB 701 and HB 2854—remain eligible for consideration on the opposite floors. On the state budget, Dr. Jobe noted that agencies have been instructed to request flat budgets and reiterated the importance of maintaining the appropriation for property insurance, cautioning that separating it from the annual budget request would effectively result in a cut to institutions.

9. **PROPOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Mr. Steve Turner, Deputy General Counsel for the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, advised State Regents that an executive session was needed at this time pursuant to:

- a. Possible discussion and vote to enter into executive session pursuant to:
 - i. 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 #564-2024-02714, 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,
 - ii. 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 Levit moved, seconded by Regent Adwon, to enter into executive session. Voting for the motion were Regents Sherry, Warmington, Adwon, Taylor, Casey, Levit, and Turpen. Voting against the motion were none. Following the executive session, Regent Adwon moved, seconded by Regent Warmington, to return to the regular meeting. Voting for the motion were Regents Turpen, Casey, Taylor, Levit, Warmington, Hickman, and Hilliary. Voting against the motion were none.

10. **“BEST OF HIGHER EDUCATION.”** Regents received the update on institutional activities via e-mail on April 22, 2025.
11. **CALENDAR OF EVENTS.** The calendar of events was distributed in written form to the Regents.
12. **ADJOURN.** With no other items to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

ATTEST:



Dennis Casey, Chair



Steven W. Taylor, Secretary