

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

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE**
Wednesday, September 3, 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 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 3, 2025, at the State Regents Office in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Notice of the meeting had been filed with the Secretary of State on Wednesday, September 11, 2024 and amended on August 19, 2025. A copy of the agenda for the meeting had been posted in accordance with the Open Meeting Act.
2. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chair Courtney Warmington called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and presided. Present for the meeting were State Regents Jack Sherry, Dennis Casey, Michael C. Turpen, Courtney Warmington, and Phillip Mitchell "Mitch" Adwon. Regents Steven W. Taylor, Dustin J. Hilliary, Ken Levit, and Jeffrey W. Hickman were absent. Regent Hickman entered the meeting at 2:55 p.m. Regent Adwon exited the meeting at 3:00 p.m.
3. **INVESTMENTS.** Update on the status of higher education investments. Mr. Tim Westrich with Mercer reported that investment returns for the year have been strong, despite mixed economic indicators. Year-to-date, global equity markets are up 14.5 percent, and the overall portfolio has achieved an 8 percent return. He presented two recommendations: a \$10 million commitment to Abacus Multifamily Partners VII within the private real assets portfolio, and a \$12 million commitment to Audax Direct Lending Solutions III within the private markets portfolio. Mr. Steven Ewen with Mercer provided an update on the hedge fund program, noting that overall performance remains strong and that the hedge fund has met or exceeded its objectives established 19 years ago. He recommended a \$10 million investment in Global Macro Multi-Strategy (BVI) with the Tudor Group to enhance portfolio diversification. He also noted an intent to reduce concentrated positions at the margins to raise additional capital.
4. **STATE SYSTEM INSTITUTIONS.**
 - a. Southwestern Oklahoma State University. President Diana Lovell provided an institutional update on Southwestern Oklahoma State University. She stated her focus is on producing graduates prepared for the critical workforce. The aerospace and defense industry are the second largest economic engine in Oklahoma. SWOSU utilizes a strong relationship with Oklahoma Space Industry Development Authority (OSIDA). There are twelve scholarships offered through the Stafford Air and Space Museum for students who work there. President Lovell reported that 55 percent of undergraduates have zero debt. The average for undergraduates who do graduate with debt is \$14,363, which is well below the national average. SWOSU ranks 8th out of 141 pharmacy schools in the nation and is 1st in Oklahoma.
 - b. Western Oklahoma State College. President Chad Wiginton provided an institutional update on Western Oklahoma State College. He reported high pass rates for the nursing

NCLEX across WOSC campuses ranging from 83 percent to 100 percent. He reported on programs that align with workforce demands such as agriculture and business micro-credentials. He presented a few ways WOSC is enhancing long-term institutional sustainability through increased partnerships and collaborations. They partnered with Great Plains Regional Medical Center on a new nursing facility and with Northwestern Oklahoma State University on a nursing articulation agreement.

5. **BLUEPRINT 2030.** Update on initiatives aligned with Blueprint 2030 strategic plan.

- a. Updates on Teacher Education initiatives (Strategy #1C). Associate Vice Chancellor for Teacher Education and Special Programs Dr. Goldie Thompson presented an update on the Inspired to Teach initiative. Since its launch in Fall 2022, 35 institutions have joined the program. Participation has grown by 46 percent over the past year, with 6,624 current participants, most of whom are from rural high schools. To date, the program has disbursed over \$10.5 million in scholarships and \$2.3 million in incentive payments, supporting more than 575 teachers now working in Oklahoma schools. Among out-of-state participants, the highest numbers come from Texas, Kansas, Arkansas, and Colorado, with the fewest from Missouri. Of the 545 out-of-state participants, 296 are from Texas. Academic interest in teaching fields has also increased, with Mathematics Education majors up 98 percent and Special Education majors up 43.5 percent in the past year. The program's outreach has been significant, generating 11.7 million impressions in the fall campaign and 2.6 million in the spring. Dr. Thompson introduced a student recipient of the Inspired to Teach Scholarship, Madalyn Aunko, who is an elementary education major at Northeastern State University. She shared that because of this program, she will graduate without student loan debt.
- b. Update on Oklahoma's Promise (Strategy #6). Associate Vice Chancellor for Scholarships and Grants Dr. Colbie Beam reviewed the implementation of HB 1727. This bill extended the Oklahoma's Promise application window to December 31 of the senior year. It created an opportunity to grant exceptions based on hardships to the application deadline. It set age parameters for a "high school student to align with federal standards. It also established a teacher eligibility track for children of certified classroom teachers. Children of school administrators do not qualify. The online application opens this month and there will be a comprehensive update to all the webpages and an update to the process to accommodate the new deadlines.
- c. Update on Low-Producing Programs Review (Strategy #16B). Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs Dr. Joel Kendall provided an update on the low-producing degree program review process. He explained that step one involved revising policy to grant institutional presidents the authority to discontinue low-producing programs and to reduce the number of exemptions that allow such programs to continue. In March 2025, institutions received a list identifying their low-producing programs. Step two of the process requires institutions to prepare a report for each identified program and submit it to OSRHE by September 7 for review. Dr. Kendall noted that eleven program deletions are being considered on the agenda tomorrow, and six universities have submitted an additional nineteen programs for potential deletion.

6. **BUDGET REPORT AND REVENUE UPDATE.** Vice Chancellor for Budget and Finance Nick Hathaway presented the Regents with an update on the state budget and revenue. Oklahoma finished the fiscal year budget up 2.5 percent. In the first month of this fiscal year, it is up 4.5 percent. Consumer activity and gross production tax are up strongly. The budget team has started the process of preparing budget requests for the October meeting. Regent Casey inquired about the status of the “Rainy Day Fund,” and Dr. Jarrett Jobe, Vice Chancellor for Government Relations, reported that it is consistent and healthy.
7. **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE.** Vice Chancellor for Government Relations Dr. Jarrett Jobe provided the Regents with an overview of current legislative topics. He announced that he and Chancellor Burrage have begun meeting with legislators and will continue to meet with more in the next few weeks to discuss legislative priorities. There is still some caution on recurring budgets due to costs being realized. He reported that institutions should continue requests for one-time funding. Legislators are still interested in continuing to help with the deferred maintenance funding. On October 13, OSRHE will be presenting in Chairman Brian Hill’s interim study on Workforce. There will also be interim studies on funding for higher education and particularly rural institutions, and another one has been filed on the topic of concurrent enrollment. He has also started scheduling the legislative tours and will be announcing those soon. Dr. Jobe reported that there might be some policy change priorities to Oklahoma Promise regarding possible adjustments for family income qualifications. Concurrent enrollment is still a topic of interest regarding the delivery methods and cost.
8. **PROPOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION.**
 - 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; and (c) U.S. v. Oklahoma, Case No. 6:25-CV-265-RAW-DES in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Oklahoma, 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.
 - b. Enter into executive session.
 - c. Exit executive session and vote to re-enter open session.
 - d. Possible discussion and vote on items discussed in executive session.

Mr. Chris Turner, General Counsel, advised State Regents that an executive session was needed at this time pursuant to 25 O.S. § 307(B)(4) for confidential communications between the board and

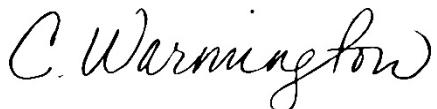
its attorney(s) concerning: (a) Black Emergency Response Team, et al. v. Drummond, et al., Case No. 5:21-cv-01022-G in the United States District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma.

Regent Casey moved, seconded by Regent Hickman, to enter executive session. Voting for the motion were Regents Sherry, Warmington, Casey, Hickman and Turpen. Voting against the motion were none. Regents entered executive session.

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

9. **“BEST OF HIGHER EDUCATION.”** Regents received the update on institutional activities via e-mail on September 2, 2025.
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:



Courtney Warmington, Chair



Steven W. Taylor, Secretary