

Meeting of the
Oklahoma Free Speech Committee
MINUTES

Tuesday, December 9, 2025, 12:00 p.m.

Notice. The meeting notice was posted with the Secretary of State on Sunday, December 14, 2025, at 11:14 p.m. The meeting agenda was posted on the State Regents' website on Monday, December 8, 2025, at 8 a.m.

1. **Call to order.** Regular Meeting called to order at 12:07 p.m. The following members were in attendance: Andy Lester (Chair), Representative Caldwell, Michael McNutt, Judge Valerie Couch, Hayley Jones, Mariana Pitts and Dr. Rick Hall. Senator Floyd and Regent Levit were unable to attend.
2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting.** Rep. Caldwell moved to approve the June meeting minutes. Mr. McNutt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Comments from the Chair.** Chairman Lester complimented the work of the Committee, which has developed a great routine in its work. He mentions recent political events including Charlie Kirk's death and how this impacts freedom of expression and free speech. He highlights how institutions have adopted broad statements, including the adoption of Chicago Principles. Chairman Lester reiterated how institutions must embrace freedom of expression as it is not only law, but policy in the State of Oklahoma. He concludes his remarks by touching on the safety of students and staff and those who populate the campus, stating training on how to handle free speech issues will make a significant difference as the committee continues to promote, protect and model freedom of speech on campuses.
4. **Task Force Reports.**
 - a. Institutional Policies Task Force Report (Judge Valerie Couch). Judge Couch gave an update on the work of the task force.
 - Judge Couch thanked everyone who has been involved, and thanked OSRHE staff. The Institutional Policies Task Force has found a good pace, each meeting submitting between two and four reports. Judge Couch spoke about two pending institutional policy reviews

pending for East Central University and the University of Oklahoma. The Task Force is hoping to complete these reports for February's meeting to be considered. In the following weeks, the Task Force will be scheduling meetings with institutions for winter and spring months to bring to the committee in June.

b. Complaints Task Force Report (Dr. Rick Hall). Dr. Hall gave an update on the task force.

- The Complaints Task Force has received three (3) complaints since the last meeting and has initiated discussions with the institutions involved. The Complaints Task Force is still reviewing the details but there may be action required at the next meeting in February.

c. Training Task Force Report (Andy Lester). Chairman Lester gave a brief update on the training task force.

- The Training Task Force is working on putting together training for 2026 which will consist of new and old materials. One thing to note is that many participants demanded more after a successful training and Chairman Lester is looking forward to the material for the upcoming training.

6. Staff Report. Mr. Turner discussed potential dates for the next meetings

- February 10, June 9, September 8, and December 8, 2026, at noon.

- These dates will be filed unless there are any objections from the committee.

7. Other Business or Discussion. Rep. Caldwell mentioned recent events going on in Norman on OU's campus, noting the importance of the Oklahoma Free Speech Committee. As situations arise, the importance of having good policies becomes apparent. OU has a process that it is going through, and they are proceeding through the necessary steps. Students' grades should be based on academic merit only and it is crucial that academic standards be met while also protecting free speech. Rep. Caldwell commended OU for how they're handling a challenging situation.

Chairman Lester states that there is no other committee that is similar to the Oklahoma Free Speech Committee, existing by law only in the State of Oklahoma. This committee protects both institutions and students on campus.

8. Meeting Adjourned: The meeting adjourned at 12:32pm.