

Meeting of the
Oklahoma Free Speech Committee

MINUTES

Tuesday, June 9, 2026, 12:00 p.m.

Notice. The meeting notice was posted with the Secretary of State on Sunday, December 14, 2025, at 11:15 p.m. The meeting agenda was posted on the State Regents' website on Monday, June 8, 2026, at 10:18 a.m.

1. **Call to order.** Regular Meeting called to order at 12:04 p.m. The following members were in attendance: Andy Lester (Chair), Representative Chad Caldwell, Judge Valerie Couch, Michael McNutt, Dr. Rick Hall, and Hayley Jones. Senator Kay Floyd, Mariana Pitts, and Regent Ken Levit were unable to attend.
2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting.** Mr. McNutt moved to approve the February meeting minutes. Representative Caldwell seconded the motion. All those in favor: Chairman Lester, Representative Caldwell, Michael McNutt, Dr. Rick Hall, and Hayley Jones. All those abstained: Judge Valerie Couch. The motion passed.
3. **Comments from the Chair.** Chairman Lester commented on the activities of the Oklahoma Free Speech Committee. Since its last meeting, the task forces continued their work and remained active in completing reports and addressing matters related to free speech on Oklahoma campuses.
4. **Task Force Reports.**
 - a. Institutional Policies Task Force Report (Judge Valerie Couch). Judge Couch began her report by reiterating the membership of the Institutional Policies Task Force, which includes herself, Representative Caldwell, Senator Floyd, and Chairman Lester.

She thanked those who contributed to the work of the task force, including legal staff. Judge Couch reported that the task force continues to review institutions governed by the State Regents and noted that, if the reports presented during the meeting were approved, the task force would have completed reviews of slightly more than half of the institutions assigned for review.

Three institutional reviews remain pending: Tulsa Community College, Oklahoma City Community College, and the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma. Judge Couch stated that, if progress continues as anticipated, reports for those institutions could be presented by the September meeting.

The task force presented the following reports for consideration:

- 1) Report and Recommendation for Connors State College
- 2) Report and Recommendation for Carl Albert State College

The review team for Connors State College consisted of Michael McNutt and Chairman Lester with contributions from Chris Turner, Brandt Sterling, Melissa Chavez, and Judge Valerie Couch. A courtesy copy of the report was provided to the institution and every member of the committee. Judge Couch moved to approve the report, Hayley Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The review team for Carl Albert State College consisted of Dr. Rick Hall and Judge Valerie Couch with contributions from the legal team. A courtesy copy of the report was provided to the institution and every member of the committee. Judge Couch moved to approve the report, Michael McNutt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- b. Complaints Task Force Report (Dr. Rick Hall). Dr. Hall provided an update on the work of the Complaints Task Force.

Since the previous meeting, the Committee received one additional complaint regarding Cameron University on February 26, 2026, bringing the total number of pending complaints to four. Two complaints were addressed during this meeting, while two additional complaints remain under review and will be considered at a future meeting.

With each report the task force learns to address each complaint in the best interest of the complainants and parties involved.

Dr. Hall noted that the task force continues to refine its review process as additional complaints are received, with the goal of evaluating each complaint thoroughly and fairly.

He also reviewed the task force's complaint review process and stated that inquiries not addressed during the meeting could be directed to Chris Turner. The Committee can expect at least one additional Summary and Analysis report for consideration at the September meeting.

The task force presented the following reports for consideration:

- 1) Summary and Analysis for the University of Oklahoma
- 2) Summary and Analysis for Oklahoma State University

The Summary and Analysis for the University of Oklahoma addressed a free speech complaint concerning actions related to late speaker Charlie Kirk. The report included a summary of relevant facts, an analysis of the free speech issues involved, and the Complaints Task Force's findings and recommendations. The

report was based on the allegations contained in the complaint, supporting documentation, and discussions with University of Oklahoma representatives regarding the accuracy of the allegations.

Chairman Lester referenced a video recording related to the events described in the complaint. Judge Couch inquired whether the task force's review process had evolved as additional complaints have been received.

Dr. Hall and Chris Turner explained that some complaints require a more extensive review process than others. More complex complaints are typically reviewed collectively by the full task force, while less complex matters may initially be handled by staff working directly with the institution to gather relevant information for further review.

Representative Caldwell asked whether the University of Oklahoma had issued any statements to the student body discouraging the behavior identified in the complaint.

Mr. Turner stated that he would follow up with the University. Chairman Lester commented that the incident appeared to be isolated and that the institution had initially chosen to address the matter through individual discussions with those involved.

Representative Caldwell expressed his hope that institutions would address free speech violations, regardless of how big or small the violation was, and take steps to ensure such conduct is not tolerated on campus. Committee members further discussed the role that free speech incidents can play as learning opportunities for institutions and their staff.

Dr. Hall moved to approve the University of Oklahoma Summary and Analysis. Haley Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. McNutt offered to review the University's student handbook to further address Representative Caldwell's concerns regarding institutional responses to similar incidents.

The Summary and Analysis for Oklahoma State University addressed a free speech complaint that also involved Charlie Kirk. The report included a summary of the relevant facts, an analysis of the free speech issues presented, and the Complaints Task Force's findings and recommendations. The report was based on the allegations contained in the complaint, supporting documentation, and the task force's discussions with Oklahoma State University regarding the accuracy of the allegations.

Dr. Hall moved to approve the Oklahoma State University Summary and Analysis. Mr. McNutt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- c. Training Task Force Report (Andy Lester). Chairman Lester provided an update on behalf of the Training Task Force due to Mariana Pitts being on leave.

He reiterated that the primary responsibility of the task force is to develop and provide training opportunities for institutional leaders and personnel.

The task force recently recorded a panel discussion featuring Brandee Hancock and Mackenzie Wilfong, moderated by Chairman Lester. Post-production of the recording is underway, and the completed training will be made available to institutions in the near future.

The task force is also exploring opportunities to host a live training event featuring interactive discussion and practical application of free speech concepts. Additional information will be provided as planning progresses.

Representative Caldwell then updated the Committee on recently enacted legislation.

He reported that Senate Bills 1725 and 1726 contain provisions that will directly affect the work of the Oklahoma Free Speech Committee, including training requirements for graduate assistant instructors and their professional development. He noted that a free speech component is expected to be included in those training efforts. The legislation also requires free speech training for first-year college students.

The Committee discussed the legislation further, including questions regarding its development, implementation, training requirements, and institutional responsibilities.

Chairman Lester emphasized the importance of teaching students how to engage in civil discourse and stated that institutions of higher education should continue efforts to strengthen those skills among students.

5. **Staff Report.** Mr. Turner reported that legal staff continues to work with institutions on compliance efforts related to House Bill 3700, including matters involving institutional academic and grading policies.
7. **Other Business or Discussion.** The next meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2026.
8. **Meeting Adjourned:** The meeting adjourned at 12:59pm.