

Special Meeting of the
Oklahoma Free Speech Committee

MINUTES

Tuesday, August 18, 2026, 12:00 p.m.

Notice. The meeting notice was posted with the Secretary of State on Sunday, August 13, 2026, at 2:02 p.m. The meeting agenda was posted on the State Regents' website on Monday, August 17, 2026, at 9:48 a.m.

1. **Call to order.** Special Meeting called to order at 12:05 p.m. The following members were in attendance: Andy Lester (Chair), Representative Chad Caldwell, Judge Valerie Couch, Michael McNutt, Mariana Pitts, and Hayley Jones. Senator Kay Floyd and Regent Ken Levit were unable to attend.
2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting.** Mr. McNutt moved to approve the June meeting minutes. Judge Valerie Couch seconded the motion. The motion passed. Ms. Pitts moved to amend the minutes to remove her name from the attendees. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed.
3. **Comments from the Chair.** Chairman Lester provided an overview of current Committee activities and Oklahoma's approach to protecting freedom of speech on public college and university campuses. He described Oklahoma's statewide, system-wide approach to free speech as the "Oklahoma Experiment" and contrasted it with institution-specific approaches used in other states.

Chairman Lester reviewed House Bill 3543, which established the Oklahoma Free Speech Committee as an advisory body to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, and State Regents Policy 2.28, which incorporates a modified version of the Chicago Principles and affirms the importance of freedom of expression. He also discussed Section 2120, which requires institutions to annually report barriers to or disruptions of free expression on campus.

Chairman Lester noted the enactment of SB 1725, which assigns the Committee responsibility for developing or approving student free speech training programs, and stated that implementation of SB 1725 and consideration of student training programs would be the primary business of the meeting. He concluded by emphasizing the importance of protecting unpopular or controversial speech and fostering critical thinking rather than indoctrination.

4. **Task Force Reports.**
 - a. Training Task Force Report (Mariana Pitts). Mariana Pitts provided an update on the activities of the task force.

The training task force report provided updates in three primary areas:

1. Employee Free Speech Training;
2. Student Free Speech Training pursuant to SB 1725; and
3. The Oklahoma Campus Free Speech Summit

The Committee completed the 2026 Employee Free Speech Training panel discussion recorded on June 5, 2026. The panel included Brandee Hancock, Mackenzie Wilfong, and Chairman Lester. The recording was distributed to institutional representatives on July 21, 2026 for review and implementation. The training materials are also available on the State Regents' Free Speech Training Materials page.

Pursuant to SB 1725, the Committee completed a student free speech training recording with Professor Noah Chauvin on August 12, 2026. The recording was in post-production at the time of the meeting. Upon completion, the training materials will be posted on the State Regents' Free Speech Training Materials page and distributed to institutional representatives for use by their institution.

The Oklahoma Campus Free Speech Summit is scheduled for September 17, 2026 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the UCO Grand Ballroom. Professor Thai will facilitate this training and provide an in-person, interactive training session. Attendance is being limited to eight participants per institution. A save-the-date announcement was distributed to institutional representatives on June 26, 2026. Approximately 60 participants had registered as of the previous Friday, with additional registration information to be provided at the Committee's next meeting.

Ms. Pitts discussed the student training for the University of Oklahoma which the Committee reviewed and passed along recommendations to OU. OU implemented all recommended changes.

Ms. Pitts moved to recommend that the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education approve the University of Oklahoma's free speech student training.

During discussion, members suggested adding language to the training concerning destruction, removal, tampering with, or stomping on signs or other expressive materials. The suggestion was based on a prior complaint involving a student who had walked over and damaged signs on the University of Oklahoma campus.

Representative Caldwell amended the motion to recommend to the State Regents approval of the University of Oklahoma's student free speech training as presented, with the additional recommendation that the training address conduct such as taking down, destroying, tampering with, or stomping on expressive signs or materials. Mr. McNutt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Pitts discussed the student training for Oklahoma State University which the Committee reviewed and passed along recommendations to OSU. OSU implemented all recommended changes.

Ms. Pitts moved to recommend that the State Regents approve Oklahoma State University's free speech student training. Mr. McNutt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Pitts concluded her report by acknowledging and thanking the committee and legal staff for their work.

5. **Staff Report.** Mr. Turner did not have any items to be discussed.
6. **New Business.** No new business discussed.
7. **Announcements.** The next meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2026.
8. **Meeting Adjourned:** The meeting adjourned at 12:28 p.m.