

**COUNCIL OF  
DIRECTORS OF STUDENT ACADEMIC SERVICES**

**MINUTES**

**March 27, 2024**

**Zoom - <https://zoom.us/j/99545430954>**

**Passcode - 321037**

**10:30am to 12:00pm**

In attendance: Dani Bellmer, Lindsey Brownlow, Larry Burns, Kyndal Campbell, Aaron Christensen, Mary Francis, Jeff Hartman, Ebonie Hill, Nick Holmes, Diane Jones, Twambi Kerstetter, James Knecht, Kristen Kulling, Caitlin Laughlin, Aleigha Mariott, David Mariott, Marissa McIntyre, Marilyn Middlebrook, Lance Millis, Linda Millis, Jeremy Minyard, Beverly Morris, Rita Peaster, Sky Rogers, Kirsti Seuhs, Richard Shepard, Debbie Stump, Anna Teague, Candace Thrasher, Betsey Weaver and Shannon Baker, Chair.

S. Baker began the meeting by introducing Twambi Kerstetter to DSAS. She is one of the first hires for the Student Success team. T. Kerstetter has come on board as the Coordinator for Professional Development and Academic Advisor Training. Her purpose is to assist individuals throughout the University, such as onboarding new advisors or creating ideas for professional development of existing advisors. She will be meeting with Mary Francis to discuss how this position will interact with the Academic Professional Development Group. She is very solidly focused on the onboarding of our first year advising team, and we are learning things through that process that will be helpful to other units within the University. T. Kerstetter expressed her gratitude and appreciation for this opportunity. Next month she will share a bit of what she has learned in her first month of employment, as well as provide DSAS with an update on professional development and advisor training.

**1. Domestic Application Fee Increase – Jeff Hartman**

The Office of Undergraduate Admissions requested and received approval from the Regents to increase the domestic application fee from \$40 to \$50, starting with the summer / fall 2025 application cycle. International application fees will remain at \$90 and all of our standard and traditional fee waiver processes will stay the same. Over the course of the last couple of years recruiting students has become more expensive, resulting in the need to make a change with the application fee. Spring and fall 2024 students will still pay the \$40 fee.

**2. Online Withdrawal Requests – Rita Peaster and Betsey Weaver**

R. Peaster discussed the online withdrawal system in Slate that has been operational since January. As of this morning 519 withdrawals have been submitted, and the system appears to be working well. R. Peaster expressed her appreciation of the Slate team, and all the cooperation of everyone across campus. One issue that has been addressed is that if a withdrawal is submitted, an email notification is automatically routed to the student's advisor to review and approve. If the advisor does not take action on the withdrawal within 3 business days, Slate will automatically send a reminder email to the advisor. After that time period, if there is no action, the withdrawal form stops in the system - in limbo. We need to determine a way to automatically keep the process moving if there is a lack of response from the advisor. The current proposal specifies that if the advisor has not taken action within 2 weeks, the Slate process would involve an email automatically submitted to either the DSAS representative or another college service account. The colleges would determine what email address is used and that individual would have the ability to act on the withdrawal request.

C. Thrasher questioned the timing of the withdrawal form and the possibility of the Registrar's Office (RO) backdating if the request was submitted during the refund period. R. Peaster acknowledged that once one of these requests is fully approved, RO will process as of the date the student submitted it. The delay in the approval does not have any negative impact to the student. C. Thrasher also questioned the process regarding a student who does not have an advisor assigned in Banner. B. Weaver answered that the request would then be routed to the college DSAS service account. K. Seuhs added that she would prefer to receive the direct email, not the service account email at the 2 weeks.

B. Morris asked if 14 days was too long, especially during certain parts of the semester. B. Weaver answered that there have been no issues with delays during the first part of the semester, when multiple withdrawals are being submitted. This is no guarantee it will not happen but this is a good proposal to have a reminder after 14 days. The advisors receive a reminder at 3 days, and then at 14 days the request is escalated. RO will keep track of those pieces of data. This semester the delay did not occur until later in the term and the number of students affected was small.

R. Peaster added that from the RO perspective, there is no strong feeling about the 2 weeks or less. This situation is being presented to this group to solicit everyone's feedback to make sure we allow time for advisors to be out of the office for a period of time, and not step on that.

D. Mariott added there is a significant number of processes in Slate and those processes will continue to increase. We know that advisors have to access a dashboard or their email to check on these matters. One way to address the need is by creating a daily digest email. This email is designed to be action oriented, and the intent is that this daily email would include all advisors in an attempt to summarize these pending actions – outstanding withdrawals, academic alerts, student appointment notes, a summary of how many appointments for the day. The idea behind this email is to hyperlink the processes directly to your dashboard to interact with the system in that dashboard appropriately. There will also be occasions for sending emails for these one-off processes like the withdrawal process. Our hope is that this daily digest email adds another layer of reminders for individuals to take that appropriate action. There will be additional information on this daily digest email in the future, and we will make sure that the DSAS group is aware before activating.

S. Baker expressed her interest in building a triage system with the use of daily digest email and early alerts, so that advisors could see the students who most needed a response to early alerts to help them prioritize. If their daily digest email reports 300 alerts to respond to it, they will need a way to target their more concerted efforts effectively.

L. Millis expressed his opinion that although he likes the idea of the digest, he was concerned about daily submission, possibly leading people to ignore it. N. Holmes recommended the need for adjusting settings so that advisors would only receive the daily digest if they had someone on the list. S. Baker agreed that there will be some fine tuning with this email. K. Seuhs would like to bounce the idea off her team to get their thoughts on it, asking the people who are actually going to use it.

D. Mariott added that timing can be easily adjusted. There are many processes in Slate now that advisors may not know where to go for information. This email can help to combine all processes into one place. But, we do not want people to feel overwhelmed with the information and therefore not utilize it. S. Baker mentioned discussing this further in the Operations Group (the early withdrawal group that has become the operations group), followed by additional discussion at the April DSAS meeting. B. Weaver announced that her team met about the daily digest email earlier today, and its readiness for production. She will have a sample available at the next DSAS meeting, and we will go from there.

### **3. Academic Advisors' Professional Development Group – Mary Francis**

M. Francis is head of the Academic Professional Development Group for academic advisors. This group is advisor led, and T. Kerstetter will be a partner and a resource for this group to help them carry out their ideas and their vision. M. Francis expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to talk to DSAS. With everything that has happened over the last year, the APDG has trickled down in size. M. Francis explained that as an advisor group they can speak for the collective group in situations such as the above-mentioned daily digest for example. If a member of the APDG could attend this meeting, as an advisor, they would be able to represent the advisors on this topic to inform the working group if this idea is overwhelming, or if more information is needed. M. Francis asked DSAS to talk to their teams regarding advisors who would be interested in being a part of this group. In the past APDG has had 2 advisors per college or area. Currently the group consists of 3 advisors from Ferguson, 2 from Spears, 3 from Arts and Sciences and 1 from Student Success, but no one from Education and Human Sciences or Honors, Engineering, Architecture and Technology, Athletics or Tulsa. We want advisors to be able to speak into this institution, as well as each other and at the same time enjoy their jobs. K. Seuhs asked for additional information on the APDG that could be shared with other advisors to explain the direction of APDG. M. Francis agreed to prepare a statement about who they are, what their vision is, and what their duties are. M. Francis expressed her gratitude for S. Baker and T. Kerstetter. While they are not leading the APDG they are the point persons. One of the problems from the development of APDG was that there was no one to provide guidance for the long term future, and now that issue is

being resolved with S. Baker and T. Kerstetter. For additional information, please contact Mary Francis either by Teams or email – [mary.k.francis@okstate.edu](mailto:mary.k.francis@okstate.edu).

S. Baker agreed to distribute information on APDG. She also mentioned that having representation from areas like Honors College, Athletics and Student Success would be fantastic, because each group of advisors plays a different and important role in the lives of our students, and having more kinds of cross fertilization of what that means for the students would be extremely helpful. She suggested having a web page as an offshoot of the Office of Student Success website. M. Francis added that in the past a Canvas page was available to all advisors, but that page may need to be updated. It was a great way to place critical information for all advisors across campus, ultimately creating a community.

#### **4. Academic Advisors' Career Development Plan – Shannon Baker**

There has been considerable discussion regarding position descriptions, as well as the Career Development Plan (CDP), which has needed significant adjustment given all the other changes that have occurred throughout the year. Most notable is the removal of teaching the orientation class as a core responsibility. That duty will become an opportunity for advisors in the colleges to take on as overload. It will only be a required assignment for advisors in Student Success. The only change for an Academic Advisor I is removing that responsibility. Changes for Academic Advisor II are removal of teaching the orientation class and assisting with various scholarship programs. Keep in mind the CDP is very broad, and the position descriptions are much more specific and tailored to the needs of individual colleges. An addendum of "should nots" portion has been added to the CDP to address the expectations of some colleges where advisors were expected to perform duties that were taking a significant amount of their time and in some cases overshadowing their core responsibilities of advising.

C. Thrasher asked for clarification with "SHOULD NOT assist with preparation of course action forms and program modifications." There are several advisors in our course program management system who build degree sheets and make changes to undergraduate degrees. K. Seuhs answered that the idea behind this was that advisors should offer thoughts on scheduling so we will not create barriers for students that someone else might not think of; however, advisors should not be in the system making any changes, crafting the schedule, submitting the program modifications and course action documents that curriculum committees do. C. Thrasher informed the group that there are advisors who are listed as the program coordinator in CourseLeaf CIM programs that are initiating all the program modifications and new programs that come through their department. It was B. Morris' understanding the plan would be changing across campus. C. Thrasher recommended altering the statement to read, "SHOULD NOT Assist with preparation of course action forms and program modifications and program proposals." S. Baker notified DSAS they should be receiving changes regarding college personnel designated for different programs. Keep in mind that in the colleges where advisors reporting to their department heads will now be reporting centrally to DSAS, and those changes will more than likely occur in May. CEAT and CAS have their dates in May when that shift is occurring. Throughout this semester, business will proceed as usual.

S. Baker also explained the changes to the pay ranges for advisors, starting with an adjustment of the minimum annual salary to \$38,000 for July 2024 then moving to \$40,000 in July of 2025 for academic advisor I. The impact is not staggering across the University at this point. To make these adjustments to \$38,000 for this July and even to increase it to \$40,000 for next year, it would help us close the gap on the median. As indicated in the CDP, the median for academic advisors is \$53,000, and very few of our advisors are at that level. HR is encouraging the University to make this change. CDP discussion will continue at the April DSAS meeting in order to receive an endorsement from DSAS that can be taken to Instruction Council for approval, followed by approval from the Council of Deans.

#### **5. Health, Vet and Law Week – Caitlin Laughlin**

C. Laughlin, Pre-Health Coordinator with the Pre Professional Academic Support office, highlighted several activities with Health, Vet and Law Week. Thursday, March 28 the Pre Professional office is offering free dental and vision screenings for all students, faculty, staff and any individual(s) considered part of the family units, in the Student Union from 10 Am to 2 pm. There is also a Let's Talk Healthcare Volunteering component on Thursday at 4:30, and eyeglass donation bins have been placed throughout campus for eyeglasses you wish to donate. Please visit the link below to view the multiple activities planned:

[https://universitycollege.okstate.edu/preprofessional/events/health\\_law\\_week/hvllwk\\_local.html](https://universitycollege.okstate.edu/preprofessional/events/health_law_week/hvllwk_local.html)

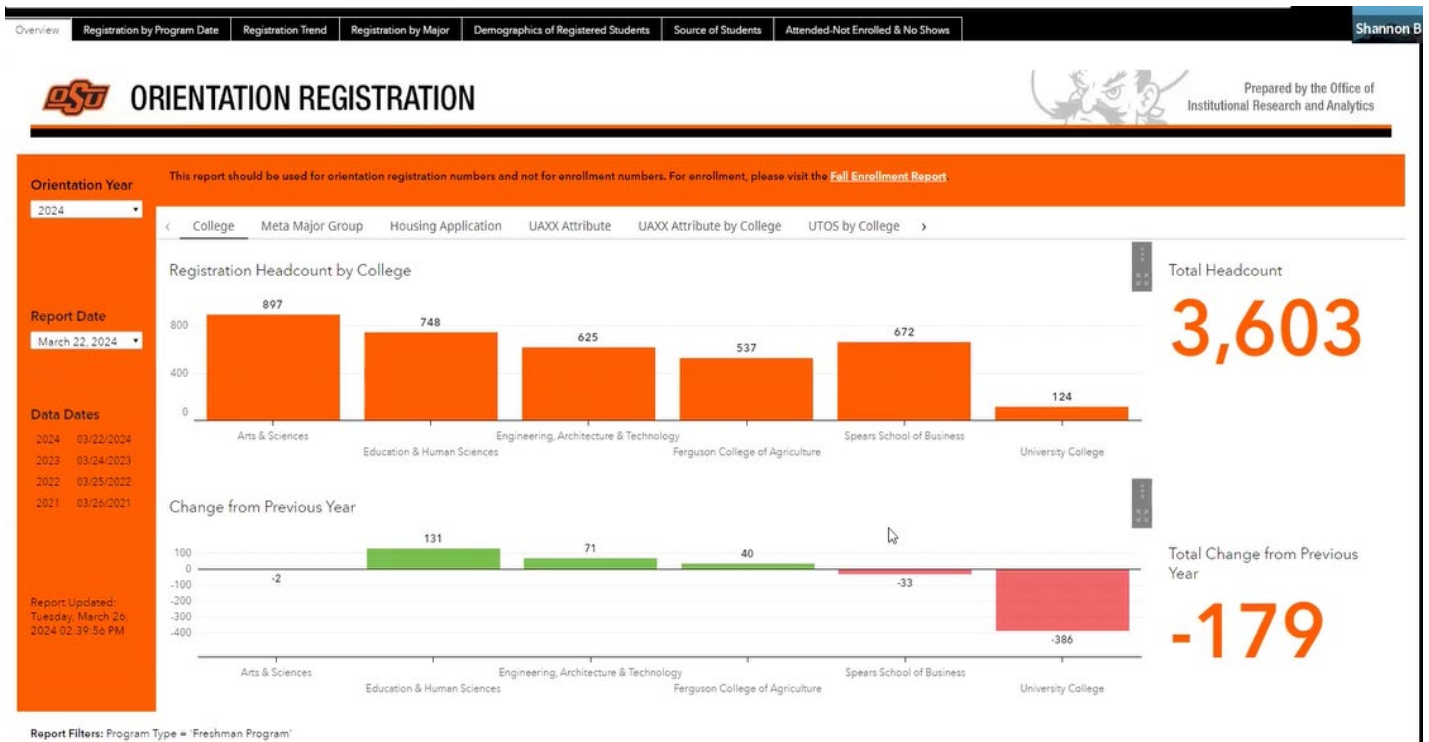
C. Laughlin also shared the Pre-Professional Instagram information for communicating their activities throughout campus:

<https://www.instagram.com/okstatepreprofessional/>

S. Baker thanked the Pre Professional team for their hard work this semester. They have been short staffed, yet they are still providing a robust array of activities for students in the next week, as well as meeting with all their students, offering excellent care, and revising their website in their spare time.

## 6. Other

- S. Baker shared the Orientation Registration dashboard created by Institutional Research and Analytics (IRA). Although the head count for each academic college may seem to relay larger student numbers, keep in mind that University College has decreased by 386 students, and those students have been absorbed by the academic colleges. With the new way of categorizing students with the creation of the Office of Student Success, University College now consists primarily of our undeclared students. The alternative admitted students are now represented in each academic college account as well. Also noted is the possibility of additional melt due to the issues with financial aid and the common app changes this year. The first-year team will be focused on giving students an excellent experience at their Orientation.



- L. Burns added that while it looks like our enrollment numbers are down, there is no major concern that we will continue to be down. IRA believes it is a little early in the cycle to anticipate the total number of students to enroll.
- N. Holmes detailed the alternative / holistic admitted students listed under the tab UAXX for attributes by college. This area displays the breakdown of alternative admits and holistic admits within each academic area. The students on this list would have been the students who, last year, would have been advised by University College.
- Linda Millis, Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid, reported their office has received about 17,000 student records now from FAFSA, and they are currently being loaded into Banner. In a 3-month period that number has increased from what we had last year in a 3-month period. However, when compared to last year at this time, we had 21,000 student records. We are seeing a higher rejection rate of those applications where students indicate something is an issue. Typically, the average rejection rate for the year is about 9% of the applications we receive. Currently, after the 3-month period, we have 22% of the applications rejected. We are discovering a significant number of problems coming to light as we load in more student records, and we are seeing more

delays. With all that being said we are still planning to package Federal Aid to our prospective students by mid-April. The continuing students' Federal Aid should be available late April / early May.

- <https://slatehr.okstate.edu/manage/login?realm=&r=/register/datawranglers/>  
L. Burns explained that IRA is creating a new opportunity for interaction with their office. This is something that other Universities have been doing for years, and something that we have discussed as well. Starting April 15<sup>th</sup> every Monday at 11 am. and every 2 weeks after that, we will be offering an open review of student success data. Current plans are to meet face to face bi-weekly on Mondays at 11am. The meetings will be recorded but not offered for virtual participation. Our goal is to have people interact with the data - ask questions, propose new ideas, and IRA will review and share that information with the advising community. The link, provided above, may be used to sign up for the data wranglers meeting. Additional information will be detailed in the IRA Newsletter. L. Burns also added that of the other schools who have implemented this open review of student success data, they all agreed that if not the top, it was one of the top ways they increased student success at their universities. People are interested in what the data is showing.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:16am

Minutes were recorded by K. Campbell