

INSTRUCTION COUNCIL

MINUTES

Thursday, January 15, 2026
126 ITLE or Zoom

<https://okstate-edu.zoom.us/j/93408932681?pwd=k7XfZJyUQZIDaBosY89x45j3PHDFfs.1>

Meeting ID: 934 0893 2681

Passcode: 097849

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

In attendance: Shannon Baker, Laurie Beets, Chad Blew, Larry Burns, Aaron Christensen, Cynda Clary, Chris Francisco (Chair), Craig Freeman, Jami Fullerton, Ty Hawkins, Ebonie Hill, Kelva Hunger, Diane Jones, James Knecht, Marlys Mason, Christine Ormsbee, Rita Peaster, Darius Prier, Carisa Ramming, Jennifer Rudd, Rebecca Sheehan, Candace Thrasher, Ashley Varnell.

Meeting was called to order at 9:02am.

1. Sub-120 hour bachelor's degree update – Chris Francisco

Francisco provided updates related to sub-120 hour bachelor's degrees, with particular focus on the ongoing development of the proposed 90-hour bachelor's degree structure. An update was provided from the most recent Council on Instruction meeting held with State Regents institutions the previous Thursday. A robust discussion occurred regarding the proposed sub-120 hour bachelor's degree framework, centered on a structure including 30 hours of general education with corresponding adjustments to other requirements. A second roll call vote was conducted, and the proposed structure failed by a vote of 13 to 11. At the time of the meeting, no alternative proposal had been formally introduced, though State Regents staff were reported to be discussing the issue with the Chancellor. Francisco noted the potential for compromise options but expressed a preference that such compromises be introduced by two-year institutions rather than by research institutions. Concerns were raised regarding the implications of ongoing delays, particularly given the State Legislature's interest in seeing the initiative completed and its potential willingness to act through legislation if higher education institutions fail to resolve the issue internally. While additional time was seen as beneficial for thoughtful policy development, it was emphasized that delays should not extend to the point where legislative action dictates program structure. The group discussed perceived objections from two-year institutions, including dissatisfaction with the difference between the 37-hour general education component in an Associate of Science degree compared to the proposed 30-hour requirement for the sub-120 hour bachelor's degree. This was described as a concern that seven hours completed at the community college level would not apply toward the sub-120 bachelor's degree requirements, creating inefficiencies for transfer students. It was noted that further nuance may exist, but clarification was limited due to limited visibility into two-year institutional discussions; Vanderslice

was identified as a key source of insight, though currently on leave. In the interim, Francisco told the group to continue preparing materials to submit the week of January 26th in case a revised structure is advanced quickly, but it is anticipated that approval of new rules by State Regents may be delayed at least one month.

The meeting included discussion regarding accreditation implications. It was noted that the structure may create challenges for AACSB-accredited programs, and Francisco acknowledged the importance of ensuring any proposed degree structure aligns with accreditation standards where relevant. Hawkins requested additional clarification regarding naming conventions for the proposed sub-120 hour degrees, including whether they would be issued as a standard Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science. Francisco responded that the likely eventual naming would be a “Bachelor’s in Applied [field],” though agreement across institutions on the exact naming remains unresolved. A previously suggested title, “Bachelor of Professional Studies,” was rejected due to its existing specific use within current institutional structures and similar concerns raised by other institutions. The group also noted existing policy language allowing OSUIT and OSU-OKC to offer Bachelor of Technology degrees, and it was emphasized that these institutions should also be permitted to offer compact workforce-oriented degrees as applicable.

The meeting further addressed anticipated policy language requiring sub-120 hour degrees to be tied directly to workforce needs, likely in response to concerns about proposals such as interdisciplinary or integrated studies models. While members generally supported the requirement that programs align with workforce needs, concerns were raised about narrow interpretations of “workforce readiness” as job skill training. Discussion emphasized that workforce readiness should also encompass critical thinking, independent problem-solving, and the ability to apply knowledge in unfamiliar contexts across a wide range of fields, including those not traditionally associated with technical training.

The group also discussed the growing expectation for program proposals to include labor market and earnings data. A preview of a draft version of a new program proposal form was referenced, indicating it would require data pulled from the Lightcast system and include specific discussion of earnings outcomes and related measures. The form is still under development, and the final requirements are not yet confirmed, though it is anticipated the new template would require substantial additional documentation. A follow-up discussion addressed how these earnings expectations might apply to certificates and micro-credentials, including “trails” and similar embedded credential structures. Francisco noted that one possible argument would be that such certificates function as embedded credentials within an existing degree pathway, potentially reducing scrutiny depending on how the proposal is evaluated. Concerns were expressed about borderline cases where only a single course might separate a credential from formal degree requirements, reinforcing the strategy of structuring certificates at 18 hours to minimize compliance risk.

2. HLC Update – Chris Francisco

Francisco provided an update regarding preparations for the upcoming Higher Learning Commission (HLC) mock visits, scheduled to occur in approximately two weeks. Chung and his team are actively coordinating the visit logistics, and the schedule is still being finalized. While final meeting times and details are not yet available, it is anticipated that finalized communications will be distributed shortly. There has been frequent coordination with Brand Management to ensure timely messaging to campus stakeholders.

The open forums associated with the mock visit were confirmed to take place on Wednesday, January 28th. Francisco stated that his understanding is that upper administration is prohibited from attending the open forums, along with Deans and Vice Presidents, while Associate Deans, Department Heads, and similar academic leaders are permitted to attend. Members were encouraged to attend at least one open forum, as strong participation would support a positive institutional representation during the mock visit process. Participants were informed that a formal communication with confirmed times and locations would be sent as soon as possible. Efforts will also be made to encourage participation, including direct outreach to Department Heads to support strong attendance and representation at the open forums. Francisco noted that the mock peer review team determines the structure of the visit and the individuals they wish to meet with, which has contributed to ongoing logistical complexity and last-minute adjustments.

The mock peer review team is expected to be on campus for approximately one and a half days, completing most scheduled activities by Thursday morning. Following their campus activities, the team will remain for additional time to meet with a subset of the OSU/A&M Board of Regents, allowing Regents to practice responding to typical accreditation questions. The visit will conclude with a brief debrief session with the UAT team, followed by a more extensive debrief in the weeks afterward. Francisco discussed progress toward completion of the institutional argument, which must be finalized by approximately the end of Spring Break. The goal is to complete the argument by the beginning of Spring Break to allow additional review time and to demonstrate readiness ahead of formal deadlines. Francisco emphasized that the institution is in the final draft phase, primarily focusing on refinement and updates.

Overall confidence was expressed that compliance requirements are currently in good standing, though Francisco noted they are still managing related correspondence. Francisco also recognized and thanked Freeman and his team for progress on the multi-campus portion of the HLC preparation, as well as Stroup and his team at CHS for their readiness efforts. A preliminary review of submitted materials had already occurred, and feedback was reported as generally positive with only two minor suggestions for improvement. Appreciation was also expressed to members who contributed course syllabi that effectively represent instructional quality and practice at the institution. The syllabi are being compiled in a shared folder with the UAT team to support documentation and evidence for the review. While representation across colleges and campuses was described as strong, additional syllabi submissions are still welcomed, particularly from areas not yet represented.

3. Curriculum

Course Action Summaries:

College of Engineering, Architecture & Technology

Ramming noted that the proposed EEM (Energy Engineering and Management) courses have been in development for approximately five years. She reported that the EEM program is now moving forward and that significant coordination had occurred with Hawkins and his team to resolve issues involving Geology.

Ramming stated that the remaining course action proposals included several prerequisite modifications and other adjustments.

Clary moved to approve, and Mason seconded. Instruction Council members approved the College of Engineering, Architecture & Technology course action summary.

Program Modifications:

Ferguson College of Agriculture

Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources in Agricultural Leadership (458)

Option deletion

- Delete option in Extension Education
- One student is currently enrolled and will be allowed to continue or change to the general option and complete extension-related coursework.
- Delete option in International Studies
- Two students are currently enrolled and will be allowed to continue or change to the general option and complete international agriculture-related coursework.
- Reason for requested action: The options are no longer viable with student interest and enrollment.

Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (026)

Option Addition

- Add option in Secondary Education
- Total credit hours: 120
- Reason for requested action: To prepare students for careers as secondary school science teachers, Career and Technical Education instructors, post-secondary faculty (vocational schools, colleges and universities), biochemists, biological technicians, and medical scientists.

Clary highlighted enthusiasm for the addition of an option within the undergraduate degree in Secondary Education, noting collaboration with the College of Education and Human Sciences. Clary indicated that a corresponding program modification from that unit would appear later in the meeting agenda. She also noted that the language included in the requested action may require minor revision to more clearly support a dual-degree opportunity (adding “to allow for a dual degree opportunity”), as the intent is for students to be able to earn both degrees. Francisco responded that he will add this language for presentation to the Council of Deans.

Master of Science in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (027)

Course requirement change

- Thesis option
 - Remove Combination of core courses and other requirements to equal 24 hours. Specify that 13 hours of core and 11 hours of electives are required.
 - Remove 2 Advanced Biochemistry 6000-level courses
 - BIOC 5120 is required within the elective hours
- Non-Thesis option
 - Remove Combination of core courses and other requirements to equal 20 hours. Specify that 15 hours of core and 15 hours of electives are required.
 - Add BIOC 5930
 - Remove 2 Advanced Biochemistry 6000-level courses
- Total credit hours will not change

- Reason for requested action: To bring course offerings up-to-date and reorganize degree requirements to improve clarity for students.

Doctor of Philosophy in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (028)

Course requirement change

- Remove duplication of BIOC 5753
- Require BIOC 5120
- Total credit hours will not change
- Reason for requested action: To bring course offerings up-to-date and reorganize degree requirements to improve clarity for students.

Doctor of Philosophy in Crop Science (056)

Degree requirement change

- Specify degree requirements for students applying to the program with a bachelor's degree.
- Students entering the program with a master's degree may apply up to 12 credit hours to the PHD with committee approval. This corrects an error that occurred in 2023.
- Total credit hours listed in the catalog will change from 48 to 60 credit hours. Students entering the program with a bachelor's degree will complete 78 credit hours.
- Reason for requested change: To correct an error in how total credit hours are listed in the catalog.

Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources in Food Science (361)

Option addition

- Add option in Business, Pre-Law
- Total credit hours: 120
- Reason for requested action: To provide a pathway for students with an interest in starting their own food businesses, direct-marketing food products to consumers, and sales/marketing of food products to consumers, or pursuing a law degree to work for major food industry companies or practice in firms with increased knowledge of the food industry. This will attract students who can easily transition to the workforce or open their own food businesses.
- Add option in General
- Total credit hours:
- Reason for requested action: To provide a pathway for students with a general food science interest in a variety of areas. This will attract students who can easily transition to the workforce in the food industry.

Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources in Horticulture (128)

Course requirement change

- Add HORT 1011, HORT 3011, and HORT 4011
- Remove 3 hours from other areas of the degree requirements
 - Horticultural Food Safety option: Select from HORT 4143 or HORT 4233
 - Horticultural Business option: Reduce HORT or Ferguson College of Agriculture courses from 5 to 2 credit hours

- Horticultural Science option: Reduce related courses from 12 to 9 credit hours from Ferguson College of Agriculture
- Landscape Management option: Select hours from AGECE 3323/AGECE 3423/AGECE 3713/LSB 3213, MGMT 3013, and MKTG 3213
- Public Horticulture option: Reduce PBIO or Ferguson College of Agriculture courses from 5 to 2 credit hours
- Turf Management option: Remove 4 hours of MGMT or Ferguson College of Agriculture courses and add 1 credit hour of electives
- Urban Horticulture option: Reduce courses from Ferguson College of Agriculture from 12 to 9 credit hours
- Total credit hours will not change
- Reason for requested action: To advance career preparedness across the curriculum.

Doctor of Philosophy in Soil Science (187)

Degree requirement change

- Specify degree requirements for students applying to the program with a bachelor's degree.
- Students entering the program with a master's degree may apply up to 12 credit hours to the PHD with committee approval.
- Total credit hours will not change for students entering the program with a master's degree. Students entering the program with a bachelor's degree will complete 78 credit hours.
- Reason for requested change: To be more competitive with similar programs.

Freeman moved to approve, and Hawkins seconded. Instruction Council members approved the Ferguson College of Agriculture program modifications.

College of Arts and Sciences

Professional Science Masters in Geoscience (310)

Program suspension

- Effective immediately
- Program will be reinstated or deleted within three years
- Reason for requested action: Program needs to be reorganized and undergo a change in advertising and recruitment strategy to attract a wider applicant pool.

Master of Music in Music (408)

Option in Applied Music

- Remove MUSI 5890, MUSI 5733, MUSI 5842
- Add focused tracks that require 10 credit hours
- Total credit hours will not change
- Reason for requested action: Replacing unnecessary pedagogy courses with courses that will serve as a greater benefit to students.

Bachelor of Science in Physics (161)

Option in Applied Physics

- Remove CHEM 1515
- Add 5 hours of Math and/or Science
- Add course equivalents to the required course list
- Total credit hours will not change
- Reason for requested action: Adding flexibility to degree requirements to attract students to add the program as a second major.

Hawkins explained that student agency and student-centered program design were noted as important drivers behind proposed changes in Physics at the undergraduate level. In particular, the department is adjusting the overall degree structure and revisiting mathematics requirements associated with the Applied Physics track. Hawkins indicated that additional changes to Applied Physics-related programs may follow, reflecting a broader effort for Physics to reconsider how it supports undergraduate student recruitment, retention, and graduation. Francisco expressed appreciation for the work underway in Physics, particularly efforts focused on strengthening undergraduate outcomes.

Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology (178)

Program name change

- Change program name from Psychology to Psychological Sciences

Option name change

- Change option name from Experimental Psychology to Experimental

CIP code change

- Change CIP code from 42.0101 (General Psychology) to 42.2799 (Research and Experimental Psychology)
- Reason for requested change: Updating to be consistent with recommendations from the American Psychological Association.

These changes involve realignment with relevant Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes, as well as broader efforts to ensure external audiences understand the identity and positioning of the discipline. It was also noted that Psychology is scheduled for Academic Program Review (APR) during the year, which provides additional context for these modifications.

A question was raised regarding the proposed CIP code change—specifically whether the change would create issues within Banner or other institutional reporting systems. Thrasher clarified that Banner issues will be avoided because of the program name change. Burns expressed concerns that the change might complicate comparative reporting, particularly if the revised CIP code results in different benchmarking assumptions or outcomes compared to the prior classification. It was implied that the department may need to account for these implications in external reporting and program positioning.

Sheehan moved to approve, and Freeman seconded. Instruction Council members approved the College of Arts and Sciences program modifications.

College of Education and Human Sciences

Undergraduate Certificate in Aging, Disability, and Community Living (New)

New certificate request

- Delivery method: Traditional
- Total credit hours: 18
- Reason for requested action: To prepare students with the foundational knowledge and applied skills needed to support individuals and families across the lifespan, particularly those navigating the challenges of aging and disability.

Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (074)

Option addition

- Add option in Special Education
- Total credit hours: 124
- Reason for requested action: To prepare teachers to work in special and elementary education settings. The option will fulfill a persistent need for more special education teachers while also offering more employment options for graduates.

Prier explained that this will create a dual-certification pathway for students to earn both Elementary Education certification and Special Education certification.

Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Science (094)

Option in Family and Consumer Sciences Education

Course requirement change

- Remove 3 hours of courses designated (S)
- Add HDFS 2113 as a required (S) course
- Remove HDFS 1112
- Add HDFS 1113
- Remove DM 2913 or DM 2204
- Add HDFS 2123
- Add HDFS 4433 as an alternative to EDTC 3123
- Total credit hours will decrease from 122 to 120
- Reason for requested action: Updating requirements based on feedback from program alumni and to better prepare students interested in cooperative extension job opportunities.

Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education (182)

Option in Science

- Add a Biochemistry track that aligns with the Biochemistry and Molecular Biology: Secondary Education program
- Reason for requested action: To allow students to complete professional education courses that lead to certification in secondary chemistry.

Course requirement change

- Remove 6 hours of (H) and require 3 hours of (H) and 3 hours of (DH)
- Remove PHIL 3933
- Change college/departmental electives from 0-11 hours to 4-12 hours
- Remove SMED 4023 and SMED 4723
- Add CIED 4724

- Total credit hours will not change
- Reason for requested action: To provide a pathway for students to obtain a dual degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology: Secondary Education.

Master of Arts in Social Foundations of Education (529)

Course requirement change

- Remove SCFD 5873
- Reduce Research and Inquiry courses from 9 to 6 credit hours
- Require SCFD 5913
- Total credit hours will decrease from 36 to 30 hours
- Reason for requested action: To be more competitive with similar programs.

Degree requirement change

- Add Creative Component track
- Total credit hours: 30
- Reason for requested action: Graduate College recommended separate tracks for thesis/non-thesis options.

Following the presentation, Clary inquired about the first certificate program, specifically whether the certificate is structured to be embedded within existing degree programs (minimizing additional hours) or whether it would generally require students to take extra coursework beyond their major requirements. Prier responded that his expectation is that the certificate will fit within existing programs by leveraging current coursework where appropriate, allowing students to integrate the certificate into their degree plans without significant excess credit accumulation.

Freeman moved to approve, and Clary seconded. Instruction Council members approved the College of Education and Human Sciences program modifications.

College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology Bachelor of Science in Construction Management (New)

New program request

- Delivery method: Electronic
- Total credit hours: 123
- Reason for requested action: To provide access to rural Oklahomans and former military, an online degree program can provide opportunities for students to earn a degree and impact their local communities.

Francisco stated that he will mention to the OSU/A&M Board of Regents that this program is specifically for people with associate's degrees to have an opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree.

Minor in Energy Engineering and Management (New)

New minor request

- Total credit hours: 15
- Reason for requested action: To provide students with a competitive advantage in a rapidly evolving workforce and support Oklahoma's economic resilience through energy diversification.

During discussion of the Energy Engineering and Management minor, concerns were raised about potential confusion created by program naming conventions and the overlap of “Energy Engineering” terminology across existing academic areas (including energy-related accounting and management programs). Questions were also raised about whether the minor structure was selected in part to remain within 15 credit hours (and therefore avoid issues related to financial aid eligibility or threshold requirements), and whether a certificate model had been considered instead. It was noted that this type of discussion had occurred previously in other units and that program design choices may reflect both curricular strategy and compliance considerations.

Further discussion focused on prerequisites within the proposed minor structure. Clary noted that the documentation helpfully identified prerequisites for a key course (referenced as the 4213 course) and asked whether the listed prerequisite courses themselves had additional prerequisite chains that would increase the total number of courses required before students could realistically access the capstone-level coursework. It was suggested that if multiple layers of prerequisites were required, making those steps explicit could improve transparency and potentially support a different credential structure (such as a certificate) by acknowledging the full pathway students must complete.

Following this discussion, the group agreed to table the minor in Energy Engineering and Management to allow for additional conversation and clarification, particularly regarding naming, overlap with existing programs, and prerequisite sequencing.

Master of Science in Engineering Technology (519)

Option in Fire Safety and Explosion Protection

- Switching FEMP/IEM/FSEP courses
- Total credit hours will not change
- Reason for requested action: Listing the FSEP course first is more appropriate for Engineering Technology students.

Master of Science in Fire and Emergency Management Administration (414)

Course requirement change

- Remove FEMP 5113 and FEMP 5123
- Add FEMP 5133 and FEMP 5143
- Remove FEMP 5653 as an alternative to FEMP 5023 and FEMP 6013 (Thesis option)
- Remove FEMP 5013 (Non-Thesis option)
- Add 12 hours of FEMP coursework to Non-Thesis option
- Add course-work only and creative component tracks to the Non-Thesis option
- Total credit hours will not change
- Reason for requested action: To facilitate the need for master’s students to have more applied management knowledge and skills. To provide additional pathways for students earning the degree through the Non-Thesis option.

Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology in Fire Protection and Safety Engineering Technology (079)

CIP code change

- Change CIP code from 43.0201 (Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting and Related Protective Services – Fire Protection – Fire Prevention and Safety Technology/Technician) to 15.9999 (Engineering/Engineering-Related Technologies/Technicians)
- Reason for requested change: Updating CIP code to better fit the purpose of the program.

A question was raised regarding whether the CIP code change would create Banner or reporting issues. It was noted that similar updates had been made previously, and the modification was considered defensible based on the program's positioning as more aligned with STEM than with Homeland Security.

Minor in Petroleum Engineering

Change to existing minor

- Remove GEOL 4323
- Add EEM 4123
- Total credit hours will not change
- Reason for requested action: Adding a new EEM course will give students a better learning experience and preparation for the industry.

Freeman moved to approve, and Clary seconded. Instruction Council members approved the College of Engineering, Architecture & Technology program modifications with the exception of the new program request for a Minor in Energy Engineering and Management, which will be tabled for further discussion.

Spears School of Business

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in Economics (445)

Course requirement change

- Remove ECON 3613
- Increase upper-division ECON courses by 3 credit hours
- Total credit hours will not change
- Reason for requested action: ECON 3613 is not necessary for the degree program.

Embedded Undergraduate Certificate in Finance: Commodity Trading and Risk Management (New)

New certificate request

- Embedded in the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in Finance (446)
- Delivery method: Traditional
- Total credit hours: 18
- Reason for requested action: To prepare students for dynamic careers in the energy and commodities sectors by providing a strong foundation in the principles, practices, and technologies that drive modern commodity markets.

Graduate Certificate in Marketing Analytics (494)

Program deletion

- No students are currently enrolled
- To be effective immediately

- Reason for requested action: Content from this graduate certificate has been incorporated into the Graduate Certificate in Business Analytics and Data Science

Master of Science in Quantitative Finance (431)

Course requirement change

- Add FIN 5343 as a required course
- Decrease electives from 12 to 9 credit hours
- Total credit hours will not change
- Reason for requested action: Updating program requirements to remain competitive with similar programs.

During discussion, Clary inquired about the implications of an embedded certificate designation, particularly whether students outside the embedded major (such as those who change majors after completing prerequisites) would remain eligible to earn the certificate. In response, Francisco clarified that State Regents policy requires institutions to identify whether a certificate is embedded and, if so, to specify the program in which it is embedded. It was noted that this designation is primarily associated with reporting and recordkeeping, and Francisco indicated that the operational impact on eligibility may depend on policy interpretation and how embedded credentials are administered.

Additional context was provided indicating that State Regents policy language has shifted in recent years and continues to evolve. Francisco noted the need to confirm the most current policy interpretation and definitions, including how embedded certificates are treated relative to standalone certificates. It was suggested that one of the key practical differences may relate to APR requirements: a standalone certificate may require its own independent APR, while embedded certificates may be reviewed as part of the APR for the associated degree program. It was further noted that internal APR and certificate submission forms require the institution to list embedded credentials and associated program information.

Hawkins moved to approve, and Freeman seconded. Instruction Council members approved the Spears School of Business program modifications.

Veterinary Medicine

Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (400)

Course requirement change

- Remove VCS 7342 as a core rotation and move it to electives
- Total credit hours will not change
- Reason for requested action: No longer able to offer this rotation to all students in the program.

Rudd provided background that several years ago the college updated its fourth-year clinical program to include a new ophthalmology core rotation required of all veterinary students. This requirement was described as academically appropriate given the universal relevance of ocular health in veterinary practice. However, the rotation is highly dependent on the availability of specialist faculty for instruction and supervision.

Rudd explained that staffing capacity in veterinary ophthalmology can fluctuate as specialists join or leave the institution. During the past year, CVM lost one veterinary ophthalmologist, resulting in reduced instructional capacity. While the ophthalmology service remains operational, it can no longer

accommodate every veterinary student in a required rotation format. As a result, the proposed modification shifts the ophthalmology course from a required core rotation to an elective rotation. Rudd emphasized that the change does not alter fourth-year credit hour totals; rather, it is a restructuring intended to prevent over-enrollment beyond caseload volume and available instructional supervision. Rudd noted that ophthalmology is expected to remain a highly enrolled elective and affirmed that ophthalmology instruction will continue as an important component of clinical training.

Freeman moved to approve, and Clary seconded. Instruction Council members approved the College of Veterinary Medicine program modifications.

4. Other

State Regents Policy Changes and Updates

Discussion focused on policy changes in progress at the State Regents level related to new program proposals and the protest process. Francisco reported attending a State Regents committee meeting the previous day, during which the discussion centered on revisions to the procedures governing letters of intent (LOIs), full program proposals, and the associated protest timelines and processes. Francisco noted that the committee reached a tentative consensus, though the proposed changes remain preliminary and must still proceed through additional governance bodies, including the Council on Instruction, the Council of Presidents, and the State Regents, before becoming final.

Francisco reviewed the current two-step program approval process, which includes submission of an LOI followed by a full program proposal. Under the current policy structure, institutions have the opportunity to protest at two points—both after the LOI and again after the full proposal—each with a 14-day protest window. The proposed plan is to shorten the LOI response period to seven days, shifting it away from a formal protest framework and toward an initial “notification and conversation” period. Francisco noted that protesting at the LOI stage has historically been difficult due to limited proposal detail, making it challenging to make a substantive case without access to a full program design.

Under the revised model being discussed, the full program proposal protest period would be extended to 21 days, providing institutions more time for internal review and decision-making. Francisco indicated that this longer window would better support internal consultation processes required to determine whether a protest is warranted, including the need to engage relevant academic units, coordinate with the Provost, and obtain the President’s formal approval and signature on any protest submission. The revised timeline is intended to provide adequate time for the necessary internal governance and administrative routing.

Francisco also noted that the updated proposal process will require additional supporting information, including a clearer inventory of similar programs currently offered within the state and evidence of program demand. It was emphasized that these requirements largely reflect practices institutions already follow, especially for specialized or niche program areas where questions of market saturation and duplication are more likely. In contrast, broad foundational programs (e.g., standard Arts and Sciences programs) rarely prompt protest activity, given their widespread presence at comprehensive universities.

Francisco also noted that the same State Regents policy document includes standards for proposing sub-120 hour bachelor’s degrees, including requirements that programs demonstrate alignment with

workforce needs and maintain appropriate academic rigor—elements also expected to receive attention during accreditation review processes such as HLC.

A tentative implementation timeline was shared, with Francisco indicating these changes may take effect beginning with the new fiscal year, though final adoption depends on State Regents governance review. Francisco committed to providing updates once the revised policy advances through Council on Instruction and is formally approved.

A question was raised regarding a recently circulated LOI for a Mechanical Engineering program and whether protest action might be anticipated. Francisco acknowledged that the LOI had also drawn their attention but explained that the State Regents have modified protest rules such that institutions are no longer permitted to protest on the basis that another institution lacks the necessary resources or capacity to operate the program. Instead, protests must be grounded primarily in unnecessary duplication, which is difficult to argue successfully in areas designated as high-demand or included on the critical occupations list, where statewide workforce need is significant.

Francisco also reported discussion at the State Regents level regarding concern over the growing number of doctoral program proposals statewide, particularly from regional institutions. As a result, State Regents are considering reinstating a requirement for external review of new doctoral program proposals. Historically, this process involved State Regents coordinating selection of two external evaluators and requiring payment of \$1,000 per evaluator to review the proposed program. Francisco noted prior concerns with this model, including past instances in which program ideas were effectively “borrowed” after external reviewers gained access to proposals.

Under the revised proposal now under consideration, institutions would still be required to obtain reviews from two independent external evaluators, but the proposing institution would be responsible for identifying and coordinating with those reviewers rather than State Regents managing the selection. Concern was expressed that this approach could reduce the independent value of reviews, as institutions may naturally select evaluators likely to provide favorable feedback. However, it was noted that the State Regents view the reviews as a mechanism to increase confidence that proposed doctoral programs are reasonable and appropriately designed.

Francisco advised the group to anticipate that if the external review requirement is reinstated, it may add time and procedural steps to doctoral program development, including identification of external reviewers with no clear connection to OSU. Francisco noted that payment practices for evaluators would be determined at the institutional level and that the requirement would apply only to new doctoral proposals moving forward, with no retroactive effect. Implementation was projected as potentially appearing on a future State Regents agenda, possibly as early as April but more likely later in the year, with an anticipated effective timeline for the next fiscal year.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:06am.

Minutes were recorded by Ashley Varnell.