

## INSTRUCTION COUNCIL

### MINUTES

Thursday, October 16, 2025  
126 ITLE or Zoom

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

Meeting ID: 934 0893 2681

Passcode: 097849

**9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.**

In attendance: Laurie Beets, Chad Blew, Larry Burns, Aaron Christensen, Cynda Clary, Chris Francisco (Chair), Craig Freeman, Richard Frohock, Jami Fullerton, Jeff Hartman, Ty Hawkins, Kelva Hunger, Diane Jones, James Knecht, Matt Lovern, Marlys Mason, Christine Ormsbee, Rita Peaster, Carisa Ramming, Adrienne Sanogo, Candace Thrasher, Ronna Vanderslice, Ashley Varnell, and Robin Wilson.

Meeting was called to order at 9:31am.

#### **Update on Legal Changes to Aid for Undocumented Students – Chad Blew and Rita Peaster**

Francisco invited Blew and Peaster to provide a follow-up update regarding undocumented students. Following the University's recent policy review, it was determined that DACA students who possess a Real ID are considered to have legal presence in Oklahoma. As a result, the University has created a new "LP" (Legally Present) status code in the student system to reflect this classification. Students coded as LP are now eligible for reinstatement of their out-of-state tuition waivers and may also receive institutional and Foundation-funded aid, including cash scholarships and tuition waivers. However, these students remain ineligible for federal or state financial aid programs.

As of the most recent update, approximately eight DACA students have successfully had their waivers reinstated under this policy. When scholarship committees review applicants, students listed with the LP designation may be awarded institutional or Foundation aid, provided that selection is not based on citizenship status.

Francisco and other members expressed appreciation for the clarification and noted that this change represents good news for affected students.

Thrasher noted that two students have petitioned for a retroactive drop refund (with one more in process) and that these requests are being expedited.

Clary asked Blew to prepare a brief written statement summarizing the update so it can be shared with college scholarship committees, ensuring consistency in understanding and implementation. Blew confirmed that Rob Lofton is preparing this communication and expects to distribute it in the coming weeks. Francisco closed the discussion by thanking Peaster, Blew, and their teams for their work in

supporting students affected by these policy changes and for their coordination across University offices.

### **1. The Case of the Disappearing Friday Classes – Chris Francisco**

Francisco explained that several recent blended/hybrid course modification requests have raised concerns. A noticeable trend has emerged in which instructors request to hold Monday/Wednesday in-person classes and conduct Friday sessions online. Francisco noted that while some of these requests included clear pedagogical justifications, others lacked sufficient explanation, appearing instead to be based on convenience rather than instructional need. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that online activities are pedagogically equivalent to in-person learning, rather than serving as an inferior replacement for classroom time. He also expressed concern about accreditation implications, as certain blended/hybrid syllabi may not meet seat-time and instructional engagement requirements if Friday activities are primarily homework assignments.

During discussion, several members agreed that online or blended/hybrid formats can be effective when used intentionally, but many of the current proposals lack clear rationale. It was noted that requests disproportionately designate Fridays as online days, which raises questions about potential shifts toward a de facto four-day campus schedule. Francisco cautioned against allowing this trend to develop informally, noting that the President and Regents would not support a move away from a five-day instructional week.

Members also discussed possible explanations for the pattern, including low Friday attendance, student work schedules, student attendance at tutoring labs, and evolving pedagogical approaches such as flipped classrooms. However, there was consensus that a genuine flipped-classroom model requires active in-class engagement—not simply online discussion posts or homework assignments. Faculty were urged to provide detailed pedagogical reasoning for blended/hybrid scheduling proposals and to ensure academic rigor remains consistent across modalities.

Concerns were also raised about space utilization and public perception. Underused classrooms and laboratories on Fridays could lead to negative impressions among donors and visitors, particularly when campus tours or meetings reveal empty facilities. Francisco shared an example of a major donor who noticed absent personnel on a Friday visit, underscoring the importance of visible engagement on campus.

The discussion also touched on campus culture and student behavior, including concerns that reducing Friday instruction could exacerbate weekend party culture and conflict with the University's residential-campus identity.

Francisco concluded by reiterating that blended/hybrid courses are welcome when pedagogically justified, but proposals must be clearly designed, well-documented, and consistent with accreditation standards. He encouraged deans and department heads to review such requests carefully and ensure thoughtful consideration before approval.

### **2. Low Enrollment Timetable – Chris Francisco**

Francisco provided an update on the low enrollment timetable and related communication processes. He shared that he discussed the matter with the Council of Deans and distributed detailed information to associate deans. The topic had also surfaced at a recent Faculty Council meeting, where several faculty members expressed frustration about not knowing the deadline for colleges to submit low-enrollment exception requests. Francisco clarified that the deadline is November 24 but emphasized

that this information is primarily relevant to associate deans—not individual faculty members—since colleges typically establish earlier internal deadlines for gathering and reviewing course data before submitting it to Academic Affairs. He further explained that while faculty input is valuable, the November 24 timeline for exception requests is an administrative process that involves college-level review and justification. Francisco reassured the group that he will work to provide timely feedback on submissions, ideally by December 1, and that he will attempt to review and return approvals as quickly as possible during Thanksgiving week.

In discussing the broader purpose of the low-enrollment review, Francisco emphasized that the goal is not simply to cancel courses but to prompt strategic conversations about course scheduling, enrollment patterns, and faculty resource allocation. Colleges are encouraged to analyze historical fill rates, student demand, and curricular needs when planning future course rotations. He noted that this process is meant to foster proactive scheduling decisions and ensure efficient use of instructional resources rather than impose punitive actions.

Francisco commended colleges for initiating early conversations with department heads regarding low-enrollment courses, which helps avoid last-minute cancellations and ensures thoughtful planning. They emphasized the importance of maintaining transparency and consistency in communicating expectations to faculty while reinforcing that this initiative is part of a long-term effort to align course offerings with student needs and institutional capacity.

In response to a question regarding the spreadsheets used for reviewing low-enrollment classes, Francisco clarified that his office did not distribute the spreadsheets but that colleges pulled them from ePrint. Burns added that updated data have been integrated into the Course Roster Report to allow colleges to review their enrollments and make informed decisions.

The group agreed that continued collaboration, clear communication, and early intervention are essential to effectively managing low-enrollment sections and supporting student success through efficient scheduling practices.

### 3. Curriculum

#### **Course Action Summaries:**

##### **Ferguson College of Agriculture**

These changes are a result of a major curriculum review. Discussion included tabling two Agricultural Leadership courses (AGLE 4403 and 5803 to have further conversations with CAS and History) and two Animal Science courses (ANSI 4143 and 5143, as ANSI 5143 is already in the course inventory).

**Freeman moved to approve, and Hawkins seconded. Instruction Council members approved the Ferguson College of Agriculture course action summary with the exception of AGLE 4403 and 5803 and ANSI 4143 and 5143.**

##### **Spears School of Business**

Discussion included that the ECON changes primarily involve prerequisite adjustments to ensure students complete the required mathematics course before enrolling in advanced ECON classes. Since one prerequisite still needed revision and since one proposed course action included a number/title/description change and warrants further discussion with the Registrar's Office, the group agreed to table all undergraduate ECON actions.

**Hawkins moved to approve, and Clary seconded. Instruction Council members approved the Spears School of Business course action summary with the exception of the undergraduate ECON course actions (ECON 3113, 3123, 3213, 3703, 3713, 4113).**

**Center for Health Sciences**

This is a revision of a Biomedical Sciences course to increase credit hours from two to three and add pharmacology components to the curriculum.

**Freeman moved to approve, and Hawkins seconded. Instruction Council members approved the Center for Health Sciences course action summary.**

**College of Engineering, Architecture & Technology**

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

**College of Veterinary Medicine**

Wilson presented updates to the clinical year (fourth year) curriculum of the program. Most of the proposed changes involve course title updates to align with the discontinuation of prior emphasis tracks and to reflect current course offerings. Additionally, several new clinical courses were proposed to accommodate recently hired clinicians, including specialists in dermatology, equine ambulatory services, and neurology. Wilson noted that the fourth-year curriculum is closely tied to the expertise of current hospital clinicians, and these updates ensure that the course inventory accurately represents current instructional and clinical practice.

**Clary moved to approve, and Mason seconded. Instruction Council members approved the College of Veterinary Medicine course action summary.**

**Program Modifications:**

None

**4. Other**

Meeting was adjourned at 10:12am.

Minutes were recorded by Ashley Varnell.