

INSTRUCTION COUNCIL

MINUTES

Thursday, August 21, 2025
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, Stephen Clarke, Cynda Clary, Chris Francisco (Chair), Craig Freeman, Richard Frohock, Jami Fullerton, Ty Hawkins, Kelva Hunger, James Knecht, Marlys Mason, Christine Ormsbee, Rita Peaster, Carisa Ramming, Jennifer Rudd, Candace Thrasher, Ronna Vanderslice, Ashley Varnell.

Meeting was called to order at 9:01am.

1. Associate Deans' wish lists for lower-division courses and upper-division service courses – Chris Francisco

- In what courses do we need more or less capacity?
- For what courses should we be exploring additional support?
- What new courses should we think about offering, or are any obsolete?

Francisco led a broad planning discussion on current and future course capacity, support needs, and potential new or obsolete offerings. The conversation focused on enrollment trends, class sizes, waitlists, and planning tools.

- Enrollment Data and Advising
 - Mason and Clary discussed how student enrollment data is still in flux as registration continues and how advisors play a critical role in identifying student needs
 - Early analysis of incoming credits is essential to anticipate demand for subsequent courses
- Class Sizes and Capacity
 - Fullerton raised concerns about graduate seminars becoming too large, which requires a change in how these courses are taught
 - Mason spoke to how Spears works to manage class sizes for accreditation purposes
 - Ramming discussed how some departments added sections late due to full courses and increased freshman enrollment, which was a challenge
 - Mason requested clearer guidelines on optimal class sizes, as classes are expanding and colleges need to be mindful of efficiency and ratios

- Burns contributed that national rankings consider undergraduate classes over 50 as “large” and over 60 as “extremely large”
- Clary flagged space constraints as a growing concern if course demand continues to rise
- Francisco asked the group if cancelling small courses was helpful or not
 - Clary mentioned not necessarily for departments that are extremely specialized and would like conversations about how small is too small
 - Fullerton suggested retaining small sections for late enrollers
 - Ramming said that it was a good process, although difficult at the time; challenges were with specialized research faculty and openings to teach freshman classes after their grad classes were cancelled
- Waitlists
 - Students are often reluctant to join waitlists, and many join multiple lists, making projections unreliable
 - Manual management is required, particularly to prioritize students near graduation
 - Suggestions included cultural shifts (encouraging earlier registration, bursar payment timing) and proactive communication by graduate coordinators, who can be helpful with projecting enrollment
- Predictive Planning and Analytics
 - Hawkins expressed that early, accurate demand projections are critical for budgeting and scheduling, especially with regards to GenEd designations and operationalizing them more effectively
 - He mentioned improving courses with poorer enrollment and finding a solution for courses with higher enrollment that does not include just creating more sections
 - Francisco mentioned that this will need to be considered for the trails too (determine demand and where more capacity will be needed), but there are a lot of unknowns
 - Ideas included:
 - Decoupling lecture/lab courses for schedule flexibility (Biology was specifically mentioned)
 - Peaster mentioned using degree audits to map course needs, but Burns informed that this is not scalable without contracting external support, which is costly
 - Clary discussed adding curricular analytics during Academic Program Review Training to not only address what courses need to be taken during certain years to progress through the program, but also think about if the courses have enough sections/seats or if more capacity is needed
 - Francisco added that good undergrad program directors know this information and can answer these questions, but for the rest of the unit, it is helpful to see these analytics diagrammed
 - Mason inquired about best practices for scheduling that other institutions are using and Francisco answered:
 - Pre-assigned schedules for first-year students
 - Scheduling software for room optimization, though such tools may remove freedoms
- Additional Issues Raised

- Housing capacity was stable this year due to early contracts for 200 beds off-campus and caps on returning students. Advisors were essential through this process, as they are often the first line of communication for students. Francisco added that Mike Hunsucker was an asset in his role as Interim Director of Housing through these discussions/planning
- Honors and trail courses were discussed, with interest in developing flexible “add-on” models for core, foundational, and trail courses
- Francisco mentioned that Honors will be discussed at the next Council of Deans meeting, as it is getting large
- Clary inquired about deadlines for spring courses and when more information will be requested; Francisco answered that it will be later in the semester once everyone has had a chance to enroll
- Francisco will revisit these discussions later in the semester, once enrollment data is more complete and after advising staff have provided additional input

2. Associate Deans' wish lists for OSRHE – Chris Francisco

- **What suggestions would you have for OSRHE to make processes better or fairer?**

Francisco and Mendez will meet with Joel Kendall, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs (OSRHE), in mid-September. Francisco invited input on areas where OSRHE processes could be improved or streamlined, as well as potential collaborative projects that he can take to Joel during their meeting.

- Data Integration
 - Burns emphasized the need for a K–12 to higher education longitudinal data system. Despite repeated requests over eight years, OSRHE continues to state that systems do not connect. However, Tulsa has made progress in this area, offering hope for broader adoption
- Curricular Review and Approvals
 - Cynda requested faster review timelines for substantive degree program changes
 - Mason agreed, noting that missing catalog deadlines creates long delays
 - Francisco added that mismatched approval processes between the OSU/A&M Board and OSRHE further slows progress. He also noted inefficiencies in reporting, such as having to submit separate smart sheet forms for each APR/low-productivity report instead of a consolidated packet, which requires earlier deadlines from the group
- Regent Communication and Planning
 - Hawkins requested a comprehensive list of Regent actions and goals

3. Curriculum

Course Action Summaries:

N/A

Program Modifications:

N/A

4. Other

Curriculum Summaries

Hawkins requested clarity for the timeline for the curriculum summaries. Francisco confirmed that planned curriculum documents for each college (for the OSU/A&M Board of Regents) are due September 15 and he will provide headings as guidance. He clarified for the group that colleges should outline big-picture curricular goals, new programs/certificates under development, and key issues identified in APRs. Francisco stressed that the goal is to help the Board understand the broader strategic direction for what each college is trying to accomplish. Clary asked whether co-curricular projects should be included, and Francisco confirmed that they should. Mason clarified that submissions should effectively summarize each college's strategic curricular plan. Francisco will send template headings to Burns to be used for the submissions.

Degree Works Update

Peaster's team had a meeting with DSAS members and college certification specialists to gain a better understanding of the issues in Degree Works and find an ideal way to architect the GenEd block with the new requirements. The intent of the GenEd block design was to minimize exceptions, but it is not functioning as expected in real student scenarios. Peaster emphasized the importance of transparency and noted that the team is currently testing potential fixes to improve the program. Implementation will be done through a gradual roll-out, with collaboration across college teams. A newer version of Degree Works is also being tested, which operates differently than the current system.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:52am.

Minutes were recorded by Ashley Varnell.