INSTRUCTION COUNCIL

MINUTES

Thursday, July 16, 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, Dani Bellmer, Chad Blew, Larry Burns, Aaron Christensen, Rachel Eng, Chris Francisco (Chair), Craig Freeman, Richard Frohock, Jami Fullerton, Ty Hawkins, Kelva Hunger, Diane Jones, James Knecht, Marlys Mason, Christine Ormsbee, Rita Peaster, Darius Prier, Carisa Ramming, Jennifer Rudd, Paola Sainz-Sujet, Rebecca Sheehan, Ronna Vanderslice, Ashley Varnell, Elisabeth Walker.

Meeting was called to order at 9:01am.

1. **DHS regulations affecting international students – Jami Fullerton and Elisabeth Walker**
   Elisabeth Walker, Director of International Students and Scholars, provided an update on a pending federal immigration regulation that would significantly change requirements for international students and exchange visitors in F-1 and J-1 status. The proposed rule, originally published in the Federal Register in 2005 and now in the final stages of approval, is expected to be implemented with only minor changes from the proposed version. Walker explained that the International Students and Scholars office has prepared guidance based on the proposed rule and will update campus resources once the final regulation is published.
   Walker explained that the most significant change would replace the current "duration of status" admission for F-1 and J-1 students with a fixed period of authorized stay, generally not exceeding four years. While universities would continue determining the expected length of academic programs and issuing immigration documents accordingly, students whose programs extend beyond four years—particularly doctoral students—would likely be required to apply directly to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for extensions rather than receiving institutional approval. This new process would introduce federal review, application fees, and processing times that are not currently required for program extensions or changes in educational level.
   The discussion highlighted several additional restrictions included in the proposed rule. International students would no longer be permitted to pursue another academic program at the same or a lower educational level after completing a degree. For example, students completing a master's degree would not be permitted to begin a second master's program on the same immigration status, regardless of the field of study, but could continue to a doctoral program. Participants discussed several scenarios in which this limitation could affect current academic pathways, including students wishing to earn additional credentials or those leaving a doctoral program and seeking to complete only a master's degree. Walker

noted that while academic policies may still permit these actions, immigration regulations may no longer allow corresponding changes to the student's immigration record.
Questions were also raised regarding reverse matriculation and transfer students. Walker clarified that immigration restrictions apply to the educational level reflected on the student's Form I-20 rather than institutional credit transfers. Therefore, students transferring from a community college to OSU could still complete associate degree requirements after transferring, provided the associate degree is not the educational objective listed on the immigration document.
The group discussed the proposed one-year restriction on undergraduate students changing majors or transferring institutions after entering the United States. Under the proposed regulation, undergraduate F-1 students would be required to complete one academic year before changing majors or transferring to another institution. Walker explained that this provision is intended to prevent students from entering the United States using admission from one institution before immediately transferring elsewhere. Members discussed how this requirement could affect admissions processes, academic advising, and degree planning. While students could likely begin taking coursework toward a future major, immigration records would need to remain consistent with the approved program until the one-year requirement had been satisfied. Additional coordination among Admissions, Student Success, advising, and the International Students and Scholars office was recommended once the final regulation is released.
Sheehan sought clarification regarding the impact on graduate students enrolled in programs that routinely exceed four years. Walker explained that institutions would likely continue identifying the expected program length, but students would nevertheless receive an initial admission period of no more than four years and would need to request extensions directly from the federal government. She noted that many institutions are already considering strategies to assist students whose programs extend beyond the initial authorized period, including completing portions of programs remotely if necessary. The regulation does not prohibit extensions but transfers approval authority from institutions to the federal government.
Sheehan also inquired about the impact on current international students already studying in the United States. Walker explained that students presently admitted under "duration of status" would be permitted to remain until their current program end date, up to four years following implementation of the new rule, after which they would transition into the new fixed-period admission and extension process. She noted that the International Students and Scholars office has already notified current students of the anticipated changes and has encouraged eligible students needing program extensions or educational level changes to complete those requests before the new regulation becomes effective.
Walker concluded by noting that although many implementation details remain uncertain until publication of the final rule, institutions nationwide are preparing for the changes. She indicated that additional guidance, campus training, and collaboration with Student Success, Admissions, and academic advising will be provided once the final regulation is released. Members thanked Walker for the informative presentation and acknowledged the importance of preparing campus stakeholders for the anticipated federal policy changes.

A handout was provided titled “DHS Final Rule Ending Duration of Status FAQ”
Link related to the discussion: https://www.dhs.gov/news/2026/07/16/trump-administration-issues-final-rule-end-foreign-student-visa-abuse

2. **Competitive scholarship application process – Chad Blew and Rachel Eng**
Blew and Eng presented a new initiative designed to streamline the competitive scholarship process and improve the overall student experience. The current scholarship process has become increasingly fragmented, requiring students to complete multiple supplemental applications for various scholarship programs while often being evaluated by several committees using similar criteria. Additionally, many of the university's premier scholarships include leadership and engagement programming, resulting in

students receiving multiple overlapping scholarship offers that require participation in competing programs. The proposed process seeks to simplify applications, reduce duplication of effort, improve coordination among scholarship programs, and present a more cohesive experience for prospective students and their families.

Beginning August 1, a new scholarship application process will be implemented through Slate. A dedicated Scholarship tab will be added to the student portal, consolidating all scholarship opportunities into a single location while separating them from other supplemental opportunities such as program-specific applications. Students will see only those scholarship opportunities for which they are eligible based on information already available through their admissions application. To reduce redundancy, applicants will complete one standardized supplemental application consisting of two essay responses, one video response, and the existing leadership and involvement résumé submitted with the admissions application. The video component, which was piloted successfully through the Horizon Scholars program, is intended to provide scholarship committees with a more authentic understanding of each applicant while also helping distinguish applicants in an era of increased AI-assisted writing.

Blew and Eng emphasized that while the standardized supplemental materials will be used across the competitive scholarship programs included in the initiative, colleges and academic programs will retain full authority over their individual scholarship selection processes. The standardized application materials will also be made available as supplemental information for departmental and college scholarship committees, allowing them to incorporate the information into their own review processes if desired. Students who are not eligible for one of the university's major competitive scholarships will still have access to the Scholarship tab, where they will receive information about institutional scholarship opportunities and be encouraged to complete the supplemental materials for consideration for additional departmental and college awards.

Blew and Eng reviewed the revised scholarship application timeline, which aligns competitive scholarship deadlines with the university's existing November 1 Early Opportunity Scholarship deadline and February 1 Priority Scholarship deadline. The only exception will be the Thoma Scholars program, which will maintain a January 15 deadline due to donor-specific requirements. Additional timelines outlining committee scoring, selection periods, and award notification dates will be distributed to participating scholarship committees before the process launches.

To reduce duplicate evaluation efforts, a university-wide review committee of approximately 75 representatives will score the standardized essays, video responses, and leadership résumé. Scholarship programs will receive both raw and weighted scores from this committee while maintaining flexibility to determine how much weight to assign each evaluation component according to the priorities of their individual scholarship. Selection committees may use these scores as one factor among others or continue conducting additional reviews as appropriate. Blew and Eng emphasized that the centralized committee is intended to support, rather than replace, existing scholarship selection committees.

Blew and Eng discussed how the new process is intended to minimize situations in which highly qualified students receive multiple competing scholarship offers that ultimately cannot be stacked. Rather than asking students to choose among several leadership-based scholarship programs after offers are made, the revised process will coordinate selections behind the scenes and consider student preferences collected during the application process, including whether a student values participation in a particular academic program or maximizing the monetary value of a scholarship. Although the presenters acknowledged that some overlap and adjustments may still occur—particularly with scholarship programs operating on different timelines, such as the Thoma Scholars program—the overall goal is to substantially reduce changes to scholarship offers after they have been communicated to students.

Several members raised questions regarding scholarship timelines, award sequencing, and the interaction between first- and second-round scholarship selections. Discussion focused particularly on ensuring that students who have already accepted one competitive scholarship are not unnecessarily reconsidered for

later scholarship rounds, while recognizing that certain scholarship programs operate under donor-imposed schedules that cannot yet be fully aligned. Blew and Eng acknowledged that some aspects of the process remain under development and agreed to continue refining procedures and clarifying expectations with scholarship committees as implementation progresses. Members generally expressed support for the initiative, noting that the standardized application process, centralized review, and video component represent significant improvements for both students and scholarship committees.

A handout was provided titled “OSU Competitive Scholarship Process – Fall 2027”

3. **Graduate College Regulation 11.16 on sharing hours between a bachelor’s degree and a graduate degree – Chris Francisco**

Francisco discussed Graduate College Regulation 11.16, which governs the amount of coursework that may be shared between undergraduate degree programs and accelerated master's degree programs. The discussion was prompted by a recent question regarding the interpretation of the policy for a program containing four-credit-hour courses and whether the current policy should be revisited. The existing regulation permits undergraduate and accelerated master's programs to share up to 30% of the master's degree credit hours, allowing, for example, nine shared hours in a 30-hour master's program. Members were asked whether the current policy remains appropriate or whether there is interest in revisiting the allowable amount of shared credit as additional accelerated pathways and system-wide curricular alignment initiatives are developed.

Discussion included questions about how the 30% rule applies when master's degree options have different total credit hour requirements. Members noted that a 32-hour non-thesis master's program would allow 9.6 shared hours, raising the question of whether the policy permits rounding to 10 credit hours. It was noted that the current regulation already provides examples permitting rounding, including allowing 14 shared hours in a 45-hour master's program where 30% equals 13.5 hours. While participants acknowledged that different options within the same degree could therefore permit slightly different amounts of shared credit, there was little concern with that interpretation, provided it remains consistent with existing policy.

Members generally agreed that the current 30% limit remains appropriate. Several participants observed that allowing nine shared hours in a 30-hour master's program provides sufficient incentive for high-achieving undergraduate students to begin graduate coursework while maintaining the integrity of the graduate degree. There was no support expressed for increasing the allowable percentage, and one member noted that, if anything, a lower limit would be preferable to expanding beyond the current threshold.

The discussion also considered how the policy may intersect with broader strategic initiatives involving system-wide curricular alignment, reverse transfer, and accelerated pathways connecting undergraduate programs with graduate and professional programs across the OSU System. Members acknowledged that questions surrounding shared credit and 4+1 pathways are likely to become more common as additional agreements are developed between campuses and programs.

Questions were raised regarding the administration of accelerated programs, including whether exceptions could be granted for programs that rely heavily on four- or five-credit-hour courses. Sheehan indicated that while she is not supportive of increasing the overall 30% limit, she recognizes that programs with larger credit-hour courses may occasionally require reasonable exceptions because individual courses cannot be divided. Such exceptions would be considered on a case-by-case basis and should not establish a broader precedent or alter the university's overall policy. Members also reiterated that students may participate in accelerated pathways only through formally approved 4+1 agreements and not through individually arranged exceptions outside established memoranda of understanding.

The discussion concluded with general consensus that the existing regulation appropriately balances flexibility and academic rigor. Members supported maintaining the current 30% shared-credit limit while allowing the Graduate College limited discretion to address unique program structures involving higher-credit-hour courses. Francisco indicated that the specific Ferguson College proposal would continue to be reviewed under the existing policy framework.

4. Curriculum

Course Action Summaries:

College of Veterinary Medicine

Rudd reviewed a curriculum proposal from the College of Veterinary Medicine's Comparative Biomedical Sciences graduate program. The proposal introduced a new graduate-level course in foundational physiological sciences as part of broader efforts to strengthen and enhance the graduate curriculum. The course is designed to emphasize biomedical translation and provide foundational instruction in physiological systems, building upon an area of established strength within the college. The course will primarily serve doctoral students in the Comparative Biomedical Sciences program.

Hawkins moved to approve, and Bellmer seconded. Instruction Council members approved the College of Veterinary Medicine course action summary.

Program Modifications:

College of Professional Studies

Master of Public Health in Public Health 500

Course requirement change

- Remove cross-listed courses and require MPH courses. Remove HCA 5013, MC 5953/AGCM 5403, and REMS 5013/HDFS 5133. Remove "select 3 hours." Update guided electives.
- Total credit hours will not change
- Reason for requested action: New electives that are public health-focused are now available. Updating the degree to be available for distance learners.

Freeman revisited the proposed revisions to the Master of Public Health (MPH) program that had been tabled at the previous meeting (7/2/26) to allow additional discussion, which was reported to have taken place with involved parties indicating they were prepared to move forward with the proposal. The revisions are intended to align the program with its transition to an online delivery model by removing several courses that were designed primarily for in-person instruction and are no longer appropriate in the revised format. The changes will streamline both the thesis and practicum options, creating a more manageable curriculum while maintaining the program's academic objectives.

Francisco expressed appreciation for the collaborative discussions that had taken place over the previous several weeks.

Sheehan moved to approve, and Fullerton seconded. Instruction Council members approved the College of Professional Studies program modification.

5. Other

Pre-Med Working Group Updates

Francisco provided several updates on ongoing Academic Affairs initiatives. Members were thanked for their participation in the recently completed pre-med working group, particularly Ty Hawkins and the committee

members from both the Stillwater campus and the Center for Health Sciences. The working group developed recommendations identifying the coursework and best practices necessary to ensure students are both prepared to apply to medical school and competitive for admission to the medical schools of their choice. The report will be distributed to members for review before being presented to Instruction Council, where additional feedback will be solicited prior to any recommendations being finalized.

BUS Degree Assessment Working Group Updates

An update was also provided on the BUS degree assessment working group. Because only a limited number of colleges had submitted representatives, appointments to the committee had not yet been finalized. Members were encouraged to submit a representative within the next few days so the working group could begin developing a consistent approach to assessment in collaboration with University Assessment and Testing (UAT). Colleges that already have established assessment processes in place were not expected to participate if they felt additional representation was unnecessary.

OSRHE Low-Producing Academic Programs Update

Members were informed that the annual list of low-producing academic programs had been received from the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (11 programs were on the list). The current list contains significantly fewer programs than the previous year's review because the earlier report encompassed multiple years of data. Two programs on the list were identified as recently approved programs that appeared only because they had not yet produced graduates during their initial implementation period, and state regents staff indicated those programs would not present concerns during review. For the remaining low-producing programs, members were encouraged to carefully evaluate whether continued justification is appropriate or whether program consolidation, restructuring, or discontinuation should be considered. Francisco noted that recent statutory changes have reduced flexibility in maintaining low-producing programs and encouraged colleges to think strategically about consolidating offerings while continuing to meet student needs.
Francisco reminded members that all low-producing and post-audit program reports submitted through UAT will be reviewed centrally before submission to the State Regents. While edits may be made to strengthen or clarify institutional responses, colleges will be consulted regarding any substantive revisions to ensure the final submissions accurately reflect unit perspectives while presenting the strongest possible institutional case.

Upcoming Academic Leadership and Professional Development Programs

Ormsbee reminded the group of several upcoming professional development events and asked them to encourage participation within their colleges. Registration remains open for the New Department Head Orientation (August 4th), but current registration numbers suggest that several newly appointed department heads have not yet enrolled. Likewise, registration for the annual Critical Issues Update (August 5th) for department heads is lower than expected, and associate deans and deans were again invited to participate. Members were also asked to remind newly hired faculty to register for New Faculty Orientation (August 6th, 7th, 10th), noting that participation remains well below expected attendance levels. Similarly, colleges were encouraged to ensure that all first-year Graduate Teaching Assistants register for the required GTA Conference (August 12th), as participation is a contractual expectation and an important component of instructional preparation.
Additional details were shared regarding this year's Critical Issues Update. One session will focus on implementation of the university's strategic plan, emphasizing the academic priorities and responsibilities assigned to Academic Affairs. A second session will provide a comprehensive review of the recently revised

Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT) policy, with particular attention to the standardized career-track faculty contract structure and other significant policy revisions. Members were reminded that the new RPT policy is now officially posted on the Administration and Finance policy website, with links also available through the Academic Affairs website to ensure faculty and administrators access the current version.

A handout of the academic leadership and professional development sessions/dates was provided.
Link to the RPT policy can be found here

Meeting was adjourned at 10:21am.

Minutes were recorded by Ashley Varnell.