

INSTRUCTION COUNCIL

MINUTES

Thursday, July 2, 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, Chad Blew, Aaron Christensen, Cynda Clary, Chris Francisco (Chair), Craig Freeman, Richard Frohock, Ty Hawkins, Kelva Hunger, James Knecht, Marlys Mason, Rita Peaster, Darius Prier, Carisa Ramming, Jennifer Rudd, Rebecca Sheehan, Candace Thrasher, Ronna Vanderslice, Ashley Varnell, Wilma White.

Meeting was called to order at 9:56am.

1. Discussion regarding retention metrics and college needs – Shannon Baker

Baker provided an overview of current retention trends and ongoing intervention efforts, noting that first-to-second-year retention continues to be the university's greatest area of concern, with second-to-third-year retention also remaining below the previous year. Members were informed that enrollment outreach efforts, including email and text message nudges to non-enrolled students (who had not enrolled by June 22nd), have shown early positive results. Financial Planning Coaches continue targeted outreach to students with financial barriers to enrollment, including recipients of prior retention grants and students with bursar holds, while collaborating with campus partners to identify additional financial support opportunities (e.g., housing packages).

Baker also discussed efforts to ensure consistent advisor availability following Orientation and Enrollment, including establishing minimum calendar availability expectations, updating advisor schedules for the remainder of the summer and fall, and providing students with clear alternative contacts when advisors are away.

Members discussed the types of retention data and reporting that would be most beneficial moving forward. Suggestions included cohort-specific reports for first-year students, streamlined reports identifying bursar balances and registration barriers, improved visibility into Financial Planning Coach outreach efforts, and additional information to help colleges coordinate retention initiatives while avoiding duplicated outreach. Freeman also discussed the value of developing more strategic approaches to retention grant funding and identifying students for whom financial assistance would have the greatest impact on persistence.

The conversation broadened to include longer-term retention strategies. Prier emphasized the importance of reviewing course availability and scheduling flexibility to better accommodate students with work and family responsibilities. Additional discussion focused on the role of faculty engagement in student retention, including strengthening undergraduate mentoring opportunities, reinforcing meaningful participation in six-week grade reporting, making mid-term GPAs visible to students, increasing faculty awareness of their role in supporting student success, and continuing to cultivate a campus culture that promotes belonging and engagement.

Prier also highlighted the importance of student health, wellness, and mental health support as significant contributors to persistence and student success.

Clary discussed challenges associated with the admission and subsequent success of students admitted through holistic or alternative admission pathways. Concerns were expressed about ensuring that students are academically prepared for success while balancing the university's commitment to access and enrollment growth. The discussion emphasized the importance of providing appropriate support while maintaining responsible admissions practices that promote long-term student success.

Baker proposed a pilot initiative to remove advising holds for a limited group of continuing students who had not yet enrolled, while providing personalized registration recommendations and encouraging students to meet with their academic advisors. Members generally supported further exploration of the idea but recommended carefully reviewing the student population before implementation, limiting the pilot to students in good academic standing, ensuring clear communication that the pilot would not establish a permanent practice, and monitoring outcomes to evaluate its effectiveness.

Hawkins also inquired about current practices for notifying students when low-enrollment course sections are canceled. He made a suggestion to explore whether students could be automatically moved into equivalent course sections, particularly for high-enrollment foundational courses where alternative sections are readily available. While members recognized potential benefits for student success and retention, they also acknowledged logistical, policy, and communication considerations that would require additional review before such a practice could be implemented.

The discussion concluded with broader consideration of advising practices, including the continued use of advising holds each semester. Members noted that while some peer institutions require advising only during portions of a student's academic career, regular advisor interactions remain an important component of Oklahoma State University's student success model by strengthening advising relationships, supporting degree progression, and helping identify student needs throughout their academic experience.

2. Curriculum

Course Action Summaries:

N/A

Program Modifications:

Ferguson College of Agriculture

Graduate Certificate in Grassland Management 488

Program Suspension

- Will be reinstated or deleted in three years. Program suspension effective immediately.
- Reason for requested action: Program has not been heavily utilized, so the department is suspending it while they evaluate the need and opportunities for the program and consider possible future modifications.

Clary reviewed a proposal to suspend the Graduate Certificate in Grassland Management, a program in the IDEA Distance Learning Consortium program (formerly Ag IDEA). The program has historically served a small number of students, and enrollment has remained limited, with similar trends reported across participating institutions. Clary noted that the suspension will provide an opportunity to evaluate the program's long-term viability, including whether to renew efforts to promote it on campus or to consider discontinuing participation based on future enrollment and institutional need.

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

College of Arts and Sciences

Master of Science in Statistics 192

Online delivery request

- Adding online delivery will provide additional opportunities for students to pursue the degree.

Course requirement change

- Remove STAT 5333. Increase electives by 3 credit hours.
- Total credit hours will not change
- Reason for requested action: Updating degree requirements to align with current course offerings.

Hawkins reviewed proposed revisions to the Master of Science in Statistics program. The changes were presented as part of a broader departmental effort to increase the program's visibility, strengthen its appeal, and address concerns related to the curriculum.

Clary moved to approve, and Prier seconded. Instruction Council members approved the College of Arts and Sciences program modification.

College of Education and Human Sciences

Bachelor of Science in Public Health 116

Course requirement change

- Add BIOL 3203 and BIOL 3201 as an option to BIOL 3204. Update HHP 3663 to reflect the new course number HHP 3664. Decrease elective hours by 1.
- Total credit hours will not change
- Reason for requested action: Updating degree requirements to align with new course numbers.

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

College of Professional Studies

Graduate Certificate in Public Health in Rural and Underserved Communities 499

Course requirement change

- Add MPH 5323 and MPH 5973. Remove six hours of electives.
- Total credit hours will not change
- Reason for requested action: Updating degree requirements to align with industry expectations.

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.

The discussion of proposed revisions to the Master of Public Health program was tabled for consideration at a future meeting. Freeman then reviewed proposed revisions to the Graduate Certificate in Public Health. The revisions were described as part of an effort to streamline the certificate by reducing elective options and

establishing a more focused curriculum, making it easier for students to complete the credential through a clearly defined sequence of courses.

Sheehan moved to approve, and Clary seconded. Instruction Council members approved the College of Professional Studies program modification for the Graduate Certificate in Public Health in Rural and Underserved Communities, while the Master of Public Health in Public Health was tabled.

3. Other

Francisco reminded members of the upcoming August orientation and professional development sessions for academic leadership. The annual new department head workshop will again provide orientation for newly appointed department heads from across campus. In addition, a critical issues session will be held for all department heads, with associate deans and deans also welcome to attend. Members were informed that this year's session will focus on two primary topics: implementation of the university's strategic plan and recent revisions to the Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT) policy approved by the OSU/A&M Board of Regents on June 12. Discussion of the strategic plan will emphasize the academic key performance indicators (KPIs), unit alignment with institutional priorities, and expectations for implementation. The RPT session will review the approved policy changes, with particular attention to revisions affecting career-track faculty appointments, and provide an opportunity for attendees to ask questions and discuss implementation. Members were encouraged to review the previously distributed schedule and registration information for these August programs.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:56am.

Minutes were recorded by Ashley Varnell.