

UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND ARTS OF OKLAHOMA
1727 W. Alabama Avenue, Chickasha, OK 73018
MINUTES FOR THE BOARD OF REGENTS REGULAR MEETING
December 12, 2024

The Board of Regents for the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma met Thursday, December 12, 2024 in the Student Center's Regents Room of the USAO Campus.

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chair Kelly Wilkerson at 1:03 PM.
2. **Open Meeting Law:** President Hale announced the filing of the meeting notice and posting of agenda was done in accordance with the Open Meeting Act.
3. **Roll Call** was taken. Regents in attendance were Kelly Wilkerson, Suzanne Reynolds, Amanda Conley, Cale Walker and Chris Mosley. Regents JJ Francais and Diane Ming were absent.

Staff and faculty members in attendance included: VP JP Audas, VP Nick Hathaway, VP David Evans, Cathy Perri, Tony Hutchison, Dr. Sarah Layman, Dr. Misty Steele, Dr. Karen Karner, Amy Goddard, Robyn Rogers, David Smith, Whitney Palesano, Jana Ware, David Smith, Adeel Siddiqui, Kristi Trapp and Tarrah Kinney.

4. **The pledge of allegiance** was recited by those in attendance.
5. **Introductions:** Chair Wilkerson introduced Sohail Punjwani as the Assistant Attorney General from the Oklahoma Office of the Attorney General and counsel for the Board of Regents for USAO.

President Hale introduced Jason Brown, Superintendent for Harding Fine Arts Academy in Oklahoma City, as well as new employees Kristi Trapp, Licensed Professional Counselor, and Bryce McKinnis, Director of Marketing and Communication.

6. **Presentations:** Mr. Jason Brown, Superintendent of Harding Fine Arts Academy of Oklahoma, gave a presentation on the sponsorship, partnership and pipeline with USAO.
7. **Minutes of the November 14, 2024 Meeting:** The minutes of the November 14, 2024 meeting were presented. Having no corrections or additions, Regent Mosley made a motion to approve the minutes, and Regent Walker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
8. **Communications to the Board:** President Hale shared upcoming dates for athletic events now through March 2025.
9. **Personnel Actions and Spring 2025 Adjuncts:** The following report was presented for approval from Human Resources. Regent Mosley made a motion to accept the Human Resources actions and 2025 proposed Spring adjuncts as printed; Regent Walker seconded the motion, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

Personnel Actions

Appointments:

Kristi Trapp, Effective December 1, 2024; Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC)

Bryce McKinnis, Effective November 18, 2024; Director of Marketing and Communications

Margo Lucero, Effective November 15, 2024; NASNTI (Part A) Administrative Assistant

Change in Status:

Annie Roberts, Effective November 1, 2024; promoted to Director of Student Life

Resignations:

None

Retirees:

None

Spring 2025 New Faculty Appointments:

Dr. Jason Carter – Assistant Professor of Business Administration

Proposed Adjunct List for Spring 2025:

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION & SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

Dr. Connor Sullivan

Ashly Euwins

Jessica Mason

Kim Chester

Marilyn Holt

Mary Jeffries

Keisha Hill

Amy Herchock

SCHOOL OF IDS AND HUMANITIES

Kaitlyn Verser

Jerry Weems

Zachary Widener

Brian Steele

Katherine Messerly

Kelli Monroe

Nicole McMonagle

SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & KINESIOLOGY

Niall Crick

Andrea Freymiller

Jaye Nayreau

Dee Dee McCormick

Meredith Nolan

Sherry Reed

Thomas Willcock

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES & BUSINESS

Candace Chinsethagid

Clayton Hampton

Mark Jernigan

Kellee Jernigan

Molly Perkins

Pam Foster

George Burnett

Brian Steele

Marissa Moore

SCHOOL OF VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

Sara Baird

Ron Blankenship

Rhenda Finch
 Adam Heilman
 Guilherme Lopes-Correa
 Emily Maddox
 Andy Myers
 Trey Switzer
 Rachel Jackson - Kiowa/Clemente

- 10. Presentation of Monthly Financial Statements:** David Smith, Controller, presented financial statements to the Board of Regents. No action was necessary. (Appendix A pp. 10-12)
- 11. Presentation of Annual Audit Report:** Vice President Hathaway presented the 2024 Annual Audit Report. Regent Walker, chair of the Finance & Audit Committee, made a motion to accept the audit report on recommendation of the committee. Regent Conley seconded the motion. The floor was opened for discussion. After discussion ceased, a vote was taken, and the motion carried with unanimous approval from the regents.
- 12. Remarks from Sohail Punjwani, Assistant Attorney General representing USAO Board of Regents**
- Chair Wilkerson recognized Assistant Attorney General Sohail Punjwani, counsel of the Board of Regents for USAO, for remarks before the next item of business. AAG Punjwani directed the question of any possible conflict of interest to the Regents regarding RCE General Contractors, LLC. Roll call was taken of the Board citing any conflict of interest.
- Results of the voting were:
- Regent Conley – No; Regent Mosley –Yes; Regent Reynolds – No; Regent Walker – Yes; Regent Wilkerson – No.
- With Regents Francais and Ming being absent for the meeting, a quorum was not reached, and Item 13 ‘Discussion and vote to approve/disapprove the Selection of Construction Manager for Willard Hall Renovation’, was tabled and scheduled for the February 2025 meeting.
- 13. Selection of Construction Manager for Willard Hall Renovation:** no action taken.
- 14. Authorization to Negotiate a Contract for USAO Real Estate Development:** From the Finance and Audit Committee, Regent Walker presented the Authorization to the Board. Regent Walker made a motion to approve the Authorization to Negotiate a Contract for USAO Real Estate Development. Regent Conley seconded the motion, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Authorization to Negotiate a Contract for USAO Real Estate Development

Background/Rationale:

This initiative aims to construct new housing facilities for faculty, staff, coaches, and potentially students, enhancing the university community and supporting its mission.

Project Overview

The proposed real estate development initiative encompasses the following key elements:

1. Property Leasing: USAO will lease identified dilapidated residential properties to the selected real estate partner for a nominal fee.
2. Development Responsibilities: The partner will be tasked with planning, financing, and constructing new housing units that meet the needs of university personnel and contribute positively to the campus

environment.

3. University Oversight: USAO will maintain significant influence over the development process, including:
 - Approval of architectural designs to ensure alignment with university standards
 - Engagement of university and local community stakeholders in discussions about project impacts and benefits
4. Long-term Leasing Strategy: Upon completion, USAO plans to enter into long-term lease agreements with the developer to provide stable attractive solutions for the university's housing needs and generate revenue through rent.

This initiative addresses the growing demand for quality housing near campus due to increasing enrollment and faculty recruitment efforts. It also allows USAO to strategically utilize existing real estate assets, optimizing resources and ensuring that land adjacent to campus effectively contributes to the university's mission.

15. **Proposed Adjustments to Non-Mandatory Student Fees:** Regent Walker, chair of the Finance and Audit Committee, presented the Proposed Adjustments to Non-Mandatory Student Fees schedule. After presenting the proposal, Regent Walker made a motion to accept the proposal as presented. Regent Reynolds seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Proposed Adjustments to Non-Mandatory Student Fees for Academic Year 2025-2026

Background/Rationale

Non-mandatory fees, also known as academic service fees, are distinct from tuition and mandatory fees as they are specifically tied to certain courses, programs, or specialized services that not all students utilize. These fees are essential to maintain the quality and sustainability of specialized academic offerings, laboratory experiences, and student support services. As operational costs, equipment needs, and supply expenses continue to evolve, regular review and adjustment of these fees ensures that USAO can continue to provide high-quality educational experiences without compromising program quality or shifting the burden to general tuition and mandatory fees. Unlike mandatory fees which apply universally to all students, these specialized fees create a more equitable system where students pay for the specific enhanced services and resources they use in their chosen courses and programs.

Proposed Fee Adjustments

1. Art Laboratory Fee
 - Current: \$10 per course
 - Proposed: \$30 per course
 - Rationale: Increased costs of art supplies and specialized instruction
2. Academic Support Fee (formerly Remedial Course Fee)
 - Current: \$20 per credit hour
 - Proposed: Name change only
 - Rationale: Alignment with current OSRHE policy
3. Science Laboratory Fee
 - Current: \$30 per course
 - Proposed: \$66 per course
 - Rationale: Rising costs of laboratory equipment and supplies
4. Tutorial Fee
 - Current: \$30 per course
 - Proposed: \$50 per course
 - Rationale: Reflects specialized nature of individualized instruction
5. Drover Excellence Fee (formerly Mission Enhancement Fee)

- Current: \$60 per credit hour
- Proposed: Name change only
- Rationale: This is a mandatory fee. Approval for change in institutional terminology (No OSRHE action being sought)

6. International Student Record Fee

- Current: \$15 per term
- Proposed: \$50 per term
- Rationale: Cover administrative costs

Proposed New Fees

1. Research Fee

- Purpose: Support research-intensive courses and projects
- Proposed: \$50 per course

2. Student Success Fee

- Amount: \$20 per credit hour
- Purpose: Support tutoring, mentoring, and academic support services
- Scope: First three semesters for incoming students
- Rationale: Continuation of successful program following grant expiration

- 16. USAO Monetary Prizes/Awards Policy & Reporting Form:** Regent Walker presented the Monetary Prizes/Awards Policy to the board from the Finance and Audit Committee. After discussion, Regent Walker made a motion to accept the policy and form as written. Regent Conley seconded the motion and the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

Adoption of USAO Monetary Prizes/Awards Policy & Reporting Form

Background/Rationale:

The proposed USAO Monetary Prizes/Awards Policy & Reporting Form is essential for ensuring compliance with federal regulations, specifically the requirements outlined in the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) regarding Estimated Financial Assistance (EFA). By adopting this policy, USAO will uphold its commitment to adhering to these regulations. Furthermore, the policy plays a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of students' financial aid packages by accurately reporting all forms of monetary assistance provided to them. This accuracy is vital for ensuring that students receive the appropriate financial support without jeopardizing their eligibility for aid. Additionally, implementing this policy serves as a proactive measure to mitigate risks associated with non-compliance, such as potential citations, fines, or even the loss of the ability to offer Title IV aid. Overall, the adoption of this policy is a necessary step in safeguarding both the university's and students' interests.

Key Elements of the Policy:

1. Definition of EFA and reporting requirements for monetary prizes/awards, including gift cards.
 2. Procedure for USAO representatives to report monetary awards to the Financial Aid Office.
 3. Student acknowledgment and acceptance process for monetary prizes/awards.
 4. Guidelines for determining the impact on a student's Cost of Attendance (COA) and existing financial aid.
 5. Examples of assistance that must be reported as EFA, regardless of amount.
- 17. Revised Open Records Request Policy:** Regent Mosley presented the revision to the USAO Open Record Request Policy on behalf of the Policies and Procedures Committee. He thanked Asst. Atty. General Punjwani for his assistance in setting up a fee schedule and fine tuning the policy. The new policy will be filed with the Grady County Clerk's Office. Regent Mosley made a motion to accept the revised policy as presented. Regent Conley seconded the motion and the motion carried by unanimous vote. (Appendix B pp. 13-15)

- 18. Selection of Co-Managed IT Service Provider:** Regent Conley presented the Co-Managed IT Service Provider Selection from the Academic and Administrative Affairs Committee. Regent Conley made a motion to accept the proposed contract to Run Business Solutions, Inc. of Amarillo, TX. Regent Mosley seconded the motion. After discussion, the vote was called and the motion carried by unanimous approval.

Selection of a Co-Managed IT Service Provider

Background/Rationale:

The University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (USAO) issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an independent Information Technology provider to act as the university's IT department, providing management, administration, and support of the institution's information technology systems. This initiative aligns with USAO's commitment to maintaining a cost-effective, responsive, and adaptable IT infrastructure that supports the university's mission and future growth.

Scope of Services

The selected vendor will provide IT services to assist USAO's IT Department, including but not limited to:

1. Strategic planning
2. IT budgeting and procurement assistance
3. Help Desk operations
4. Enterprise application management
5. Network and server infrastructure administration
6. Information security and compliance
7. Disaster recovery and business continuity planning
8. Project management services

Selection Process

The evaluation of proposals was based on the following criteria:

1. Experience and qualifications
2. Ability to implement solutions and provide project-based services
3. Commitment to USAO's mission
4. Cost-effectiveness and risk minimization

Fiscal Impact

The annual cost for the recommended co-managed IT services is \$172,800. The university has unobligated funds to address this expense for the remainder of FY25. This expenditure is included in the university's budget planning process for FY26 and beyond.

This service model is expected to result in cost savings/improved efficiency/enhanced services compared to the current IT support model.

- 19. Academic Program Reviews:** Regent Conley presented four Academic Program Reviews from the Academic and Administrative Affairs Committee.
- a. **Environmental Science:** Regent Conley made a motion to accept the review as presented for the Environmental Science program. Regent Walker seconded the motion, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.
 - b. **Early Childhood Education:** Regent Conley made a motion to accept the review as presented for the Early Childhood Education program. Regent Walker seconded the motion, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.
 - c. **Deaf Education:** Regent Conley made a motion to accept the review as presented for the Deaf Education program. Regent Walker seconded the motion, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.
 - d. **Elementary Education:** Regent Conley made a motion to accept the review as presented for the Elementary Education program. Regent Walker seconded the motion,

and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

20. President's Report: President Hale offered her report that was presented at the OSRHE meeting on December 4, 2024. Highlights included:

Overview of USAO's progress toward Blueprint 2030

- a. Produce workforce-ready graduates
- b. Grow the student pipeline
- c. Focus on student success
- d. Improve system efficiency and effectiveness

Produce Workforce-Ready Graduates

Embraced academic opportunities with Grady County public schools, Harding Fine Arts Academy and Canadian Valley Technical School

- Substantially grew concurrent enrollment through re-establishing positive working relationships with area public and technical school administrators
- Assisted 14 teachers from Chickasha Public Schools and Tuttle Public Schools in receiving state certification through GEER funding

Establishment of the Division of Professional Studies

- Center for Career and Workforce Development
 - o *Community outreach for upskilling through micro-credentials through Coursera and enhanced online learning opportunities*
 - o *Expanding our adult degree completion efforts*
 - o *Collaboration with South Central Oklahoma Workforce Center*
 - o *OSHRE – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families*
 - o *Both organizations are embedded on campus in our administration building*
- Launched a partnership with Oklahoma City Community College to offer USAO programming on their campus
 - o *Working toward the establishment of a bachelor degree option*
 - o *Examining additional partnership to expand nursing certification*
 - o *Expanded partnership with Redlands Community College*
 - o *Funded a shared Career Services Coordinator*
 - o *Launched a reverse transfer project*

Redesigning our business curriculum to be more responsive to the evolving needs of business and industry

- o Embedding stackable micro-credentials in course syllabi
- o Convened a Regional Business Roundtable last month seeking and receiving input from area businesses (public and private)
- Established Industry Advisory Boards across the academy
 - o School of Business and Social Sciences (finalizing)
 - o School of Interdisciplinary Studies
 - o School of Visual and Performing Arts (finalizing)
 - o School of Education and Speech Language Pathology

Grow the Student Pipeline

- Increased headcount by 12% (918 to 1022)
- Grew full time equivalency by 8% (829 to 913)
- Freshmen cohorts have grown by 33% since 2020
- Generated credit hours increased by 8% to 13,604
- Held tuition and fees flat for FY25
- Officially launched the Common Application
- Invested in the expansion of student recruitment personnel
- Introduced junior varsity athletics to four intercollegiate sports programs

Focus on Student Success

- Established a campus-wide Student Retention Task Force to focus on persistence and retention

- 34% of USAO students overall are first-generation
- Deploy data analytics to personalize and individualize service to students
- Reintroduced computer science, and revamped public policy and economics as majors
- Invested additional funding into student life operations
- Introduced financial planning/literacy for USAO students to ensure transparency and develop financial awareness
- Celebrated a landmark achievement as the first graduate of the Neill-Wint Center for Neurodiversity earned acceptance to the OU College of Law
- Hired a Director of Institutional Assessment to ensure promised educational outcomes are successfully achieved
- Recently reassigned responsibilities for course scheduling to ensure a more equitable approach to accessibility by our students.
- Hired a licensed professional counselor who is experienced in crisis interventions
- Established a faculty led task force to further the use of Open Educational Resources in course development
- Formalized a certificate in Critical Reasoning which underscores our mission as Oklahoma's only public liberal arts institution. This certificate equips our students with essential skills that are highly valued in business and industry:
 - Enhanced problem-solving abilities
 - Effective decision-making
 - Advanced communication skills
 - Adaptability

Improve System Efficiency and Effectiveness

- Embrace data driven decisions to strengthen university operations
- Currently examining credit hour production by school, department, and faculty to determine program viability and/or redirection of positions/salary lines
- Launch USAO strategic plan to grow enrollment, increase retention, enhance graduation rates, and reflect alignment with Blueprint 2030
 - Enhance marketing to elevate USAO's "Degree in Three" option for incoming students

Office of Business and Finance

- Hired a new Chief Financial Officer
- Hired a university controller (new position)
- Implemented cross-training in accounts payable functions
- Digitized all business function operations
- Established distributed budgets throughout the university, engaging deans and division leaders in the budget development process

Established the Office of Grants and Contracts

- Reports to Chief of Staff
- Re-established active engagement at the state capitol and strengthened working relationships with members of Oklahoma's national delegation
- Submitted first application for TRIO grant funding
- Working with Representative Cole's office on a \$6M funding request
- Goal to grow grant funding by 50% in FY25

Office of External Affairs

- Gifts to USAO from private donors equaled \$2,266,166 - a 59% growth that exceeded the \$2M annual goal
- FY25 fundraising goal is \$4M
- USAO Foundation endowment grew to \$20M in the past year, a 17% increase from FY23

21. Remarks from Representatives to the Board: Reports were submitted in advance from the Faculty Association and the Alumni Association.

22. **The Next Meeting for the USAO Board of Regents** is Thursday, February 13, 2025, 1:00 p.m., USAO, Student Center, Regents Room, 1727 W. Alabama Ave., Chickasha, Oklahoma 73018.
23. **Consideration and possible action on new items of business** not known about or which could not have been reasonably foreseen prior to the time of the posting of the agenda – none.
24. **Adjournment:** Having no other business, Regent Mosley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Regent Reynolds seconded the motion and the motion carried by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 2:09 PM.