



OKLAHOMA  
PANHANDLE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

## **Minutes for Faculty Senate Meeting**

Friday, December 6, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. in SAB 202

### **Members:**

**COASN:** Dr. Curtis Bensch, Shawna Tucker, Tonnie Scott

**COAE:** Stacy Nordquist, Dr. Jarrett Kaufman, Dr. Marjory Hall

**COBT:** Steve Martin, Tracy Curtis

All Senators present.

**Call to Order:** 12:59 p.m. by Dr. Curtis Bensch

**Invited Guests present:** Dr. Julie Dinger, Ms. Vicki Pasque

### **Reading / Approval of Minutes:**

— November 1, 2024: The minutes were accepted as read.

### **New Business:**

— Dr. Dinger briefly reviewed her recent Campus Update.

Among the main topics covered were results from a recent Board meeting in which:

- all proposed program reviews and modifications were approved;
- a campus wellness initiative was discussed;
- naming rights for OPSU's Esports are being planned;
- more deferred maintenance projects were outlined.

— Dr. Dinger presented her Panhandle Path Forward, an initiative in which four task forces address a variety of University concerns as OPSU seeks to proactively work through the anticipated changes of the coming five years, including a variety of Artificial Intelligence issues, decline in college-age demographic, and possible job losses in the area. Dr. Dinger explained that her approach in establishing this initiative has been to dispel any OPSU culture of fear of innovation and risk-taking. Effectively serving historically underserved community populations will require ingenuity and pooling of creative and intellectual resources.

This strategic initiative was presented to and approved by the Regents earlier on this day.

The Panhandle Path Forward will consist of four task forces:

- Administrative Excellence and Facilities
- Academic Program Innovation and Alignment
- Technology and Data Governance
- Revenue and Partnerships

Dr. Dinger provided brief explanations of the charges for each task forces and added that she anticipates that faculty will be most heavily involved in the Academic Program Innovation and Alignment taskforce. Participation in all the taskforces, however, is open to individuals from every part of OPSU. She requests that Faculty Senate take an active part in organizing participants into the task forces.

Dr. Dinger specified that work on this initiative will follow a timeline that should ensure timely results and action. Initial meetings will be part of the schedule of January back-to-school activities, and more detailed timelines will be announced.

Dr. Hall inquired as to the Senate's specific duties in forming the committees. Whereas an earlier campus-wide announcement suggested that all members of OPSU's faculty and staff were expected to participate, Dr. Dinger clarified that participation is voluntary and that people may opt out if they so desire.

Dr. Hall inquired as to the nature of the task forces' work and the criteria for participation in them. Dr. Dinger replied that there are no requirements beyond those skills we all already bring to the university.

Discussion followed in which various ideas for faculty and staff indicating where they wanted to serve. It was determined that the most practical approach would be to broadcast a Form on which people could indicate which task force they wish to join.

Dr. Hall moved that a volunteer form be produced and disseminated to all faculty,

The motion was seconded by Steve Martin and passed by unanimous vote.

### **Unfinished Business:**

- Revising the Faculty Handbook
- Flexible faculty time on campus
- Overload hours

The senators addressed the questions of Faculty Handbook revision, flexible faculty time on campus, and overload hours. Each of these discussions returned to the same fundamental questions that have and continue to prevent conclusive action on these projects. These questions are as follows:

- What are the specific expectations of 9-, 10-, 11-, and 12- month faculty contracts?
- What comprises FTE for faculty?
- Recognizing that various programs have different faculty load requirements for both external accreditation and effective management of the programs, what are the standards for faculty workload and overload?

Discussion resolved in consensus that these three questions are inextricable and must be clarified before any progress can be made on the topics and that such clarification must come from OPSU administration.

Vicki Pasque announced that she has a meeting scheduled for Tuesday, December 10 with VPAA Lewis in which Dean Pasque anticipates resolution of at least some of these questions.

— Update – International students’ concerns with final exam attendance

Sarah Green presented the results of her committee’s work in resolving confusion regarding final exam policy for all students but particularly for international students.

In cooperation with Registrar Erin Moore, the committee clarified that international students are required by visa policy to remain on campus through the end of each semester. The committee recognized that all students, including international, might encounter emergencies that would make adjustment of the final exam schedule reasonable.

The committee produced a policy and accompanying form by which students may request an alternate final exam date. The major points of the policy are as follows:

- The Registrar’s office will determine whether or not the request complies with the legal requirements of the student’s enrollment;
- the Academic Affairs office will determine whether or not the request complies with OPSU policy;
- the instructor for the class in question will review the request and determine if and how the missed instruction hours will be made up and either approve or decline the request.

**Other Business:**

- Kim Smith will not be returning to OPSU in January, 2025, and she will be missed.
- Dr. Collins’s wife is very ill, and the Faculty Senate extends its best wishes for her recovery.
- A new instructor for Ag Business had been offered the vacant position but has backed out of accepting.

There was discussion of OPSU’s current hiring freeze with questions of its duration and nature. The freeze is across the board, and there has been no announced date for its expiration.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business, Dr. Bensch adjourned the meeting at 2:06 p.m.