

Council of Directors of Student Academic Services

MINUTES | January 21, 2026 | 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

OSU Family Engagement will be offering a book club for interested staff and faculty campus-wide during the spring 2026 semester for the book, *Engaging Families in Higher Education: Lessons Learned and Best Practices*. - Amy Gazaway

Amy Gazaway presented information about a book club focused on engaging families in higher education, which will meet three times this semester with limited spots available. Only space for 30 individuals. Deadline to sign up noon Jan 22.

Writing Center – Michelle Waters

Dr. Baker introduced Michelle Boyd Waters, the new Interim Director of the Writing Center, who is also a visiting assistant professor of English. Michelle provided brief introductions for all attendees, including their roles and affiliations with OSU. The discussion focused on discussing the Writing Center's operations and recent changes, with Michelle expressing excitement about her new position and commitment to improving the center's processes; she provided an overview of the Writing Center's services, including consultations, workshops, and various appointment options for students and instructors.

Retention Report – Shannon Baker, Larry Burns

Dr. Shannon Baker and Larry Burns led a presentation on an analysis report focusing on the retention of the Fall 24 cohort, highlighting challenges and intervention strategies, and announced a change in peer group comparison from Big 12 to land grant institutions.

They discussed retention trends, noting that while the Fall 24 cohort had lower retention compared to previous years, the university is implementing new cohort management strategies to improve retention rates. Changes in GPA calculations and their impact on retention predictions were highlighted, emphasizing the need to adjust models for the Fall 25 cohort. Demographic factors affecting retention, including an increase in non-resident, low-income students were also addressed. The group discussed suggesting a policy requiring students to be admitted and enrolled 7 days before classes to improve retention rates.

Shannon and Larry addressed concerns about low enrollment numbers and retention interventions. They highlighted the effectiveness of academic alerts and Cowboy Charlie's outreach efforts, which have connected thousands of students to resources and advisors.

They noted that while some interventions have been successful, more research is needed on the impact of others, particularly the use of risk lists.

They also discussed ongoing work to improve student advising interventions, including modifying the high-touch/low-touch approach and developing more varied prescriptions for students. They highlighted that tutoring had positive impacts on student grades, with tutored students more likely to improve their grades and less likely to fail compared to non-tutored students.

They also reviewed summer retention efforts, noting a 39% drop in retention grants for the Fall 2024 cohort and a lower first-year enrollment gain, which they attributed to financial support needs. They suggested a comprehensive review of peer institution practices and emphasized the need to better prompt students to take specific actions like attending tutoring.

They discussed retention strategies, emphasizing the need to track high-impact practices and differentiate care for students. They proposed expanding to concurrent enrollment and focusing on retention beyond the first year. The group also discussed academic alerts for all students, not just freshmen, and the potential for automated notifications and self-referrals. They mentioned ongoing research with faculty on academic alerts and shared ideas from other institutions on improving their effectiveness. The conversation ended with a discussion on policy revisions and the integration of Canvas with academic alert systems.

Advisor's Conference Swag Giveaways & Registration – Twambi Kerstetter

Twambi discussed the upcoming advising conference, noting that registration is open and there is a deadline for submitting giveaway items.

Meeting adjourned at 11:58 pm

Minutes recorded by Audrey Pinion