

INSTRUCTION COUNCIL

MINUTES

Thursday, June 5, 2025

143 ITLE or Zoom

<https://okstate-edu.zoom.us/j/93408932681?pwd=k7XfZJyUQZlDaBosY89x45j3PHDFfs.1>

Meeting ID: 934 0893 2681

Passcode: 097849

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

In attendance: Shannon Baker, Laurie Beets, Larry Burns, Aaron Christensen, Cynda Clary, Andrew Doust, Chris Francisco (Chair), Craig Freeman, Jami Fullerton, Diane Jones, James Knecht, Jerry Malayer, Marlys Mason, Christine Ormsbee, Rita Peaster, Carisa Ramming, Adrienne Sanogo, Rebecca Sheehan, Candace Thrasher, Ronna Vanderslice, Ashley Varnell, Jimmie Weaver.

Meeting was called to order at 9:02am.

1. Fall Course Enrollment – Chris Francisco

Exception requests are due on Monday (6/9/25). Francisco will review next week and then speak with the Provost about them; he will call if he has questions. There may be a dashboard for these requests in the future, but there is not one at this time. Any questions that Francisco has received so far from department heads/faculty have been referred back to Deans' Offices. Francisco has also had productive discussions about this topic with Faculty Council.

Several questions were asked of Francisco re: exception requests. Please see answers/discussion below:

- Details are not necessary for independent study, flight labs (Sanogo)
- Yes, Francisco still wants overload because there are a lot of questions about how it works and is managed (Mason)
- If one course is distance and non-distance counted as one part of load, report it as cross-listed; with 4000- and 5000-level courses, note that they are the same if they meet together (Mason)
- For classes with mostly first year graduate students, make a note and give the best estimate for enrollment numbers. For more standard graduate courses, please ask your graduate students to enroll early so we have an idea of enrollment numbers and so that the courses are not in jeopardy of being cancelled (Weaver)
- Honors will be handled differently because of add-ons and seminars and with the standard enrollment barely being above minimum enrollment (Doust)
- Tulsa is budgeted differently and is a different conversation (Freeman)
- Departments (largely service departments with a lot of TAs) need to provide graduate courses for TAs (Francisco)

- Balancing specialty courses has been a discussion; unsure of Provost's decision on this but will probably depend on the specifics of the situation (Clary)
- Impact on the budget will be that, knowing the upper division/graduate courses now and which do not have the numbers, instructors can be adjusted into other courses (large freshman courses) rather than having to hire temporary instructors or open new lines in the future (Weaver)

The bottom line is that no one wants to cancel classes, and budgetarily, hopefully we will feel more comfortable going forward.

2. Discuss Trail Modifications (Connecting Writing with Agriculture and Life Sciences) – Chris Francisco

Formerly known as "Narrating Nature." The additions are non-substantive changes; they are courses that were seeking gen-ed designations. Clary mentioned that where it says "agriculture," it's really "entomology."

Sanogo moved to approve, and Freeman seconded. Instruction Council members approved the Connecting Writing with Agriculture and Life Sciences trail modification.

3. Curriculum

Course Action Summaries:

N/A

Program Modifications:

Spears School of Business

Undergraduate Certificate in Personal Wealth Management and Financial Advising (New)

New program request

- Delivery method: Electronic and traditional
- Total credit hours: 18
- Reason for requested action: To better prepare students with the necessary skills for the CFP exam or Financial planning careers, such as Estate Planning.
- *Tabled by Instruction Council on May 1, 2025*

Freeman moved to approve, and Sanogo seconded. Instruction Council members approved the Spears School of Business new program request.

Added for discussion during Instruction Council meeting:

College of Veterinary Medicine

Graduate Certificate in One Health (New)

New program proposal

- Delivery method: Electronic
- Total credit hours: 12

- Reason for requested action: To equip students with a comprehensive understanding of One Health principles, enabling them to effectively address complex health challenges at the intersection of human, animal, and environmental health
- *Tabled by Instruction Council on May 15 for additional information from Veterinary Medicine.*

Dr. Jerry Malayer was present at the Instruction Council meeting to provide additional information and to answer questions about this new program proposal. He discussed how this certificate is an effort to fill a niche in the health professions area that encompasses environmental interactions, sustainable development, and human/animal health. This also includes several other dimensions such as social-economic, environmental, agriculture, entomological (with regards to disease), etc. Dr. Malayer discussed how this certificate has been in the works for several years now with inspiration from Global Studies and international partnerships about sustainable development. This certificate will attract medical and veterinary students, as well as other students interested in careers in sustainable development, public health, international development, regulation, etc. It will be offered to medical and veterinary students as a dual-degree opportunity, and then the plan is to also offer it to health professionals off-site (international partners). This certificate is based on existing courses and can be modified. Clary asked for clarification that these courses are or will need to be offered online, and Malayer confirmed. This was not moved for a vote during Instruction Council; instead, Francisco will complete the vote for this via email. This must be approved by the OSU/A&M Board before being presented to the State Board of Regents and thus won't receive final action until September.

4. Other

Freshman Class Size – Chris Francisco

Data (Cowboy Data Roundup) are showing large numbers in orientation registration, strongly suggesting a freshman class of over 5,100. This means that more sections of freshman courses will be needed, and because students are also coming in with credits, more seats in sophomore-level courses will be needed, as well. Baker mentioned that Nick Holmes is using heat maps for enrollment patterns for particular days of O&E. Baker's team is working to balance course loads appropriately to help academic programs. Nick Holmes and Amy Martindale are frequently communicating about gen-ed seats, and Amy Martindale is working to maintain the waitlists effectively.

Fullerton asked about the reason for these numbers. Francisco answered that out-of-state enrollment has grown and the cliff is not as dramatic in Oklahoma. He also mentioned that, overall, out-of-state admissions are more profitable (which Burns stated might help with budget). Francisco said that international numbers are an unknown at this point and out of our control. Clary mentioned that this will affect graduate programs and is causing difficulty predicting numbers with classes being uncertain. Francisco advised not to project numbers lower based on a concern that accepted international graduate students might not be able to attend.

Francisco also discussed that the only data source to rely on is IRA.

The topic of housing was breached. Burns stated that there is a group looking at numbers weekly and updating President Hess. He stated that everyone in the group feels comfortable that there will not be an issue with freshmen housing; however, there may be issues with returning students. Baker mentioned a concern that some students may not come back if they cannot get on-campus housing.

Burns said that they are reporting to Housing daily the students who are most financially at-risk who have not received housing in hopes to place them as soon as possible.

Clary asked about an increased yield on in-state, and Burns answered that the growth is in out-of-state, which is similar for OU as well.

Baker stated that her team is recalibrating who they consider to be the high-touch/at-risk students because of the change with GPA calculations. They are using 3.6 as the cutoff GPA this year (last year, the cutoff GPA was 3.2) for high-touch/low-touch students. It's harder to anticipate what the High School GPA means in terms of enrollment/retention; will have to reset with this cohort because of reduced predictability (Burns stated that GPA in the past has provided 60% predictability of what we can tell about a High School student in his/her first year). Fullerton asked why this is, and Burns responded that it is because of the State Regents' changes with weighted GPAs (showing as higher). Francisco added that there was an overhaul in State Regents policy that changes how almost everything is done, and because of this, weighted GPAs must be used or there would be issues with scholarships and competition with other institutions.

Clary asked Baker how this will affect the number of students with the GPA cutoff adjustment. Baker reported that, when calculating numbers (which was difficult to do), they used 3.6 GPA plus first generation students, which is around 2000 students.

Burns also discussed that his team is adding rural as a flag in analytics, as well as Title 1 High School students.

Academic Records Retention Policy – Chris Francisco

There is a new draft that Francisco will circulate (and a vote will be needed) but is pending Legal's review. The changes will allow electronic records of grades along with written records of grades, which right now is prohibited. There is a provision that requires faculty to retain certain course materials for five years, which Francisco is setting down to one year but is asking departments to keep course outlines and syllabi that can be accessed if needed (i.e., for transfer credit). The changes are consistent with State policy, which has very specific restrictions. Another change has to do with OSU-TUL with regards to where things are sent, treating OSU-TUL the same way as other entities. Francisco stated that he wants to make sure that we are complying with the minimal standards of the policy.

Student Complaint Tracking – Chris Francisco

We are required to have a system for tracking student complaints and how they are resolved. It is a Federal financial aid requirement and has been an HLC policy since 1998. After review of our current practices, we feel we need to improve what we have been doing and ensure we have a clear and organized process. A working group is finalizing a revision to our current approach and will streamline the process soon.

Clary asked what constitutes a complaint (vs a conversation). Francisco answered that some institutions define it as a formal, written, signed complaint; some have specific criteria for what the topics are to be. He mentioned that we do not just want a form on the web that will only increase complaints centrally that can be better addressed at different levels, such as a complaint about a class that should go to a course coordinator or department head who can more effectively deal with it.

Student Complaint re: the ability to see graded work and ask questions about it – Chris Francisco

Francisco led a discussion regarding whether or not we want to document somewhere that students have a right to see graded work and ask questions, and if so, where this would be formalized (besides just a syllabus attachment). He discussed wanting to find a place to record this outside of the Grade Appeals policy to be more proactive rather than reactive – and to have something that the colleges and departments can refer to when issues that arise. Francisco mentioned that this would be similar to when the attendance policy was revised to include jury duty since it was not specifically mentioned in the policy. Doust discussed including it in the New Faculty Orientation, and the response was that it is often not a new faculty issue. Mason discussed that this speaks to the culture of how learning is changing (e.g., AI) and how faculty are struggling with how to adjust and are possibly responding/withholding out of fear. She also discussed a desire to work with faculty to help them feel more comfortable with this.

Low Productivity Requests from State Regents – Chris Francisco

The State Regents wish to improve efficiency and do not want us running programs that are costing more than they feel appropriate. Instead of completing annual Low Productivity Reports as has typically been done, they are going back to look at everything that was on the list from the last five years, which is around 40 programs. Ryan Chung's team (UAT) is coordinating this. Provost Mendez wants the Deans themselves to look at these. Francisco asked that these be taken very seriously. There are some programs in which the Provost's Office will recommend deletion. The issues are with the courses with few students in them, and colleges need to take a hard look at these and decide whether or not there is justification for continuing these programs. Other programs that are low- or no-cost should not be an issue. Additionally, shared programs are easy to justify, as they are an efficient use of resources across institutions.

Sanogo discussed APR lists for certificates for next year, mentioning that this is a good opportunity to assess, as many are graduate certificates with low enrollment. Francisco discussed that the State Regents have a rule that states that if you have not completed your APR on time, you cannot complete a program modification. Doust asked about departments that have master's to PhD or off-ramp programs because students did not get admitted to the PhD program being reasonable, and Francisco answered affirmatively because this is not courses being offered specifically for a master's degree but rather a "getting a master's along the way" situation.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:58am.

Minutes were recorded by Ashley Varnell.