



# FACULTY SENATE

*The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA*

## **AGENDA OF THE FACULTY SENATE – NORMAN CAMPUS**

**November 10, 2025 | 3:30 p.m. in the Thurman J White Forum Building, Forum Room**

- **Call to Order and Determination of a quorum**
- **Approval of the Senate Journal for the regular sessions of October 13, 2025.**
- **Announcements**
  - o The Faculty Senate extends condolences to the family and former colleagues of Sonya Fallgatter, long time staff of the Senate who passed away on October 15, 2025.
  - o Save the Date: The Faculty Senate Shared Governance Reception will be held on January 26, 2026, from 4 pm to 6 pm in the Scholars Room at Bizzell Memorial Library
- **Senate Chair's Report (attached)**
- **Remarks from Dr. Wayne Riggs, Director of the Center for Faculty Excellence**
- **Remarks from Dr. Paul Gilmore, Dean of the Honors College**
- **Remarks from Dr. Lori Snyder, OU Elevate**
- **For Discussion: Revised "Oklahoma Principles and Policy for Political Neutrality in Hiring" facilitated by Dr. Hunter Heyck (attached)**
- **Committee of the Whole**
  - o Follow-up on topics from October
- **New Business**
- **Adjournment**

Long before the University of Oklahoma was established, the land on which the University now resides was the traditional home of the "Hasinai" Caddo Nation and "*Kirikir?i:s*" Wichita & Affiliated Tribes.

We acknowledge this territory once also served as a hunting ground, trade exchange point, and migration route for the Apache, Comanche, Kiowa and Osage nations.

Today, 39 tribal nations dwell in the state of Oklahoma as a result of settler and colonial policies that were designed to assimilate Native people.

The University of Oklahoma recognizes the historical connection our university has with its Indigenous community. We acknowledge, honor and respect the diverse Indigenous peoples connected to this land. We fully recognize, support and advocate for the sovereign rights of all of Oklahoma's 39 tribal nations. This acknowledgement is aligned with our university's core value of creating a diverse and inclusive community. It is an institutional responsibility to recognize and acknowledge the people, culture and history that make up our entire OU Community"

## JOURNAL OF THE FACULTY SENATE

The University of Oklahoma (Norman Campus)

Regular session – October 13, 2025 – 3:30 p.m.

Oklahoma Memorial Union – Frontiers Room

Office: Chemistry Building, Room 207 | Phone: 405-325-6789

Email: [FacSen@ou.edu](mailto:FacSen@ou.edu) | Website <https://www.ou.edu/facultysenate>

*Note: The remarks of the Senators and others are summarized and not verbatim*

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The meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm by Chair Robbins.

PRESENT: Ahsan, Apanasov, Bert, Beutel, Bhattarai, Bofferding (1), Borck, Brice (1), Cain, Cavallo(1), Costa Mirais de Sa E Silva (1), Cortest (1), Demir, Edgerton, Ernest, Fahes, Fithian, Gordon, Grigo, Grinnell Davis (1) Hambright, Hill, Hougen (1), Kang, Kaoutzani, Kazempoor, Ketchum, Kibbey, Lamothe, Litov, Liu, Lungmus, McLeod, Minks, Mountford, Muraleetharan, Nollert. Richter Ado, Rueda, Sarmiento, Scrivener, (1) Sharma (1), Tracy, Warnken, Wood, Youngbull

FS Chair: Sarah Robbins

FS Chair-elect: Rebecca Loraamm

FS Secretary: Stephanie Burge

FS Executive Committee Members (Non-senators):

FS Administrative Manager: Ann Seely

Guests: Milos Savić – Dean, College of Professional and Continuing Studies  
Professor Hunter Heyck

ABSENT: Cavallo, Costa Mirais de Sa E Silva, Ethridge, Lungmus, Rueda (1), Larson, Schmeltzer,

*Note: During the period from June 2025 to May 2026, the Senate holds eight regular sessions. The figures in parentheses above indicate the number of absences.*

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## **DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM.**

Quorum was achieved.

## **APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL**

The Faculty Senate Journal for the regular meeting of May 12, 2025, was approved with the revisions of a couple of incorrect reported absences. Senator Tracy moved to approve, and the motion was seconded by Senator Demir. The vote passed and the journal was approved.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

## **SENATE CHAIR'S REPORT, BY CHAIR ROBBINS**

The report was distributed via email. Chair Robbins opened the floor to questions. There were no questions.

## **MILOS SAVIĆ – DEAN, COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING STUDIES**

Dean Savić offered remarks concerning updates on the College of Professional and Continuing Studies (PACS) in an effort to improve visibility for the college. PACS offers a number of educational opportunities for the community, as well as OU students including programs for K-12 students, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, the Economic Development Institute, and its own degree programs. Savić noted that PACS students are primarily non-traditional students, in their mid-30s, who are concurrently enrolled and working. For this reason, PACS offers many asynchronous, 8-week courses. Students are also offered five start dates to allow for greater student flexibility. One out of every three students is a first-gen college student and one out of every five students is active-duty military. PACS students have non-traditional pathways, often having attended multiple institutions before landing at OU. Most degrees are focused on adult degree completion programs to allow students to work while enrolled in college.

PACS has increased its enrollment by a considerable amount and offered 31,000 credit hours across the world. PACS also has significantly higher persistent rates for adult learnings than the national average. Savić noted that the PACS difference is care for students, which emphasizes communication and concern, despite the on-line asynchronous nature of instruction.

The fastest growing majors in PACS include construction management, healthcare management, and criminal justice degrees. Savić noted that PACS contributes to lead on plan through its connection to students, with a 70 percent retention rate. It also is accessible, affordable education for students. PACS is well positioned to shape Oklahoma's workforce via the wide array of credentials and degrees it offers. Faculty who are interested in developing micro credentials are welcome. PACS also offers a lot of chances to be in community and partner with industries.

A senator asked how PACS relates to OU online and asked why PACS wanted to reach out to Faculty Senate. Dr. Savić stated that OU online is a big umbrella overseen by Senior Vice Provost Morvant, and PACS is one of the colleges under that umbrella. Dr. Savić said that he tries to listen to faculty and staff, and they recommended him come to speak with Senate to offer a refresher on what PACS does and does not do to articulate the contribution PACS makes to OU. He also noted that PACS works with OU Educational Services and pointed to our strong adult degree completion programs there.

Another senator asked about faculty/staff professional development that PACS offers. Savić noted that PACS has extensive knowledge about teaching and advising.

A senator asked whether PACS offers classes on global fluency and/or study abroad. Savić noted that with the new strategic plan, there is a push to ONE OU, and that PACS students should have all the same opportunities as other OU students. While demand is an issue, working towards better facilitation of these students is an opportunity upon which to build. Savić also noted that OU PACS reach is wide ranging, and that the OU brand often attracts students to OU PACS. Savić also noted that many students who have had a great experience often will advertise it to other potential students.

## **FOR DISCUSSION: OKLAHOMA PRINCIPLES, FACILITATED BY PROF. HUNTER HEYCK**

Professor Hunter Heyck introduced the Oklahoma Principles, giving some background on their development. Late last spring, President Harroz asked Provost Wright to compose a group from each of the various campuses to develop a set of statements related to political neutrality of hiring. This group worked together to develop the Oklahoma Principles. These efforts were developed to enhance best practice on ideological and political neutrality, as well as academic freedom. The Oklahoma Principles have already been approved by the Provost, university council, and Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

One senator noted that the policy is well-written and makes sense. He asked how many other universities have similar policies, given that development of a policy could bring unwanted scrutiny? Heyck noted that the politics of political neutrality are very fraught. There are both good and bad faith critiques. Good faith critiques would like to see a body of faculty members with heterogeneous ideological thought. A number of other universities have adopted the Chicago principles, which echo similar ideas.

Another senator raised two issues. First, he argued, there is no such thing as unbiased, neutral science. Doctoral programs in social science teach that social backgrounds influence scientific inquiry. Second, have there been any allegations that political bias has infused hiring searches? So, why introduce a resolution that insinuates this is happening? Heyck noted that the current presidential administration is trying to impose ideological tests to pursue and secure research funding, and this kind of statement would argue against that. Heyck noted that he has never taken part in a search that used an ideological litmus test but noted that he has seen searches where best practices were not implemented (e.g., being asked about marital status). So, by re-affirming best practices, we instill them further. One of the goals of this is to be able to articulate that if there is a skew in the ideological viewpoint of a given faculty group, it is not from a litmus test. Heyck also noted that people tend to hire people who are like themselves in various ways, unless they are made aware of the need for intellectual diversity.

Another senator noted that the first two paragraphs (especially the reference to that Chicago principles) do not describe what is happening in terms of course syllabi.

A senator noted that this policy referenced a Board of Regents policy that talks about discrimination based on various characteristics but does not reference political beliefs. Why make a policy that is about political beliefs, rather than other forms of discrimination? Further, what if a person explicitly avows antisemitic beliefs, could we not refuse to hire them? Heyck argued that under the typical understanding of the law, antisemitism, racism, and misogyny, do not fall under the category of political beliefs. The senator responded that maybe we should broaden the policy to include other forms of discrimination. Heyck argued that we are singling out political beliefs because we are being attacked on that ground. The senator argued that it might be read as allowing other forms of discriminatory behavior to take place.

Another Senator noted that this would be beneficial in instances where candidates offered a political view that differs from search committee members, it would be helpful to avoid discrimination. The senator asked about the last paragraph, which specifically mentioned academic hiring, and whether that was intentional? Heyck noted that was reflected in the charge that the committee was given, which was focused on faculty hiring. By contrast, staff hiring works much more through HR, with its own policies.

A senator noted that in talking about current events, discussions of politics can potentially come up in searches, and probably should not. He also noted that he shared other senators' concerns about the statement being narrowly about political ideology with respect to hiring. He advocated for broadening the statement. Heyck noted that he would welcome a statement from the Senate that expressed support for freedom in academic inquiry.

A senator noted that for some disciplines, they are caught between the executive order and what their professional accreditation demands. So, for some disciplines, the knowledge production process is more political than others.

Another senator asked how we would assess this. A form? Training? Could candidates still meet with broad groups of people who may not sign such a document? Heyck noted that the Oklahoma Principles would apply to the search committee and the group of people above that committee (e.g., search committee, chair, and those involved in hiring process above chair).

A senator noted that the first paragraph avowed the importance of not shielding students from ideas that they might find offensive, and that was important to state. The senator asked how this would relate to bias training for search committees and chairs. Heyck noted that as a part of this process, the group was asked to review training materials (anti-bias training) and noted that the training was good. Heyck noted that a couple of slides in that training could be reflective of the ideas in these principles.

Another senator noted that the primary purpose of policy is to clarify and assign responsibility, which is better than informal norms, as these can generate mistrust.

A senator argued that she really liked the idea of having policies and it would offer protection. She noted that while the first paragraph was good, the second paragraph had a lot of ambiguous language. Heyck noted that the second paragraph was written with specific charges levied at the university in mind. Heyck noted that in the committee's minds, there is a difference between discussing a variety of viewpoints rather than political indoctrination.

Another senator noted that while there are lots of good things in the first two paragraphs, the first sentence might be inferred as making programmatic decisions about what research areas are valued and not valued (e.g., bias in decision-making). Heyck noted that perhaps wordsmithing this part would solve this.

Chair Robbins asked senators to send feedback to [FacSen@ou.edu](mailto:FacSen@ou.edu) or Hunter Heyck [Hheyck@ou.edu](mailto:Hheyck@ou.edu). Robbins noted that she would meet with Provost Wright on Thursday and could ask for time to revise the document with Faculty Senate input.

A senator moved that we create a sub-committee to work on friendly amendments to the Oklahoma Principles. The motion was seconded. The senator who started the motion called the motion to question. 15 in favor. 7 opposed. 7 abstentions. A sub-committee will be appointed to review the language.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Chair Robbins asked if there was any new business and no new business was introduced.

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

Dean Hougen moved to add NVivo to the Committee of the Whole and another senator seconded the motion. The motion passed.

A senator moved to the committee of the whole, another senator seconded. The motion passed. Entered at 5:11pm. Exited at 5:44pm.

**Class Cancellation for SOval Experience**

**Faculty Voice**

**Parking Challenges**

**Cancellation of NVivo**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:44 pm. The next regularly scheduled Faculty Senate Meeting of this academic year will be held on November 10, 2025, at 3:30 pm.

Stephanie Burge, Faculty Senate Secretary, 2025-26

## October 2025 Faculty Senate Chair's Report

I'm stunned that it is already the end of October – where does the time go? October was another month filled with conversations and planning. And, of course, November will be a third over by the time you receive this, and then it's Thanksgiving, finals, and winter break – all before we can come up for air.

In early October, I met with Grey Allman, Associate Provost for Policy & Administration, to discuss the next steps for a resolution from SGA regarding a limit on the number of midterms a student must take on a single day. This was a resolution sent to the Faculty Senate Chair in the Spring, but no action was taken at the time. It was unclear if this was a single student who encountered a problem with scheduling or a more widespread issue. There will be a follow-up meeting with SGA representation in November to discern the scope of the problem. During this meeting, I made an inquiry about changing the term "non-regular faculty" in the Regents Handbook, and I was informed that there is a comprehensive review of Regents policies underway and this could be addressed when they reached the relevant policy.

During the October FSEC meeting, we were joined by Hollye Hunt, Vice President of Executive Affairs, to discuss issues planned for the FSEC discussion with President Harroz related to faculty engagement. Mark Morvant, Senior Vice Provost for Student Success, attended to discuss changes to the 8-week block schedule.

At the October Faculty Senate Meeting, we heard a presentation from Dr. Miloš Savić, Dean of the College of Professional and Continuing Studies. We also had a spirited discussion about the proposed "Oklahoma Principles and Policy for Political Neutrality in Hiring," which was facilitated by Dr. Hunter Heyck. Following the senate meeting, we appointed a subcommittee to propose revised language for the "Oklahoma Principles." Hunter Heyck chaired the subcommittee. Senators Lewis Borck, Mashhad Fahes, Marie Kaoutzani, and Roxanne Mountford also served. The proposed language has been circulated among the committee that drafted the original version and will be brought forward to senate for further discussion in November. The OU-Health Senate will also be discussing the principles for a vote in December. Thank you to all who have worked on these drafts!

FSEC met with President Harroz and VP Hunt on October 15th. The discussions included the landscape of higher education, the highlights from the meeting with the SEC Presidents, and faculty engagement. On October 20th, FSEC met with Provost Wright, and we discussed the Vice Provost for Online Learning position that will be recruited soon; this is not a new position but rather is being reclassified from Vice President to Vice Provost. We also discussed proposed changes to the academic calendar and implications for possible changes to student visas as well as H-1B visas.

I had a meeting with VP Hunt where I provided the feedback received from the senate regarding the Soval concert. She was very receptive to the feedback and indicated they would communicate known interruptions sooner moving forward.

Jennifer Murchison, Director of the Accessibility and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), invited me to an introductory meeting. We focused on getting to know each other and exploring collaboration opportunities. She provided an update on implementing a new platform to better manage information related to accommodations; the system will provide a faculty portal to see all accommodations for a class in one place and an easier experience for students.

## **October 2025 Faculty Senate Chair's Report**

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Faculty Advisory Council met at the end of the month. We discussed changes to the annual faculty survey, including timing of distribution and content. This survey will be distributed soon. Please take a few minutes to complete it. It provides longitudinal data for the state and a basis for comparison between state institutions.

In November, Jeff Blahnik will be meeting with the FSEC to discuss the current system for awarding scholarships; Wayne Riggs will be promoting the Center for Faculty Excellence with the Senate; and, the new Dean of the Honors College, Paul Gilmore will also be speaking to the Senate. FSEC will also be having discussions in earnest about the possible revisions to the Faculty Senate By-laws that will be presented to the Senate for discussion in the upcoming months. In addition, the Senates at both the OU-Health Campus and OU-Norman will be continuing their discussion of the "Oklahoma Principles and Policy Regarding Political Neutrality in Hiring."

Submitted by Sarah Robbins, 2025-26 Faculty Senate Chair



## Oklahoma Principles and Policy for Political Neutrality in Hiring

The University of Oklahoma affirms that the most robust education arises from the free exchange of ideas in a scholarly community that is open to a wide range of views, and where those views are examined in the bright light of evidence and reasoned argument. As reflected in the Chicago Principles, adopted by the University in 2022<sup>1</sup>, our mission is not to tell students what to think or to shield them from ideas or opinions that they or others may find uncomfortable, unwelcome, or even offensive. Our mission is to create, communicate, and engage with knowledge in an environment that lets inquiry and discussion flourish.

Our commitment to free expression and open inquiry is also manifest in the University's longstanding policy prohibiting discrimination based on political beliefs<sup>2</sup>. Our dedication to political neutrality in hiring decisions is a deliberate and necessary commitment to ensure that scholarly inquiry, teaching, and research flourish in an environment of open inquiry and freedom of expression. Thus we maintain our dedication to the principle that decisions regarding the recruitment and employment of all University personnel shall be based solely upon relevant professional qualifications and merit.

All individuals who participate in the hiring process for academic appointments are expected to adhere to the University's prohibition on discrimination on the basis of political beliefs and the University's commitment to political neutrality in hiring. In addition, individuals appointed to serve on search committees, and individuals with ultimate authority to make hiring recommendations or decisions for any academic appointment (such as Department Chairs or Directors, College Deans, and the Provost), must certify their compliance with this policy as a condition for being eligible to serve on such committees or make hiring recommendations or decisions. The Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost for each respective campus shall develop a certification form by which the individual attests that the individual:

1. Acknowledges and agrees to comply with the prohibition on discrimination as set forth by the [Non-Discrimination Policy](#), including on the basis of political beliefs;
2. Commits to a politically neutral evaluation of a candidate's academic merits;
3. Will not ask about or discuss partisan affiliation during the search and recruitment process;
4. Will not indicate to a candidate, either directly or through clear implication, that the University of Oklahoma endorses or rejects any set of political beliefs or partisan ideology.

Any individual who does not execute the certification is ineligible to serve on a search committee or make hiring recommendations or decisions for an academic appointment. Allegations of noncompliance with a certification shall be referred to the Office of Institutional Equity for investigation. Any individual who is found not in compliance shall be ineligible to serve on future academic search committees or to make hiring recommendations or decisions regarding academic appointments.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Oklahoma Board of Regents (2022). "Adoption of the Chicago Statement". In [Minutes of the Regents Meeting](#), November 30, 2022. University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.

<sup>2</sup> [Non-Discrimination Policy](#)