

AGENDA OF THE FACULTY SENATE – NORMAN CAMPUS

September 21, 2026

Thurman J White Forum Building
1704 Asp Ave – Conference Room A

- **Call to order and determination of quorum**
- **Approval of the Senate Journal for the regular session of May 11, 2026.**
- **Welcome:**
 - Introductions and communications
 - New Senator orientation materials and survey
- **Announcements:**
 - The Faculty Senate is sad to report the death of Associate Professor Vincent Leseney, Musical Theatre, on June 20, 2026, and extends sympathy to his colleagues and family.
- **Senate Chair's Report** (attached)
- **Speakers:**
 - **Lindsay Risley, Health and Wellness Manager:** Employee Engagement Survey
 - **Sarah Ellis, Vice Provost for Faculty:** President's Advisory Committee for Faculty Accountability
- **Committee of the Whole**
 - Overview and procedures
 - Student Visa System: Samuel Meek
- **New Business**
- **Adjourn**

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:*” 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 – May 11, 2026 – 3:30 p.m.

Oklahoma Memorial Union – Frontiers Room

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

Email: FacSen@ou.edu | Website <https://www.ou.edu/facultysenate>

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

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

PRESENT: Ahsen, bert, Beutel, Bhattarai, Bofferding, Borck, Cain, Cortes, De Sa E Silva, Demir, Etheridge, Fahes Fithian, Gordon, Grigo, Hill, Hill, Hougen, Kang, Ketchum, Kazempoor, Kibbey, Lamothe, Larson, Litov, Lungmus, Mortazavi, Muraleetharan, Nollertm Richter Addo, Samiento, Sharma, Tracy, Warnken, Wood, Youngbull

FS Chair: Sarah Robbins

FS Chair-elect: Rebecca Loraamm

FS Secretary: Stephanie Burge

FS Executive Committee Members (Non-senators): Julia Abramson

FS Administrative Manager: Ann Seely

Guests: Hunter Heyck, Professor History of Science, Technology, and Medicine

ABSENT: Apanasov, Edgerton, Ernest, Grinnell-Davis, Hambright, Kaoutzani, McLeod, Minks, 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 April 13, 2026, was approved. Senator Fithian moved to approve, and the motion was seconded by a second senator. 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.

FOR VOTE: ELECTION of AT-LARGE MEMBERS OF FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair Robbins announced the slate of candidates for the at-large members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. There were no additional nominations from the floor. Peter Soppelsa (Humanities), Lee Fithian (Professional Programs), and Cindy Gordon (STEM) were elected.

FOR VOTE: APPROVAL OF PROPOSED CANDIDATES FOR COMMITTEES AND COUNCILS

Chair Robbins initiated the vote on the slate of proposed candidates for committees and councils. The slate attached was elected by acclamation.

DISCUSSION AND VOTE: DRAFT OF RESOLUTION RELATED TO UNIVERSITY DIGITAL SYSTEMS, PRESENTED BY HUNTER HEYCK

Hunter Heyck presented a draft of resolution related to university digital systems, in consultation with the IT Council. Heyck noted that over the past year, there have been several attempts by university to use digital systems that might infringe on the civil liberties and rights of individuals in the university committee. Heyck proposed a resolution that would recommend the IT council form a task force that would develop a policy for the classification, review, and oversight of digital systems to be presented to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

A senator asked why the IT council would be the one to constitute the task force because her experience suggests that the IT council is not as concerned with academic freedom relative to data stewardship and institutional risk. Heyck noted that if another body or group would be better positioned to this task, he would be open to that. He also noted that the IT council can be a place where faculty and people representing the administration often work together on that council. The faculty member noted the importance of the composition of the council with respect to faculty representation.

Another senator mentioned that she was on the IT council as a faculty member and spent the year being told what she was going to be doing, without input from the council.

Another senator noted that at Arizona State, the university is scraping data in efforts to create short videos but is using the technology in a way that potentially misrepresents intellectual property. Heyck noted that this resolution would not necessarily relate to intellectual property, although that could potentially be within the scope of the committee. He noted that in North Carolina, a university president mentioned that they would video tape faculty without asking them.

Another senator asked whose council the IT council was, and under whose purview it fell. The senator noted that he also had not heard of instances that would require a resolution such as this. Heyck noted that Inside Higher Education or the Chronicle both reveal a fair amount of activity in universities where digital technology is being used to transgress civil liberties. Heyck noted that while he trusts our administrators, he could envision a situation where these decisions are not left to OU administration. Heyck also noted that there is supposed to be a Gemini rollout, which may have implications for the information collected by Gemini, and as such, OU might benefit from such a policy.

Another senator asked whether the OU IT Council is the right group for this task, noting that this group has out-of-date contact information on their website, which may indicate a potentially less than functional council. Heyck noted that the current chair would like the council to be more active than it has been and noted that the charge of the council makes it a good fit, although past practice may make it a less ideal location for the development of such a policy.

Another senator noted that such a policy is badly needed. He noted that if you travel to China, even for private travel, you can no longer access any OU account, even if you take precautions using a VPN. He noted that this new practice was developed without faculty input and feedback. Heyck noted that important technology related policies are often presented in ways that suggest faculty participation in their development has been rare- if at all.

Heyck noted that while there seemed to be general agreement with the need for such recommendations, there seemed to be concern about referring this to IT council and that perhaps this committee should originate from the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

A senator noted that she is a part of the AI leadership council for the university and they are having some of these conversations already, so some of these conversations are already happening at the university.

A senator asked a clarifying question to see where the IT council stands in relationship to shared governance. This council is supposed to meet with Faculty Senate Executive Committee regularly. Chair Robbins noted that the committee chair has been active and in communication with FSEC via two annual meetings with the large FSEC.

Another senator asked whether there was a specific problem or threat currently that is leading to this resolution or whether this was in anticipation of such a problem or threat. Heyck noted that while there is no specific issue at OU at the moment, this is happening at other universities, and we want to be ahead of the issue. As an example, Heyck noted that the example of Canvas being hacked might prompt additional security measures that might present concerns for individual faculty rights. He also advocated for the role of faculty to provide insight for shared governance.

A friendly amendment was proposed to have FSEC create a task force, rather than the IT council.

Chair Robbins initiated the vote on the resolution, as amended. The vote passed.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Senator Tracy motioned that we moved to the Committee of the Whole, and another Senator seconded the motion. We entered Committee of the Whole at 4:01pm. We exited at 4:53pm.

TRANSITION OF POWER

Chair Robbins passed the gavel to Chair Anderson. Chair Anderson initiated a resolution honoring Past Chair Robbins for her efforts on behalf of Faculty Senate over the past year.

Resolution of Appreciation to Professor Sarah Robbins, *Outgoing Faculty Senate Chair*

WHEREAS Professor Robbins has served with distinction as Chair of the Faculty Senate for the academic year 2025-2026;

WHEREAS Professor Robbins worked behind the scenes to improve the operations of the Senate, including the streamlining of Senate internal procedures and committees;

WHEREAS Professor Robbins saw to completion the years-long effort to amending the bylaws to include valuable contributions from non-regular faculty;

WHEREAS Professor Robbins maintained open communication, collaboration, and mutual respect among the members of the Faculty Senate and with the OU administration;

WHEREAS Professor Robbins demonstrated thoughtful leadership and outstanding commitment to protecting the interest of the faculty and upholding the principles of shared governance in an especially challenging year;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate expresses its deepest appreciation to Professor Sarah Robbins for her **exemplary** leadership, service, and commitment to the Faculty of the University of Oklahoma for the academic year 2025-26.

The resolution passed.

NEW BUSINESS

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

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5 pm. The next regularly scheduled Faculty Senate Meeting of this academic year will be held on September 14, 2026, at 3:30pm.

Stephanie Burge, Faculty Senate Secretary, 2025-26

Faculty Senate Chair's Report – September 2026

As we head into another academic year, I am excited to step into the role of Faculty Senate Chair as it will provide new challenges and opportunities to work with my colleagues towards making OU a better place for all of us.

Although the summer was relatively light in terms of meetings, the Faculty Senate officers handed off materials during the transition period between incoming and outgoing officers, and had thoughtful discussion as we began planning for the coming year. The Immediate Past Chair, Sarah Robbins recently took a position in the Provost's office, and as such had to step away from her advisory role in the Faculty Senate. I asked former chairs Hunter Heyck and Lori Jervis to return to this advisory role and they graciously agreed to ensure continuity. While Sarah will be missed in her role in the Faculty Senate, I am confident the Provost's office has an excellent new addition to their team.

August saw considerable pick up in activity, as is normal for the university during annual retreats and kick-off season. Faculty Senate was no different, as we held our own FSEC planning retreat to embark on a few new things. First, we discussed shared governance with Staff Senate and Student Government representatives at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. We listened to what topics are on their agenda for this year that may also impact the Faculty. These included instructional policy changes, international student visa changes, and issues surrounding "thriving wages" as we work towards building shared support and resources. Then, President Harroz and VP for Executive Affairs Hollye Hunt joined us for a working lunch. President Harroz shared some updates from the summer then discussed some of his key objectives for the upcoming year with our group, such as continuing to make OU more affordable to students, ways to connect OU with the broader community, advocating for OU in the current funding landscape, and working towards accountable shared governance at the university. FSEC ended the retreat with discussion on the pressing issues left open in the senate last year and identified topics we would like to address, including continued improvements to internal processes, monitoring change at the local, state, and federal levels, and upholding the principle of academic freedom.

We ended the month of August with the Large FSEC meeting, which provides an opportunity for council and Faculty Senate standing committee chairs to share updates and outline their goals for the year. One of the challenges for these chairs in prior years was the handoff of materials when one chair steps away from a committee/council and a new chair assumes the role. For that reason, one of the new things the Faculty Senate officers added is a streamlined means for reporting committee/council activities and a way to use the Faculty Senate office to assist with the management of these materials during transition periods in support of new chairs. I appreciate how dedicated the committee and council chairs are to their roles as leaders in the University; as each chair articulated the challenges their respective committee will face in a thoughtful way and discussed plans to address those issues in the year ahead. I look forward to working with them to help facilitate these needs by mobilizing the resources of the Faculty Senate and am excited to learn more about their progress at the end of the year.

Stepping into September, FSEC convened an Ad Hoc Committee on Responsible Governance of University Digital Systems, as per the resolution adopted by the Senate in May 2026. The senators identified that we as an institution are increasingly reliant on advanced digital systems, including artificial intelligence, data analytics platforms and cloud-based services, all of which impact faculty in

Faculty Senate Chair's Report – September 2026

areas of teaching, research, service, and administrative functions, and that many of these systems present elevated institutional, legal, ethical, and reputational risks to faculty. To fulfill its core principle of not procuring or deploying digital systems in ways that materially undermine academic freedom, due process, or the rights of individuals, the Senate has resolved that OU must adopt a structured shared governance framework. The Ad Hoc committee will aim to develop and propose a shared governance framework that respects these rights and is responsive to faculty needs, as well as the rights and needs of students and staff. The committee will report back to Faculty Senate on their progress in the spring surrounding the positive use and management of advanced digital systems at the university.

Additionally, the Ad Hoc Faculty Senate Committee on Committee & Council Alignment and Inter-Campus Collaboration held its first meeting. Over several years of feedback, faculty have continued to ask for structural integration at the university level, as it represents necessary input toward tackling university-wide challenges such as streamlining research collaborations, enhancing operational excellence, and providing a unified faculty voice; but to make this a reality we must look at how faculty voice is integrated into existing administrative and governance structures. Over the next couple of years, representatives from the Faculty Senate and the Provost's office will work together by reviewing the existing committee and council landscape to suggest ways to strengthen our shared governance framework. Findings from this effort will align governance with the University's strategic objectives, fostering an environment of accountable shared governance that supports the growth of "One University." Although formal committee recommendations will not be shared until the work has been concluded, the committee will report an update to FSEC towards the end of the year on their progress.

Once again Faculty Senate was honored to co-host the [State of the University](#) address with the Staff Senate, as this annual event provides the opportunity in part to reaffirm our shared values, vision, and voice among faculty, staff, and senior administration. President Harroz offered his insight into the current state of higher education more broadly, outlined the challenges we face as an institution and opened a dialog on the shared concerns of impact to our community and our ability to make meaningful progress toward the One OU vision. Both Staff and Faculty Senates asked a series of questions in consultation with President Harroz. Faculty in particular were interested in hearing President Harroz's perspective on where he sees investment and growth in research as we continue to strive for AAU status, how the university will address record enrollment numbers as it relates to faculty hiring in the coming years, and to hear his take on the value of shared governance to him and the executive administration directly. President Harroz was thoughtful yet optimistic in offering his answers, and we look forward to working with the faculty we represent, our associated staff, and senior administrators towards meaningful outcomes this year as we tackle complex, shared challenges together.

As we move through the remainder of September, the Faculty Senate will conduct our first meeting of the year, and the FSEC and Faculty Senate officers look forward to actively engaging with the senators and senior administrators at this meeting and future opportunities, towards a productive and memorable academic year.

Submitted by Rebecca Anderson, 2026-27 Chair, Faculty Senate