

JOURNAL OF THE FACULTY SENATE
The University of Oklahoma (Norman Campus)
Regular session – September 16, 2024 – 3:30 p.m.
Thurman J White Forum Building – Conference Room B
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 3:34 pm by Chair Jervis. Senators were asked to read the [Land Acknowledgement](#).

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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 13, 2024 was approved without revisions. Senator Lee Fithian moved to approve. Sarah Tracy seconded. Vote was approved. There were 0 no votes and 3 abstentions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) The Faculty Senate is sad to report the deaths of Angela (Anne) Million, Professor Emeritus of Bibliography on July 4, 2024, Fred Morgan Siegfried, Professor in Marketing, on August 23, 2024, and Dr. Stewart Ryan, Professor of Physics on September 7, 2024. The Senate extends condolences to their colleagues and family.

b) André Wright and Dean Denise Stephens (University Libraries) invite university faculty to a reception in their honor on Thursday, September 19, from 3:30pm to 5:00pm in Bizzell Memorial Library, Scholars Lounge, Zarrow Family Faculty and Graduate Center.

c) We welcome Staff Senate Chair Crystal Ary, and Student Government Association Representatives Marilou Bento and Caleb Richardson to our meetings.

SENATE CHAIR'S REPORT, by Chair Jervis

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

INTRODUCTIONS

A motion was introduced to have Senatorial introductions. The motion was seconded and passed. Introductions of Senate Faculty officer, Senators, and student representatives commenced.

REMARKS FROM FAITH MARTIN, DIRECTOR OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, OK VOTES

Faith Martin (Director of Civic Engagement at Car Albert Center and Advisor to OK Votes) and Michael Stoyak, (President of OK Votes student organization) presented information to Faculty Senate about student voter registration and participation. The OK Votes organization would like faculty members to consider offering an excused absence for voting day. One of the biggest student concerns with voting is accessibility and getting to the polls. During voting day, campus remains open, which may inhibit student voting if they cannot find time to vote in between their classes. Martin and Stoyak also noted that there is a presentation on Canvas Commons area, related to voting accessibility, why we should vote, registration, eligibility and deadlines, if faculty are interested in accessing those materials.

REMARKS FROM DEAN RANDY HEWES, DEAN OF THE GRADUATE COLLEGE AND INTERIM DEAN OF DODGE FAMILY COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Dean Hewes offered remarks on graduate stipends, as well as Stellic (a new system for advising students). Considerable progress has been made on graduate student fees and stipends. When Dean Hewes began in the Graduate college, OU fees for graduate education were nearly \$5000 annually, which was well above average of AAUP universities. In 2021-22, with considerable decrease in graduate student fees, OU ranked at the average of AAUP universities. In addition, in 2018 OU graduate stipends were approximately 60 percent of R1/R2 schools (approximately \$9,500 for 9 months). Currently, OU graduate stipends are equivalent to 100% of R1 schools (equivalent universities or better), and offer approximately \$19,260 for 9 months. Dean Hewes is collecting data from departments regarding how these changes in fees and stipends affect graduate recruitment. Many AAUP universities are unionized, which may push stipend rates upward, which means this keeping pace with recruiting and competing for graduate students applying to top universities remains a moving target.

Dean Hewes also discussed changes in advising and degree management tools, and introduced a new tool used by OU (Stellic). Stellic (OU's new degree management tool) will allow students to track progress to degree, modify their schedules, and provide transparency of program requirements. OU has moved away from degree navigator, especially for graduate education, because it is not intuitive for students to use. Currently, the Graduate College uses over 300 forms (programs of study) available on the Graduate College website, which is both laborious for the Graduate College and also inhibits students from efficiently tracking their progress to degree. Stellic will be introduced to eliminate programs of study for graduate degrees. Master's degrees have already been programmed in Stellic, and as such will be soft-launched first. The Graduate College will be working with departments to program programs of study within Stellic so that this software can be used to assist students with planning their degrees.

Stellic will also offer departments opportunities for more proactive advising tools, including developing pathways that will show students which classes they need, along with options for courses to fulfill those requirements. Stellic will also offer opportunities for exception requests (e.g. subbing in alternative courses that meet requirements or exceptions to degree requirements). Advisors will also have access to additional advising tools, such as the ability to search students who have not yet met a key requirement or who have a GPA that puts them in academic jeopardy, etc. Stellic will also eventually allow for additional graduate milestones (e.g. ACR forms).

Senator Burns posed a question regarding part-time vs. full-time students and time to degree, noting that part-time may take students longer to degree. Dean Hewes responded that the Graduate College tracks time to degree, completion, and context is needed to understand those statistics. For example, professional programs that attract individuals who are also working full-time may take more time. Senator Burns also inquired whether time to degree might be shorter for hard sciences compared to Humanities and Social

Sciences. Dean Hewes stated that time to degree was not clearly patterned by field of study (e.g. hard sciences as compared to social sciences, humanities, and fine arts).

Another senator inquired about sources for the increases in funding for graduate stipends. Dean Hewes said that graduate fee reductions go back to his early efforts in 2016-17, and he looked for ways to increase the rate of tuition to grants that would offset some of the reduction in graduate fees. After that, a central commitment of funds (from a variety of sources, but stemming from OU's budget), allowed for permanent increases to stipends. About \$3 million came from grants, about \$1 million from DFCAS, and the rest (\$7 million) is from central investment.

Senator Hougen asked a question about the training of faculty and staff on Stellic, as well as whether Stellic integrates into undergraduate education advising. Dean Hewes answered that Stellic will include both undergraduate and graduate education, as well as OU-Norman and OUHSC degree paths. Dean Hewes also noted that Stellic is very intuitive and a mobile-friendly program, which may help people to become comfortable with this new program. The Graduate College will also work on education campaigns and have trainings for faculty, staff, and students. Senator Hougen also inquired whether departments should reach out to the Graduate College to assist with creation of Pathways. Dean Hewes said to reach out to Graduate College staff who work with program of study.

Senator Sharma asked about the feasibility of graduate stipend increases when granting agencies do not necessarily increase granting amounts. Dean Hewes discussed the difficulty in recruiting talented graduate students in an environment where stipends are increasingly competitive and where OU is trying to compete nationally for graduate student talent. Dean Hewes noted that OU has been a little low on the numbers of post-docs, and that this might be an avenue for potential growth.

Senator Grinnell Davis asked about insurance support for graduate students, given that heavily unionized institutions focus on both stipends as well as insurance. Dean Hewes responded that OU graduate students receive insurance as a part of their graduate stipend package, which they automatically receive as GTA's, but if they are not appointed as GTA's, they are eligible to sign up for a modest cost.

NEW BUSINESS

Chair Jervis asked regarding new business and no new business was introduced.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm. The next regularly scheduled Faculty Senate Meeting of this academic year will be held on October 14, 2024 at 3:30 pm.

Stephanie Burge, Faculty Senate Secretary, 2024-25