

JOURNAL OF THE FACULTY SENATE

The University of Oklahoma (Norman Campus)

Regular session – April 14, 2025 – 3:30 p.m.

Thurman J White Forum Building – Conference Room A

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

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 pm by Chair Jervis. Senators were asked to read the [Land Acknowledgement](#).

PRESENT: Almasri, Beaulieu, Beutel, Bhattarai, Brice, Burns, Busselle, Cavazos, Cuccia, Deacon, Demir, Edgerton, Ernest, Fithian, Grigo, Hill, Hougen, Jablonski, Jones, Kang, Lamothe, M., Lamothe, S., Leseney, Litov, Liu, Lungmus, Mansky, McLeod, Muraleetharan, Pixley, Rai, Schmeltzer, Scrivener, Sharma, Tracy, Warnken, Wood

FS Chair: Lori Jervis

FS Chair-elect: Sarah Robbins

FS Secretary: Stephanie Burge

FS Administrative Manager: Ann Seely

Guests: Carol Silva, Interim Vice President for Research and Partnerships
Sanum Raza, OU Education Service
J.E.B. Sheriff, Assistant Director, IT Services, Customer Experience, Identity and Access Management
Mashhad Fahes, Associate Professor, Petroleum & Geological Engineering, Gallogly

ABSENT:

Note: During the period from June 2024 to May 2025, 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

Due to inaccuracies in listed attendance for the March 10 meeting, the journal was tabled until the next meeting in May.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Sympathies are extended to the families and colleagues of Dr. Roger Mellgren, former OU Professor of Psychology, who passed away March 13, 2025.
- b. Fred Jones Art Museum Memberships: additional information is available on your table.

SENATE CHAIR'S REPORT, by Chair Jervis

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

CAROL SILVA, INTERIM VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH AND PARTNERSHIPS, EDITH KINNEY GAYLORD PRESIDENTIAL PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Carol Silva offered remarks on the current federal research environment. Silva noted that the research funding environment has changed fundamentally over the past few months, including the downsizing of funding agencies and changes in what will be funded. NIH, NSF, DOE, DOD are all now required to shift priorities and cut indirect cost recoveries. Silva noted that with the executive orders, the VPR team is working with about 25 executive orders that have impact for federal funding and noted that executive orders currently prohibit funding related to DEI, gender ideology, and green energy. Silva also noted deep cuts to federal research and administrative functions, which have had a big impact on peer review, getting federal assistance, and grant processing.

In terms of impact at OU, Silva noted that these changes have resulted in quite a few current awards being canceled, as well as the rescoping of other current awards. The federal funding environment has contributed to a substantial amount of anxiety in the academic environment. NSF has experienced major staff reductions, with up to 50 percent of staff being cut. However, lawsuits are ongoing that make this a fluid and confusing environment. Silva noted that this has resulted in a lot of delayed award processing, including the reassignment of program officers. There has been temporary freezing of grant funds, but by court order these have been lifted.

Silva reported that NIH has similar issues with respect to staffing, and one of the most important things that has happened is an imposed 15 percent cap on indirect costs. The previously negotiated rate for Norman's cap was 55% and for OUHSC was 45%. However, this reduction has been temporarily blocked in court. On

Friday (April 11), OU received notice that the Department of Energy will also be instituting a cap of 15%. However, lawsuits have been filed in these cases.

The Department of Defense remains a relatively stable funding source for research on AI, quantum, hypersonic research, but OU has had some cancellation of funding in areas that have anything to do with DEI or immigration issues.

NOAA has proposed restructuring that would eliminate climate-based research and redirect resources to programs that are not about climate change. Silva noted that they were hoping that funding related to severed weather would be allowed to be retained.

Silva noted that the funding environment has really changed significantly, and paying attention to new RFP's will be critical. In terms of indirect costs, both NIH and DOD are actively working to reduce indirect costs to 15%. That money is used to support compliance obligations, cybersecurity compliance, contract compliance, IRB, and other research support related tasks.

OU is currently advocating daily at the federal level, including using the Government affairs team to represent OU's interests through conversations with the legislation branch. Coordinated policy and legal monitoring are ongoing with multiple task forces working with OU Legal to interpret the executive orders. The environment changes daily. Hands-on faculty support is offered through the VPR's offices for faculty who have had grants cancelled, changed, and/or restructured to be proactive and advocate for faculty, and Silva asked faculty to reach out to the VPR team so that they can keep record of what is happening. There is a live FAQ with guidance tools to help navigate the process. Search Research FAQ to find it. It is updated regularly.

OU VPR is working on a policy for people who may lose their funding to provide some short-term transition funding. The policy is still in development. For FY26 the OU VPR is still planning to provide seed grants and continue support for research. Silva encouraged faculty to continue to try to submit proposals, as the portals remain open. Silva also noted faculty should look very carefully at the new language for the RFP's to make sure that proposals are in line with the new language.

A senator asked about whether there would be any compensation for PHD students whose grants had been cancelled. Silva noted that faculty in this situation should email her. The senator followed up with a question about the quickness with how long OU Legal counsel is taking to review grants and offer legal counsel. Silva noted that OU VPR can help interface in those instances to try to cut down the time to review.

A senator asked whether CFE is working with the VPR office to identify other organizations that could fund projects. Silva replied that yes, you can access CFE, and they have resources to look for funding. However, things are slow due to these changes and private organizations are rewriting their RFP's in response to these changes.

A senator noted that there was a lot of confusion about what kinds of proposals and language could be included in proposals. Silva noted that CFE is a good place to start, but this remains an ambiguous environment. If program officers are available, that is a good place to start. However, we don't have definitive definitions on DEI and green energy, as of yet.

Another faculty member asked about the travel assistance program. Silva noted that the travel assistance program has temporarily been put on hold to review current executive orders but noted that she expected that to come back online in about 2-3 weeks if things go well, but the environment changes so rapidly.

Silva noted that notifications coming out of NSF are all delayed, but if you had been expecting a decision in January or February, go ahead reach out to Program officers.

Another senator asked about the impact to the bottom line at OU. Silva noted that it is difficult to know right now, because it's hard to know what the indirect costs might be. On the Norman campus, it could be \$2-3 million. At OUHSC, it could be \$15 million.

SANUM RAZA, OU EDUCATION SERVICE

Sanam Raza, CEO of OU Education Services offered remarks on how this organization serves students and faculty. OU Education services serve two constituencies in the university: 1) providing instructional design services to faculty as they build and deliver online courses and programs 2) offering assistance to online students who often will not come to campus except for clinical services. OU educational services has a team of instructional designers, and they work hand in hand with faculty to deliver a quality product. They have a team that does market research and markets for student acquisition for OU online programs. They also have a team that assists students with services and locating resources for students who are not likely to come to OU in person.

Currently, there are 4,900 students enrolled in online OU, undergrad and grad, at OU-Norman and OUHSC. Students are often place-bound, and looking to further education but cannot make it campus. OU education services is looking to expand OU's reach. These students may be military, working adults, etc. OU education services seeks to reach outside of the campus.

OU Education services looks to ensure the quality of programs under the OU online brand and umbrella and also to facilitate student success. They are looking for partnerships with faculty in ideas about new programs. They are also looking for partnerships in market research in ways to serve the workforce needs of the state and the country.

Sarah Tracy asked what faculty should do if they have an idea for a course (which they may have taught previously) but may be useful for OU education services. Raza recommended faculty reach out to the Provost's office to Dr. Morvant.

Senator Burns asked about which platform OU education services uses. Raza responded that they use Canvas, but their work is around instructional design rather than the platform.

J.E.B. SHERIFF, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, IT SERVICES, CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, IDENTITY AND ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Jeb Sheriff, Assistant Director, IT services and offered remarks on the OUID Pin, domain consolidation, and the OU external email banner.

OUID Pin

There has been a large increase in the number of attacks where people call the service desk and impersonate faculty, students, and staff to try to get access to accounts, largely in an effort to change direct deposit. OU Health accepts no password requests over the phone. OU-Norman could not do that, and OUID Pin is an effort to not be as extreme in policy but still increase security. There is an OUID pin FAQ questions page at <https://ou.edu/ouit/ouidpin>. If you forget your pin, OU IT can still help, but may request you to come in person. If you're not on campus, you may be asked to use a photo with your OUID to verify your identity or get onto zoom. Most students, faculty, and staff have already set OUID pin. Please do so quickly if you have not already done this.

A senator asked a question about whether it must be a university ID to verify identity. Sheriff responded that government issued ID's also work.

A senator noted that once an OUID pin has been entered, it does not say that it has been accepted and that the page is poorly designed. Sheriff noted that he would take this back to his team but also noted that once you have set your pin, you will receive an email confirming that you have just set your password.

A senator asked how many times people were resetting passwords when someone called on the phone. Sheriff noted that 15 people called in today that needed a password reset and/or had not moved PingID to their new device. Sheriff noted that OUIT also recommended signing up for texts for authentication as well, in case your device changes and you have not installed PingID.

Another senator asked about whether OU IT can block domains that are trying to get into our accounts. Sheriff said that it is difficult to block these because these can come from a wide array of IP addresses, and faculty, students, and staff also work around the world. Sheriff also noted that they could potentially look into travel notifications that would facilitate verifying false attempts from actual attempts to access accounts.

Email/Domain Consolidation

OU IT is providing all OU-HSC and OU-Tulsa with an @ou.edu email address as part of the ONE OU email consolidation. Phase 1 – all new and existing OU-HSC have an email alias of @ou.edu. This phase is complete. This plan does not include the consolidation of shared mailboxes or distribution.

Phase 2 – All will use @ou.edu as their primary email address but will still continue to receive mail through their @ouhsc.edu email address. This plan's scope is just people and does not include shared mailboxes or distribution lists. This will consolidate identities. Individuals in both systems (sooner and HSC) will continue to have separate accounts. There is no date set yet for Phase 2. High impact applications and access which are based on email addresses will have issues such as Zoom, Canvas, Concur. OUIT is working to minimize and mitigate the downtime for OU IT managed/owned service. OUIT is proactively communicating and working with the independent system administrators (e.g. systems not managed/owned by OUIT).

Phase 3 – increase single sign-on (SSO) experience. The goal is to decrease the need to enter passwords to authenticate university systems and prepare for the consolidation of accounts into sooner. The eventual goal is to integrate SSO so that once a person has signed on and authenticated, you will not continue to need to sign in. Impact: Visible change that improves the user experience when an application is moved behind PingSSO.

A senator asked about the impact for faculty at OU-Norman vs. OUHSC. OU-Norman faculty are already in the Sooner domain and the impact should be very minimal unless you have an OUHSC email address. There was some concern about whether this would impact grant applications. However, because grants are based on people, not email addresses, there should not be an impact on grants. OUHSC is already in the global address list.

External Email Banner

Sheriff noted that most security incidents begin with a phishing email and AI is making it harder for users to detect threats.

At OU, 72.3% of inbound emails are potential threats blocked by IT security tools. To account for this, on Monday May 19, there will be a visual banner on external emails to let users know that emails have come in from an external source, which will be helpful in detecting spoofing emails.

A senator asked about phishers pivoting, and Sheriff replied that at least emails would be identified as external emails. Sheriff also noted that he would send out the PowerPoint to Faculty Senate.

MASAHF FAHES, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, PETROLEUM & GEOLOGICAL ENGINEERING, GALLOGLY COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Mashhad Fahes and First Demir (Sponsoring Senator) introduced a resolution in support of one university at the university of Oklahoma.

Fahes noted that in this political environment, efforts are being made to suppress freedom of speech and noted that Faculty Senate has a particular responsibility to protect free speech. The history of this resolution was in reference to 3 specific Oklahoma bills under consideration that may limit free speech. Fahes noted that an option is to wait and see what happens. Another option is to have a conversation that will proactively give some protection to free speech.

Fahes noted that there needs to be an infrastructure to support and nurture academic freedom and free speech. While it is the OU administration job to support this, this is more effective when the community has a say in it, according to Fahes. The OU community needs to hear from us as ONEOU. OU Faculty community, a private Facebook group, excludes faculty with upper administration role and offers a space to think about and talk about this evolving environment with threats to free speech.

Fahes noted that a resolution is one option of what we can do. Fahes stated that this group is open to lots of options and primarily wants to facilitate a discussion.

In the resolution proposal, which affirms the importance of free speech, is a proposed One OU Task Force to develop guidelines that assure bold inquiry and freedom of thought and expression are protected.

A Senator asked about whether the administration has been contacted/asked about this. Chair Jervis noted that the administration had not been informed about this resolution. The Senator also noted that the timeline is very fast.

A Senator noted that if we want to have shared governance, more faculty voices would be needed, or the upper administration would overrule faculty voices.

A Senator asked what Fahes imagined might be some of the recommendations of what the task force might produce. Fahes noted that faculty/staff interest groups that allow for faculty debate and disagreement might be one. Listening sessions for faculty needs and/or a survey about what people need might also be useful. Free legal representation or consultation when something happens (e.g. being detained during travel abroad) might also be a recommendation.

NOMINATIONS

- a. At Large Members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for 2025 to 2026 term. The vote will take place at the May Faculty Senate Meeting.
- b. Committee Members for the 2025-2026 Academic Year. The vote will take place at the May Faculty Senate Meeting.

VOTE – CANDIDATES FOR CHAIR-ELECT AND SECRETARY for the 2025-2026 year

Chair Jervis asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There were no nominations.

Vote on candidates for Chair-Elect – Rebecca Loraamm and Matt Wood, and for Secretary – Stephanie Burge.

Vote: Rebecca Loraamm was elected as Chair-Elect and Stephanie Burge was elected as Secretary.

NEW BUSINESS

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

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm. The next regularly scheduled Faculty Senate Meeting of this academic year will be held on May 12, 2025, at 3:30 pm.

Stephanie Burge, Faculty Senate Secretary, 2024-25