

JOURNAL OF THE FACULTY SENATE

The University of Oklahoma (Norman Campus)

Regular session – April 13, 2026 – 3:30 p.m.

Oklahoma Memorial Union – Frontiers Room

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

The meeting was called to order at 3:31 pm by Chair Robbins.

Present: Apanasov, Neutel, Bhattarai Borck, Cain, Cortest, Costa Morais de Sa E Silva, Ethridge, Fahes, Fithian, Gordon, Grigo, Hambright, Hill, Hill, Hougen, Kazempoor, Ketchum, Kibbey, Lamothe, Litov, Liu, Mortazavi, Mountford, Muraleetharan, Nollert, Richter Addo, Sarmiento, Scrivener, Tracy, WArnken, Watson, 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: Matt Hulver, Vice President for Research and Partnerships

Carol Silva, Senior Associate Vice President for Research

ABSENT: Ahsan (2), Bert (1), Bofferding, (3), Edgerton (2), Ernest (1), Grinnell Davis (3), Kang (1), Kaoutzani (2), Kibbey (1), Larson, (3), McLeod (2), Minks (1), Schmelzer (3), Sharma (2)

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 March 9, 2026, was approved. Senator Hougen moved to approve, and the motion was seconded by Senator Fithian. The vote passed and the journal was approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Bios for candidates for the At-Large members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee were included in the meeting materials. Please review the information in preparation for the vote to be taken at the May 11, 2026, meeting
- Also attached are the proposed candidates for service on University Councils and Committees and/or Faculty Senate Sanding Committees

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: FACULTY SENATE OFFICERS

Chair Robbins announced the candidates for Faculty Senate officers and asked if there were any additional nominations from the floor. As there were no other nominations, Chair Robbins initiated the vote.

Senator made a motion to vote on Faculty Senate Officers. Julia Abramson was elected as Faculty Senate Chair-Elect and Sarah Breen was elected as Faculty Senate Secretary.

FOR VOTE: FACULTY SENATE BY-LAWS

Senator Hambright made a motion to vote on the Faculty Senate By-Law Revisions and Senator Tracy seconded the motion. Chair Robbins asked if there was discussion. There was no discussion. All changes to the by-laws passed.

MATT HULVER, THE VICE PRESIDENT OF RESEARCH AND PARTNERSHIPS, AND CAROL SILVA, SENIOR ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH

Matt Hulver, Vice President of Research and Partnerships delivered comments on the state of research at OU. Hulver discussed the need to tell the story of OU's impact to funders, the state, and the AAU. In addition, Hulver emphasized the need to try to remove obstacles and provide faculty with resources they need, as well as to build partnerships with faculty and departments and government and industry. Hulver also highlighted the need for all disciplines to be engaged in this process.

Hulver noted the importance of tying OU's research mission to needs of the state to improve the impact of research on the state. Over the past 5 years, there has been a 70 percent increase in research expenditure, from \$303M to \$517M. There are 1,200 active sponsored awards. This enhances OU's national visibility as a research leader, and we are in the top 80 of NSF HERD rankings. Hulver noted that while STEM is important, many of the challenges that the state is facing requires humanities and social sciences, not just STEM.

Four key areas that need strategic investment in Oklahoma: energy (secure and resilient systems, minerals, policy, community and industry impact), extreme weather (prediction, mitigation, community resilience, and communication), health (urban, rural, and tribal care, health care quality, access and innovation), and national

security (aerospace systems, advanced materials, AI, sensing, cybersecurity, defense policy). Hulver noted that all these areas require investment and research beyond STEM to create these impacts.

Hulver emphasized that every discipline matters and the VPRP wants to incentivize creative works and publications to build strategies around Mellon, Ford, Guggenheim, and other foundation fellowships. Hulver noted that we have a presence in Washington DC now to help build resource streams and partnerships to move the needle for impact.

Hulver discussed the following initiatives as areas for strategic growth: National Weather Center (a world-class severe storm prediction serving the entire nation), Stephenson Cancer Center (NCI-designated center expanding clinical trials and access), Secure & Resilient energy, and the Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (connecting faculty expertise to state and federal policy).

Hulver also covered the Office of Vice President for Research and what it leads: research services and administration (proposal development, submission, budget, and compliance reporting), facilities, security and operations (cored facilities, animal care, recharge centers, field stations, research security), innovation and commercialization (tech transfer, patents, licensing, iHub, startup) and strategic engagement and partnerships (industry and government partnerships, sponsored agreements, federal relations).

Hulver noted that streamlining and aligning OU Norman and OU Health has been a big goal of the OU VPRP office. Hulver also emphasized that they are centralizing resources to help assist faculty with the administration of grants. Hulver stated that there are a variety of research and development programs that are offered to faculty to help incentivize research.

Hulver stated that the OU VPRP is also involved in Project 200: effort to recruit established leaders with sustained funding and recognized scholarship in those four key areas (energy, extreme weather, health, and national security). Hulver also emphasized the need to connect our research to the world, through partners and funders who can assist with real-world impact.

Hulver noted that the current environment is questioning the value of higher education, and this is the moment to illustrate the value of higher education's contribution to solving real world problems. Hulver emphasized the value of each discipline to move the needle on these critical areas of inquiry that need investment and highlighted that the OU VPRP is there to help facilitate faculty in their pursuit of impact.

A senator noted that pre-tenure faculty rely upon graduate funding to help recruit talented graduate students to work in the lab. Hulver noted that he was having regular conversations with Randy Hewes (Dean of Graduate College), and stated that the goals of pursuing AAU dictated the need for further emphasis in Graduate programs, including interdisciplinary graduate programs, training grants on the health campus, etc.

Another senator noted that the pay scale often stands in the way of recruiting talented faculty. He also argued that there are many obstacles in the way of grant services for faculty who are pursuing research grants. He stressed the need for further investment in a variety of avenues to help facilitate increased faculty research. Hulver responded that these are all topics of discussion with administration and trying to figure out priorities is always challenging and ongoing.

A senator noted his appreciation for Project 200, but he noted that OU has not done a good job of managing the real estate (space needs) for research and space is needed to facilitate faculty grants and research. Hulver responded that space needs are always contested and stressed the need for data on space allocation. He stated that we are about to embark on a contract with an external agency to evaluate space allocation and needs, which may be able to assist with that. He also talked about the ways that some centralization might be needed to help allocate space to its best use.

A senator noted that a key concern for recruiting and retaining faculty is the new merit-based raise and evaluation system, which endeavors to differentiate faculty and leads to poor faculty morale.

A senator highlighted that the political conditions in which the strategic plan is being pursued make it difficult for certain disciplines to participate fully (e.g., extreme weather is related to climate change). Second, he noted improvement in the VPRP current strategy to be more inclusive of disciplines and a wide array of research goals. Third, he noted that OU wants to lead, but at what level do we want to lead (regional, national, global)? He noted that investments and resources are necessary to be able to reach global leadership. Hulver responded that we still have IPRA, ICAST, and DISC and they are all still very important OU-Norman based research institutes, but he would like to see them work with other campuses as well. Hulver noted that we are in an unprecedented political time, but we still have problems to solve and unique capabilities with which to solve them. We may have to make shifts in how we discuss these topics, but the focal points themselves transcend political environments. Hulver emphasized the need to first lead regionally and nationally, and eventually perhaps globally.

A senator asked about Project 200. She noted that she was happy to see neuroscience as an area of hire for Project 200, and she asked what is being done to incentivize college deans. She noted that the offers coming out of the college are often insufficient, and wondered what could be done to supplement salary, startup, etc. Hulver responded that Project 200 is just starting to launch. He stated that we have not yet done large-scale marketing and noted that he is partnering with Provosts on both campuses. He also noted ambiguity in what defines a Project 200 hire versus a normal hire. That process is currently being developed which makes the process clunky at the moment.

A Senator noted the need for economic analysis to determine if an area of inquiry (e.g., geothermal) makes sense. Hulver responded in agreement and stated that all the areas that we are looking at require faculty involvement.

A Senator noted that while Hulver emphasized all the disciplines need to be included, it seems very STEM forward, particularly for certain disciplines (e.g., Fine Arts) to be able to participate in the four key areas of impact. Hulver responded that he is all ears and while he wants to be thoughtful and purposeful in strategic investments, he would like to know how OU VPRP can be more helpful to key areas of inquiry like Fine Arts and Humanities. The Senator noted Culture and Education would be a good area of inquiry. Hulver encouraged faculty to reach out the OU VPRP.

A senator noted that Hulver discussed impact and asked how are making sure we find ways to meaningfully measure impact (e.g., research dollars, publications, graduate students, etc.) that also includes the partnership aspect. Hulver noted that when we measure impact, we are going to always measure the things that affect rankings (scholarly impact, awards, proposals, etc.). However, that can also extend to things that are more relevant for the community in addition to our own metrics.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

No topics were submitted for Committee of the Whole.

NEW BUSINESS

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

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:57pm. The next regularly scheduled Faculty Senate Meeting of this academic year will be held on May 11, 2026, at 3:30 pm.

Stephanie Burge, Faculty Senate Secretary, 2025-26