

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 | 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: 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, Ethridge, Lungmus, Rueda (2), 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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Announcements.....	2
Senate Chairs Report.....	2
Milos Savić – Dean, College of Professional and Continuing Studies.....	2
For Discussion: Oklahoma Principles (attached), facilitated by Prof. Hunter Heyck.....	3
New Business.....	4
Committee of the Whole.....	4

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 or Hunter Heyck 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