



April 2025 Meeting Minutes

Eastern Oklahoma State College

4/18/2025 10:30 AMCDT

@ EOSC Campus, 1802 E. College Ave, McAlester, OK 74501

Attendance

Present:

Members: Eric Bilderback, Cara Bland, Jerry Hamilton, Latt Jeffrey, Brian Lott, Larry Spradley, Leland Walker

Staff: President Janet Wansick, Trisha White, Dr. Kyle Foster, Dr. Randy Harp, Anne Brooks, Kellye Semeski, Dr. Cathy Cogburn, Colby Carpenter, Stephanie Giacomo, Candace Raney

I. CALL TO ORDER

Regent Walker called the meeting to order at 10:30 A.M.

II. DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Candace Raney called roll and declared that a quorum was present.

III. INTRODUCTIONS OF GUESTS

A. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Mr. Morgan, Latimer County Conservation District

Regent Latt Jeffrey introduced Mr. Morgan from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office in Latimer County. Mr. Morgan is a graduate of Eastern Oklahoma State College, with strong family ties to the institution—his father was a Meat Science graduate, and his mother earned a degree in Ranch Operations. Regent Jeffrey noted the family's longstanding connection to Eastern and welcomed Mr. Morgan's engagement with the college.

Mr. Morgan shared that it has been approximately 10–12 years since Eastern last participated in NRCS programs. He explained that while the college itself is not eligible to receive federal funds through these programs, the Eastern Foundation may qualify to act on the college's behalf. To proceed, the Board of Regents would need to take formal action to authorize the Foundation to operate the farm property.

NRCS programs, funded through the USDA Farm Bill, offer opportunities for significant improvements to the college farm, such as conservation efforts, infrastructure upgrades, and emergency assistance. Mr. Morgan noted that some progress has already been made, including collaboration with Jared's group on a conservation plan and the recent award of \$7,500 through an emergency

drought program, which will allow for improvements such as graveling heavy-use areas and laying water lines to serve pastureland.

The goal of the presentation was to ensure all stakeholders were informed and aligned, with the intent to move forward collaboratively on a solution that meets eligibility requirements and supports future development opportunities.

B. EOSC Meats Judging Team

Jade Edwards, Instructor of Agriculture, Meat Judging Coach, Averie Bain, Bailyn Hill, Robert Kincade, Cadence Myers, Hannah Morphis, Dylan Neely, Gracie Ward, Eli Whitney

Dr. Randy Harp introduced Ms. Jade Edwards, a faculty member in the Division of Agriculture and the newly designated coach of Eastern's Meat Judging Team. He praised the team's outstanding accomplishments during the spring season and invited Ms. Edwards to share an overview.

Ms. Edwards began by thanking the Board for the invitation and explained the team's role in competing at contests hosted by the American Meat Science Association. These contests involve carcass grading and class placements following real-world industry standards.

She highlighted the team's success throughout the spring season, including High Overall Team honors at the National Western Stock Show in Denver and the Fort Worth Stock Show, with multiple students placing in the top ten individually. The team also earned top honors at the South Plains contest in Hereford, Texas, and concluded the season with a strong finish as Second Overall Team at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

While currently on a short break, the team will resume training later this summer in preparation for a full fall contest schedule, including the national championship. Ms. Edwards expressed her gratitude for the Board's support, which makes these achievements possible.

Following her remarks, she introduced the team members in attendance, and the Board expressed their appreciation for the group's accomplishments and the way they have represented Eastern with pride and professionalism. A photo was taken with the Regents and the team.

IV. ACTION

A. Board Minutes

1. Board Meeting held March 14, 2025.

The minutes of the March 14, 2025 meeting were presented for approval.

A motion was made by Regent Spradley and seconded by Regent Jeffrey to approve the minutes as written.

Vote: Ayes: Regent Bilderback, Regent Hamilton, Regent Jeffrey, Regent Lott, Regent Spradley, Regent Walker Noes: None Abstentions: Regent Bland Absent: None **The motion carried.**

B. Academic Affairs Committee Update

Dr. Randy Harp provided a report from the Academic Affairs Committee meeting held the previous Friday. He summarized several key items discussed:

- The committee reviewed and recommended approval of the Simple Syllabus platform, which had already received approval from faculty, the Deans' Council, and the Leadership Council. Dr. Harp noted that this system—led in implementation by Kelly Smith—will provide a more consistent and efficient syllabus format while maintaining faculty academic freedom. It will ensure required legal content is consistently included while allowing instructors flexibility in their course materials. The cost of implementation will be offset by phasing out another system, resulting in no additional financial burden.
- The committee also discussed the tenure application submitted for board consideration, which would be addressed during Executive Session.
- Dr. Harp provided an update on the Native American Studies degree program, sharing that the proposed Associate of Arts degree and an updated certificate were submitted to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education with no opposition received. Final paperwork is being completed. He clarified that the board had previously approved the certificate portion of the program, and that a formal notification to the Higher Learning Commission will follow once state approval is finalized.
- Additionally, the committee reviewed the status of low-productivity academic programs and discussed strategies for addressing them in the future. Some programs show strong enrollment but low graduation numbers, often due to one-year certificate tracks that don't reflect in the five-year graduation totals. Dr. Harp, Dr. Wansick, and Dean leadership are working collaboratively on potential curriculum modifications, and a more detailed presentation is anticipated at the next board meeting.

To conclude, Dr. Harp requested formal board action to approve the implementation of the Simple Syllabus system.

1. Simple Syllabus

The Board reviewed the Simple Syllabus proposal, previously approved by the Academic Affairs Committee.

A motion was made by Regent Hamilton and seconded by Regent Bilderback to approve the proposal as presented.

Vote: Ayes: Regent Bilderback, Regent Bland, Regent Hamilton, Regent Jeffrey, Regent Lott, Regent Spradley, Regent Walker Noes: None Abstentions: None Absent: None **The motion carried.**

2. Resolution-Dedication of Mitchell Hall Room 118 classroom

A resolution was presented to honor Brenda Bohanon Strange upon her retirement, recognizing nearly 40 years of dedicated service to Eastern

Oklahoma State College. Dr. Harp noted that the recognition parallels those previously given to long-serving faculty members such as Dr. Givens and Ms. Duncan.

In addition to the resolution, the college plans to install a commemorative plaque outside a classroom in Mitchell Hall—an honor consistent with past recognitions for retirees of similar tenure. Kellye Semeski has been working closely with Dean Strange in preparation for this recognition.

The Board expressed appreciation for Dean Strange’s outstanding service and support of the proposed resolution.

A resolution was presented to dedicate Room 118 in Mitchell Hall in honor of Brenda Bohanon Strange.

A motion was made by Regent Bland and seconded by Regent Lott to approve the resolution as presented.

Vote: Ayes: Regent Bilderback, Regent Bland, Regent Hamilton, Regent Jeffrey, Regent Lott, Regent Spradley, Regent Walker Noes: None Abstentions: None Absent: None **The motion carried.**

C. Finance Committee Report Update

1. Internal Audit for January 2024-December 31, 2024

The final internal audit report was discussed and presented to the Board, following review by the Finance Committee. The auditor had joined the committee meeting to walk through the report in detail. There were no significant concerns identified. A few minor findings were noted, primarily related to inconsistencies in expense coding and a delay in receiving the updated travel formula, which led to some carryover issues from the prior year. These issues have since been addressed. Overall, the audit reflected improvement over the previous year’s report, and the Committee expressed satisfaction with the progress made.

The Internal Audit report was presented to the Finance Committee and received their recommendation for full Board approval.

A motion was made by Regent Bland and seconded by Regent Bilderback to approve the Internal Audit as presented.

Vote: Ayes: Regent Bilderback, Regent Bland, Regent Hamilton, Regent Jeffrey, Regent Lott, Regent Spradley, Regent Walker Noes: None Abstentions: None Absent: None **The motion carried.**

2. Payroll & Misc Claims for March 2025 - \$1,981,077.33

The March 2025 Payroll and Miscellaneous Claims were discussed and approved in the Finance Committee meeting and brought forward for

full Board consideration.

A motion was made by Regent Bland and seconded by Regent Hamilton to approve the payroll and claims as presented.

Vote: Ayes: Regent Bilderback, Regent Bland, Regent Hamilton, Regent Jeffrey, Regent Lott, Regent Spradley, Regent Walker Noes: None Abstentions: None Absent: None **The motion carried.**

3. Housing Cloud Agreement

The Housing Cloud Agreement was presented for approval following discussion in the Finance Committee. The new software system, requested by Student Affairs, is intended to streamline the student housing assignment process by allowing students greater input—such as selecting roommates—and increasing overall efficiency for both students and staff.

Committee members noted that internal budget adjustments had been made to cover the cost of the new program, with no additional funding required. The goal is to have the system in place in time for upcoming housing assignments.

The agreement and supporting contract materials were included in the committee packet.

The Housing Cloud Agreement was discussed and approved in the Finance Committee meeting and brought forward for full Board consideration.

A motion was made by Regent Bland and seconded by Regent Spradley to approve the agreement as presented.

Vote: Ayes: Regent Bilderback, Regent Bland, Regent Hamilton, Regent Jeffrey, Regent Lott, Regent Spradley, Regent Walker Noes: None Abstentions: None Absent: None **The motion carried.**

4. RFP Access Control - Housing

The Finance Committee discussed the Request for Proposal (RFP) for access control systems in student housing. The proposed project aims to significantly enhance dorm security by installing controlled access to exterior residence hall doors, allowing students to enter using mobile credentials, proximity cards, or digital fobs. Staff will be issued permanent fobs, and temporary credentials can be created for events or special circumstances.

The system will also enable real-time tracking of who accesses each building and when, improving overall campus safety and administrative oversight. Students will have more control over access, while the system remains fully customizable to accommodate future campus needs.

The estimated cost of the project is between \$80,000 and \$90,000, and

funding strategies were discussed. The committee noted this as a first phase, with the potential to expand access control to other campus facilities over time.

The Finance Committee approved the Housing Access Control project to move forward for full Board consideration.

A motion was made by Regent Bilderback and seconded by Regent Lott to approve the issuance of the RFP for the project as presented.

Vote: Ayes: Regent Bilderback, Regent Bland, Regent Hamilton, Regent Jeffrey, Regent Lott, Regent Spradley, Regent Walker Noes: None Abstentions: None Absent: None **The motion carried.**

D. Legal & Compliance Committee Update

The Legal and Compliance Committee provided an update on ongoing efforts to review and consolidate institutional policies and procedures. The committee is undertaking a phased approach to present revised policy chapters for Board consideration as they are finalized. At this meeting, four items were presented for review and approval:

- Chapter 1 – Board of Regents Policies
- Chapter 2 – President Policies
- Open Records Request Form
- Open Records Fee Schedule

The proposed Open Records updates were developed in consultation with the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office to align with current legal standards and manage the increasing volume of public records requests. It was noted that minor grammatical and formatting revisions are still in progress, but the Board was asked to focus on reviewing and approving the substance of the policies. Final editing and standardization will occur prior to full publication of the revised policy handbook.

The Legal and Compliance Committee reviewed and approved Chapter 1 – Board of Regents Policies, Chapter 2 – President Policies, the Open Records Request Form, and the Open Records Fee Schedule. The items were recommended for full Board approval with the understanding that grammatical corrections will be made.

A motion was made by Regent Spradley and seconded by Regent Hamilton to approve the documents as presented, subject to final grammatical edits.

Vote: Ayes: Regent Bilderback, Regent Bland, Regent Hamilton, Regent Jeffrey, Regent Lott, Regent Spradley, Regent Walker Noes: None Abstentions: None Absent: None **The motion carried.**

V. President's Report-Dr. Janet Wansick

President Wansick provided a brief report and invited two campus leaders to share

updates on major initiatives prior to Executive Session.

Stephanie presented an update on the Health and Wellness Center project, noting that Eastern is preparing to apply for a substantial Legacy Grant through the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET). The program has allocated \$150 million in available funding for shovel-ready projects with a minimum request of \$3 million and a completion timeline of no more than three years. The Health and Wellness Center aligns well with the grant's priorities, and Eastern is optimistic about its potential.

Additionally, the college continues to work with state legislators in Oklahoma City to identify supplemental funding sources.

Dr. Foster followed with an update on Eastern's specialty license plate redesign. After discovering that the existing plate design was not aligned with Eastern's branding, a new version was created in-house by Jacob [last name not stated], and has since been approved by Service Oklahoma. The updated plate is expected to be available for public purchase within two to three months. A portion of the annual specialty plate fee will return to Eastern, supporting institutional branding and visibility across the service area. Dr. Foster thanked Senator Hamilton's staff for assisting in moving the project forward. President Wansick concluded the report by expressing appreciation for ongoing progress on these initiatives.

At the request of Regent Walker, Dr. Randy Harp provided an update on recent and upcoming campus events. He shared that Monday would be a particularly busy day as Eastern hosts the Southeast District face-to-face speech contest, with student participants from across the region on campus. The following day, Tuesday, Eastern will host the State Interfaith Forestry Contest at Robbers Cave State Park, with longtime supporter and adjunct faculty member Mr. Eddie Boone serving as contest superintendent.

Dr. Harp also noted that Eastern recently hosted the Career Development Events (CDE) Testing Contest on March 27–28, which brought over 2,000 registered participants to campus. Despite weather challenges—including rain and a temporary power outage—the event successfully continued, with a few events adjusted or shortened. Awards for those contests will be presented at the State FFA Convention on May 6–7, where Eastern will also host a recruitment booth.

He expressed appreciation for the success of the Sapphire Ball, held just two days after the CDE contest. The 2024 event set a record, raising \$51,456 in scholarship funds. Dr. Harp thanked the Board, Foundation, and staff—especially Candace Raney, who chaired the event—for their support and involvement in making it a success.

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Vote to Enter Executive Session

A motion was made by Regent Lott and seconded by Regent Bland to enter into Executive Session pursuant to 25 O.S. 2021, § 307(B)(1), for the purpose of reviewing the tenure application of Cullen Whisenhunt and discussing the qualifications and application materials of candidates for the position of

President of Eastern Oklahoma State College.

Vote: Ayes: Regent Bilderback, Regent Bland, Regent Hamilton, Regent Jeffrey, Regent Lott, Regent Spradley, Regent Walker Noes: None Abstentions: None Absent: None **The motion carried.**

B. Vote to Exit Executive Session

A motion was made by Regent Bland and seconded by Regent Spradley at 12:01 pm to return to Open Session and provide any motions or decisions resulting from the discussion held in Executive Session.

Vote: Ayes: Regent Bilderback, Regent Bland, Regent Hamilton, Regent Jeffrey, Regent Lott, Regent Spradley, Regent Walker Noes: None Abstentions: None Absent: None **The motion carried.**

The Board returned to open session. The Chair announced that no votes were taken and no other matters were discussed during Executive Session, in accordance with 25 O.S. 2021, § 307(B)(1).

VII. Discussion and possible action arising from Executive Session

A. Possible action on the tenure application of Cullen Whisenhunt.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the tenure application of Cullen Whisenhunt.

Vote: Ayes: Regent Bilderback, Regent Bland, Regent Hamilton, Regent Jeffrey, Regent Lott, Regent Spradley, Regent Walker Noes: None Abstentions: None Absent: None **The motion carried.**

B. Possible action regarding the presidential search process, including consideration of candidates for further review or interviews.

The Board discussed scheduling and logistics related to the next step in the presidential search process. Four finalists—referred to as Candidates A, B, C, and D—have been selected to move forward for in-person interviews.

President Wansick informed the Board that a potential scheduling conflict could arise due to Regent Lott's reappointment confirmation, which must go before the Oklahoma Senate Education Committee. Since confirmation hearings are held on Tuesdays and the agenda is not released until the day prior, there was concern that Regent Lott may be required in Oklahoma City on April 29. To avoid conflict and accommodate all board members, it was decided to schedule a special meeting on April 29, 2025, beginning at 8:30 a.m., for the purpose of conducting interviews with the four candidates in Executive Session.

During the discussion, President Wansick and legal counsel advised against any open gatherings involving all candidates, such as group breakfasts or public

receptions, due to confidentiality concerns and the potential of violating applicants' requests to remain anonymous during the process. It was emphasized that, as per executive session guidelines, candidates will only be publicly identified as A, B, C, or D unless they consent otherwise.

The Board also approved a structured interview day, which will include:

- Individual executive session interviews with the Board of Regents
- A campus tour for each candidate, led by a team of faculty, staff, and students
- A private meeting with President Wansick to allow candidates to ask institutional questions

The campus tour committee will consist of:

- Hannah Truitt
- Kristen Turner
- Philip Hawthorne
- Pam Denny
- Caden Goodson (student)
- Phoebe Finch (student)

The Board affirmed this approach as a balanced, transparent, and confidential process for selecting the next President of Eastern Oklahoma State College.

1. Date of Special Meeting to hold the Interviews

The Board approved the scheduling of interviews for presidential candidates to be held as a special meeting on April 30, 2025, beginning at 8:30 a.m. Interviews will be conducted with Candidates A, B, C, and D.

A motion was made by Regent Lott and seconded by Regent Bland to approve the date and time for the special meeting

Vote: Ayes: Regent Bilderback, Regent Bland, Regent Hamilton, Regent Jeffrey, Regent Lott, Regent Spradley, Regent Walker Noes: None Abstentions: None Absent: None **The motion carried.**

VIII. GENERAL INFORMATION/REPORTS REQUIRING NO ACTION BY THE BOARD

A. Governance Committee Meeting Update

The committee discussed the progress of the presidential search, with 6 top candidates identified. Further follow-up with candidates is planned. The committee is focused on narrowing down the field to 4-5 strong candidates for in-person interviews. Committee had proposed a special board meeting for April 29th, with a decision on the candidate expected soon after.

Confidentiality remains a priority as candidate names and details are not to be publicly disclosed at this time.

B. President Update

President Wansick provided an update on pending state legislation, specifically House Bill 2197. The bill, which was previously considered stalled, has resurfaced

and is expected to go before the Senate Education Committee. HB 2197 would prohibit colleges and universities from requiring students living in campus housing to also purchase a dining plan.

Originally, the bill applied only to research universities, but recent revisions have expanded its scope to all institutions of higher education, including regional colleges like Eastern. President Wansick strongly expressed the institution's opposition to the bill, noting that if housing students are not required to purchase meal plans, Eastern would not be able to financially sustain its cafeteria services—leaving residential students without reliable access to food.

She encouraged Board members to reach out to Senator Hamilton and other legislators they may know to advocate against the bill moving forward. While the bill passed the House with the “research university” language, its expanded version would need to return to the House if it passes the Senate.

President Wansick concluded her report by noting that most other updates had been addressed throughout the meeting.

C. Chairperson and Regent's Report

Staff members were reminded that timely submission of committee materials is critical to allow adequate review prior to Board meetings.

IX. NEW BUSINESS UNFORESEEN AT THE TIME AGENDA WAS POSTED

None

X. Dates to Remember

The next special meeting is scheduled for April 30, 2025, at 9:00 a.m., and committee meetings are set for May 9, 2025, with the following schedule:

- Finance – 9:00 a.m.
- Academic Affairs – 10:00 a.m.
- Student Engagement – 11:00 a.m.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Regent Bilderback and seconded by Regent Hamilton to adjourn the meeting.

Vote: Ayes: Regent Bilderback, Regent Bland, Regent Hamilton, Regent Jeffrey, Regent Lott, Regent Spradley, Regent Walker Noes: None Abstentions: None Absent: None

The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at **12:45 p.m.**

CERTIFICATE

I, Larry Spradley, the duly appointed Secretary of the Board of Regents for Eastern Oklahoma State College, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing are true and correct copies of the minutes of this Board at a Regular Scheduled Meeting hereof, truly, and lawfully held on April 18, 2025.



Larry Spradley, Secretary



Leland Walker, Chair