Slevitch called the meeting to order with the following members present: Boileau, Crick, Daglaris, Eisenberg, Emerson, Fathepure, Fitzgerald, Glenn, Haley, Hildebrand, Hoff, Jadeja, Joshi, Knapp, Lawson, McGlynn, McMaughan, Olsen, Parkison, Perkins, Pranger, Yates, and Yough.

Also present: Alvarado-Albertorio, F., Avance, R., Brennen, G., Cline, L., Colquhoun, C., Compton, JJ., Corky, Francisco, C., Gajan, R., Gardner, G., Graham, E., Gujar, V., Hepworth, A., Heragu, S., Hiltz, S., Hoffner, B., Hord, N., Hosmer, B., Hunter, B., Koehler, G., Krishnan, G., Labrecque, J., Lacombe, V., LaVanchy, T., Macken, M., Mautino., S., McCullagh, L., Moore, K., Neurohr, K., Peaster, R., Peiffer, K., Reininger, C., Sewell, K., Shea, M., Spaulding, S., Stephanie, Ventura, N., Weaver, J., Wilmoth, J., and yanwu.

Absent: Barker, Gardner, Gonzalez, Riley, Warren, and Weiser.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Special Reports:

Dr. Kenneth Sewell – VP Research ……………………….………………………………

Interim President’s Report and Comments on matters of interest to the faculty – Jim Hess……...

Provost’s report on Recommendations made by the Faculty Council and Comments on matters of interest to the Faculty – Chris Francisco for Provost Mendez……………………………….…

Vice-Presidents’ Reports and Comments on matters of interest to the faculty…………………...

Faculty Council Chair’s Report……………………………………………………………………

Reports of Liaison Representatives

Emeriti…………………………………………………………………………………….

Staff Advisory Council……………………………………………………………………

Graduate Council.…………………………………………………………………………

Student Government Association…………………………………………………………

Graduate and Professional Student Government Association…………………………….

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

Academic Standards and Policies ……………………………………….………………...

Access and Community Impact ……………………………………………………………

Athletic, Health and Wellness ………..………………………………….………………..

Budget …………………………………………………………………….…………….....

Campus Facilities, Safety and Security ………………………………….……………...…

Career Track…………..………………………………………………….………………..

Faculty ………………………………………………………………….…………………

Long-Range Planning and Information Technology ………………….……………...……

Research ……………………………………………………………….………………...…

Retirement and Fringe Benefits ……………………………………….……………...……

Rules and Procedures ………………………………………………….……………...……

Student Affairs and Learning Resources …………………………….…………………....

Slevitch welcomed everyone to the meeting. Slevitch established that a quorum was present and brought the meeting to order. Slevitch asked those present to sign the attendance sheet. Slevitch asked everyone on Zoom to please put their name in the chat so their attendance can be recorded. Slevitch asked if those on Zoom can hear OK. Seeing positive response, Slevitch asked anyone who has a question to raise their hand or type their question in the chat. Please direct your questions to Perkins who is watching the chat. He will then communicate the question(s) to the group. Slevitch reminded everyone to please set their microphones to mute. Slevitch stated the first item of business was the approval of the January 21, 2025 minutes. These were electronically distributed and are available on the Faculty Council website. Slevitch asked for corrections or objections to the approval of the minutes. Seeing none, stated the minutes are approved. Slevitch stated the second item of business is adoption of the agenda which was also electronically distributed and is also available on the Faculty Council website. Slevitch asked if there were any corrections to the agenda. Seeing none, Slevitch asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. Yough moved and Lawson seconded the motion. Slevitch stated that it had been moved and seconded to adopt the agenda. Slevitch asked those in favor to enter their vote in the chat. Those opposed do the same. Motion passed and the agenda was adopted. Slevitch stated we have one special report today and introduced Dr. Kenneth Sewell, VPR, who will update us on the current federal funding situation.

**Special Reports:**

1. **Dr. Kenneth Sewell- Vice President of Research**

Sewell stated there is a lot going on but at the same time there are plenty of reasons to keep forging ahead and continuing our research enterprise at OSU. Of all the things that have happened in the last couple of weeks, I'm going to try to put my focus on how all this affects research at OSU. Particularly, how does it affect our individual research at OSU? You know that there are various presidential orders/memorandums coming out of OMB, federal administrative actions that have been issued. Some of these have been withdrawn, some have been enjoined, some have been stalled via temporary restraining orders. But a lot of things could still rise up. There doesn't seem to be an end to new initiatives and things going on at the federal level. Some of these have nothing to do with our research enterprise, others do and may yet to come. The net impact, at least so far, on the federal research funding and on federal funding agencies can be put into what I think of as four broad categories. 1. A stop work order or cancellation of programs. 2. A lot of the agencies have been kind of thrown into a limbo state. 3. A so-called DEI prohibition that all of the federal agencies are dealing with. 4. The most prominent thing in most people’s minds is the cap on NIH indirect costs recovered at 15% (facilities and administration costs that are incurred covering throughout the process). The 15% cap is National Institutes of Health (NIH) specific for now.

1. Individual stop work orders or cancellations. There have been very, very few of these received at OSU. We've received some stop work on pieces of grants. To my knowledge, we've only had one program cancellation that completely nullified a person's research participation in a broader program. We don't expect there to be a lot more of these, but we're keeping track of them, making sure we document what's going on so that we deal with our federal delegation and keep them informed of the impacts of these actions. We're not seeing a slew of stop work orders at OSU. Sewell has been in touch with colleagues at other universities. Some universities had a few more but this is not a common output of this current situation. The stop work orders are very few and we're tracking them.

2. Programs and agencies being in limbo. One of the first executive orders issued a freeze on funding of many programs until the agencies came back with answers to certain questions, particularly around DEI. Canceling DEI programs within some grants have been blocked by federal courts so that many of the agencies, even though they are continuing to try to answer these questions for the administration and for the office of management budget, have for the most part gotten back into the business of funding the research enterprise at least while the stay on that order is in existence. Many of you may have tried to contact a program officer or ask a question or request a no cost extension and get something between radio silence, I can't talk to you right now or I'm not sure the answer to your question until further notice. There is still a limbo status that some of our federal agencies are in. They've been directed to answer a certain set of questions for the office of management budget. A lot of the agencies are scrambling to try to evaluate their individual grant programs to determine which, if any, are impacted by the various executive orders. So even if the impact of some of those orders have been stayed or under a temporary restraining order, they are still under instruction to evaluate their programs for their compliance with or need to comply with those executive orders. Under this sort of limbo, we're seeing some delays with funding decisions. I'm aware of one here on campus by the way. It was highly recommended for funding by the panel. It was about to go to council and get the final stamp -- almost for sure going to be funded. And it was literally the day that everybody was told don't travel, don't have meetings. The council meeting was indefinitely stalled. This has been rectified; they have moved forward and approved that study for funding. Some of these things are starting to resolve even as the agencies are still scrambling. Even if something is delayed, even if a deadline has been suspended, we have no reason to believe that all these programs are just going to disappear.

3. DEI prohibition. When DEI as an acronym, my air quotes up as I say it is mentioned in executive orders and OMB memoranda, there is very little definition given to that terminology. The only definition from the federal government we've been able to see out of these executive orders around DEI has been clarification questions. For instance - are you talking about does this include programs in collaboration with historically black colleges universities? Oh no, that's not what we mean. So far, all the clarifications have been, oh no, that's not what we mean. We've yet to really know what the executive orders apply to and what the agencies say. In my opinion the way we have been using the term DEI within academia in the last several years is a very broad encompassing concept that is not really what's under attack here. Sewell thinks what's under attack in these executive orders and how they will be interpreted are some narrow ranges of activities that may need to be reconceptualized so they can be extracted from federal funding if these orders hold, but will not collapse the entirety of every program that we have that perhaps has inclusive STEM outreach components or programs to ensure access of all populations equally for opportunities with fair hiring processes. We will continue to get more definition around this. We may have a variety of grants that have to look at certain pieces of those programs to have them be either recast, excised and rebudgeted or otherwise dealt with so that the agencies can stay in compliance. Sewell does not foresee some widespread revocation or cancellation of any funding associated with this, at least as we're envisioning it now. Sewell stated most agencies are still trying to work this out. A very few agencies, Department Of Energy (DOE) being one of them, have issued some statements directly to PIs. They asked you to put a DEI component in your community benefit plan, now we're asking you to stop working on this and work with your program officer. There's been a little bit of definition from Department of Energy, but not much from anyone else.

4. NIH cap of indirect cost recovery at 15%. Sewell stated that indirect costs are the most widely misunderstood concept associated with grants. It is the way that institutions recoup investments in research infrastructure. Research infrastructure includes the walls that the research is done within, the heat that keeps us from freezing to death, but also the personnel that do our accounting and our compliance and all the physical and human infrastructure around research. Institutions invest in these then get reimbursed for those investments by proportions of federal funding that we expend. In 2018 during the first Trump administration, there was an attempt to cap NIH cost recovery on facilities administration. Congressman Cole led an effort to help his colleagues understand what FNA costs really are. They're not slush funds, they're not profit for the institutions, they're part of the real cost of research and our negotiated F&A rate is there to help institutions recover those costs so they can continue to invest in research. Here we see it arising again in the form of this administrative action. It came out as an administrative action, an edict to NIH. It went into effect yesterday. Several lawsuits have ensued. 22 state attorneys general filed a lawsuit that made it to a preliminary hearing and received a temporary restraining order. This restraining order only applies to those 22 states. The American Association of Medical Schools and Colleges also filed a lawsuit and as of several hours ago, received a nationwide temporary restraining order for that cap. There's also a lawsuit that is a combined effort by the several agencies that's attempting to overturn that entire action. And there may be yet another lawsuit in the mix too. This is a temporary restraining order. So, it just buys us a little time to breathe until this can be formally heard in the courts of whether this is legal at all to do. Sewell stated we'll keep working with Congressman Cole, who's chair of appropriations, who is very well read up and very well studied on this issue.

What does it mean right now? Even before that temporary restraining order was put in place nationwide for current ongoing grants that you have from NIH, from the standpoint of the researcher, it means absolutely nothing to the research itself. Continue doing the research, continue spending from those direct costs budgeted. Program offices might still require some rebudgeting or rescoping to comply with this DEI stuff we were talking about. The cap on F&A has no impact whatsoever under present guidance on current projects. Now, if this cap is allowed to go into effect and go forward, what will its impact be for future projects, for projects that we propose, projects that we get funded in the future? From the standpoint of expending direct costs, it still should not have any impact. But what about from the standpoint of the agency having funds to expend? Will this result in a funding cut to the agency? We don't know that yet. What we do know is that it would result in a forced cost share on the part of institutions like OSU because these are real costs. These are costs that have already been incurred by doing research in partnership with NIH. We will no longer get reimbursed for those real costs. Does it mean we're going to tell people not to engage in biomedical research and go to NIH for funding? Sewell can't even fathom such an approach. It will just mean that our ability to reinvest will be hampered by that delta between our negotiated rate and whatever that cap is. Sewell doesn’t think a 15% cap is going to go into place and stay there permanently, but there may be some kind of cap that does. Sewell believes there may be some kind of rethink in how the investments are recovered and feels that the 15% cap might be the extreme negotiating stance that’s proposed, then see where things end up. Even as distressing as it might sound in the news as agencies fight this, they're fighting with the basic message that a cut to research is a cut to research. You don't cut reimbursement of research and get more research out of the deal. Some of the rhetoric you see is intended to really help our decision makers understand that this isn't profit. You're not just shaving the profit margin off of universities. This is truly a cut to research. Don't have the sky on fire about current funding or how we will go about pursuing biomedical research funding in the future.

Sewell opened the floor to questions. Emerson asked if OSU plans to come up with ways to “fold” the overhead costs into direct costs. Sewell stated that right now we are not allowed to. This is one of the potential negotiating strategies over the longer term. Maybe we will be given the wherewithal and the capability to direct charge more of those investments, much in the way that industry does. We're not industry. We have research facilities, but we do research in a lot of facilities that are multipurpose. We have accounting staff at the university, but they don't just dedicate themselves to this or that project. It would require a fundamental change in how our university operations are structured in order to do what the R and D industry arm can do. But that is one of the possibilities going forward. Hoff stated that there is a lot of news about a 50% cut to NIH, which may just be a cut to the NIH budget, he does not know. He has also heard of a 60% cut to NSF. Hoff feels there may be big cuts after the budget is decided in April. Hoff wonders how many research students departments will admit. Research is done in many departments by TA’s and RA’s. Can departments pay them? Since we do not know what the budget cuts might be yet, is this a moment where we should plan for unusual circumstances and measures. Is OSU preparing for disaster? Should OSU be reactive and have measures in place if the funding cuts are as bad as we see in the news? Do we need more emergency planning? Sewell stated he’s not telling you we shouldn't worry about any this. If just a 15% cap of NIH funds goes into effect today and doesn't go away for the next six years, there would be something like $16 to $17 million of funding that we would recover as OSU and OSU-CHS combined over that five-and-a-half-year period. These are projections that we would not recover under that. If we're talking about OSU and the overall budget of the institution, we care about $15 to $16 million. It matters a lot, but it is not a catastrophic impact upon how we would operate. Should we attempt to mitigate or prevent it? On the overall budget cut side of things, Sewell stated what we know in April will not be what the budget is going to be in the federal government for FY 26. It will simply be do we have a budget and what will it actually be for the fiscal year that we're already seven months through. The Federal government works in a strange way. Sewell stated what's looming here is a resolution on the current budget cycle that we're more than halfway through. We will then see a Presidential Budget Request (PBR) for the year which Sewell stated will be another year to figure out. Sewell anticipates there will be dramatic cuts requested in the PBR. Some of the cuts may be sustained, but we have supporters all across the political spectrum that will keep these cuts from being catastrophic in the research realm. Sewell suspects there will be cuts to NSF. Sewell believes that a 60% cut is unthinkable. Sewell suspects we will not see reductions in NIH funding even though it may be directed in different ways. Sewell believes there will be no cuts in the research budget for the Department of Defense or Department of Energy. There will be some places where cuts are achieved by those who want to cut for cuts sake. We have people across the political spectrum on the science-based technology appropriations committee who are not looking to see the United States tank our research enterprise. This is on the federal side. On the OSU side, we have people ready to go into emergency mode around any kind of threat to our operational structure. Sewell does not think we are at panic mode on an institutional level. Perkins asked if Oklahoma was one of the 22 states involved in the lawsuit? Sewell stated no Oklahoma is not. Eisenberg wanted to know if there are plans to switch from reactive to proactive at some point in this process. Eisenberg represents the faculty in Arts and Sciences, and he has received numerous questions some regarding how changes to grants will affect tenure packages. Is there a strategic plan that lays out possibilities so if these things happen there is a plan in place moving forward? Sewell said a plan to address all the possibilities at this point is mind boggling. We are gathering numbers and are working with our government relations people and university leadership to understand who our political allies are and who needs to know what. Sewell said he does not have the resources to say it is a strategic plan and honestly it would not be a good use of our resources because things are changing and, in a few weeks, we will hopefully know what sticks. Right now, there is so much going on. Sewell’s office received a call from a reporter asking how all this affects OSU’s R1 status. Sewell feels this is a reasonable question but at the same time, OSU is not exactly the only university in the country dealing with this and if there is catastrophic funding shifts and so forth, we're going to be dealing with that as an entire community. Same way with tenure. These are things that we will have to deal with if we find that the impact is more than anecdotal one-offs, which will have local solutions. Sewell doesn’t want to go to a global university-level solution when we don't yet know if the impact is going to be at that level. Eisenberg stated that if certain grants get pulled for certain resources, are we addressing them in an equitable way, treating all the researchers the same way. If this gets pulled, here’s the outcome. Sewell stated the way we will think about this are protecting students first, junior faculty first in the sense of the impacts through any stop work orders. Sewell stated if you're contemplating taking a student off a grant-salaried position, please don't do that without conversations up the chain because we don't yet have any reason to believe that that's going to be a widespread reality that's going to cause an institutional response. But if we could focus on protecting the most vulnerable among us as we get through an uncertain time, then we'll see what we've got to deal with at an institutional level. Yough wanted to know if there are any recommendations or directions regarding stop work orders received for work outside of track systems. For example, those who are reviewing grant proposals. Should these be forwarded to the ADR. Sewell believes it should be because it’s contextual information. Sewell stated what we want to be able to do with our federal delegation in particular is to be able to point at specific ways in which our institution has been negatively impacted. And those are things that tell us about something that is maybe a harbinger for things that might be coming down the road, but it's a little hard to put a quantity on how that's a quantifiable impact to the institution. Hoff asked if there was any news regarding the recent reports of unknown amounts of money going to the Innovation Foundation that should have been going to OSU. Is it coming back. Will it trickle down to the colleges. Can we get all the students we need to hire? Sewell stated he is not in a position to answer those questions.

Sewell stated that as stressful and hectic as the last few weeks have been, he wanted to stress that research will remain a core component of the OSU mission. There will continue to be great opportunities at the federal level to obtain funds. Some may shift but there will be opportunities. Sewell stated to take heart of our collective mission and our joint commitment to serve our students, each other and our state. We will get through this, and we are going to continue the research mission of OSU.

**President’s report and comments on matters of interest to the Faculty – Interim President Jim Hess**

Slevitch introduced the Interim President Dr. Hess and thanked him for coming today to talk to us. Hess thanked the council for the opportunity to speak today and introduced himself. He’s not formal and big on titles. He asked everyone to call him by his name, Jim. Hess introduced himself and gave the council members his background. From a small town, Henrietta, to his first job opportunity at OSU working at the Vet College. He stated OSU changed his life because of all the people he met that took an interest in him and his success. He thanked all the faculty members for mentoring and nurturing students. He told the Board of Regents (BOE) that students were the number one priority, and they are the number one priority because of faculty members. Faculty members have an impact on the trajectory of students’ own lives. Hess has worked in the OSU system for 43 years. He is currently a professor in the School of Healthcare Administration. He’s currently teaching six online courses. He is fully engaged as a professor. OSU acquired the Tulsa campus years ago. Hess was instrumental in wrestling the teaching hospital away from venture capitalists in New York who owned what was then Tulsa Regional Medical Center. OSU needed a teaching hospital for its school of medicine. Hess stated you can be a mediocre medical school without a teaching hospital, but you can’t be a great medical school without a teaching hospital. Hess is serving as the CEO of the OSU Vet Med Authority. This is a public trust that the legislature set up to acquire funding to recapitalize and revitalize the College of Veterinary Medicine. This is his number one legislative priority. Hess will be making a lot of visits to set the priorities for the university to acquire some funding to recapitalize our animal teaching hospital. This is a very, very heavy lift. It will cost about $295 million to build a new animal teaching hospital. What we really need is enough appropriation to pay off a debt on that scale. What we are really talking about is $15 million a year to amortize this. The other priority from a private fundraising point of view is for student scholarships. Hess stated that tuition waivers are great but that’s a discount of money that we could be spending on something else. What we need is cash. We need more private donations for scholarships, so we do not have to give so many waivers. Hess promised to do his very best every day to make everyone proud, not of him, but of OSU. It’s about the institution, our faculty and students. If someone were to ask me, what do you think your greatest skill is? It's not science. I care about what people think. I want to listen to what they have to say. I also care about how they feel. I care about how you feel because being the professionals that you are, sometimes you don't get all the recognition that you deserve. And I'm really attuned to your feelings about lots of different issues. It doesn't mean that we'll always agree on things. I'm sure there'll be things that we disagree on, but that's okay. We're colleagues. And there's nothing wrong with disagreement among colleagues. Hess said thank you and appreciated the opportunity to be with Faculty Council and allowing him some time to talk. Hess opened the floor for questions. Hoff expressed his concerns given the tumultuous times we are currently living in and asked as Interim President, are you ready to make difficult, impactful decisions if necessary. Hess addressed the word “Interim”. It means temporary or in between. Hess stated he loved what he was doing before this appointment and is perfectly happy to back to it once a new President is named. He stated he will make decisions based on what he thinks is in the best interest of the university. He will make a hard call that will be in the long-term best interests of this institution and its future, its survival and its fulfillment. Hess stated there's two approaches to being an interim officer in any area, whether it's a dean or a department head or in this case an interim a president. There are two approaches. One is to just keep the trains running on time. Just sit in the chair. Don't worry about making any decisions, avoid conflict at all costs. That's one approach. But I made it clear when I took the position, I only have two criteria. One is I need my wife to be with me in Stillwater and I need to make that happen as fast as I can. And the other one was, I need the freedom to make a hard decision and that I'll be supported in a hard decision. These were my only two conditions, so I promise you I will do what's right. Slevitch stated Hess mentioned his philosophy towards students and faculty. She is wondering what his take is on Faculty Council and how do you see the role of Faculty Council. Hess stated one of the advantages of coming from the faculty is you have a faculty perspective about things. Faculty governance and relationships are critical to our higher ed community and OSU community. Hess is a big believer in a faculty governance system where you have a shared perspective, a shared responsibility for the direction of the institution. Hess stated the advantage that I feel like I have is having come from and still am an active faculty member, that I have a certain view about administration. My philosophy will always be every time, how does this, whatever our faculty governance, our shared governance view of the world, which is important to us, what did they think? What did they need? Maybe not what they want. Our wants and needs are different, but I think sharing of the future of the institution affects all of us. We can't make these decisions in a vacuum. I'm not a top-down kind of guy. I'm a bottom-up kind of guy because that's where you end up with some good thinking. Hess stated the important thing in answer to your question is we're in this thing together and we're going to face some challenging times. Hess said right now, our state has enjoyed some really great financial times over the last several years. But in economics it is cyclical. There's going to be sometimes the state's not going to have any money. A lot of you all in this room that I know have lived through those times before, and here's how you make the best of those times, shared governance. How do we figure out a way to continue our mission and fulfill the institution's dreams in a much-constricted environment? Hess feels that wisdom is not in him but with all of us. Hess is a big believer in shared governance and practiced it over many years as a faculty member. Knapp thanked Hess for stepping into the role of Interim President at this critical hour and it speaks volumes that he is meeting with Faculty Council on his second day on the job. Knapp thinks we do have mechanisms in place for the faculty being full partners, decisions that are made at the university. I think there are those that feel that we wouldn't be in the situation we're in right now if that had been going on and we really look forward to reengaging with the administration in a productive way going forward. Hess stated he had a duty to be here, and he appreciates Knapp saying you're appreciative of him stepping into this role. Hess knows it's a big responsibility, but it's not his first rodeo. He’s been in a few scrapes before and promised to make you proud. He'll do his very best. Perkins stated given the sort of mid-semester appointment in your discussions with the regents, what are we looking at in terms of your interim appointment and when will the job search for the permanent president will begin? Hess stated the Regents did not tell him how long his service would be and asked if he was comfortable with this, which he is. The Regents did not indicate to him when the search process would begin but in his personal opinion, we have some work to do to attract people who will take this job and lead. Hess’s primary goal is to attract all kinds of people who want to be President of this institution. Haley asked if he has any plans or if there are any initiatives from the previous administration that you really have on your plate to carry through or any new initiatives or new direction or what do you see as the direction under your Interim position. Hess stated we have the accreditation site visit coming up in 2026 and from a practical point of view it would not be a good idea to change directions when you are about to go through an accreditation site visit. Hess stated it was his job to keep us focused on the execution of the things that were identified to move the institution forward. He wants peace, comfort, stability and fulfillment. You can’t expect people to do their very best work if they feel insecure about the future. His number one thing for all of us as faculty members, staff members, and students is stabilization, tranquility, and security. Hess stated that there is a narrow window of opportunity to get the animal teaching hospital built for Vet Med. Economic cycles being what they are, his number one priority is to get the animal teaching hospital funded and built. The second thing he is focused on is raising private funds for scholarships. This would release the pressure we have on waivers because they are just discounts on our revenue. Slevitch stated we have several committees working on recommendations, and we hope to share those with the administration first before putting them to a vote. Slevitch is hoping we will continue this initiative and for these committees to work with Hess. Hess stated you can count on it. Hess thanked everyone for the opportunity to attend the meeting and speak to everyone today.

Slevitch introduced Chris Francisco who is sitting in for Provost Mendez.

**Provost’s report on recommendations made by the Faculty Council and comments on matters of interest to the faculty – Chris Francisco for Provost Mendez:**

Francisco stated that Provost Mendez wanted to be here today and had arranged her travel so that she would be able to be here today but then the weather intervened and so she had to get out today or she was going to be stuck otherwise. She sends her regrets and wishes she could have been here today. Francisco appreciates the ability to talk with you and the fact that Hess was able to be here and so early on in his Interim Presidency and have a conversation with you. I, just from personal experience, have been fortunate enough to have a monthly meeting with him and the other vice provosts on our campuses for the last 18 months or so. It's just been terrific working with him. Extremely collaborative. What you see is what you get. He has been really a terrific colleague who comes to us with issues that he has really had been insightful about and really helped move things along. We are excited in Academic Affairs to work with him. Francisco wanted to update the Council members on the HLC accreditation that’s coming up. Our site visit is in about 14 months. Francisco stated there have been a lot of questions over the last week or so about what happens when we have a new president, and we have this strategic plan that we've been following for the last several years. Are we pivoting? What are we doing here? Francisco wanted to mention that we have the institution strategic plan and until we hear anything otherwise, he does not anticipate any major shifts, we're going to continue to focus on those goals because those are the goals that we have always been focused on as a university. The strategic plan was a way to highlight very specific things and laser focus us on those initiatives. We've always been committed to student success, access and research. Not only the basic research that we do, but what we disseminate through extension and through outreach. What HLC will want to see is that we are adhering to a strategic plan that we've announced and that we are continuing to make progress on that. Francisco does not anticipate any issues with this at all. Francisco did want to let everyone know that we have continued the process in preparing and we're kind of reaching some of the later stages of that process now. We had a campus-wide steering committee meeting last week to discuss progress on the self-study that we're doing, the reassurance argument that we're giving to HLC. The committee discussed what the plans are for this semester. Basically, what our timeline is. We're trying to get a draft of this report done sometime early in the summer. This is far ahead of what we might need to do, but we'd like to have it done earlier rather than later because that gives us time to let people see it, make some comments on it, decide whether we're missing anything, whether we need to go back and get more evidence for anything. Being ahead of schedule reduces all our anxiety a little bit, right? It's a big effort and we want to make sure we have enough time to do it. Over the next couple of weeks, our subcommittee groups are going to start meeting again. These are the groups that are responsible for each of the five (or four, depending on what happens) HLC criteria that we have to meet and provide evidence for. Francisco stated at least a couple of these meetings are next week. We will be going through the evidence that we collected last semester for our argument to make to HLC. We will then start looking at where we need to fill in some gaps. This is when we'll be going out to the colleges and to departments to find out if we need to know additional information about efforts that are going on in a certain area. We'll be asking for that sort of information. We may ask about specific resources that have been provided to do something or projects that you all are working on for student success or whatever it might be. Francisco stated that we are already way, way, way over the word limit as good academics always are, right? Fracisco stated that we have a writing team comprised of faculty and staff who will sit down and try to write the document so that it's all in one voice and that we present a very cohesive and coherent message. As Francisco mentioned in December, our timeline's the same. We'll be inviting our HLC representative out in the fall so that she can visit campus. She's new to being with OSU, so we'll want to have her on campus just to let her get acquainted with our institution and talk to some folks in administration and faculty. We're still planning a mock visit in January where we bring in peer reviewers from other institutions, go through all the steps that we would go through in our accreditation site visit so that we have a chance to practice and have the ability to see where we did well and where we still need to improve before that April visit. Then we'll be prepared for that April visit in 2026. Francisco does not foresee major changes from what I mentioned in December, we're still following the same strategic plan, still have the same goals and the same focus. Francisco thinks we're on a good schedule. Francisco gave a big shout out to Ryan Chung and the team from UAT that has done a fantastic job in leading this effort. Francisco is the chair in name only. They're the ones who've really done the work and kind of led us along to figure out what it is that we need to do. They're all experts in this process and kind of know where all the landmines are and where we need to make sure that we have good evidence for everything. Francisco opened the floor to questions.

**Vice Presidents’ Reports and Comments on matters of interest to the faculty:**

None

**Faculty Council Chair’s Report:**

Slevitch updated the council members on what’s been happening with the executive team. They have been working with administration on initiatives, and it looks like we have a receptive audience. Slevitch mentioned that March is right around the corner and that means the next election cycle will begin soon. We do have several faculty council members who will be rotating off: Ravi Jadeja, Jim Knapp, Wouter Hoff, Brad Lawson, Mike Yough, Heather Yates, Aric Warren, and Charlotte Baker and Joe Haley. Joe, you can run for another term since you were a substitute. Slevitch encouraged everyone to reach out to your colleagues, speak to people in your colleges to make sure that we have good representation from your colleges because again, shared governance is important. Having the right people in that position would be very essential. And that's all for me. Any questions?

**Report of Liaison Representatives:**

* 1. **Emeriti – Tom Royer**

Gary Clark has organized a list of speakers for our Monday Night Dinners

March 3: Chancellor Sean Burrage,

Topic of “The Future of Higher Ed in Oklahoma.

April 7: President Emeritus Burns Hargis

Topic: Reflections of a Former First-time President.

May 5: Professor Kevin Wagner

Topic: Oklahoma’s Water Future

June 2: Senior Vice Provost Chris Francisco

Topic: New Directions for General Education at Oklahoma State University

President Gang wants to emphasize to our members to work at obtaining new members for 2025, through word of mouth. Mike Lorenz, Emeriti Councilor, will assist any member with paperwork in the process of initiating new members. A new guest that attends their first Monday night dinner will have the cost absorbed by the Association.

We are happy to welcome Patricia Acurio who will provide clerical support.

* 1. **Staff Advisory Council – Sam Morse – No Report**
  2. **Graduate Council – Veronique Lacombe**

The following Academic Program Committee (APC) items were reviewed and approved at the November Graduate Faculty Council

• New Programs:

1. GCRT in Fashion Design – Digital Product Creation

2. GCRT in Collaborative Piano

3. GCRT in Forensic Investigation of Impaired Driving

4. GCRT in Dyslexia

• Program modifications:

1. Doctorate in Healthcare Administration - DHCA - correct degree sheet error

2. GCRT in Sport Communication - updated with course additions and deletions

3. Masters of Engineering (MEN) Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering - remove GRE requirement

4. Masters of Music (MM) Applied Music - required course updates

5. Masters in Public Health - MPH - required course updates

6. MS Animal Science - remove GRE requirement; required course updates

7. MS Design and Merchandising Interior Design - update program name to better reflect the major

8. MS Design and Merchandising - Merchandising - new course offerings

9. MS Integrative Biology - required course updates

10. MS Microbiology, Cell, and Molecular Biology - required course updates

11. MS Management Information Systems Big Data Analytics - lower required hours from 33 to 30

12. MS Management Information Systems Cybersecurity - lower required hours from 33 to 30

13. MS Management Information Systems Health Analytics - lower required hours from 33 to 30

14. MS Mass Communications - correct degree sheet; required course updates

15. MS Plant Biology - add research proposal defense requirement to degree sheet, reflecting what is already done

16. PhD Curriculum Studies College Curriculum and Teaching - remove GRE requirement

17. PhD Curriculum Studies Curriculum and Leadership - remove GRE requirement

18. PhD Curriculum Studies International and Peace Curriculum - remove GRE requirement

19. PhD Education Literacies and Language Arts Education - update program name to better reflect the major

20. PhD History - required course updates

21. PhD Integrative Biology - remove requirement for MS degree prior to pursuing PhD reflecting practice already in place

22. PhD Microbiology, Cell, and Molecular Biology - reducing required hours for PhD from 90 to 65

23. PhD Nutritional Sciences - required and electives course updates

Enrollment –Enrollment in Health Sciences is up 34.8 % compared to Spring 2024 at 1,679 students

Graduate Faculty Status Results – An email was sent to Department Heads and Staff for “Graduate Faculty Status Management System” with a portal link. The deadline is March 1st.

Catalog Updates – The Graduate College is working with the Registrar to compare the Plan of Study with the catalog, as there are discrepancies. The catalog will serve as the ultimate reference.

Upcoming deadlines

Last day to attend the Thesis/Dissertation Format and Graduation Review or watch the online tutorial in GC Round-Up Friday, March 7

Last day to submit a Graduation Clearance From and a revised Plan of Study (if needed) to the Graduate College Friday, March 14

* 1. **Student Government Association – Sam Hiltz/Aubrey Ruffin**

Hiltz stated that the Student Government Association trip to the capital for higher education day tomorrow has been canceled due to the weather. We're looking forward to rescheduling this trip. They were going to discuss scholarship opportunities for students and other opportunities for Oklahoma students to receive higher education with current legislators. Currently, the student government has appointed three students to fill positions: the multicultural affairs committee director, the director of accessibility and the food insecurity director. AFAP funding for student organizations has closed as of last week. Forms to run for student government president and vice president closed last week. We currently have two pairs of candidates running. And lastly, student government has provided co-sponsorship funds for the following student organizations, Aggie-X, the Hindu Association, Ferguson College of Agriculture Multicultural Program Leaders, Ferguson College of Agriculture Student Council, Cowboy Motorsports, Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Science, and Model United Nations.

My name is Aubrey Ruffin. I'm the student body president. Sam allowed me to come with him today. I just wanted to come here and fill you in a little bit but also introduce myself. I see some familiar faces who have been so kind and from what Dr. Hess was saying, when it comes to faculty members, you guys are the light of this campus just as much as the students. You guys are the ones that encourage us and get us to where we are. I'm the student body president. This is a campus that provides an environment that allows students to grow and to be the leaders that they're meant to be. But that's only because they have such great examples. The Student Government Association is going to Big 12 on the hill next week in DC. We will be going and advocating for a week from the 22nd to the 26th. When I get back, I hope to come and report to you guys what we got done. It's six students alongside our advisors. Ruffin would love to help faculty at any way she can. She represents the students, but the way she can do that is to talk to faculty and really bridge that gap between students in any way possible. Ruffin is a Human Development Family Science major, but would love to help in whatever respective area faculty are in.

Slevitch thanked Ruffin for her kind words, we really appreciate it. We have several committees where student engagement is really important, so maybe you'll be able to help us with having students participate on those. We would love to do that in any way we can. Yough asked to make sure this happens sooner than later. Yes, I'll mention that. SGA had a meeting set up for this Friday with the past administration and Dr. Hess agreed to meet with us on Friday. Ruffin is hoping that she can prepare the next president and vice president to work with administration hand in hand.

* 1. **Graduate & Professional Student Government Association – Marcia Sun**

GPSGA Membership Application - Spring 2025

**All new representatives and liaisons** from graduate and professional student organizations and departments must complete the **Spring 2025 GPSGA Membership Application Form**. **Returning representatives and liaisons do not need to resubmit this form.** The form is available for download on [**Canvas**](https://canvas.okstate.edu/courses/84470/pages/gpsga-statement-concerning-members-representatives-and-liaisons?module_item_id=1952503) and must be submitted through the designated **Microsoft Form Submission Portal** by **Wednesday, February 26**. For any questions, please refer to Canvas or reach out to GPSGA.

GPSGA Assistance/Grant/Fund Information

The [**Sprin 2025 GPSGA Travel Assistance Application**](https://canvas.okstate.edu/courses/84470/assignments/2313514)is open. Application assignments will be available on the GPSGA Canvas page. Please carefully review the [**GPSGA Travel Assistance Information Page**](https://canvas.okstate.edu/courses/84470/pages/gpsga-travel-assistance-information)before applying. The due date for the conference travel period January 1-June 30 is due on Monday, March 31. The Finance Committee will review all applications at the end of the semester, as previously conducted, and applicants will be notified via email of approval decisions after all applications have been collected and evaluated. The Finance Committee will review all applications at the end of the semester, as previously conducted, and applicants will be notified via email of approval decisions after all applications have been collected and evaluated.

The [**Spring 2025 GPSGA Co-Sponsorship Fund Application**](https://canvas.okstate.edu/courses/84470/assignments/2153912)is open until **Monday, February 17**, and it is intended for events taking place between January 1 and May 31. Please carefully review the [**GPSGA Co-Sponsorship Fund Information Page**](https://canvas.okstate.edu/courses/84470/pages/gpsga-co-sponsorship-fund-information)before applying. Additionally, the [**Post Event Visual Report for Spring 2025**](https://canvas.okstate.edu/courses/84470/assignments/2313516) for the Co-Sponsorship Fund is open. Please submit the relevant documents to support the applications to Canvas.

GPSGA Phoenix Awards – Important Notice Regarding Recommendation Forms

Listed recommenders will receive the recommendation form directly from the **GPSGA email** once the process begins on **February 15, 2025**. Please note that applications will only be considered complete **after recommenders have submitted the form.** For more details, please refer to the clip **posted on GPSGA Community Canvas regarding the process.**

The GPSGA Phoenix Award applications are open from **October 28, 2024, to March 10, 2025**. Late submissions will not be accepted. Please review the criteria and complete the form accurately. The application is available on [**GPSGA Community on Canvas**](https://canvas.okstate.edu/courses/84470/assignments/2213852)via[**Microsoft Forms**](https://forms.office.com/r/uVkiQmgTuq).

GPSGA Meeting Reminder

The fifth General Assembly Meeting of the academic year—and the first for Spring 2025—will take place on **Wednesday, February 26, at 5:30 PM in SSH 035**. An online option will be available for GPSGA representatives and liaisons from Tulsa and OKC campuses.

Slevitch stated that we have some College Faculty Council Representatives in attendance today. She is hoping to interact with them more. Slevitch asked if anyone would like to update the Faculty Council on what is happening within their respective councils.

Monica Whitham from the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) gave the following update. The CAS faculty Council this year has been mostly focused on participating in Dean Crow's working groups, dealing with some of the challenges CAS is currently facing. We are currently reviewing and going through some of the reports from those. We're amending our bylaws to incorporate career track faculty representation throughout all our college level committees. We are awaiting the university RPT policy update to incorporate career track faculty more fully into the RPT process before we move ahead with advising on our college level RPT documents. And we're currently looking for a new substitute CAS representative for this body. If you know anyone who might be interested in serving, please let me know.

Veronique Lacombe from the College of Veterinary Medicine gave the following update. Thank you for giving me this opportunity. We have a faculty council at the College of Veterinary Medicine (VFC). Briefly I will explain the structure. We have three departments, two representatives from each department and we have also two important ex-official members. One is the dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, and we have Dr. Boileau, who is the liaison for the university Faculty Council. We have standing agenda item at VFC, which is that we always get a report from Faculty Council. We get a report, an update from the dean, and we have also a standing agenda item about faculty grievance because this is a mechanism for faculty as well. Every time there is an issue, like for RPT for example process, they can resolve it through the mentoring committee. They can try to resolve it through the department head, but also through VFC since we have a direct report with the dean. This is how VFC worked last year. Similar, I'm glad to see we have some parallel activity. The dean had shared VFC to revise many policies that relate to faculty. We reviewed and revised over 14 policies. The two major ones were related to tenure track and career track. We are also waiting for the last update to make sure we're in compliance, but hopefully we are for the career track. For this year, what we'd like to do, based on all the feedback we received in the past, we're going to develop best practices. Sometimes we have a policy, but we don't have procedure and people interpret policy differently. We are going to have best practice for how candidates for the RPT process should compile their dosage. That's what we're working on. We're also going to work on developing and revise a bylaw to make sure we are more aligned with Faculty Council. Learning from you and maybe having a similar mechanism in place. Slevitch mentioned if they are dealing with certain grievances, the Faculty Council also has a capacity to deal with grievances, whether there is a formal procedure just dealing with grievances. She just wanted to make sure that you are aware. Yes, we are. And anything that we cannot resolve at the college level, we'll make sure to forward it to you guys. We'll try to resolve it at the lower level if possible.

Slevitch stated that Allison Hepworth from CHS has joined us today, but she does not have anything to report at this time.

**REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES:**

**a. Academic Standards and Policies: Mike Yough – Update**

Yough stated the committee is very committed to exploring a recommendation that we hope to make to this body at the end of the spring. This recommendation would be to have static codified learning objectives listed in the course catalog in Banner. Just to be clear, this is not a directive from administration. This is something that we've identified in ASP as something that impacts student learning, student autonomy, degree planning, curriculum planning, advisement, instructional fidelity and integrity, instructional planning and support efficiency to reduce course duplication, and quite frankly, the value of the degree at Oklahoma State University. We honestly feel like good students pay good money for the courses that they're taking. And it would be a little bit like going to a car dealership and asking about the specs then being told that, well, you have to buy the car first. In our view, that's what this is like. We are in the data gathering phase now. We know that this is going to be something that there's going to be a lot of challenges administratively, et cetera, associated with this. We are very much looking forward to recognizing the need to identify those challenges this semester. So please do feel free to email me. My name is Mike Yough and email me with anything that you foresee as being a bit problematic. Yough stated that what we're talking about is a really heavy lift and a hard sell. What we want to do is provide a recommendation at the end of the semester that's nuanced and really provides direction. And for this to happen, any feedback is absolutely welcome.

**b. Access and Community Impact: Ravi Jadeja – No Report**

**c. Athletics: Aric Warren – No Report**

**d. Budget: Brad Lawson – No Report**

**e. Campus Facilities, Safety, and Security: Patrick Daglaris – No Report**

**f. Career Track: Jennifer Glenn – No Report**

**g. Faculty: James Knapp – No Report**

**h. Long-Range Planning and Information Technology: Melanie Boileau – No Report**

**i. Research: Wouter Hoff – No Report**

**j. Retirement & Fringe Benefits: Mark Weiser – No Report**

**k. Rules and Procedures: Christopher Crick – No Report**

**l. Student Affairs and Learning Resources: Heather Yates – No Report**

**Unfinished Business** – None

**New Business** – Nomination of two Vice Chair candidates. Slevitch stated that according to the bylaws, Faculty Council shall nominate two candidates for the position of Vice Chair at their February meeting. If more than two are nominated during this time, it will move to a vote with the top two moving forward as the nominees. If any other nominations are requested, they can be done through a petition requiring signatures. Anyone wanting this petition, please reach out to Tricia White and she will provide the form. The forms will be electronically sent to all faculty members. Slevitch turned the floor over to Stephen Perkins, Nomination Committee Chair. Perkins stated that nominations are now open for the position of Vice Chair. Perkins asked for nominations. Slevitch nominated Dr. Aric Warren. Dr. Warren could not be with us today but has accepted this nomination. Perkins asked for a second nomination. Crick nominated Dr. Heather Yates. Perkins asked Yates if she accepts this nomination. Yates stated yes. Perkins asked if there were any other nominations at this time. Seeing none, declared nominations closed.

Slevitch asked for a motion to adjourn. It was moved and seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Faculty Council is Tuesday, March 11, 2025 in room **126 ITLE**.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Crick, Secretary