

# INSTRUCTION COUNCIL

## MINUTES

Thursday, July 18, 2024  
126 ITLE or Zoom

<https://okstate-edu.zoom.us/j/94152939415?pwd=YzdXM2MwTnF4bTZqUoRnNy8rU1FYUTog>

**PASSCODE: 649494**

**9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.**

In attendance: Shannon Baker, Mario Borunda, Laurie Beets, Danielle Bellmer, Chad Blew, Larry Burns, Kyndal Campbell, Aaron Christensen, Craig Freeman, Richard Frohock, Jami Fullerton, Jeff Hartman, Diane Jones, James Knecht, Marlys Mason, Christine Ormsbee, Rita Peaster, Carisa Ramming, Jerry Ritchey, Adrienne Sanogo, Candace Thrasher, Ronna Vanderslice and Chris Francisco, Chair.

### 1. Summer retention strategies - Chris Francisco

There are different summer retention strategies and patterns across colleges and populations. For example, University College does not experience a significant amount of growth during the main part of the summer; however, their numbers shoot up at the end of summer. At a fundamental level, do we need to keep doing more of what we are doing, or do we need to think outside the box with brand new sorts of ideas? We will continue this discussion throughout the year and ask colleges to share their most useful strategies so that we can incorporate these ideas with all colleges across campus. Also, it might be helpful to investigate what your colleagues at other institutions are doing in their retention efforts. We are pushing toward an 84 percent retention rate; however, the rate of increase has slowed recently.

Advisors need some guidelines as to what best practices are when focused on retention. There can be a fine line between keeping in contact with students and harassing them. As long as we track our efforts in Slate, that information can be helpful in determining trends - why students are not coming back to our campus. Peer mentorship was mentioned as a helpful tool as well.

Institutional Research and Analytics (IRA) has focused almost exclusively on what advisors and staff can do in terms of retention, but they have no data regarding retention practices in the classrooms. One of the aims of the Strategic plan was to provide training for the graduate teaching assistants as well as other faculty to capitalize on the early alerts system. Those conversations are ongoing as well.

During the summer months all eyes are on the advisors. The campus looks to them to move the needle on retention. This feeling of pressure is mostly seasonal rather than an institutional mindset that the entire job falls on the advisors. It had been a hope in administration that the first year advising team with 30 new advisors to work with the incoming freshmen would take workload off department advisors so they could have more time to focus on retention. Over the past few years, we have made huge strides in contacting our students over the summer to ensure a healthy fall enrollment.

Quality instruction was also discussed. Department heads are to review all instructor evaluations, complete their A&Ds and help them succeed as instructors. ITLE provides programs year-round for leadership training, department head training, new faculty training and GTA training. Note - if colleges do not require that GTAs to attend, 90 percent will not attend the training. We must consistently enforce the expectation of attendance.

Information is currently being gathered from the advisors who are speaking with the students regarding common reasons for not returning to campus. Certain colleges typically investigate each student who has not enrolled for the upcoming semester. If the issue is mostly of a financial nature, occasionally a retention grant can be offered between the college and the financial aid office. Bursar's office also contacts the students with options for payments. Colleges can also

evaluate the students' eligibility for college funding as well. Each college has a limited amount of funds available. Possibly faculty could review the list of students to determine if there is a connection between student and instructor. If so, have that instructor reach out.

As advisors are talking to students with significant medical or mental health issues remind them of the late drop refund petition process that may help the student be able to get back on track academically and financially. Advisors are well versed in this process.

As VP Chen is fond of saying, "Retention is all of our jobs."

### **General education**

We are still operating under interim rules for General Education Advisory Council (GEAC) that we passed in the summer of 2021. There are two vacant seats on GEAC 1) diversity seat and 2) international / global competencies seat. Dr. Amy Malek will be accepting the global competencies seat. For the diversity seat, we will be soliciting nominations for that content expert. Nominees will be sent to IC members for their vote.

### **2. Trail feedback – Chris Francisco**

C. Francisco has received feedback from academic advisors on the five trails we are funding this summer. Some of the trails were somewhat narrow in course content, however most were broad in topic. We are trying to move very quickly with this process. All feedback is very helpful and will be shared with Tammy Mix who is continuing to assist us with the GenEd reform.

### **3. Potential policy revisions – Chris Francisco**

In order to be sure we have a record of complying with our obligation to hire qualified instructors, C. Francisco will need all instructor qualification exception forms. This information will consist of name, vita and explanation for exception if the instructors do not meet current qualifications. C. Francisco will not be critiquing those decisions unless something seems very out of place but simply maintaining the information for proper records purposes.

The current retention of academic records policy specifies retaining paper copies of grades for five years. We would like to change various aspects of that policy to align more with State policy.

Policy 2-0902 regarding the career track faculty descriptions and promotions within the RPT document needs revision. C. Francisco would like to update / rewrite some of the rank descriptions within the document, descriptions of specific faculty ranks along with the qualifications. We have a considerable number of career track faculty who do not have a terminal degree. The language is written for tenure track faculty, not considering the situation regarding a professor of practice who may have a master's degree and 25 years of experience in the industry. We want to make sure we have career track representation on college committees that are evaluating career track cases. There was also discussion at the Provost's retreat regarding external letters in career track faculty evaluations. We need a uniform process for career track faculty. We need to have a policy that outlines the process for these cases instead of leaving the policy up to interpretation. Guidance for the colleges is important as well. Further details will be discussed as the semester progresses.

### **4. Curriculum**

#### **Information Items Only:**

N/A

#### **Course Action Summaries:**

N/A

#### **Program Modifications:**

**Spears School of Business**

**Master of Science in Accounting: Tax (002)**

## Option Reinstatement

- Option in Tax was suspended in 2021.
- Reason for requested action: Reinstating option to meet student demand.

**Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in Management: Nonprofit Management (449)**

## Option Suspension

- Suspend option in Nonprofit Management
- Reason for requested action: The department recently changed the option in Business Sustainability to Business Sustainability and Nonprofit Management.
- The option will be reinstated or deleted within 3 years.

***Motion was made by A. Sanogo and seconded by J. Fullerton to accept the above-mentioned Spears School of Business program modifications, and Instruction Council members approved.***

**5. Other**

- J. Hartman, Director of Undergraduate Admissions, reviewed the Admissions Policy revisions by the Board of Regents with Instruction Council (IC) members. Within this policy, the grade point average (GPA) no longer contains the word “unweighted” within the admissions and scholarship criteria. Our policy going forward for freshmen for Fall 2025 will use the highest GPA for admissions and scholarships. All incoming freshmen GPAs will be converted to a 4.0 scale for consistency. Concurrent policy still states that concurrent students are only admitted with unweighted GPA. The concurrent policy is currently under revision, and our hope is that these two policies will match, but as of now, they do not. This policy also proposes that the concurrent minimum GPA requirement is 2.0.
- C. Blew, Director of Scholarships and Financial Aid, provided a FAFSA update to IC members. A majority of our students are now packaged with financial aid. The Scholarships and Financial Aid office will be closing the front office on Tuesday and Friday mornings for the next three weeks to finalize the financial aid packages for our students.
- Ag Hall / Legacy Hall confusion – communication is planned for students and instructors as well.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:53am

Minutes were recorded by K. Campbell