

KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS
MINUTES
January 15, 2025

The meeting was called to order by Chair Carl Ice at 1:15 p.m. The meeting was held at the Board Office, Curtis State Office Building, 1000 SW Jackson, Ste. 500, Topeka, Kansas. Proper notice was given according to the law.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Carl Ice, Chair
Jon Rolph, Vice Chair
Alysia Johnston
Blake Benson
John Dicus
Neelima Parasker
Wint Winter
Diana Mendoza

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regent Rolph moved to approve the minutes of the Board's December 18, 2024 meeting. Regent Dicus seconded the motion. The motion carried.

INTRODUCTIONS

Wichita State University President Richard Muma introduced Dr. Monica Lounsbery, WSU's new Senior Executive Vice President and Provost.

GENERAL REPORTS

REPORT FROM CHAIR

Chair Ice wished the meeting attendees a happy new year. He explained that the meeting would feature information sharing helpful to building the Board's long-term plan, focusing on what the universities do with state investments, and the student success initiative, which is one of the Board's pillars. After the meeting, the Board will attend the Governor's State of the State address. Chair Ice said that the Board is looking forward to seeing the state's policy makers at the address.

REPORT FROM PRESIDENT AND CEO

Board President and CEO Blake Flanders said he is excited that the Legislature is back in Topeka, and that the Board has a great relationship with state policy makers. President Flanders testified last week on state employee compensation. Board of Regents and state university employees received reduced amounts in the most recent two rounds of state employee pay plans compared to other employees. President Flanders shared market information with legislators and will provide any additional information requested.

President Flanders also noted that RSVPs should be made by Friday for the Complete College America launch event that Washburn University is hosting on February 11. President Flanders thanked Washburn for hosting the event.

REPORT FROM COUNCIL OF FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENTS

Pittsburg State University Professor Norman Philipp, Chair of the Council of Faculty Senate Presidents, reported that the Council completed its updated recommendations on the Board's faculty of the year award policy, which would permit an additional award for non-tenured, non-tenure track faculty. The Council will also recommend changes to the definition of work duties.

Chair Ice noted that the Governance Committee discussed the issue this morning and is planning on reviewing the faculty award policy in February, along with discussing a possible staff award.

REPORT FROM STUDENTS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Pittsburg State University Student Government Association President Hannah Eckstein, Chair of the Students' Advisory Committee, said the Committee enjoyed breakfast with the Regents in December, and is looking forward to Higher Education Day at the Capitol on February 17. At today's meeting, the Committee discussed upcoming elections and tuition and fee decisions.

STANDING COMMITTEE AND OTHER REPORTS

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Regent Mendoza, Chair of the Board Academic Affairs Standing Committee, reported that BAASC met this morning and approved Washburn University's request to offer an MS in Medical Dosimetry. This would be the only such program in the state. BAASC also approved the University of Kansas' request to change its qualified admissions criteria. Sam Christy-Dangermond, Director of Academic Affairs, reviewed the performance report rubric, and BAASC will continue discussing the rubric at its next meeting. Rusty Monhollon, Vice President for Academic Affairs, announced First 15 workgroup dates and said a webpage would be live later this week.

Regent Mendoza extended her appreciation to Dr. Karla Wiscombe, Director of Academic Affairs. Regent Mendoza congratulated Dr. Wiscombe on her upcoming retirement. Chair Ice echoed Regent Mendoza's comments.

FISCAL AFFAIRS AND AUDIT

Regent Benson, Chair of the Board Fiscal Affairs and Audit Committee reported that the Committee conducted its agenda call on January 2 and met this morning. Today, the Committee heard annual audit plans and prior year outcomes from Kansas State University, Emporia State University, and Fort Hays State University. The Committee discussed the importance of adequate resources dedicated to the internal audit function, cross-training staff, and developing succession plans. The Committee requested information from the universities on how their staffing levels compare to those of similar universities and their peers. In addition, going forward, the Chair of the Board's Fiscal Affairs & Audit Standing Committee will co-sign the universities' audit charters with the campus CEOs as they are updated.

Regent Benson next stated the Committee reviewed and recommended favorably to the Board all the Fiscal Affairs items included in the Board's agenda.

Finally, Regent Benson reported that, as authorized by Board Policy, the Committee approved Wichita State University's request for authorization to refund a portion of nontaxable bonds issued in 2021. The refinancing will permit WSU to lease space in its Digital Research and Transformation Hub on the Innovation Campus to private companies.

GOVERNANCE

Board Governance Committee Chair Carl Ice reported that the Committee met this morning. The Committee authorized the Board President to execute a contract for instructional design services for the Blueprint for Literacy program. In addition, the Committee received a report on proposed changes to the Board's faculty of the year award policy. The Committee also received an annual campus safety and security report from Wichita State University.

Lastly, Chair Ice reported that the Committee received an update on work an outside vendor will perform to aid evaluation of CEO compensation. A contract has been awarded. Board staff will have a kick-off meeting with the vendor, and the vendor's draft report is expected to be provided in March.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Regent Rolph moved to approve the consent agenda. Regent Benson seconded the motion. The motion carried and the following items were approved:

*Fiscal Affairs & Audit***ACT ON REQUEST TO ACCEPT PROPERTY FROM UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION – KSU**

Kansas State University received approval to accept ownership of an 85-acre tract of land known as Knox Lane from the KSU Foundation.

ADOPT BOND RESOLUTION FOR THE ISSUANCE OF REVENUE BONDS TO FUND CONSTRUCTION AND EQUIPPING OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR AVIATION RESEARCH HUB FOR ADVANCED MANUFACTURING AND RESEARCH AND RENOVATION AND EQUIPPING OF THE UNIVERSITY STADIUM; EXECUTION OF VARIOUS OTHER DOCUMENTS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH – WSU

The Board adopted a resolution for the issuance of revenue bonds to fund two Wichita State University Projects: (1) constructing and equipping the National Institute for Aviation Research Hub for Advanced Manufacturing building (HAMR); and (2) renovating and equipping the university stadium.

The HAMR building will be a 167,500-square-foot research and training facility for emerging technology, advanced materials, digital twin, advanced machining, and automation. The total project cost is estimated to be \$66.8 million, with \$20.0 million debt financed, \$16.0 million funded by the Kansas Department of Commerce, \$26.4 million funded by a construction grant from the Federal Economic Development Administration, and the remaining balance funded from university resources. The Board resolution authorizes the issuance of bonds for the HAMR project in an aggregate principal amount sufficient to finance expenditures for costs of the HAMR project not to exceed \$20.0 million, plus all amounts required for costs of issuance, costs of interest on such revenue bonds during the construction of the project, credit enhancement costs, and any required reserves for the payment of principal and interest on such revenue bonds, for the purpose of funding the project. The debt will be secured by a pledge of generally available unencumbered funds of the university, and the debt will be serviced from NIAR funds.

The University Stadium project is a replacement for Cessna Stadium and, at completion of the phased construction project, will seat approximately 12,500-14,000 spectators. Project Phase 1A, comprising improvements on the east side of the existing track, began in summer 2024, funded by revenue bonds issued by the Wichita State University Board of Trustees. Wichita State University sought to cause \$6.81 million in revenue bonds to issue, to finance the completion of project phases 1A and 1B. The Board resolution authorizes the issuance of bonds in an aggregate principal amount sufficient to finance expenditures for costs of the University Stadium project not to exceed \$17.85 million (the full amount of bonding authority granted by the Kansas Legislature for the project) plus the costs of issuance, costs of interest on such revenue bonds during the construction of the project, credit enhancement costs, and any required reserves for the payment of principal and interest on such revenue bonds, for the purpose of funding the project. The debt will be secured by a pledge of generally available unencumbered University funds.

ACT ON REQUEST TO RAZE THE OLATHE PAVILION AND TO ALLOCATE FY 2025 BUILDING DEMOLITION FUNDS– KUMC

The University of Kansas Medical Center received approval to raze the Olathe Pavilion building.

The Board allocated \$2,239,285 for the project from the state Building Demolition Fund. The demolition is in accordance with the planning goals identified by KUMC's 2024-2050 Campus Master Plan. The Olathe Pavilion has an estimated \$19.2 million deferred maintenance backlog. The estimated cost for demolition, utility relocation, and exterior entry is \$6.9 million.

ACT ON REQUEST TO AMEND FY 2025 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PLAN AND APPROVE PROGRAM STATEMENT FOR THE BEEF CATTLE RESEARCH CENTER – KSU

Kansas State University received approval to amend the Fiscal Year 2025 capital improvement project plan, and the Board accepted the program statement for the construction of the Beef Cattle Research Center Facilities. The project will include a teaching and research feedlot, a metabolism research barn, and a feed mill. The construction will be carried out in two phases, with a total estimated project cost of \$16,001,000, to be financed totally with private money from philanthropic and industry partner gifts.

Technical Education Authority

ACT ON REQUESTS FOR DEGREE AND/OR CERTIFICATE PROGRAM: TECHNICAL CERTIFICATE B AND AAS IN BARBERING – HUTCHINSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Hutchinson Community College received approval for the following program:

- Barbering (12.0402) – Technical Certificate B/38 credit hours, and Associate of Applied Science/62 credit hours.

ACT ON CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY ARTICULATED CREDIT WITH KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Board approved an articulated credit crosswalk aligning public secondary and postsecondary Construction Technology programs. The crosswalk establishes the conditions under which postsecondary credit may be received for coursework completed under an approved Kansas State Department of Education Career Cluster Pathway.

CONSIDERATION OF DISCUSSION AGENDA

Academic Affairs

RECEIVE INFORMATION ON THE HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION'S GUIDELINES FOR REDUCED-CREDIT BACHELOR'S PROGRAMS

Rusty Monhollon, Vice President for Academic Affairs, presented on the Higher Learning Commission's guidelines for reduced-credit bachelor's degree programs, which the Higher Learning Commission issued this fall. As distinguished from a three-year degree, in which a student completes a full-credit-hour program in a compressed timeframe, a reduced-credit degree carries a lower credit-hour requirement.

Vice President Monhollon discussed the HLC's guidelines, including the factors it would review when accrediting reduced-credit programs. He also discussed the perceived benefits and drawbacks of reduced-credit degrees. On one hand, for example, the programs offer students potential cost savings, and the programs' intense focus can lead to deeper student understanding. Additionally, shorter programs can help respond to workforce needs. On the other hand, students may encounter reduced extracurricular opportunities, and critics argue the programs may lack the depth and breadth of knowledge of full-credit-hour programs.

The Regents discussed questions surrounding reduced-credit programs' potential impact on students with some college but no degree; the ramifications of permitting institutions to offer reduced-credit programs; and the nuances distinguishing traditional four-year and reduced-credit bachelor's degrees.

[Presentation on file with official minutes.]

BREAK

Chair Ice called for a break at 2:10 p.m. The meeting resumed at 2:28 p.m.

ACT ON NON-BUDGETARY LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL TO SEEK BONDING AUTHORITY FOR STADIUM RENOVATION – WSU

Kelly Oliver, Chief of Staff, presented Wichita State University's request to seek authorization from the 2025 Legislature to issue revenue bonds to finance its University Stadium project. WSU would seek legislative authority for the Kansas Development Finance Authority to issue up to \$60,000,000 in revenue bonds to complete the project. WSU intends to limit any issuance to only the amount necessary to complete the project. WSU is fundraising to support the project, which could reduce the amount of the issuance. If approved, this item would be added to the Board's nonbudgetary legislative proposal.

Regent Benson said that the Fiscal Affairs and Audit Committee approved the proposal, and was assured no general use revenues would be used. In addition, Regent Benson noted that WSU will need to return to the Board for approval to issue bonds resulting from any authority that the legislature may grant.

Regent Rolph moved to approve the addition to the Board's non-budgetary legislative agenda. Regent Benson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

ACT ON PROPOSED UNIFORM MARKET-BASED TUITION FOR THE FOUNDATIONS IN STRUCTURED LITERACY COURSE AT THE STATE UNIVERSITIES IN ACADEMIC YEARS 2025 AND 2026

Cynthia Lane, Director of Literacy, presented a proposal to establish the market-based tuition rate for the Foundations in Structured Literacy course. This course is being developed pursuant to the Kansas Blueprint for Literacy, which requires that the course be made accessible to all in-service early childhood teachers, general education teachers, and special education teachers at low or no cost to the teachers. The proposed market-based tuition rate is \$300 per credit hour. The rate was developed by the Board's office of literacy, working with the deans of the colleges of education at the state universities and Washburn university.

Regent Benson moved to adopt the market-based tuition rate. Regent Rolph seconded the motion. The motion carried.

RECEIVE UPDATE ON LEGISLATIVE INVESTMENT IN UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS

Each of the state universities presented an update focusing on legislative investments in university programs.

For Fort Hays State University, Dr. Tanya Smith, Assistant Chair of the Department of Nursing, discussed FHSU's Western Kansas Nursing Program expansion. FHSU faculty collaborated to determine how to meet the need for nursing in western Kansas. Smith highlighted a \$12.75 million expansion in physical space, which will include increased classroom size. Dr. Smith also highlighted approvals received from the Kansas Board of Nursing to increase nursing student seats. Regent Ice inquired about the relationship between the physical expansion and increased student capacity. Dr. Smith noted that the existing space constricts the number of students who may be admitted. FHSU hopes that the physical expansion will triple its Bachelor of Science in nursing capacity to 120 students.

For Wichita State University, Dr. John Tomblin, Executive Vice President for Research and Industry and Defense Programs, discussed WSU's research model. WSU focuses on applied research and 9,000 WSU students are benefitting from the on-campus applied learning opportunities. WSU begins by going to industry or government to define a problem. It then provides a solution, injects students using its applied learning program, which results

in students matriculating into the industry talent pipeline. WSU then scales the model. Reviewing recent successes, Dr. Tomblin reported that WSU had executed the largest industry-educational institution contract ever, exceeding the \$225 million contract between IBM and MIT for development of the IBM Watson computer. WSU is now home to the number one aerospace research group in the United States. Dr. Tomblin said that the \$22 million in state funding against WSU's \$401.9 million in research expenditures represents a 17:1 return on state investments. Dr. Tomblin also discussed the impact of WSU's work in generating local jobs, as well as WSU's future research aims.

For Emporia State University, Dr. Tim Burnett, Interim Dean of School of Science & Mathematics, discussed SMaRT Kansas 21. ESU receives \$500,000 per year to recruit, support, and train science and mathematics teachers. Program coordinator Kimberly Ideus reviewed scholarships granted under the program, which will grow to 65 scholarships totaling \$289,000 for Academic Year 2026. She also reviewed efforts to interest schoolchildren in science and mathematics.

For Kansas State University, Dr. Bonnie Rush, Dean of College of Veterinary Medicine, announced that the college recently received full accreditation for another seven years. Dr. Rush discussed a \$5,000,000 recurring appropriation that the College of Veterinary Medicine has received since 2019. The funding was initially used to renovate facilities and provide research support. It is now used to support research faculty. Among other items, Dr. Rush highlighted livestock infectious disease research that identified the cause of cow to cow transfer of avian influenza. The College received a National Institutes of Health grant for a core research facility that opened in October 2004. Reviewing performance indicators, Dr. Rush stated that the College receives approximately 2,200 applications for 120 student seats; and maintains a 90% four-year graduation rate and excellent board passage and employment rates.

For Pittsburg State University, Dr. Shawn Naccarato, Vice President, Research and Economic Development, discussed the National Institute for Materials Advancement. PSU is growing faculty expertise in electroactive materials. The Institute's Tyler Prove-Out Facility will enable small production runs that national manufacturers cannot perform in a cost-accessible way for entrepreneurs. The facility is expected to be completed in 2027. It will be key to an emerging research and development park currently experiencing about \$70 million in active development. With the facility, PSU is focused on expanding research and development, paving the way for industry partnerships, and positioning PSU as a battery technology leader.

For the University of Kansas, Dr. Jay Kalabas, State Geologist of Kansas and Director of the Kansas Geological Survey, discussed the Kansas Geological Survey. Dr. Kalabas highlighted the KGS' work around water usage in southwest Kansas, including the KGS' technology-enabled capacity to identify problems and create practical solutions. For example, Dr. Kalabas discussed airborne electromagnetic surveying, which enables KGS to generate three-dimensional models of the geological subsurface. KGS can model an entire aquifer, from which it can model outcomes based on variables such as precipitation and business usage.

[Presentations on file with official minutes.]

Due to time constraints, Chair Ice stated that the Board would deviate from the written agenda by receiving a legislative update and acting on two naming requests before receiving updates on legislative investment in student success.

RECEIVE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Fred Patton, the Board's governmental affairs consultant, reported that President Flanders provided testimony to the Legislature's employee compensation committee. Patton believed legislators appreciated the information, and that the committee will issue a report. Next Tuesday, there will be a hearing at which the Educational Building Fund is discussed.

Patton noted that the budget process is new this year. The process usually begins with the Governor's recommendation. This year, House Bill 2007—a budget bill with no enhancements—will be worked by the House first and then the Senate. Although the Governor will present her budget recommendations as usual, it is not clear what the Legislature will do with it.

ACT ON REQUEST TO NAME A FACILITY – WSU

Wichita State University President Richard Muma presented a request to name the main entrance of the Shocker Fly Lab in honor of Lynn and Sherry Nichols.

Regent Rolph moved to approve the request, seconded by Regent Johnston. The motion carried.

ACT ON REQUEST TO NAME A FACILITY – KSU

Kansas State University President Richard Linton presented a request to name KSU's Beef Cattle Research Center the Doug Laue Beef Cattle Research Center.

Regent Johnston moved to approve the request, seconded by Regent Benson. The motion carried.

Regent Ice thanked the Fiscal Affairs and Audit Committee for its quick work on project approval for the Center.

RECEIVE UPDATE ON LEGISLATIVE INVESTMENT IN STUDENT SUCCESS

Three of the state universities updated the Board on their student success initiatives. The remaining three will provide updates at the next Board meeting.

For Wichita State University, Dr. Ashlie Jack, Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, stated that WSU focused on using student success funding on transformational practices that provide continuous support to WSU's students. Dr. Jack provided an overview of WSU's strategic enrollment management plan. There are four goals within the plan, and initiatives relating to each goal. Dr. Jack explained how WSU's National Institute for Student Success (NISS) Playbook recommendations fit within those goals.

Dr. Jack discussed the manner in which WSU has acted to meet the NISS recommendations, including WSU's data-driven approach to course design. She highlighted the university's use of academic data to maximize retention. She also noted that 18 front-facing offices for students have been consolidated in the Shocker Success Center. In Fall 2024, WSU had over 19,300 student visits within the building. Dr. Jack also discussed the ways in which WSU has worked to standardize academic advising, ensure intentional academic pathways for retention, and strengthen financial outreach to students. Regarding the latter, Dr. Jack highlighted expansion of the Shocker Promise program and the increase in first-time freshmen receiving financial aid. Dr. Jack noted that WSU has lowered the time to degree across multiple cohorts based on students' starting credit hours and has increased its persistence rates.

Regent Parasker asked whether WSU's efforts involved addressing the cost of required books. Dr. Jack said that WSU is continuously working on this. All open-access courses are marked for students. This may also be addressed through communications between advisors and students. Dr. Jack noted that the University bookstore is supportive to students. She also said that there are specialized advisors and resources to help students who cannot afford books.

For Fort Hays State University, Dr. Jill Arensdorf, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, highlighted the role of student success in FHSU's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. The University seeks to improve equitable access for all students by reducing achievement gaps and improving persistence by three percent. Dr. Arensdorf updated the Board on FHSU's progress toward its NISS recommendations. FHSU is working to implement and integrate three data sources, including EAB Navigate; and to complete initial analysis of its D-F-W rates and other statistics.

FHSU finished implementing its centralized advising model in Fall 2024. Each undergraduate student now has a faculty mentor in their field, in addition to their faculty advisor.

Wesley Winch, FHSU Vice President for Administration and Finance, discussed how FHSU used funding it received for need-based aid. The funds supplemented existing programs and funded a new income-based award for students with family adjusted gross incomes of \$70,000 or less. Winch provided information on the amount of aid and number of students receiving assistance in the current and previous academic years. FHSU resident enrollment and its retention and graduation rates are all up in AY 2024.

For Emporia State University, Dr. Taylor Kriley, Vice President for Student Success, reported that ESU is ahead of schedule on all four of its NISS goals. She provided an overview of work currently being done regarding each of the goals: creating structured pathways; standardizing academic advising; strengthening student financial well-being; and enabling the use of actionable data in support of improved student outcomes and better-coordinated student communications. Dr. Kriley discussed how ESU is using data, such as graduation and retention rates, to evaluate its progress. ESU has seen an increase in freshman and online first-semester retention rates; an increase in first year retention rates for freshmen and transfer students; and an increase in its 4-, 5-, 6- and 8-year graduation rates.

In response to a question from Regent Winter, Dr. Kriley said the NISS Playbook has complemented the University's strategic plans. It helped the University generate engagement on-campus and has assisted it in working with the other state universities.

[Presentations on file with official minutes.]

ADJOURN

Chair Ice adjourned the meeting at 4:25 p.m.

Blake Flanders, President and CEO

Carl Ice, Chair