

KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS
MINUTES
March 12-13, 2025

The meeting was called to order by Chair Carl Ice at 1:17 p.m. on March 12, 2025. The meeting was held at the Board Office, Curtis State Office Building, 1000 SW Jackson, Ste. 520, Topeka, Kansas. Proper notice was given according to the law.

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Carl Ice, Chair	John Dicus	Neelima Parasker
	Jon Rolph, Vice Chair	Alysia Johnston	Wint Winter
	Blake Benson	Diana Mendoza	Kathy Wolfe Moore

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regent Winter moved to approve the minutes of the Board's February 12, 2025 meeting and March 5, 2025 special meeting. Regent Mendoza seconded the motion. The motion carried.

INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Ice welcomed Regent Kathy Wolfe Moore, who joined the Board in February, to her first in-person Board meeting. He also welcomed and congratulated Ben Schears as the new Vice President for Economic and Workforce at Fort Hays State University.

GENERAL REPORTS

REPORT FROM CHAIR

Chair Ice noted that the Board will hold a legislative reception this evening following adjournment of the Board meeting. He also noted that the Board is hosting roundtables Thursday with the Council of Chief Academic Officers and the Council of Business Officers.

REPORT FROM PRESIDENT AND CEO

President Flanders recently attended a State Higher Education Executive Officers Association meeting in Washington, D.C. Many systems are facing issues similar to those Kansas faces. Kansas' efforts surrounding student success are as comprehensive as any. President Flanders cited efforts including the National Institute for Student Success playbooks, corequisite education, and increased amounts of need-based aid. These efforts have resulted in improvements in metrics such as on-time graduation rate.

President Flanders delivered testimony this morning on a bill that would create a blue-ribbon commission on higher education. The Board's testimony was neutral, but the Board will offer support to any commission resulting from the legislative effort.

REPORT FROM COUNCIL OF FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENTS

Pittsburg State University Professor Norman Philipp, Chair of the Council of Faculty Senate Presidents thanked those in attendance for their efforts providing testimony on House Bill 2348. He reported that there has been progress on the faculty of the year awards, with all campuses having updated their criteria. He noted that the Council presented a unified tuition assistance proposal to the Council of Chief Academic Officers.

REPORT FROM STUDENTS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Pittsburg State University Student Government Association President Hannah Eckstein, Chair of the Students' Advisory Committee, stated that she appreciates the opportunity to participate in the Pittsburg State University presidential search. Students from four universities have been invited to speak to the House Higher Education Budget Committee this afternoon. The Committee heard an update from the Washburn University student government president on state and federal changes.

STANDING COMMITTEE AND OTHER REPORTS**ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

Regent Mendoza reported that the Board Academic Affairs Standing Committee (BAASC) held a virtual meeting on February 26, 2025, during which it recommended for Board approval a University of Kansas proposal to offer a Bachelor of Science degree in data science. That item is on the Board's consent agenda this afternoon. Additionally, BAASC charged Board staff with gathering additional information on a possible reduced-credit baccalaureate degree, including examining current policy, ascertaining any necessary revisions, determining what the program approval process would look like, and determining what criteria would be used to assess such programs.

BAASC also met this morning. At this morning's meeting, following a presentation from Associate Director for Academic Affairs Mistie Knox and after hearing feedback from the university provosts, the Committee recommended that the Board approve holding Apply Free Days on October 6-8, 2025. This item is on the Board's discussion agenda this afternoon.

Vice President for Academic Affairs Rusty Monhollon informed the Committee that Board staff will begin working on Performance Agreements for Academic Years 2027 through 2029 later this year. Associate Director Knox presented the Reverse Transfer Annual Report to the Committee, a key takeaway from which was that the system has awarded 785 associate degrees through the reverse transfer process in the last five years. Beginning in Fall 2025, institutions will utilize the National Student Clearinghouse as the transcript data exchange service to streamline the process. BAASC also received an update from Director for Academic Affairs Sam Christy-Dangermond on the Dana Center's Launch Years Initiative Annual Convening, at which a team from Kansas collaborated with teams from other states on current Math Pathways initiatives.

FISCAL AFFAIRS AND AUDIT

Regent Benson reported that the Board Fiscal Affairs and Audit Standing Committee held an agenda call on February 25 and met this morning. The Committee approved the two Fiscal Affairs items on today's consent agenda.

At this morning's meeting, the Committee discussed foundations' roles in supporting the universities with Greg Willems, CEO of the Kansas State University Foundation, and Jason Williby, CEO of the Fort Hays State University Foundation. They shared insights on how state funding can be leveraged with philanthropy and the opportunity to raise funding for student scholarships for the Kansas Comprehensive Grant required match. They also discussed changing donor expectations, including the expectation to see a return on their investment. In addition to capital projects, private gifts support other university needs, particularly student scholarships.

The Committee also heard financial outlook reports from Emporia State University, Fort Hays State University, and Wichita State University. Each university reported low tuition rates compared to peers, regional competitors, and athletic conference members. Each university is confronting challenges with enrollment and the effect inflation has on their ability to retain faculty and staff and finding the money to grow and innovate. State support of student financial aid is having a positive impact on enrollments and student retention. While it is too soon to measure the effect of FHSU's affiliation with the technical colleges, FHSU is putting systems in place to monitor the effect. All three universities highlighted their continuous efforts to examine their budgets, manage costs, and improve their financial ratios. As WSU has recently invested heavily in the Innovation Campus, it will strive to improve its cash reserves. The on-campus private partners paid \$30 million in student wages last year for applied learning opportunities.

Facilities Director Chad Bristow updated the Committee on the state universities' progress to complete their inspections and assessments for all facilities and infrastructure on state property by the October 2027 deadline. Additionally, university facilities staff are waiting to see if the Legislature retains the Campus Restoration Act funding as was initially provided for FY 2026 and which the Board has already allocated for planning purposes.

The Board will receive the Universities' FY 2027 five-year capital plans next month for a first read. The plans will include many of the universities' capital renewal priorities, as well as longer-term aspirational projects that align with their campus master plans.

GOVERNANCE

Chair Ice reported that the Governance Committee met this morning. The Committee approved proposed amendments to the Board's faculty of the year award policy, received a campus safety and security report from Fort Hays State University; and recessed into executive session to discuss Fiscal Year 2026 CEO compensation.

RETIREMENT PLANS

Chair Ice noted that, as of December 31, 2024, the Board's mandatory 403(b) retirement plan had \$5.5 billion in assets, and the voluntary plan had \$1.3 billion in assets.

The Retirement Plan Committee met on March 11. At the meeting, the Board's investment consultant presented its review of the plans' investment options. As a result of that review, the Committee recommends removing one of the investment options available to voluntary and mandatory plan participants with TIAA accounts, the Allspring Growth Fund. The Committee further recommends adding the substitute fund, the Nuveen Large Cap Growth Fund, to the mandatory plan investment lineup. That fund is already available in the voluntary plan. The Committee also heard a fee reduction proposal from TIAA, which the Committee recommends adopting. The lineup change and fee reduction will be on the Board's agenda next month. Finally, the Committee received a recordkeeping fee update and heard cybersecurity presentations from TIAA and Voya.

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:

Academic Affairs

ACT ON REQUEST TO APPROVE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN DATA SCIENCE – KU

The University of Kansas received approval to offer a Bachelor of Science degree in data science.

Fiscal Affairs and Audit

ACT ON REQUEST TO PURCHASE REAL PROPERTY – KSU SALINA

Kansas State University received approval to purchase two parcels of land from the Salina Airport Authority. The first parcel, located at 1910 Beechcraft Road, Salina, KS, contains 2.52 acres, which will be used as a production facility for the composites department. The second parcel, located at 2413 Hein Ave, Salina, KS, contains 0.71 acres, which will continue to be used as an aviation maintenance classroom and faculty offices.

ACT ON REQUEST TO APPROVE PROGRAM STATEMENT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF OUTDOOR SEATING AREA FOR KOSOVER TENNIS COMPLEX – ESU

Emporia State University received approval of the program statement for a new tennis spectator seating facility. The Kosover Tennis Complex, completed in 2021, includes indoor and outdoor tennis courts. The interior courts include both fixed and movable spectator seating. The original building budget did not allow for fixed spectator seating at the outdoor court area. A donor has reached out to explore design and construction of an enclosed seating and viewing facility to be built adjacent to the outdoor courts.

Initial schematic design allows for a 750 gross square feet enclosed seating area to include interior finishes, power, and HVAC systems. The initial project budget is estimated at \$465,000. This project would be funded entirely by private gifts. Construction is planned from April to August of 2025. Private gifts will pay for future maintenance of the facility.

CONSIDERATION OF DISCUSSION AGENDA**Other Matters****RECEIVE FEDERAL UPDATE REPORT**

Tom Harnisch, Vice President for Government Relations at the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, updated the Board on recent federal government actions. Congress is finishing its Fiscal Year 2025 appropriation process. A full-year continuing resolution passed by the House would freeze funding at the current level until October 1 and would remove earmarks for higher education. Options have been assembled for potential education savings, such as ending the SAVE student loan repayment plan and instituting financial aid risk sharing.

The new Education Secretary has been sworn in and the Department has laid off approximately 1,300 of its 4,000 employees. The layoffs largely impacted the Department's workforces in federal student aid and the Office of Civil Rights. Vice President Harnisch said that there are concerns about the Department's capacity to answer students' FAFSA questions and OCR's capacity to review complaints. The Department's recent "Dear Colleague" letter extended the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Students for Fair Admission v. Harvard College* to all activities in higher education and K-12.

The National Institute of Health's change to indirect cost rates is currently being litigated. The NIH had attempted to cap previously negotiated rates at 15%. A preliminary injunction has been entered.

Regent Wolfe Moore inquired if there is concern about potential changes to student loan availability. Vice President Harnisch said he has not seen that as changes would need to go through Congress. However, there are concerns about processing and responsiveness to inquiries. Regent Winter asked about the future of the Pell Grant program. Vice President Harnisch said that the Congressional Budget Office indicates the program has a \$2.7 billion shortfall, which is expected to increase, and that Congress needs a plan to address this.

Academic Affairs**ACT ON KANSAS FREE APPLICATION DAYS FOR 2025-2026 ACADEMIC YEAR**

Mistie Knox, Associate Director for Academic Affairs, presented a proposal to hold Kansas Free Application Days on October 6-8, 2025. These dates align with the dates of the 2024 event and with Kansas College Application Month. The dates proposed are based on feedback from stakeholders including public university admissions directors, the Kansas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the Kansas Independent College Association, and the Apply Kansas Steering Committee.

Regent Mendoza moved to approve the proposal. Regent Johnston seconded the motion. The motion carried.

CLARIFICATION OF PROGRAM REVIEW METRICS

Rusty Monhollon, Vice President for Academic Affairs, presented a request to clarify the Board's program review metrics. Vice President Monhollon proposed including the following in the program review metrics that the Board approved in December:

"Students who pursue graduate study immediately upon completion of a bachelor's degree can be included in the "Talent Pipeline" metric. Additionally, these students should not be included in the wage metric five years post-baccalaureate."

Regent Rolph moved to adopt the proposal. Regent Dicus seconded the motion. The motion carried.

BREAK

Chair Ice called for a break at 1:58 p.m. The meeting resumed at 2:15 p.m.

GovernanceACT ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO FACULTY OF THE YEAR AWARD POLICY

General Counsel John Yeary presented proposed amendments to the faculty of the year award policy. Current policy provides for recognition of tenured and tenure-track faculty at each state university and the University of Kansas Medical Center for excellence in teaching, research, and service. The proposed amendments add awards recognizing non-tenure track faculty and university staff. In addition, the basis for faculty recognition is expanded to include extension, libraries, clinical duties, and service in other roles.

Regent Rolph moved to adopt the policy amendments. Regent Benson seconded the motion. The motion carried and the following policy amendments were adopted:

C CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, FACULTY AND STAFF

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9 FACULTY AND STAFF OF THE YEAR AWARDS

In order to recognize and encourage excellence in teaching, research, and service among university faculty, the Board ~~will may~~, on an annual basis, present an award to one tenured, ~~and one non-tenured but~~ tenure-track, ~~and one full-time non-tenure-track~~ faculty member at each state educational institution and the University of Kansas Medical Center. To assist the Board in identifying appropriate recipients for ~~the each~~ award, the Faculty Senate of each state educational institution and the University of Kansas Medical Center shall adopt criteria by which each Faculty Senate shall annually select up to three two faculty members (one in each of the aforementioned categories) to recommend to the Board for recognition. The criteria shall seek to identify faculty members who have excelled in their university responsibilities (including teaching, research, extension, libraries, clinical duties, service, and other roles) ~~whose teaching, research, and service~~ over the preceding academic year and have exemplified excellence and commitment to the mission of the institution. The criteria may be adopted and amended at any time in accord with the governance procedures of the individual Faculty Senates but shall be submitted to and subject to final review and approval by the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Board. Nominations shall be submitted to the Board by the May Board meeting to provide in adequate time for review and approval or rejection ~~at the Board's annual August retreat~~. Recipients shall be called before the Board for recognition ~~at the September Board meeting~~ by invitation of the Board Chair, typically at the September Board meeting.

In order to recognize and encourage excellence among university staff, the Board may, on an annual basis, present an award to one staff member at each state educational institution and the University of Kansas Medical Center. To assist the Board in identifying appropriate recipients for each award, the President or Chancellor of each state university and the University of Kansas Medical Center shall annually identify one staff member at each state university and the University of Kansas Medical Center to recommend to the Board for recognition and the reasons therefore and shall submit nominations to the Board by the May Board meeting to provide adequate time for review and approval or rejection. Recipients shall be called before the Board for recognition by invitation of the Board Chair, typically at the September Board meeting.

Other MattersRECEIVE ENROLLMENT REPORT – SYSTEM

Elaine Frisbie, Vice President for Finance and Administration, presented the report on system enrollments for Academic Year (AY) 2024. The full report is available on the Board's website at https://www.kansasregents.gov/data/system_data/enrollment_reports.

Systemwide, overall enrollment is up slightly compared to AY 2023. Headcount is up 1.37 percent, and full-time equivalent enrollment is up 1.8 percent. However, since the 2012 peak headcount is down 14.6 percent, and full-time equivalent enrollment is down 13.6 percent. Since AY 2014, resident enrollment is down 18.3 percent

systemwide. Community colleges have seen the largest reduction in student counts. Student retention is up 3.8 percent since AY 2014, and up 1 percent at the public universities over the same time period.

At the state universities, headcount is down 3.9 percent since AY 2014 and full-time equivalent enrollment is down 6.7 percent, but both metrics are up relative to AY 2023. Since AY 2023, first time fall enrollments are up 4.1 percent at the research universities and 5.2 percent at the regional universities. Since AY 2014, first time fall enrollments are up 14 percent at the research universities and are slightly down at the regional universities.

Vice President Frisbie highlighted the various enrollment dimensions captured in the report. For example, Pell-eligible students, which increased slightly in AY 2024 over AY 2023; headcount breakdowns by race and ethnicity; headcount by full- and part-time status; and distance education headcount. Vice President Frisbie also reviewed enrollment at Washburn University, the community colleges, and the technical colleges. She noted steady annual increases in the percentage of credit hours delivered to high school students by community and technical colleges and strong growth in dual enrollment.

Vice President Frisbie reviewed data regarding high school graduates' college readiness. Over the last ten years, the percentage of ACT test takers who met the ACT benchmarks in all four areas declined from 31 percent to 18 percent. This figure lags the national average by two percent. Upon inquiry by President Flanders, Vice President Frisbie confirmed the data reflected eight percent of Hispanic students who took the ACT and five percent of African American students who took the ACT met all four ACT benchmarks. She noted that the data reflects a clear correlation between income and ACT preparedness. Systemwide, 17.7 percent of students are enrolled in developmental education. And the overall college-going rate is down to 43.8 percent, from 55.3 percent in AY 2014.

Regent Winter asked if Kansas is still facing an enrollment cliff. President Flanders said that it appears Kansas will see an eight percent drop in Kansas high school graduates, and that the numbers will not come back this century. However, the issue is a drop among students who take advantage of the state's higher education opportunities. Chancellor Girod observed that the college readiness and student success data shows that the universities do a better job than the preparedness numbers would suggest.

(Presentation on file with official minutes.)

ACT ON PITTSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTIAL PROFILE

Regent Benson presented the Pittsburg State University Presidential Profile. The Profile was drafted by the PSU Presidential Search Committee, which is chaired by Rick Webb. The Committee collected input through listening sessions held earlier in the week. Regent Benson stated that the Profile is comprehensive but acknowledged that it is difficult to capture everything in a short profile.

Regent Rolph moved to approve the Profile. Regent Wolfe Moore seconded the motion. The motion carried.

(PSU Presidential Profile filed with official minutes.)

ACT ON REQUEST TO GRANT HONORARY DEGREE – KSU

Kansas State University President Richard Linton presented a request to confer an honorary doctorate degree on Dr. M. Duane Nellis. Regent Johnston moved to approve the request. Regent Winter seconded the motion. The motion carried.

RECEIVE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Fred Patton, the Board's government affairs consultant, reviewed the legislative schedule and upcoming deadlines. The most important legislative item is the budget for the system. The Senate Ways and Means

Committee is working on its version of the budget. The House Appropriations Committee is working on a trailer bill this morning that is likely to be a piece of conference committee work on the budget. Mr. Patton highlighted favorable items currently in both chambers' budgets. He also noted that the House could soon vote on the bill requested by the Board revising the terms of state service scholarships, which has already been approved by the Senate.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 3:01 p.m., Regent Rolph moved that the Board recess into executive session for one hour to discuss personnel matters of nonelected personnel. The purpose of the executive session is to protect the privacy of the individual Board employees involved. The executive session will begin at 3:10 p.m., and the open session of the Board will resume at 4:10 p.m. Regent Parasker seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

At 4:10 p.m., the Board returned to open session and Regent Rolph moved to extend the executive session for 25 minutes to 4:35. At 4:35, the Board returned to open session and Regent Rolph moved to extend the executive session for 10 minutes to 4:45. Regent Winter seconded the motion, and the motion carried. At 4:45 p.m., the Board returned to open session.

ADJOURN

Chair Ice adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

Thursday, March 13, 2025

The Regents convened for Breakfast with the Council of Chief Academic Officers at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 13, 2025, at the Curtis State Office Building, Suite 530, followed by a round table at 9:45 a.m. with the Council of Business Officers in the Kathy Rupp Conference Room in the Board Office.

At 10:56 a.m., Regent Parasker moved to add an executive session to the Board's agenda. Regent Johnston seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 10:56 a.m., Regent Ice moved that the Board recess into executive session for 45 minutes, beginning at 11:00 a.m., to discuss personnel matters of nonelected personnel. The purpose of the executive session is to protect the privacy of the individual Board employees involved. The open session of the Board will resume at 11:45 a.m. Regent Mendoza seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

At 11:45 a.m., the Board returned to open session and Regent Benson moved to extend the executive session for ten minutes. Regent Parasker seconded the motion, and the motion carried. The Board returned to open session at 11:55 a.m.

ADJOURN

At 11:55 a.m., the meeting adjourned.

Blake Flanders, President and CEO

Carl Ice, Chair