

**KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS**  
**BOARD ACADEMIC AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE**  
MINUTES  
MAY 28, 2025

Regent Diana Mendoza called the May 28, 2025, Board Academic Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was held in the Kathy Rupp conference room, located in the Curtis State Office Building, 1000 S.W. Jackson, Suite 520, Topeka, KS 66612.

MEMBERS PRESENT:           Regent Diana Mendoza  
                                  Regent Alysia Johnston  
                                  Regent Neelima Parasker

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Regent Parasker moved that the minutes of the May 14, 2025, meeting be approved. Regent Johnston seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

**BOARD CONSENT ITEMS**

**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL AAS IN FOOD AND FEED MANUFACTURING - KSU**

Vice Provost Margaret Mohr-Schroeder introduced Dr. Dan Moser, Associate Dean for Academic Programs in the College of Agriculture. Dr. Moser provided an overview of the proposed program, emphasizing that it addresses a national shortage in the field. He noted that the program would be unique within Kansas and the surrounding region, with only three other land-grant universities nationwide offering similar programs. Provost Mendez acknowledged that while KBOR policy generally discourages four-year institutions from offering associate degrees, KSU was specifically approached by industry leaders to develop and deliver this program in response to workforce needs.

Regent Johnston expressed interest in seeing collaboration with the state's community colleges. She inquired whether stackable credentials could be developed using credits from community colleges in related fields. Dr. Moser responded that equivalent courses had not yet been evaluated but affirmed KSU's openness to discussions on transfer pathways. Regents Parasker and Mendoza echoed the importance of collaboration with community colleges to better serve students. Regent Mendoza proposed tabling the proposal until the fall to allow time for such collaboration and the development of an action plan. Regent Johnston moved to table the proposal until September, with a plan to collaborate with the community college sector and to include an update on progress to be provided at the June 11 meeting. She recommended direct outreach to institutions such as Cowley County Community College, noting that their historic knowledge could be invaluable. She also suggested exploring a stackable "one-plus-one" model, which could benefit both students and industry while aligning with KBOR's goals. Regent Parasker seconded the motion, clarifying that the intent was not to delay progress with industry partners but to ensure a thoughtful and collaborative approach that could serve as a model that can be referenced for future proposals. The motion carried.

Vice President for Academic Affairs Rusty Monhollon acknowledged that while such proposals from universities are rare, they are addressed, though discouraged, under current KBOR policy. He suggested this might be an opportunity to review and potentially revise that section of the policy to provide clearer guidance and avoid delays of future requests. Regent Mendoza agreed and requested that the academic affairs staff begin reviewing the relevant policy language. Regent Johnston concurred, noting that such revisions would help streamline the process and provide clarity for similar proposals in the future.

**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL BS IN NUCLEAR ENGINEERING AND REQUEST TO EXCEED 120 HOURS - KSU**

Provost Jesse Mendez introduced Dr. Amir Bahadori, the director of the Nuclear Engineering Program, who provided an overview of the proposal. This program would be the only nuclear program in the state of Kansas. KSU already has qualified faculty and is equipped to offer such a program. Regent Parasker expressed concern that the GPA admissions criteria seemed low for this type of program. Dr. Bahadori shared that the admissions criteria for this program are identical to those for the other programs at the College of Engineering. He also shared that there is an alternative transfer degree path for students who start this program and decide it is not the right fit for them, with minimal loss of invested time. Regent Johnston moved to approve the BS in Nuclear Engineering and request to exceed the 120 hours at KSU. Regent Parasker seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION AGENDA ITEMS**

### **KU, KUMC, & KSU ANNUAL PROGRAM REVIEW**

Vice President for Academic Affairs Rusty Monhollon stated that he had no additional information to share but emphasized the importance of allowing ample time for discussion of the program reviews. He provided a brief recap of the recommendations presented at the previous meeting. Institutions were instructed to consolidate all bachelor's degree options under a single major for the purposes of this review. Dr. Monhollon reminded the committee that this year's review process was new for both KBOR staff and the institutions. He commended the institutions for effectively addressing all questions posed by KBOR. He highlighted that, in addition to participating in the KBOR review process, institutions are also required to maintain a clear and consistent internal review process. He expressed confidence that each institution had established thorough internal reviews and effectively communicated those processes in their presentations. Dr. Monhollon noted that the primary focus of the Board's forthcoming recommendations would be on programs identified by the institutions for one of the following actions: phase-out, merger, or placement on an action plan. He invited the committee to offer any additional comments or recommendations to be included in the information presented to the Board.

Regent Johnston wanted to ensure that the request made at the last meeting to have KU review administrative efficiencies, particularly for the low-enrolled programs, would be included in the recommendation to the Board. Provost Bichelmeyer clarified that her understanding of this request was to look for opportunities for potential mergers or reorganizations that would create academic or administrative efficiencies, or research synergies, not to solely focus on the low-enrolled program if they could be included in other programming as well, with a report, presented in December, on what actions would be taken. Regent Johnston made a motion to refer the Annual Program Review recommendations for KU, KUMC, and KSU to the full Board at the next meeting, including the review of administrative efficiencies in December 2025. Regent Parasker seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

### **CHANGES TO QUALIFIED ADMISSIONS - KSU**

Jesse Mendez introduced Vice Provost for Enrollment Management Karen Goos, who shared an overview of the proposed changes to qualified admissions. The guaranteed options for freshmen would include a minimum 3.0 high school GPA, regardless of test score, or with no test score, or a minimum of 21 on the ACT and a minimum 2.5 high school GPA. This requested change is expected to help maintain competitiveness, grow enrollment, and sustain retention and completion rates. Regent Parasker moved to approve the changes to qualified admissions at KSU. Regent Johnston seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

## **OTHER MATTERS**

### **FIRST 15**

Vice President for Academic Affairs Rusty Monhollon shared that the First 15 workgroup has met to begin creating a low-cost model, as mentioned at the April 16 meeting. Additionally, data on the cost of dual or concurrent enrollment courses by institution is being compiled, with a submission deadline of May 30. The workgroup will review this data and use it as a tool to assist with building the low-cost model for the First 15 initiative.

**ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UPDATES**

Vice President for Academic Affairs Rusty Monhollon shared that KBOR received a request for proposals to participate in the Rural Talent Development and Attraction Laboratory. This is a joint effort of SHEEO, KBOR, and the Alliance for Research on Regional Colleges. Five states are being selected to participate in this four-year project. The primary goal is to develop at least four sub-baccalaureate pathways in rural communities that will help build rural talent and attract economic growth. Kansas was selected as one of the participating states in this initiative. KBOR will partner with leaders from the community and technical colleges, as well as representatives from the Department of Labor, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of Education.

**TENURE POLICY**

Regent Mendoza stated that she would like to initiate a review of the tenure policy in preparation for future discussions surrounding a recent bill that had been presented. She requested that the academic affairs staff review KBOR policy for any areas of potential improvement.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The next BAASC meeting will be held on June 11, 2025.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Regent Parasker moved that the meeting be adjourned. Regent Mendoza seconded, and the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:49 a.m.