

Senate Minutes
November 20, 2025

Members present: *Al-Shabrawey, Aloj, Arena, Ausloos, Ball, Bartley, Battles, Blumer-Schuetz, Boruff-Jones, Carver, Chamra, Chapman, Coleman, Craig, Debnath, Dempsey, DeVore, Dinda, Discenna, Dunn, Dwyer, Edrisinha, Gilson, Govind, Grace, Guessous, Guest, Hartmus, Hoag, Hodge, Hurse (for Wadsworth), Jamieson, Johnson, Kttner, Kauric-Klein, Kies, Landis-Piwowar, Landolt, Kozak, Margerum-Leys, Mathew, Matthews, Mcculloch, Merchant, Naus, Mitton, Nielsen, Pierce, Piscotty, Pratt, Rohn, Shesko, Thompson, Tiegs, Tilashalski, VanLoon, Wasserman, Wendell, Westergaard*

Members absent: *Carpenter, Hansen, Knox, Olawoyin, Rawashdeh, Williams*

Provost Thompson called the meeting to order at 3:10 P.M.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS:

- Motion approved to change the Undergraduate Residency requirement to 30 credits.
- Motion approved to change the withdrawal from classes deadline to 12 weeks for a regular semester, and 6 weeks for the ½ semester classes.

1. INFORMATION ITEMS

1.1. Provost Updates

Provost Thompson thanked all who submitted midterm grades. She announced that the winner of midterm grade trophy plus lunch for the entire department was Dean Chamra. She stated that she wants to continue to build up participation in the midterm grade project in the Spring semester.

She announced that she wants to create a Faculty Advisory Committee, and to use the group to be an advisory board to her with bi-directional communication.

She said she will be launching a monthly 'Breakfast with the Provost' with 15 to 20 people at once.

She said she wants to continue to improve communications on campus, and has Launched a President Leadership Council which is made up of 125 people across the whole university and meeting quarterly as a way to push out information and improve communication.

With reference to the developments within the Department of Education at the national level, she asserted that this is the most significant re-organization in its 45-year history.

1.2. Graduate School Curriculum Submissions (none)

Provost Thompson provided the opportunity for questions or comments about the informational items listed below (1.3.1 – 1.5) . There were no comments.

1.3. Undergraduate Curriculum Submissions

- 1.3.1. Certificate in Disability Awareness and Literacy, new 12-credit** certificate created from existing Communication courses to provide a non-degree program that will complement other training, support applications for graduate programs, and/or potential employment in

- the field; Department of Communication, Journalism and Public Relations, College of Arts and Sciences (Kathleen Battles)
- 1.3.2. **Certificate in French Competency, new** 12-credit language certificate program designed to provide students with a strong knowledge base and practical communicative skills in the French language, Department of Modern Languages, College of Arts and Sciences (Adolfo Campoy-Cubillo)
- 1.3.3. **Two Modern Languages, B.A., modification** to add Chinese courses to ensure consistency, and expands options for students with east Asian language interests, Department of Modern Languages, College of Arts and Sciences (Adolfo Campoy-Cubillo)
- 1.3.4. **Creative Writing Minor, modification** to reduce the number of credits in the minor from 24 to 16, Department of English, Creative Writing and Film, College of Arts and Sciences (Rob Anderson)
- 1.3.5. **Film Minor, modification** to reduce the number of credits in the minor from 24 to 16, Department of English, Creative Writing and Film, College of Arts and Sciences (Rob Anderson)
- 1.3.6. **Business Administration, Human Resource Management, B.S., modification** to change the modality, by adding partially online (Half or more of the program courses are delivered online) Department of Management and Marketing, School of Business Administration (Janell Townsend)
- 1.3.7. **Business Administration, Management, B.S., modification** to change the modality, by adding partially online (Half or more of the program courses are delivered online) Department of Management and Marketing, School of Business Administration (Janell Townsend)
- 1.3.8. **Business Administration, Marketing, B.S., modification** to change the modality, by adding partially online (Half or more of the program courses are delivered online) Department of Management and Marketing, School of Business Administration (Janell Townsend)
- 1.3.9. **Business Minor (non-business students), modification** to add a management (MGT) course to the electives, Department of Management and Marketing, School of Business Administration (Janell Townsend)
- 1.3.10. **Entrepreneurship Minor, modification** to add a management (MGT) course to the electives, Department of Management and Marketing, School of Business Administration (Janell Townsend)
- 1.3.11. **Sport Management Minor, modification** to add a management (MGT) course to the electives, Department of Management and Marketing, School of Business Administration (Janell Townsend)
- 1.3.12. **Anthropology, B.A., Concentration in Linguistics, discontinue the concentration** in Linguistics, due to low enrollment and based on suggestion of the external reviewer. Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work and Criminal Justice, College of Arts and Sciences (Jo Reger)
- 1.3.13. **Archaeology Concentration, discontinue the concentration** in order to streamline the curricular offerings and expedite students'

- progress to degree. Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work and Criminal Justice, College of Arts and Sciences (Jo Reger)
- 1.3.14. **Sociology, B.A., Concentration in Linguistics, discontinue the concentration** in Linguistics, due to low enrollment and based on suggestion of the external reviewer. Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work and Criminal Justice, College of Arts and Sciences (Jo Reger)
- 1.3.15. **Urban Studies Concentration, discontinue the concentration** due to low enrollment, an overly structured and highly demanding requirements, and lack of a director. Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work and Criminal Justice, College of Arts and Sciences (Jo Reger)
- 1.3.16. **Urban and Regional Studies Minor, new minor** to fulfill Oakland University's third goal listed in its 2025 Strategic Plan which aims to become a leader in serving the needs and aspirations of our communities and region through expanded community relationships, institutional reputation and visibility, and engagement. Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work and Criminal Justice, College of Arts and Sciences (Jo Reger)
- 1.3.17. **Gerontology Concentration, modification** to reduce the number of credits in the concentration from 28 to 20, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work and Criminal Justice, College of Arts and Sciences (Maria Beam)
- 1.3.18. **Addiction Studies Concentration, modification** to reduce the number of credits in the concentration from 28 to 20, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work and Criminal Justice, College of Arts and Sciences (Maria Beam)
- 1.4. Combined Graduate School and Undergraduate Curriculum Submissions (None)
- 1.5. **Update the Senate Committee (Co)Chairs for the Senate Record - Amy Banes-Berceli**
- Classroom Use & Academic Scheduling Committee
Chris Goeth (Co-Chair)
Janelle Townsend (SBA) (Co-Chair)
- Service Learning Committee
Deidre Hurse (SOM)
- 1.6. **Facilities Shutdown Update and Data Center Update (Steve Mackey, Penny Vigneau)**
- Steve Mackey and Penny Vigneau were present to provide updates on 1) the campus facilities shutdown, and 2) the proposal being created for the construction of a Data Center on campus.
- 1) Campus closure:** Mr. Mackey explained that there had been a leak in one of the main lines but that now everything was in place to start taking the system down on Friday, November 21 to do the repairs. He said the goal is to keep the buildings above the freeze point to make sure

nothing else freezes. He thanked everyone for rallying together during this abnormal situation to figure out how to get through with the least disruption to students. As far as how students will be taken care of who remain on campus, a student explained that Hillcrest will be open from 11:00-7:00 Monday through Wednesday.

2) OU Data Center: Mr. Mackey began by saying that his committee has been doing their shared governance presentations as they get ready to submit a proposal for a data center, and this visit to the Senate was the sixth presentation. He assured Senators that they are in the contracting phase in order to enter into due diligence. He clarified that now there is a plan to explore building a data center, but there is not a plan to build one yet. The target date to bring a plan to the BOT is April 2026. Penny Vigneau (Exec Dir for Economic Development) continued the update, saying that the idea of a Data Center came about as part of the Strategic Vision and wanting to find increased revenue for the university in order to be ready for uncertainties in the future. She said they will enter into Public-Private Partnership (P3) to share in project costs (capital and operating) as well as project revenues. She pointed out that there are already a number of P3s on campus. She explained that the Center would be built in the P35 parking lot which is near the DTE substation, chosen because that is already a paved space and thus would not use up green space. She said that a data center would free up space in Dodge Hall where there is already a data center—this space would be available for more research laboratories. She emphasized that the data center is NOT a huge one, with 3600 megawatts. She said it will be an edge data center focused on inference artificial intelligence. She pointed out that they may talk to hyper scale tenants but it is not a proposal for a hyper scale data center. She emphasized that they want to bring in tenants who will partner with OU on OU's initiatives. She said an advantage is that this would create an OU AI Institute, and provide technology and services to students of the future. She clarified that they are focused on sustainability—for example, waste-heat offtake, closed loop water cooling system, diesel for backup generators, all of which would be built at no cost to OU, though it would include a new OU data center with state of the art computing technology. She stated that they already went through an RFP process and four vendors have submitted bids. Of these, they have selected Fairmount Properties for several reasons. She provided their expected timeline starting in June 2025 to Summer/Fall 2026 at which time they would identify tenants, finalize programming and design, and begin construction. During the Winter semester, they expect to complete due diligence and develop a business plan. She said they will seek feedback as to who will be the best partners for OU. She explained what the pre-development design process provides the certifications needed such as the environmental impact studies that have to be done, among other steps. She acknowledged that there are concerns about this project on campus.

Q: Mr. Dinda asked about the impact on the power and the water system, noting that the OU water pipes are very old. A: Ms. Vigneau stated that OU has a closed loop system, with 40% of power coming from the outside. This site will not require hundreds of thousands of water every year via a closed loop system and she said that hopefully it will have nothing to do with the water grid. She added that data centers must be fed from municipal water but it is about what happens to the water going out, not so much about the water coming in. Q: Mr. Mitton asked if there are problems with the data center we have on campus now. A: Ms. Vigneau replied that part of the proposed project is to relocate that data center

because the current one is 125 kilowatts which is considered tiny, whereas the new center is expected to help our AI computer systems on campus. She noted that the present one is hard to cool. She said they are excited about the potential for creating a center with this much capacity on the OU campus.

1.7. Senate Mental Health Committee Update: REACH Update

Terry Dibble and Sara Beckett were present to provide an update on the Reach Project having to do with mental health on campus, and Sara Beckett provided the overview. Ms. Beckett explained that the project grew out of a grant and now they want to outlive the grant itself. They have created a student crisis triage map/suicide crisis map with explanations how to approach and create a universal campus-wide protocol. She said this was created by a committee of members from the office of the Dean of Students, OUCC, OUPD, ResLife, Graham Health Center, with an objective to come up with a protocol that is evidence-based. She went over the map to show how it would identify warning signs and what the warning signs look like (missing class, disturbing writing in assignments, changes in hygiene, etc). If a faculty or staff identify warning signs, they have provided a detailed map to explain how the situations should be approached in view of numerous possible scenarios. The goal is to make sure all the help is being given to students that is possible. She included a reminder that faculty and staff should keep track of their own mental health as well. She indicated that the next step is to present the triage map to faculty and staff across campus, roll out an e-Space course for training, and creating an easily accessible place for the map to be online.

1.8. Student Employment Experience

Wayne Thibodeau and Nicole Boelk were present to introduce a tool on campus to help students understand how to use competency feedback. This will help students to realize how knowledge obtained in student jobs can be transferred to jobs and careers after graduation. Mr. Thibodeau said students need to learn how to communicate transferable skills in their career opportunities and interviews. He indicated that this is a tool to use to measure career readiness competencies and measure growth at the end of employment. He announced that there would be workshops for students and supervisors for ongoing training.

2. APPROVAL of [Minutes from October 16, 2025](#)

The motion was made to approve the minutes from the meeting of October 16, 2025. (Guessous, Mitton)

The motion was approved. (54 yes, 0 no)

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

3.1. SUBSTANTIVE MOTION from the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction (UCUI) to change the Undergraduate Residency Requirement

Policy in the Undergraduate Catalog to reduce the undergraduate residency requirement from 45 credits to 30 credits in order to better align with the Michigan public institutions and to better support our students' academic progress. (Kristin Landis-Piwowar)

MOVED to reduce the undergraduate residency requirement from 45 credits to 30 credits as outlined.

The motion was approved. (49 yes, 2 no)

- 3.2. **SUBSTANTIVE MOTION** brought forward by The Committee on Academic Recovery and Success (CARS) proposing an updated University Dropping and Withdrawing from Classes Policy that extends the deadline to withdraw from a class and earn a W grade through the final day of classes (i.e., last day before final exams). The updated policy, which was approved by both UCUI and Graduate Council, is a student-centered policy aimed at enhancing student persistence and retention and decreasing negative academic and financial aid consequences for students who experience academic or personal challenges during the semester. (Neil Baumgartner, Rebecca Malesta, Nick Sanders, Audra Slocum)

MOVED to accept the revisions to the University Dropping and Withdrawing from Classes Policy as outlined.

Nick Sanders was present from CARS to summarize the notion that GPA at the end of the first year is a strong predictor of student success and graduation. He said that the idea with the new withdrawal proposal is to support an equity-based policy, especially in that first year for individuals who need flexible support.

Ms. Slocum (CARS committee member) said they are motivated by how to increase success for students, and opportunities for persistence, better grasp of initial concepts, help students recover from early struggles due to unforeseen personal circumstances to salvage a passing grade and have a better chance of success the second time they repeat a course. She stressed that not all struggles are academic in nature and challenges are not confined to the first half of the semester. She noted that this is also tied to whether students can get financial aid when retaking a class. Classes that are no longer needed are not covered by financial aid, so for a student changing major who was taking a course they failed, they will not get aid to retake the course and the F would stay on their record, if they can't afford to retake the course.

A very animated and lengthy discussion of this proposal/motion then took place. To hear the whole discussion, the recording of the Senate meeting is available in the archives. The following include highlights:

Ms. Mathew stepped up to provide results of research that she had done into the subject of withdrawal and she provided a summary of what she had learned. She then offered the following amendment to the motion:

Amendment: 'To strike the words " the last day of classes for each respective course length" in the motion, and insert: "the tenth week in a full semester and the fifth week of a half semester. Courses of other lengths have a withdrawal period based on their duration." (Seonded by Govind)

Mr. Wasserman noted that for student transcripts, F's are just as harmful as W's. Ms. Catner stated that the tenth week is very tight and is not going to help students to graduate and is not much different from the motion.

The motion was approved. (32 yes, 21 no)

Ms. Tilashalski then told the tale of how badly she had done in math as an undergraduate, no matter how hard she tried. She said this proposed policy would have encouraged her to keep trying without risking her entire future back then, because she would have had time to keep trying.

Ms. Guessous said that one point to consider was impact of new financial aid rules that would affect the students being able to retake the class over again. She asked if there can be other remedies if, for example, a student changes majors and no longer needs a class that they were doing poorly in.

Ms. Boelk (Financial Aid) pointed out that the federal regulations cannot be changed by OU. But internally, they have tried to help students not to lose their financial aid eligibility.

Ms. Drummer said the Student Congress had passed a resolution to extend the withdraw policy to 12 weeks. She encouraged Senators to vote for the motion. Mr. Govind said he has done research that shows that every time students have a W on their transcript, this decreases chances of success. He was concerned that this policy would increase the number of Ws a student gets, which does not help student success.

Mr. Sanders said an F grade also does that also.

Ms. Westergaard (Registrar) suggested that Senators could consider 12 weeks as an option. She offered the following amendment:

Amendment: To move the deadline to the 12th week in a full semester, and the 6th in a half semester.

(Seconded by Gilson)

There was then a ***motion to end the debate on the amendment*** (Mathew, Ball)

However, this motion was not approved (26 yes, 24 no), the reason being that 2/3 of those voting is needed for this kind of a motion.

Ms. Catner asked for clarification on the data presented to UCUI in the spring.

Mr. Sanders noted that two or three other Michigan universities have policies similar to the proposal the CARS committee was making.

A student who has counseled others on whether or not to withdraw said that he thinks the 12 weeks is the best option. Ms. Drummer added that Macomb Community has a 12 week withdrawal deadline, and Oakland Community is about the 12 week as well. She noted that this is the point in the semester when the highest spike in mental health crises historically occurs.

Ms. Mathew then ***moved to adjourn the meeting*** (seconded by Mr. Wasserman)

This motion did not pass. (25 yes, 26 no)

The vote was then taken on the amendment (to extend the deadline to 12 weeks (regular semester) and 6 weeks (half semester)).

The motion was approved. (29 yes, 22 no)

The concern was expressed by a Senator that a deadline of six weeks could affect faculty evaluations in the short courses, and this was acknowledged by Mr. Sanders.

Ms. Westergaard noted that the date of withdrawal does vary by the academic calendar so the entire matter could reasonably be taken up by the Academic Development Committee.

Mr. Wasserman observed that since we have had multiple readings, arguments and analyses about this policy, and now we have the 12 week suggestion made at this meeting, he suggested that Senators need more time to think about the matter.

The original amended motion was then approved. (28 yes, 22 no)

At this point in the meeting, due to the extraordinarily lengthy discussion, we were well beyond the normal Senate meeting time of two hours, Provost Thompson said she would entertain a motion to adjourn. The motion was made to adjourn. (DeVore, Kies)

The motion was approved (41 yes, 3 no)

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Dikka Berven (Senate Secretary)