

SENATE MINUTES

September 18, 2025

Members present: *Al-shabrawey, Aloï, Arena, Ausloos, Ball, Bartley, Battles, Blumer-Schuetz, Boruff-Jones, Carpenter, Carver, Chamra, Chapman, Debnath, Dempsy, DeVore, Dinda, Discenna, Dunn, Dwyer, Edrisinha, Govind, Grace, Guessous, Guest, Hansen, Hartmus, Hoag, Hodge, Jamieson, Johnson, Kattner, Kauric-Klein, Kies, Knox, Landis-Piwowar, Landolt, Kozak, Mathew, Matthews, McCulloch, Naus, Mitton, Nielsen, Olawoyin, Pierce, Pratt, Rawashdeh, Rohn, Shesko, Thompson, Tiegs, Tilashalski, VanLoon, Wadsworth, Wasserman, Wendell, Westergaard, Williams, Gilson*

Members absent: *Coleman, Craig, Hansen, Margerum-Leys, Merchant, Piscotty*

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION AND ACTION ITEMS

Action Items: Senate Steering Committee Election
Approval of Procedural Motion to staff Senate
Committees
Motion to change membership of Senate Intercollegiate
Members Committee

OFFICIAL WELCOME

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

Ryan Cotter gave a brief tutorial for all Senators on how to use the Zoom polling system to vote.

Provost Thompson then introduced and welcomed President Pescovitz who in turn welcomed everyone to the new academic year. President Pescovitz expressed her deep sadness regarding the recent passing of Glenn Macintosh whom she described as an incredible role model. She emphasized what a great loss to the community his passing will be. She paid tribute to him, saying that he was the heart and soul of campus life, touching the lives of generations of students. She said that she has heard from students, faculty, friends, as well as leaders from around the state to offer their condolences. She pointed out that he had fostered the values of an inclusive campus where everyone was welcome, he served as chief Diversity Officer, served as a guiding force to the community, and always stood up for what is right and thus lived up to our shared values. She expressed how important it is to carry on his legacy, and to support each other with care and compassion.

President Pescovitz expressed her excitement about working with the new Provost Amy Thompson, noting that the collaboration and dialogue in the Senate is one of the most important conversations on campus, and

especially important to her. She expressed her commitment to shared governance, to engage with faculty, and to provide feedback. She highlighted a few areas where there has been progress, as for example, the Strategic Vision (2030), the upcoming 'OU Pledge' and also national recognition for advancing the first year experiences. She was glad to report expanded student mental health support with the 24/7 UWill platform with which there is very short or no waiting time for students to get help. She said there are five pathways in the Strategic Vision, as for example, the Stewardship pathway in which the President's Office will be awarding two \$200,000 grants to support bold community projects that will also engage students and help solve real-world problems and at the same time meet community-based needs. The Chief Community Engagement officer, Dave Dulio, will share more about this. These grants will be called Community Change-maker Challenge. Referring to federal actions, President Pescovitz reminded everyone that OU is clear about our response, saying that we will always comply with the law. At the same time, we will stay true to our values. This means safeguarding academic freedom, and fostering a safe inclusive environment that favors diversity in all of its forms. She is determined to continue to uphold these values.

To conclude, she expressed her pride in the university's recent experience with a vigil in honor of Charlie Kirk, where there was also a counter-protest, both of which were peaceful. She was adamant that OU will continue to value free speech, but will have a zero-tolerance for harassment and violence.

Provost Thompson thanked President Pescovitz for her words of welcome.

A. Appointment of Senate Parliamentarian

Provost Thompson appointed Tom Discenna as Alternate Senate Parliamentarian

B. Appointment of Senate Secretary

Provost Thompson appointed Bridget Kies as Alternate Senate Secretary

C. INFORMATION ITEMS

- Ms. Banes-Berceli updated Senators on changes to the Senate committee memberships as listed on the Senate agenda for today's meeting. Mr. Discenna questioned whether the appointment of the Chair of UCUI (Kristin Piwowar) is appropriate since she is now serving as Interim Dean in the CAS. Provost Thompson said she would look into this matter.

- **Community Engagement Update** - Dave Dulio provided an update about the Community Engagement Committee and the new Change-maker Challenge. He said community engagement has not previously been institutionalized at OU. Instead, it has been an ad hoc committee, and not centralized. He said that he will work to provide organization to community engagement efforts. The Pontiac initiative is an example of one that has been doing well, but he noted that OU can do more with a collaborative effort. He pointed out that Community Engagement is one of the five pathways of the Strategic Vision which will serve to integrate us to the community, to provide high impact experiences for faculty, students and staff, with a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. He stressed the importance of reciprocity and re-iterated President Pescovitz's enthusiasm for the Community Change-maker Challenge grants and added that the awards will be made on or around February 1. He pointed out that his comments and the criteria for the Challenge grants are posted on the Senate website. Mr. Dinda asked who the reviewers will be. Dulio said it will be representative of all the units.
- **Provost Updates**
Provost Thompsons said that the semester has gotten off to a good start. She expressed her appreciation for the New Student welcome activities. She talked about the new optional midterm grade process to provide feedback to OU students on SAIL for which there will be a two-week window in the middle of the semester. She said that the goal is to help students by directing them how to get help, through the tutoring center and other means. There will be a trophy award for the unit (School or College) participating the most. She also provided an enrollment update based upon data which is provided by the Schools. She also provided an update on retention for FTIAC, noting that it is projected that we will be down about 2% (down to 76% from 78%). She wants to improve practices that will raise retention.

D. APPROVAL of the Minutes from May 15, 2025

The motion was made to approve the minutes of May 15, 2025 (Guessous, Battles)

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

E. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Senate Elections Committee** - Election of the new 2025-2027 Senate Steering Committee

Provost Thompson asked the Senate Elections Committee to run the election. Sarah Blumer-Schuetz conducted the process. The motion was made to open the nominations (Johnson, Matthews). Ms. Blumer-Schuetz then opened the floor for nominations. There were 10 nominationS from the floor.

The motion was then made to close the nominations (Johnson, Matthews).

The election was held electronically.

The following people were elected to the Steering Committee:

Cindy Carver (CAS), Laila Guessous (SECS), Diane Hartmus (CAS), Timothy Hodge (SBA), Jason Wasserman (OUWB, and Doug Wendell (CAS).

2. PROCEDURAL MOTION to staff Senate Standing Committees Updates and Changes to previous year.

MOVED *that the persons outlined on the Agenda [attached list](#) be appointed to the committees or positions designated (Johnson, Matthews).*

Amy Banes-Berceli provided the background to this motion.

The motion passed: 48 yes, 0 no.

3. SUBSTANTIVE MOTION from the Senate Intercollegiate Athletics Committee to change the membership of the committee to better support the student-athlete experience at Oakland University.

MOVED *to change the membership of the Senate Intercollegiate Athletics Committee as presented. (Johnson, Matthews)*

4. GOOD AND WELFARE

- Mr. Johnson said there will be a vigil outside tomorrow evening for Glenn Macintosh. 7:30 at the Tower.
- Mr. Baumgardner was speaking for Academic Honors committee and said that the nominations are being opened for which information will be forthcoming. The deadline is October 3.
- Mr Wasserman announced that the call is out for contributions for the **Student Ethics and Humanities Journal**. He said they love to recruit submissions from students with articles on a variety of topics to include poetry and other possibilities.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Dikka Berven (Senate Secretary)

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