

**ORAL ROBERTS UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC COUNCIL
MINUTES**

January 20, 2021 – 3:05 p.m. to 4:39 p.m., Trustees' Dining Room

1. **TOPIC:** Opening

Dr. Kathaleen Reid-Martinez, Chair of the Academic Council, opened with prayer.

2. **TOPIC:** Approval of Minutes of the meeting on November 9, 2020.

DISCUSSION: Minutes were sent to members via email. There was a motion by Dr. Weed, to approve the Minutes and it was seconded by Dr. Roberts. The Academic Council unanimously accepted the Minutes.

ACTION: None.

CLOSED

3. **TOPIC:** Update from the Registrar's Office – Dr. Connie Sjoberg and Jonathan Weed

DISCUSSION: Jonathan Weed, Associate Registrar, demonstrated how to access information related to seniors who have applied for graduation but not yet graduated. It can be accessed in Vision under the "Faculty Services" tab by clicking on "Advising Student Profile." When an individual student profile is accessed, faculty can see "Graduation Information" on the main page where they can note if the student has graduated or if they have submitted an application to graduate (which would appear as "active"). Additionally, the purchase and integration schedule of Ellucian Degree Works with Banner 9 was discussed. Once integrated into Banner 9, Faculty and students will both have access to Degree Works. This will better align students, advisors, and institutions to a common goal of on-time graduation. Degree Works aims to let students know exactly which courses they need to take and when to take them and removes the manual processes associated with degree audits and transfer articulation.

ACTION: At the next meeting, Jonathan Weed will provide the Academic Council with a demonstration of Degree Works and what it offers to faculty and students.

OPEN

4. **TOPIC: AA Degree and Preliminary White Paper Findings – Dr. Christopher Foster**

DISCUSSION: Dr. Foster presented research that he and the AA White Paper Committee completed since the last Academic Council meeting. Dr. Foster presented

both the challenges and benefits of ORU adopting an AA program and recommendations for the Academic Council to consider. Summarizing the challenges, Dr. Foster shared that the current market is dominated by 2-year institutions and ORU would have significant competition from other AA programs with lower tuition rates. Additionally, leadership development may be more difficult to give to AA degree-seeking students who are only at ORU for two years. Research noted that institutions with AA degrees that provide internship opportunities graduate students who are more likely to find a job and have better pay. While this may put more of a burden on Career Services, Dr. Freudenrich noted that creating a field study which includes career exploration and shadowing experience could be a solution instead of a formal internship.

Regarding AA degree benefits, Dr. Foster mentioned that an AA degree could provide an “exit-strategy” for students who are not able to complete a four-year degree after enrolling at ORU due to extenuating circumstances. Dr. Weed noted that last year, when looking at credit hours of students who left ORU without a degree, approximately 50-90 students had enough credits to receive an AA degree. Dr. Weed also clarified that if students complete an AA degree, it would increase ORU’s overall graduation rate and to better balance the HLC ratio of the incoming students to graduates. Therefore, the AA degree as an exit strategy would help ORU’s reporting numbers.

It was noted by some faculty that ORU should begin looking at what existing courses could be included in the AA degree without having to add new courses, if it were to be adopted. Some discussion occurred around not marketing an AA in general studies (even though it would exist for students that need it), but marketing a theology/ministry AA. One recommendation was that the College Deans should discuss the developmental model of assessment and how the AA degree at ORU would fit within that model. Primary focus returned to the discussion about whether an AA degree should be viewed as a recruitment/marketing tool or an exit strategy. It was suggested that the AA White Paper reflect those distinctions and challenges. Lastly, the discussion reiterated that whether or not ORU adopts an AA degree program, the continued focus should be on increasing graduation rates for bachelor’s degrees.

ACTION: Dr. Reid-Martinez will request a date change to February 15 to submit the AA White Paper Feedback and recommendations about the AA White Paper should be sent to Dr. Foster no later than Monday, January 24 as the AA White Paper will be finalized by February 1, unless the request to extend the deadline is granted.

OPEN

5. **TOPIC:** Announcements

DISCUSSION: None

ACTION: None

CLOSED

The Academic Council meeting adjourned at approximately 4:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip Nelson, Ph.D., Academic Council Secretary