

**ORAL ROBERTS UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMIC COUNCIL  
MINUTES**

**February 8, 2021 – 11:00 a.m. to 12:24 p.m., GC 3116**

1. **TOPIC:** Opening

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

2. **TOPIC:** Approval of Minutes of the meeting on January 20, 2021.

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

**ACTION:** None.

**CLOSED**

3. **TOPIC:** Registrar's Office Update (Degree Works) – Mr. Jonathan Weed

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Jonathan Weed showed a 13-minute demonstration of the Ellucian Degree Works program to show the benefits of using this program. The goal of Degree Works is to provide a clear pathway to success, present a single source of data to all of its constituents, monitor progression with on-track indicators, and integrate registration to ensure consistency. The University goal is to implement Degree Works by Spring 2022 (for both undergraduate and graduate programs). The Registrar's Office will continue to communicate with Ellucian to assure that the University will be able to process transfer credit appropriately and to have that information available for advisors and students. Dr. Sjoberg will let faculty know if the Degree Works process will require a change in our timeline for submission to the Registrar's Office.

Additionally, feedback was sought regarding whether we should submit senior grades early in order for students to receive their diplomas at commencement. This will further be discussed during the next two meetings.

**ACTION:** Continue to discuss whether to have early grade submissions for seniors for Spring semesters at the next Academic Council meeting

**OPEN**

4. **TOPIC:** General Education Curriculum Committee Update – Dr. Andrew Lang

**DISCUSSION:** Dr. Lang presented two Honors courses for approval as Scaffolded Interdisciplinary Course (SIC) credit.

- a. HONR 421 – Principles of Leadership to count for SIC, Social Science Elective, or COM 101
- b. HONR 433 – Science and the Imagination to count for SIC, COMP 303, or HUM

Dr. Ellis moved to accept, Dr. Freudenrich seconded. **Vote:** Y: All, N: 0, Abstain: 0

**ACTION:** None

**CLOSED**

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

**DISCUSSION:** Dr. Foster presented the committee findings regarding the AA Degree. Some findings included:

- a. The AA Degree is not a sustainable business model for ORU.
- b. It could be degree that supports the ORU mission, but it would have low sustainability
- c. It could serve as a possible exit alternative to stopping-out.

In summary, an Associate's degree raises some questions about the applicability about degree in the context of University mission and current business model. While it will increase graduation and completion rates, it would require monitoring over several academic cycles.

Additional considerations are required before a decision is made, including unknowns related to COVID19 and its impact on enrollments, qualifications of new students and their capacity to reach graduation. The "unknowns" include:

- Unknown level of student academic aptitude without ACT/SAT scores
- Unknown how closely high school grades reflect content mastery
- Unknown abilities of students who have not been in a classroom for the past 12 months

Dr. Foster also shared some recommendations:

- The bachelor's degree at ORU has and should remain the primary pathway for full-time, first-time students at ORU. The bachelor's *should also* remain the main offering for Online students, who have had some college, but no degree.
- Continue to review and adjust the Liberal Studies bachelor's and any other degrees that would assist students toward bachelor's degree completion.
- The associate's degree as an exit strategy for students stopping out from ORU could have merit. This would not be advertised but awarded for qualified students stopping-out for the benefit of the student and ORU's completion and graduation rates.

- An associate's degree in ministry may be an important strategy for ORU Church and Educational Partnerships, but the parameters must be demonstrated in the business model of each educational partnership. The associate's degree would not be mass marketed since it would not be competitive in the domestic market and potential low completion rates may negatively affect ORU.

If the AA degree is not approved at this time, the University may want to re-evaluate the decision once we better understand the impact of COVID-19 on the learning capacity of students and their graduation rates. Following the presentation, members of the Council commented on the values of the AA degree as a niche market for the Church and Educational Partnerships. Additionally, it was suggested by some that an AA degree could be given with special permission to current students as an exit strategy. More research may be needed on the demand for an AA degree in areas such as Dr. Freudenrich pointed to contemporary marketing strategies to include geofencing to promote the AA degree. She also noted the importance of understanding how this degree could be an important marketing strategy for the University, especially internationally, where ORU could have tremendous name recognition.

**ACTION:** Dr. Foster will send Dr. Nelson the AA White Paper which will then be distributed to Academic Council members. Academic Council members are encouraged to talk about these findings with their college faculty.

**OPEN**

6. **TOPIC:** Announcements

**DISCUSSION:** None

**ACTION:** None

**CLOSED**

The Academic Council meeting adjourned at approximately 12:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip Nelson, Ph.D., Academic Council Secretary