

**ORAL ROBERTS UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC COUNCIL MINUTES**

March 21, 2022

11:00 a.m. to 12:41 p.m.

GC 3114

Chair: Dr. Reid-Martinez

Voting members in attendance: Kim Boyd, Bill Crawford, Curtis Ellis, Chris Foster, Cristi Freudenrich, Rebecca Gunn, Julie Huntley, Jane Malcolm, Norah Swiney, Elena Gregg, Hal Reed, Hallett Hullinger, Kenneth Weed

Voting members on Zoom: Brenna Bohatec, Jay Gary, Dean Prentice,

Voting members not in attendance: Bill Buker, Janet George, Wonsuk Ma

Supporting guests: Connie Sjoberg (Zoom), Jonathan Weed, Christine Welden, Kyle Jones

1. TOPIC: Opening

Dr. Kenneth Weed opened with prayer.

2. TOPIC: Approval of February 21, 2022, Meeting Minutes.

DISCUSSION: Members received copies of the minutes via email. Dr. Freudenrich moved, and Dr. Foster seconded to accept the Minutes. The Minutes were unanimously accepted by the Academic Council.

ACTION: None.

CLOSED

3. TOPIC: General Education Curriculum Committee Discussion on General Education Outcomes

DISCUSSION: Dr. Lang led a discussion about proposed General Education Outcomes. Various members discussed the need to map how the proposed General Education outcomes align with the current University outcomes. The Provost recommended that a developmental model of General Education be considered and reviewed by the Assistant to the Provost for Exceptional Teaching and Innovation, the General Education Curriculum Committee, and the assessment team.

ACTION: The Assistant to the Provost will coordinate with the General Education Curriculum Committee to discuss the concept of a developmental model of General Education and alignment with the University outcomes.

OPEN

4. TOPIC: 2023-2024 Academic Calendar Discussion and Vote

DISCUSSION: During March departmental and college meetings, each College discussed the academic calendar based upon the two options presented at the February Academic Council meeting. Following these discussions, deans brought to the attention of the Provost

that a major faculty concern with the current calendar is the reduction in the number of time slots available for classes. In response, the Provost requested the Registrar's Office to provide an additional option, which is represented below.

The three options for discussion were

- 15-week, 60-minute MWF classes
- 16-week, 60-minute MWF classes
- 16-week, 55-minute MWF classes, with continuing research on how to incorporate an additional class period on Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Before discussion of the above, the Council reviewed survey results regarding student opinions about the academic calendar. This survey was in response to a request that originated in the Academic Council and repeated in the February University Faculty meeting. The general consensus of students was that they would like to maintain the current length of the semester and length of classes, which is 15-weeks, 60-minute MWF classes.

Positives related to a longer semester included providing students with greater time to assimilate information and more hours to work on projects and outside activities such as clinicals. Discussions of the three options included how the two 16-week models would accommodate and meet these concerns.

In discussion of the multiple approaches to the academic calendar, some representatives raised questions about an even longer 17-week model. The following challenges with such a model include the following:

a. Starting early in August puts ORU at a competitive disadvantage for recruiting fall students

- This early start date means that other universities are continuing to recruit potential ORU students after ORU has started its semester. Other universities continue to recruit students after ORU classes have started, sometimes up to three weeks into our school schedule.
- This creates a shorter ORU recruitment cycle.
- This results in the loss of ORU students when students decide not to come to ORU because they are waiting for acceptance and better financial offers at other institutions

b. Ending dates of longer semesters impact identification of students who have academic challenges and creates a grading burden on faculty that extends up to/into Christmas break, and later in May

A 17-week semester with a later August start date makes grades due on December 24 (Christmas Eve) or pushes the grades forward into the Christmas break/the first week of January. This preempts the university ability to identify students struggling academically in order to intervene prior to the start of the next semester.

c. Decreases the number of weeks in summer for students to earn income and a later commencement delays graduates' entry into the job market

When students start school early in the fall and return home late after spring semester--or graduate late in the semester--they lose several weeks of their earning capacity, which many students depend upon to pay their school bills. Graduates would be delayed by one or two weeks entering the job market.

Representatives reported that while a number of faculty wanted longer semesters, others preferred the shorter. Many representatives leaned toward the a 16-week model. As such, the 16-week, 55-minute model might be a strong option to meet the desired outcomes. This model would meet the needs raised by the colleges to have extra time to develop students, while also keeping a balance on the start and end dates of the academic year.

Representatives also noted that this option could provide a later start time, moving classes from 7:15a.m. to possibly 7:30 or 7:45 a.m. Also, it could possibly allow for an additional class period in the middle of the day on MWF.

ACTION: Dr. Weed and the Registrar's Office will research whether the proposed 16-week, 55-minute class model could accommodate an extra class after the lunch hour. Dr. Reid-Martinez will discuss the extended lunch period (12:00 – 1:30 PM) with President's Cabinet. After a resolution on these two issues, Dr. Nelson will share the findings with the Council representatives for discussion at their College meetings. Discussion with vote on this will occur during the April Academic Council meeting. Meanwhile, Academic Council members should discuss this development (16-week semester, 55-minute classes) during their next Department and College meetings.

OPEN

5. **TOPIC:** Updates from the Office of the Registrar

DISCUSSION: Students still needing to apply to graduate must complete a PDF form in the Registrar's Office. There are currently 885 applications to graduate (Fall, Spring, and Summer) representing 898 degrees. All hooding and commencement ceremony information can be accessed at oru.edu/graduation. DegreeWorks continues to be developed, and training continues in different departments throughout the university.

ACTION: None

CLOSED

The Academic Council meeting adjourned at 12:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip Nelson, Ph.D., Academic Council Secretary