

**UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND ARTS OF OKLAHOMA  
BOARD OF REGENTS  
MINUTES  
November 8, 2023**

The Board of Regents for the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma met Wednesday, November 8, 2023, in the Regents Room of the Student Center on the Science & Arts campus. Before the meeting was called to order, President Kayla Hale stated that advance public notice of this meeting was properly filed and displayed in compliance with the Open Meeting Law.

Chairman Cale Walker called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. and welcomed Dr. Suzanne Reynolds to the interim regent position. Dr. Reynolds will fill the current regent term until June 2024 previously held by the late David McLaughlin.

Chairman Walker then asked for roll call.

**Members present:**

Cale Walker  
Kelly Wilkerson  
Amanda Conley  
Diane Ming  
Chris Mosley  
Suzanne Reynolds\*

**Members absent:**

JJ Francais

**Also present:**

Kayla Hale, President  
Donna Miles, Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Mike Coponiti, Vice President for Business and Finance  
JP Audas, Senior Vice President for External Relations  
Cathy Perri, Chief of Staff  
Sheppard McConnell, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Life  
Amy Goddard, Director of Communications and Marketing  
Mike Ross, Athletic Director  
Adeel Siddiqui, Director of Information Technology  
Daniel Pool, Staff Association President  
Dawn Reitan-Brockman, Director of Alumni and University Relations  
Dany Doughan, Faculty Association President  
Sharon Greene, Executive Assistant to the President and Secretary to the USAO Board of Regents

*\*Interim Regent*

**Approval of the Minutes for the September 14, 2023 meeting:** On a motion to accept the minutes of the September 14, 2023 Regents meeting by Regent Ming, the motion was seconded by Regent Wilkerson, and the minutes were approved with five (5) yea votes and one abstaining vote.

**Communications to the Board:** President Hale reported on several topics, the first being a welcome to the new interim regent, Dr. Suzanne Reynolds.

Two USAO students were recognized for winning the Brad Henry International Scholarship, which awards a semester study abroad at Swansea University in Wales. This year's recipient for 2023 is Jordan Kirkland, from Comanche, Oklahoma, and the 2022 recipient was Chelsea Fuston of Yukon, Oklahoma.

Autumn Dalman, the Grant Program Director for NASNTI (Native American Serving Nontribal Institutions) has had notable success in writing and receiving a \$1,995,172 grant to support the work of the native community on campus which will allow the department to hire five new positions: Director, Administrative Assistant, Financial Literacy Coach, Coordinator for Accessibility Support and Equity, and an Experiential Learning Coordinator. Autumn also invited members of the Kiowa Nation to our campus this week to demonstrate how to erect a traditional teepee, which stands on the oval east of the Te Ata statue. Also, Kiowa tribal members will return soon to demonstrate how to construct a traditional medicine bag.

Homecoming 2023 was a great success and one of the largest alumni gatherings in recent memory. The president specifically congratulated Dawn Reitan-Brockman and the Alumni Relations Office staff as well as Athletic Director Mike Ross for their work in celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Drover Athletics. In addition, the men's soccer team will play for their conference championship on Thursday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, at Mid-America Christian University.

Sheppard McConnell, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Life, represented USAO at the 2023 Campus Safety and Security Summit this week hosted by the State Regents. This topic is emerging as a key focus point for the coming legislative session.

Social Sciences & Business Dean James Vaughn remains hospitalized. Last month, Dr. Donna Miles, Vice President for Academic Affairs, temporarily reassigned the faculty of the School of Social Sciences and Business to the four other Deans. Special thanks to the deans and additional faculty who have assumed Dr. Vaughn's teaching, grading, and advising responsibilities, as well as directed research done by his students.

## **PERSONNEL**

### **a. Appointments:**

Malisa Rawlings, effective November 1, 2023, Communication Coordinator

Angela Harris, effective October 30, 2023, Director, Human Resources/Title IX Coordinator

Carl Barres, effective September 25, 2023, Security Officer

Danielle Harper, effective September 18, 2023, Success and Retention Coach

### **b. Change in Status:**

Tailor Finney, effective October 1, 2023, Digital Media Manager

Jana Ware, effective October 1, 2023, Human Resources Specialist

Mary Anne Chalaire, effective September 28, 2023, Special Adjunct Instructor

Cathy Perri, effective September 18, 2023, Chief of Staff and Director of the Office of Governmental Relations

Monica Trevino, effective September 13, 2023, Grant Writing Coordinator

Dany Doughan, effective September 1, 2023, Associate Professor of Chemistry

### **c. Resignations:**

Caden Campbell, effective October 17, 2023, Carpenter

Bobbie Shores, effective September 21, 2023, Director, Student Life and Housing

### **d. Retirees:**

None

### **e. Sabbatical Requests**

i. Tonnia Anderson

ii. Sean Kelley

## University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma Request for Sabbatical

### From the USAO Faculty Handbook:

#### **Sabbatical Leave** (revised 4/11/2018; 9/9/2014)

A sabbatical leave provides opportunity for professional growth and intellectual achievement through study, research, writing, and travel. A sabbatical leave will normally involve specialized scholarly activity. However, it may serve to broaden cultural perspectives if undertaken in a systematic manner and based on a plan with objectives and expected outcomes and clearly related to professional development in one's academic discipline or defined realm of responsibility within the University.

After six years of service to USAO, full-time faculty members are eligible to apply for sabbatical leave to pursue research and professional development. Leave may be granted at one-half salary for two consecutive trimesters or full salary for one-trimester sabbatical.

Requests for leave must be submitted for division review and recommendation by October 1 of the year before the academic year for which the sabbatical is requested. The request shall state the purpose of the sabbatical, its inclusive dates, the anticipated results, and its expected contribution to the University.

After recommending approval or disapproval, the Division Chair will submit the application to the Vice President for Academic Affairs by October 15, who shall refer it with recommendation to the President by November 1. If the President approves the request, the application will be presented to the Board of Regents at the November meeting. The President will formally notify the faculty member of the decision no later than December 1. Sabbatical leave approved by the Regents will be subject to the availability of funds. Sabbatical leave with compensation will be granted only during the academic contract year.

Faculty members receiving leave shall secure a bond for sabbatical leave and enter into a written agreement to return to the University and remain in its service for a period twice as long as the time for which sabbatical leave is granted, or to repay the University the amount of salary received while on sabbatical leave. If the faculty member returns to the University for only a part of the time required, the amount to be paid the University shall be proportionally reduced.

**Applicant: Tonnia L. Anderson, Ph.D.**

**Date of application: August 6, 2023**

**Date of initial full-time employment at USAO: August 23, 2010**

**Inclusive dates of sabbatical: [Spring 2024]; Spring 2025**

Purpose of the sabbatical and anticipated results:

Conduct research on land-loss of family farmers serviced by USDA, particularly targeting disadvantaged farmers (racial minorities and white women), though not exclusive to these groups. Oklahoma contains over 40% of the nation's disadvantaged farmers and a significant percentage of this population is currently facing foreclosure proceedings or have been foreclosed. The data and personal case histories will serve as a foundation for a larger social history of the plight of American family farmers and their tenuous relationship to the USDA.

The anticipated results for the research period will be the following:

1. Create case studies of individuals within this demographic based upon their experiences.
2. Interview key legal advocates representing clients who are either struggling against or have become ensnared by foreclosure.
3. Interview key personnel within the US Department of Agriculture about systemic failures that have led to a series of class-action lawsuits against USDA since 1999.
4. Conduct archival research over the history of FSA programs that emerged out of the New Deal to remedy loss of family-owned farms.

Expected contributions of the sabbatical to the University:

In many ways, Oklahoma is synonymous with agriculture. However, among the demographic of disadvantaged farmers within the state, Native Americans face the greatest percentage of land-loss. USAO is in the heart of "Indian Country." Information gained from this research could be valuable to students interested in Public Policy, Political Science, Economics, and History programs. It may also be valuable in facilitating community dialog about the issue of land-loss and how to navigate USDA resources. These can be accomplished through both external media networks and university platforms as part of the Fisher Center.

Other notes or considerations including possible recommendations for covering the applicable courses during the sabbatical:

Well, I had taken a series of overloads for the fall of 2023 to ensure that students (history education majors and Cultural Studies minors) had opportunity to take required courses without being put into a lurch because of my application for sabbatical. At this point, I have no recommendations only that I will do what is necessary to ensure that whatever is needed to accommodate students and the university.

**Request for Sabbatical**  
**Sean Kelley**  
**Professor of Physical Education**

**From:** Sean Kelley <[skelley@usao.edu](mailto:skelley@usao.edu)>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 2, 2023 11:08 PM  
**To:** Rachel Jones <[rjones@usao.edu](mailto:rjones@usao.edu)>  
**Subject:** Sabbatical for Fall 24

Rachel,

I have decided to pursue a sabbatical leave for next fall 24, I have never taken one and decided I would like the time to pursuit some research projects.

The specific purpose is to continue my research (that I have recently presented on at conferences) the idea of the Kine-Aesthetic being by traveling to recreational facilities (most likely golf courses) and interviewing and describing these types of individuals.

Dates of my work are 9/1/24-12/1/24

I anticipate to either publish or present my findings.

The contributions to the university are in my own faculty development and inclusion of the ideas to the classroom.

Thanks  
Sean Kelley

On a motion by Regent Mosley, seconded by Regent Wilkerson, the Board voted unanimously to approve the personnel actions.

**Financial Statements:** Vice President for Business and Finance Mike Coponiti covered the monthly financial statements with the group. The audit will be completed this week and will require committee review at the next Regents meeting on Dec. 12, 2023.

No action was necessary.

### **President's Report:**

- President Hale reported on a number of items, particularly a review of the first 100 days in office included meetings and engagements in the campus community, as well as the city and county communities.
- Ongoing invitations were received by the Chickasaw and Kiowa Nations as well as the CEO for PSO/AEP of Oklahoma. Ongoing is the evaluation of FY24 and FY25 budget benchmarks and forecasts for revenue projections.
- Comprehensive enrollment and retention efforts are being reviewed and evaluated; current enrollment is at 914 students.
- External relations: numerous contacts have been made to notable donors, both past and present. Personally met with the legislative delegation. Renovations to Jourdan House, the Presidents residence, have been completed with the goal of active community engagement opportunities hosted there frequently; Regular student events are being held on the President's patio; the Jourdan House is a stop on this year's Holiday Home Tour.
- A leadership team retreat was held on October 30<sup>th</sup>. Goals were refined and articulated, particularly beginning the FY25 budget process with transparency and accountability. Concurrent Learning is an essentially untapped area for revenue generation and the university plans to enroll a minimum of 80 students during the Spring trimester. Other goals include increasing student retention to 73% and maintaining the persistence rate at 92%. The Admissions team has a goal to enroll 275 full time freshmen for Fall 2024.
- The Office of Human Resources is now fully staffed; processes for performance evaluations are being defined.
- A Letter of Intent to reinstate Computer Science as a degreeed program has been submitted to OSRHE. Approval anticipated.
- The Office of Career Readiness is soon to be established because of the recent Title III grant. USAO will apply for the TRIO grant this academic year.

- Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) visit for our School of Education concluded this morning. The reviewers were exceptionally positive during the exit interview. The CAEP report is expected in the coming weeks.
- USAO reps attended the Interim Studies discussions on DEI, Deferred Maintenance and Concurrent Learning at the Capitol on Oct. 16-17, 2023.

**Remarks from Representatives to the Board:**

- a. Faculty Association – Faculty Association President, Dr. Dany Doughan, prepared a report in advance of the meeting.
- b. Student Association – Student Association President Chandler Leamon-Webb prepared a report in advance of the meeting.
- c. Alumni Association – Dawn Reitan-Brockman, Director of Alumni Relations and University Development, prepared a report in advance of the meeting.
- d. Staff Association – Daniel Pool, Staff Association President, prepared a report in advance of the meeting.

**Executive Session:**

Chairman Walker asked for a motion to enter into executive session. Regent Mosley made the motion to go into executive session, it was seconded by Regent Conley and after a unanimous vote the board went into executive session at 2:05 pm to discuss the following agenda item:

- a. President's Review

No action was taken in executive session.

**Return to open session:** A motion to reconvene was made at 3:11 pm by Regent Wilkerson, seconded by Regent Reynolds. The motion carried to return to open session.

**Time and Place of Next Meeting – The next meeting will be held Wednesday, December 12, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. on the University of Science & Arts Campus.**

Consideration of “any matter not known about which could not have been reasonably foreseen prior to the time of posting of the agenda” – None

**Adjournment:** Having no other business, a motion was made by Regent Mosley to adjourn; a second was made by Regent Ming, and the board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting. Chairman Walker declared the Board meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.