

ACADEMIC COUNCIL Minutes July 23, 2026

Present: Jon Westfall, Vicki Bingham, Merideth Van Namen, Fawn Ussery, Joseph Childs, Kristen Land, Heather Miller, Jeffrey Leffler, Leslie Griffin

Absent: Tammy Prather

Guests: None

Call to order: The Academic Council met in the Janice Wyatt Conference Room KWH on July 23, 2026. The meeting convened at 8:33 AM, with Provost Leslie Griffin presiding.

Agenda item	Comments/Discussion	Action taken	Responsible party
Approval of Agenda:	Dr. Griffin began the meeting by asking for a motion to approve the agenda. The motion to approve the agenda was made by Dr. Merideth Van Namen which was seconded by Dr. Jon Westfall. All were in favor.	Approved	Leslie Griffin
Approval of Minutes:	The motion to approve minutes for Thursday, June 11th was made by Dr. Vicki Bingham and seconded by Dr. Jon Westfall. All in favor. The motion to approve minutes for Tuesday, July 14 th was made by Dr. Vicki Bingham and seconded by Dr. Jon Westfall. All in favor.	Approved	Leslie Griffin
Discussion Items			

Provost's Updates	<p><u>Provost, Dr. Leslie Griffin, provided the following updates:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provost Griffin asked members to review all notes from recent meetings, including the retreat. • “Close the loop,” is the phrase to be used because Academic Affairs needs to provide good customer service. That is the goal. • There will be several upcoming professional development opportunities, and we need to be more intentional about people attending training. • We are going to be busy in the upcoming weeks preparing for the fall. The 		Leslie Griffin
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	<p>College of Business will have an extra level of challenge, but we will do what it takes to meet the challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an IHL Gen Ed meeting in Starkville on October 6th. 		
Faculty Senate	<p>Faculty Senate President, Dr. Jon Westfall, provided the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Jon Westfall commented that the “Close the Loop” communication model we are trying to implement is great but still needs to trickle down to faculty. Action items need to be assigned to faculty directly instead of expecting someone to organically take it on. Things must be written, so that interpretations of assignments can be agreed upon. Should faculty automatically be added to the Faculty Senate Teams? After a moment of discussion, it was collectively decided that the answer was “yes.” Faculty Senate needs to have more visibility. It was suggested that there might could be some type of reception for Faculty Senate. UCC-fee requests have come this summer, but they’re not going anywhere right now because Academic Council isn’t going to take action at this time. UCC appointments need to be made ASAP. It’s only a two-year commitment. Canvas Course Design and ChatGPT Codex might could be used to consider the accessibility guidelines. There is a concern of student data using ChatGPT. 		Jon Westfall
Action Items: New Business Policies and Forms			
Curriculum/Course Actions	<u>None</u>		
Policy Actions:	<u>Policy Action: 2026-2027 Undergraduate Catalog Revision (First Reading)</u>		Jeffrey Leffler

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	<p><u>Policy Action: 2026-2027 Graduate Catalog Revision (First Reading)</u></p> <p>Dr. Leffler made the motion to advance from first reading to second reading to approve the 2026-27 Undergraduate Catalog Revision in a package with the Graduate Catalog Revision. Dr. Vicki Bingham seconded the motion. All in favor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Friendly amendment of “Cognate.” 	Passed	Jeffrey Leffler
	<p><u>Policy Action: Academic Records Retention Policy (First Reading)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler has worked with Katie Lusk on this. • The word “Department” needed clarity, and it was explained that it is used as a global term in this case. • On page two in the second paragraph, Dr. Vicki Bingham asked what an example of that might be. Dr. Jeffrey Leffler gave an example of the personnel files stored in Academic Affairs that might go to another office. There would need to be a history of tracking where that file went. 	Tabled	Jeffrey Leffler
	<p><u>Policy Action: Adjunct Faculty Policy (First Reading)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to time constraints, this policy action was tabled. 	Tabled	Jeffrey Leffler
	<p><u>Policy Action: Faculty Positions Policy (First Reading)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to time constraints, this policy action was tabled. 	Tabled	Jeffrey Leffler
	<p><u>Policy Action: Instructional Resources (First Reading)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to time constraints, this policy action was tabled. 	Tabled	Jeffrey Leffler

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<p>Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kuali Academic Operations proposal with Michael Peery and Chris Hyde. - In our current system, Dr. Jeffrey Leffler spends a lot of time making sure our edits are correct for the catalog. This system will push it to correct quickly. You can change it once and it is correct everywhere else. <p>Dr. Jeffrey Leffler moved that we approve pursuing Kuali Academic Operations. Dr. Jon Westfall seconded the motion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Because it takes four to five months to implement, it was asked if we would move forward with Curriculum Action Forms as normal this year and tell faculty that this electronic process is coming. It was explained that the final format will look like a website with links. Kuali Academic Operations has the potential to replace Academic Maps and it will update with Degreeworks. <p>All in favor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Selection for Professional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Merideth Van Namen asked how to approach teaching policies to Chairs and others. How are we going to package a series of policies to train? How do we make things better than they currently are? Dr. Griffin responded by encouraging Dr. Van Namen to pick out what is reasonable for someone to learn. From there, everyone should have someone to go to because faculty should ask questions. • ACUE Effective Teaching 101 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All faculty are enrolled in “ACUE Commons.” “Effective Teaching 101” is a self-paced module. How do we get faculty to sign up? Should this become a requirement for faculty? “Effective Teaching 101” assist with how to develop announcements, syllabus activities to develop course expectations, surveys. - Deans and Chairs can highly encourage ACUE 101 because ACUE should be celebrated. It’s the 10-year anniversary of launching ACUE. 		<p>Leslie Griffin</p>
<p>Announcements:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summer II Final Exams July 28, 2026 - Okratation August 15-18 - Faculty Development Day August 17, 2026 - Fall Term Begins August 19, 2026 		

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Adjourned:	11:05 a.m.		
Next Meeting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Next Meeting Date: Thursday, TBD 8:30 AM-10:30 AM in the Janice Wyatt Conference Room		