

ACADEMIC COUNCIL Minutes August 13, 2026

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

Absent: None

Guests: None

Call to order: The Academic Council met in the Janice Wyatt Conference Room KWH on August 13, 2026. The meeting convened at 8:31 AM, with Provost Leslie Griffin presiding.

Agenda item	Comments/Discussion	Action taken	Responsible party
Approval of Agenda:	The motion to approve the agenda was made by Dr. Vicki Bingham, seconded by Dr. Merideth Van Namen. All were in favor.	Approved	Leslie Griffin
Approval of Minutes:	The motion to approve minutes for Thursday, July 23rd was made by Dr. Vicki Bingham and seconded by Dr. Merideth Van Namen. 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"> • A goal for Dr. Griffin is to have structured meetings with direct reports so that goals are supported and things can move forward. • Dr. Griffin also expressed that she wants to give leadership proper recognition to validate the work that is being done. She wants assistance in celebrating the work that is being done. • Requested confirmation that Academic Council has access to the PowerBI reports, and the room confirmed. • After our next Academic Council meeting, we will have a faculty handbook. 		Leslie Griffin
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty development focused on AI will occur throughout the fall on implementation in instruction. SACSCOC is now doing business as CC&U or “The Commission.” 		
Faculty Senate	<p>Faculty Senate President, Dr. Jon Westfall, provided the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asked what faculty are ACUE certified and how we can get that out to campus so that the new faculty know who might can assist. There is an agenda adjustment for Faculty Senate so that things will stay on task and action items are captured. 		Jon Westfall
Action Items: New Business Policies and Forms			
Curriculum/Course Actions	<u>None</u>		
Policy Actions:	<p><u>Policy Action: Adjunct Faculty Policy (First Reading)</u></p> <p>Dr. Jeffrey Leffler moved that we approve. Dr. Jon Westfall seconded the motion.</p> <p>All in favor.</p>	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. 	Passed	Jeffrey Leffler

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	<p>Dr. Jeffrey Leffler moved that we approve. Dr. Vicki Bingham and Kristen Land seconded the motion.</p> <p>All in favor.</p>		
	<p><u>Policy Action: Faculty Positions Policy (First Reading)</u></p> <p>Dr. Jeffrey Leffler moved that we approve. Dr. Jon Westfall seconded the motion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a discussion of the difference between load hours and credit hours. • Discussion took place on why “Instructors” are not always full-time. <p>All in favor.</p>	Passed	Jeffrey Leffler
	<p><u>Policy Action: Instructional Resources (First Reading)</u></p> <p>Dr. Jon Westfall moved that we approve. Dr. Jeffrey Leffler seconded the motion.</p> <p>All in favor.</p>	Passed	Jeffrey Leffler
	<p><u>Policy Action: Grievance Policy-Academic- Graduate (First Reading)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback received from Katie Lusk. • There was discussion about the students’ role in the grievance process. • There was discussion about forming only one appeals committee. <p>Dr. Jon Westfall made a motion to remove the word “Graduate” in the grievance policy as well as removing the word “Undergraduate” in the “Grievance Policy-Academic-Undergraduate,” therefore, collapsing the two into one policy. Dr. Merideth Van Namen seconded the motion.</p>	Passed	Jeffrey Leffler

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	All in favor.		
	<p><u>Policy Action: Grievance Policy-Academic- Undergraduate (First Reading)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback received from Katie Lusk. • There was discussion about forming only one appeals committee and delete this policy in favor of one combined policy for both undergraduate and graduate students. <p>Dr. Jeffrey Leffler made the motion to delete the policy. Fawn Ussery seconded the motion.</p> <p>All in favor.</p>	Passed	Jeffrey Leffler
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tammy Prather provided an update on Degreeworks and stated that an advising session is scheduled for September 8th. She also updated that Raptor implementation is in process, which will allow the articulation to go faster. The university has acquired LightleapAI to assist with catching fraudulent/ghost students. • Dr. Vicki Bingham announced Shelby Polk is the Interim Chair for Nursing and Health Sciences. She also mentioned that the planetarium looks great and that the LPN to BSN program is off to a great start. • Dr. Heather Miller mentioned that the Grants and Contracts office has been very busy, and shared that all FCTL events are on the calendar. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On the note of the calendar, Dr. Griffin mentioned the importance of websites being updated and emphasized the syllabi upload into the repository. - There was then discussion of having one calendar for faculty to look at instead of subscribing to multiple calendars. - Dr. Jon Westfall agreed to coordinate with Kendra Whitehead on developing a shared Outlook calendar. - Dr. Griffin mentioned that there will be training on how 108 accounts are to be used and that she will put Dr. Edwin Craft on the agenda. • Dr. Merideth Van Namen shared that the updates in Ewing are still underway. There are two faculty promotions within her college. The MDE residency grant 		Leslie Griffin

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	<p>has been extended to 2030. The Director of Workforce Development starts on Monday, Angie Bardin. She also explained the difficulty level of having a massive Adjunct training and that discussion is needed on how to have a smaller Adjunct training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kristen Land still needs three FYS instructors and requested that if anyone is interested to please send them her way. She stated that the Intelligent Insights training went well and that they are implementing the use of the software “Clarity.” It is an AI-driven agent to monitor how students use AI. • Fawn shared that library hours start back August 18th. She also shared that Timla Washington is the new MDNHA Director and she works in the Archives building. She also noted that library usage is up by 34%. • Dr. Joe Childs shared that the Cindy Hyde-Smith event was a success. There is still a transition happening for the College of Business and College of Aviation. College of Aviation is currently interviewing candidates for the admin position and working with Gregory Braggs on website adjustments. • Amber Hays shared that she is now being included earlier in the new faculty hiring process, which is expected to streamline Banner activation and help prevent future delays. • Dr. Jeffrey Leffler is working through enrollment outreach and is building out the Academic Reporting in Anthology. • Dr. Leslie Griffin mentioned needing to build our strategic plan items. She wants to bring Academic Council members to Cabinet to help tell the story. Kristen Land is on the next Cabinet agenda. 		
Announcements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Okration August 15-18 - Faculty Development Day August 17, 2026 - Fall Term Begins August 19, 2026 		
Adjourned:	10:40 a.m.		
Next Meeting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next Meeting Date: Thursday, August 27th 8:30 AM-10:30 AM in the Janice Wyatt Conference Room 		

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