

ACADEMIC COUNCIL Minutes August 27, 2026

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

Absent: Merideth Van Namen

Guests: Anjanette Powers

Call to order: The Academic Council met in the Janice Wyatt Conference Room KWH on August 27, 2026. The meeting convened at 9:28 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. Jon Westfall, seconded by Dr. Merideth Van Namen. All were in favor.	Approved	Leslie Griffin
Approval of Minutes:			
Discussion Items			

Provost's Updates	<p><u>Provost, Dr. Leslie Griffin, provided the following updates:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Griffin gave a piece of leadership advice by explaining the importance of having a connection with history. She mentioned the significance of Dr. Kent Wyatt, Joyce Kennedy, and Patsy Thrash. • It is also important to develop connections with the here and now. For example, showing support to athletes when they are traveling beyond excusing them from their classes and asking how their team did when they returned. • Dr. Griffin stated that Dr. Edwin Craft was going to be on today's agenda, but due to last minute schedule conflicts, he had to cancel, but she is hopeful to have 		Leslie Griffin
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	<p>hm at the next scheduled meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She tasked Academic Council with doing individual research on 90-hour degrees. • The funding formula is a task that requires a lot of attention as the universities work to define the metrics. She collaborates regularly with Dr. Serge Herzog and Dr. Edwin Craft. • Several policies this group has put before Cabinet have moved forward. • She assigned Deans to work with their faculty on their scholarship agenda. She asked that units leverage their indirect accounts, grant-funding, and internal funds in a way that is agreeable with the units' goals, and then request funding from Academic Affairs. 		
Faculty Senate	<p><u>Faculty Senate President, Dr. Jon Westfall, provided the following update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It appears that the “no-show” rate is about the same as it was last year. • People are noticing that Faculty Senates are dissolving in other states. • Faculty have concern over the 90-hour degree offerings that are being discussed nationwide. 		Jon Westfall
Action Items: New Business Policies and Forms			
Curriculum/Course Actions	<u>None</u>		
Policy Actions:	<p><u>Policy Action: Faculty Annual Evaluation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Leffler stated that he consulted with Katie Lusk on the language. • The deadline is different from the prior policy because of the feedback provided by Deans. • Discussion was had regarding the word “completed,” in the event a faculty member refuses to sign the document after having the evaluation. 	Tabled	Jeffrey Leffler

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This policy is tabled due to needing more conversation with Katie Lusk and forming a study group to analyze the current document. 		
	<p><u>Policy Action: Grade Forgiveness & Academic Fresh Start</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Jeffrey Leffler clarified what “fresh start” means and how few students will utilize this option because it means that they will lose <i>all</i> the credit hours from their previous attempt, instead of cherry-picking what to keep and what to toss. There was discussion as to how this will impact students who opt for a fresh start if they decide to go to grad school elsewhere. <p>Dr. Jon Westfall moved that we approve. Dr. Vicki Bingham seconded the motion.</p> <p>All in favor.</p>	Passed	Jeffrey Leffler
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to slight technical difficulties, Dr. Jeffrey Leffler will send out the official draft of the Faculty Handbook so that comments/edits can be made in the same document. A Zoom meeting will be scheduled to discuss the handbook by September 10th. 		Leslie Griffin
Announcements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accreditation Reports/Academic Productivity Review/New Program Audits due to IHL September 4, 2026 Pig Pickin’ September 5, 2026 Labor Day Holiday September 7, 2026 ACBSP Site Visit September 23-25, 2026 		
Adjourned:	10:41 a.m.		
Next Meeting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next Meeting Date: Thursday, September 10, 2026 8:30 AM-10:30 AM Janice Wyatt Conference Room 		