

**KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS  
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
January 14, 2026**

Regent Alysia Johnston called the January 14, 2026, Board Academic Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 10:45 a.m. The meeting was held in the Board Office located in the Curtis State Office Building, 1000 S.W. Jackson, Suite 520, Topeka. *Proper notice was given according to law.*

MEMBERS PRESENT:           Regent Alysia Johnston, Chair  
                                      Regent Diana Mendoza  
                                      Regent Pamela Ammar

**Approval of Minutes**

Regent Ammar moved to amend the second to last paragraph of “Request for Approval BA & BGS in Intelligence and National Security Studies” from the December 2, 2025, minutes to read: “Regent Ammar asked if the surplus noted in the financial section of the proposal was for the hiring of new faculty.”

Regent Mendoza seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Regent Mendoza moved to approve the amended minutes from December 2, 2025, and the December 17, 2025, minutes. Regent Ammar seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

**Consent**

**Request to Approve BS in Applied & Interdisciplinary Studies**

Dr. Jesse Mendez, Provost at Kansas State University, introduced Dr. Ben Wolfe, Dean of the Kansas State University Olathe campus, introduced Associate Dean Darrin Smith. Dr. Smith highlighted that this proposal will create a new avenue for degree completion. He noted concerns from the University of Kansas, which have been addressed. Ben Wolfe added that this program will be housed at the College of Applied and Professional Studies, and therefore the university will not seek JCERTA approval.

Regent Ammar moved that this proposal be moved to the Board’s consent agenda. Regent Mendoza seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

**Request to Approve BS in Pharmaceutical & Biomedical Science**

Dr. Barbara Bichelmeyer, provost at the University of Kansas, introduced Dr. Mark Farrell, Associate Professor of Medicinal Chemistry at the University of Kansas, shared that this proposal is designed to propel students into high-skilled high-wage life science roles, which will strengthen the life science talent pipeline in the state.

Regent Mendoza moved that this proposal be moved to the Board’s consent agenda. Regent Ammar seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

**Discussion**

**Request to Approve BS in Cybersecurity**

Brent Thomas, provost at Emporia State University, shared that this proposal was put forward to address a workforce need for cybersecurity specialists throughout the state. He introduced Dr. Phillips, Co-Dean for the School of Business and Technology at Emporia State University.

Regent Ammar asked Dr. Phillips to expand on concerns from KSU regarding duplication. Dr. Phillips responded that ESU will continue collaborative dialogue to fill specific areas such as operational technology and critical infrastructure. Jesse Mendez, Provost for Kansas State University, added that KSU is willing to remain collaborative with ESU and is supportive of this proposal. The University of Kansas and Wichita State University are also supportive. There will be a cybersecurity coordinating council among the universities offering cybersecurity programs, to explore federal research grants, course sharing, and offer cybersecurity programs as efficiently as possible.

Regent Ammar moved that this proposal be moved to the Board's discussion agenda. Regent Mendoza seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

### **Other Matters**

#### **Proposed Amendments to Board Policies on Tenure and Post-Tenure Review, and Workload**

Vice President for Academic Affairs Rusty Monhollon shared that clarifying language was added to the policies based on feedback from KU and KSU Distinguished Professors as well as legislators. This language is intended to ensure due process through appeals of decisions.

The workload policy was changed to read that faculty with two unsatisfactory reviews "would be subject to dismissal, reassignment, or other personnel actions."

Clarifying language was added that one-year improvement plans must have realistic and attainable goals which could be achieved in a one-year period.

KBOR has received representative feedback that KBOR should have oversight of the tenure process and final decisions on tenure. Language was added that will allow tenure decisions to be appealed to the Board.

Regent Johnston proposed an addition to the policy language to pg. 90, C8E4, to read that faculty who do not satisfactorily complete the one-year improvement plan are subject to "dismissal, reassignment, or other personnel actions as determined by the provost." And to add that faculty may appeal decisions of the Chief Executive Officer regarding post-tenure review to the Board within 30 days under C8E5. Pg. 88 C6 was added to read: "Decisions of the Chief Executive Officer shall be final and are not subject to further administrative review by any office or committee of the institution or by the Board of Regents." Robert Klein, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs at the University of Kansas Medical Center, suggested a change to the post-tenure review language to read that "The department chair, dean, or dean designate shall form the post-tenure review committee."

#### **Systemwide Associate Transfer Degrees- Additional Considerations**

Dr. Jennifer Bonds-Raacke, Director for Academic Affairs, shared that TAAC and SCOCAO have discussed challenges related to Systemwide Associate Transfer degrees. Both Councils have highlighted a need to identify a formal oversight structure for these degrees that works collaboratively with SCOCAO and brings recommendations forward to BAASC. They are seeking verbal endorsement to charge TAAC to take on initial steps in the Spring to identify key issues and policy elements related to Systemwide Associate Transfer Degrees, and to bring those recommendations to SCOCAO for comment and consideration, and then to BAASC for consideration and ultimately approval as appropriate. Chair Johnston gave verbal endorsement for this charge.

### Reduced-Credit Baccalaureate Degree Update

Vice President for Academic Affairs Rusty Monhollon shared that a policy framework was drafted at the December workgroup meeting. The policy will be discussed at the next workgroup meeting on 1/16.

Chair Johnston suggested that a pilot program go through the regular program approval process.

### Blueprint for Literacy Update

Dr. Cindy Lane shared that SB 438 was signed into law with the following goals:

- 100% of the elementary workforce to earn a credential in the Science of Reading and Structured Literacy by 2030
- Leading to 90% of 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students achieving at Level 2 (Basic) on the Kansas English Language Arts Assessment AND that 50% of the 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students achieve a level 3 (Proficient) or level 4 (Advanced)

Next, Dr. Lane shared the current data related to the Kansas English Language Arts Assessment, which shows that 55% of 3<sup>rd</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grade students are currently reading below proficiency. 71% of those students are at level 2 or higher.

The advisory committee has developed a strategic plan with a clear vision, mission, and goals. Universities were required by August 2024 to reshape undergraduate courses to ensure a focus on the science of reading and structured literacy with an application lens. Dr. Lane commended the faculty at the seven public universities for meeting the 30-day deadline set by the legislature.

The committee has developed a course for in-service educators to strengthen their skills in the foundations of the science of reading. Educators who enroll in the course receive a stipend of \$500 upon completion. Scholarship funding is available for approximately 1,700 Kansas licensed educators to cover tuition. Educators are expected to apply their knowledge from the course back into their classrooms. Institutions provide coaching support to close the gap between theory and practice.

Chair Johnston asked how many teachers still need to receive this training and what the training will cost. Dr. Lane responded that approximately 9,000 of the 18,698 elementary educators who require the certification have completed either the foundations course or the LETRS training offered through KSDE. The strategic plan developed by the Blueprint for Literacy has a fiscal ask of \$8.6 million.

### Announcements

Chair Johnston reminded attendees that the next BAASC meeting will be held virtually on January 27.

### Adjournment

Regent Mendoza moved to adjourn the meeting. Regent Ammar seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:07 p.m.