

KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS
Council of Chief Academic Officers
MINUTES
November 19, 2025

The November 19, 2025, meeting of the Council of Chief Academic Officers was called to order by Chair Brent Thomas at 9:03 a.m. The meeting was held via Zoom conference. *Proper notice was given according to law.*

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jesse Mendez, KSU	Barbara Bichelmeyer, KU	John Fritch, Washburn
Brent Thomas, ESU	Robert Klein, KUMC	Monica Lounsbery, WSU
Jill Arensdorf, FHSU	Susan Bon, PSU	Rusty Monhollon, KBOR (<i>ex officio</i>)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jesse Mendez moved that the minutes of the September 17, 2025, meeting be approved. Following the second of Jill Arensdorf, the motion carried.

Chair Brent Thomas noted a correction to the Agenda. Item 4E should read “BAS in Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (Reduced-Credit Bachelor’s Degree.)”

Council of Faculty Senate President’s Update

Dr. Rochelle Rowley, Emporia State University’s faculty senate president and Council of Faculty Senate Presidents (CoFSP) Chair, shared that the Council of Faculty Senate Presidents met with a senior recognition manager and recognition specialist from the International Baccalaureate program to learn more about the evaluation that the Council is charged to facilitate. The Council will meet with KBOR Director for Academic Affairs Sam Christy-Dangermond later today to discuss next steps and the overall timeline. They will also discuss the proposed instructional workload, tenure, and post-tenure review policies.

First Readings

BS in Applied & Interdisciplinary Studies – K-State

Dr. Darrin Smith, Associate Dean of Faculty Research and Administration at Kansas State University, shared that the BS in Applied & Interdisciplinary Studies will align with KSU and KBOR’s goals to improve transferability and expand workforce-relevant degree options. It will integrate workforce development programs into areas such as leadership and communication.

Barbara Bichelmeyer noted that she had sent a letter to KSU expressing concerns about the program. She highlighted that the Kansas City area is serviced by KU and PSU. Demonstration of sufficient student demand is still needed for program duplication.

BS in Pharmaceutical & Biomedical Science - KU

David Deitz, Dean of Pharmacy at the University of Kansas, introduced Dr. Mark Farrell, Associate Professor of Medicinal Chemistry. Dr. Farrell shared that the 120-hour degree will prepare students for high-impact roles in pharma, biotech, diagnostics, and healthcare professions. The research-intensive program progresses from rigorous foundational STEM coursework to advanced coursework in medicinal chemistry, pharmacology, drug delivery, and pharmaceutical analysis. Graduates will be prepared to

immediately enter R&D positions, quality and regulatory positions, and be highly competitive for graduate studies in science and healthcare professions.

Second Readings

BS in Cybersecurity - ESU

Brent Thomas, Provost at Emporia State University, shared that ESU had received a letter from Provost Jesse Mendez highlighting their concerns related to the proposed program. The letter as well as ESU's response is included in the agenda packet. Concerns included faculty capacity, accreditation, and duplication. Provost Thomas emphasized that ESU believes they are proposing a program that is complimentary to the existing strengths within the system and will help address workforce needs in the state of Kansas. He concurs with the need for cooperation and collaboration across institutions.

Provost Mendez asked how the accreditation process ESU is pursuing differs from KU and WSU. Will Phillips responded that the program is meant to be constantly reviewed for industry currency to fit the ABET accreditation framework. The NCAE designations allow the program to pursue federal grants and programs.

Barbara Bichelmeyer noted a mischaracterization in ESU's response regarding the BS in Cyber Engineering at the University of Kansas. While the degree does not have the CAER and CAE-CD designations, its curriculum is designed to meet those standards. KU has relationships with the National Center for Academic Excellence in Cyber Education and the National Center for Excellence in Cyber Research.

Monica Lounsbery emphasized the concerns raised in KSU's letter regarding duplication, noting WSU's strong relationships with the Department of Defense (now the Department of War) and the ATF moving field offices to WSU. She invited opportunities for collaboration and joint-programming rather than duplication.

Provost Bichelmeyer and Provost Lounsbery noted their intent to abstain from voting, emphasizing their abstention as a point of process rather than opposing the program itself. Provost Thomas suggested moving the program forward with the understanding that VP Monhollon will call a meeting to address concerns and strategic alignment. Will Phillips, Assistant Professor of Business Administration at Emporia State University, emphasized the importance of this program to protecting Kansas' critical infrastructure, citing a recent cyber attack which knocked out a water plant in Derby, KS. VP Monhollon agreed to host a meeting to continue the conversation among the parties related to cybersecurity.

Jill Arensdorf moved to approve the proposal. Following a second from Susan Bon, a roll-call vote was conducted. Jill Arensdorf, Susan Bon, and Brent Thomas voted yes and Jesse Mendez voted no. Barbara Bichelmeyer and Monica Lounsbery abstained.

BA in Religious Education & Community Engagement - FHSU

Barbara Bichelmeyer moved to approve the proposal. Following the second of Susan Bon, the motion carried unanimously.

BA & BGS in Intelligence & National Security Studies – KU

Provost Barbara Bichelmeyer shared that KU began enrolling students in a Minor in Intelligence & National Security Studies in 2020. KU is seeking to expand this program to provide a skilled workforce for intelligence agencies and to build on research capabilities.

Jesse Mendez moved to approve the proposal. Following the second of Jill Arensdorf, the motion carried unanimously.

BS in Diversified Agriculture – KSU

Provost Mendez introduced Dr. Jonathan Ulmer, Interim Associate Dean for the College of Agriculture at KSU. Dr. Ulmer shared that this program allows for a broader understanding of Agriculture, often requested by potential students. The program will be offered both on campus and via distance. It is an integral part of the Garden City and KSU cooperative agreement, which allows students to complete their degree both at KSU and in cooperation with the Garden City Place-bound students. Provost Mendez noted that there were concerns regarding duplication from Fort Hays State University. KSU is working with FHSU regarding these concerns. Provost Arensdorf noted her support for this proposal.

Susan Bon moved to approve the proposal. Following the second of Barbara Bichelmeyer, the motion carried unanimously.

BAS in Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree) – K-State

Provost Mendez introduced Terri Gaeddert, Associate Dean of Academics, who shared that this program is fully committed to maintaining KBOR's General Education requirements, as well as keeping 45+ credit hours at the 300 level or above.

VP Monhollon recommended that this proposal not move on to BAASC until policy is developed.

Jill Arensdorf moved to table this proposal. Following the second of Barbara Bichelmeyer, the motion carried with one no vote from Jesse Mendez.

Other Matters

Request to change name of MS in Nursing to MSN in Nursing - KUMC

Dr. Robert Klein, Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs at the University of Kansas Medical Center, shared that the revised program is focused on pre-licensure education. The name change will reduce confusion with the phased-out master's program.

Monica Lounsbery moved to approve the proposal. Following the second of Jill Arensdorf, the motion carried unanimously.

The Council agreed to vote on the following items from PSU collectively:

- B. Request to change name of Department of Chemistry to Chemistry & Physics
- C. Request to change name of the Department of Mathematics & Physics to Mathematics & Computer Science

Provost Susan Bon shared that these name changes are in response to re-alignment of faculty interest and to address dwindling numbers in Physics.

Jill Arensdorf moved to approve items B and C. Following the second of Barbara Bichelmeyer, the motion

carried unanimously.

The council agreed to vote on the following items from WSU collectively:

- D. Request to change name of School of Nursing to Ascension Via Christi – Wichita State University School of Nursing
- E. Request to change name of College of Applied Studies to College of Education
- F. Request to change name of School of Education to School of Teaching & Learning
- G. Request to change name of Department of Intervention Services to Counseling, Educational Leadership, Educational, & School Psychology
- H. Request to merge the departments of Economics and Marketing into the Department of Marketing and Economics

Jesse Mendez moved to approve items D-H. Following the second of Jill Arensdorf, the motion carried unanimously.

TOEFL iBT Scoring Update

The Council agreed to table this item for the next meeting.

Discuss Opportunities (new degree programs, partnerships, strategic initiatives, etc.) that Universities are Considering or Planning to Pursue in the Future

Provost Jill Arensdorf shared that Fort Hays State University's Faculty Senate body recently approved a BS in Financial Forensics, which is planned to be presented for a first reading in December or January.

Adjournment

Brent Thomas adjourned the meeting at 10:42 a.m.