

KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS**MINUTES**

July 28-30, 2025

The Kansas Board of Regents Budget Workshop and Annual Retreat was called to order by Chair Blake Benson on Monday, July 28, 2025, at 1:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the Kansas State University College of Business Building, 1301 Lovers Lane, Room 4061, Manhattan, Kansas. Proper notice was given according to law.

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Blake Benson, Chair	John Dicus	Kathy Wolfe Moore
	Diana Mendoza, Vice Chair	Alysia Johnston	

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Chair Benson welcomed all attendees. He thanked Kansas State University President Richard Linton and the KSU staff for hosting this year's retreat. Chair Benson also congratulated Emporia State University President Ken Hush on the announcement of his retirement, recognizing his leadership and contributions to the system.

President Linton welcomed the Board to the KSU campus. He acknowledged the staff members who played key roles in planning and coordinating the retreat and shared his enthusiasm about showcasing Manhattan's unique features and highlighting several innovative campus projects.

Chair Benson emphasized the retreat's purpose as a time for reflection and strategic planning. He underscored the importance of leaving the retreat unified around the legislative platform and system goals for the upcoming year, noting that collective advocacy strengthens their impact. He highlighted positive trends in system metrics, commended the ongoing work driving those improvements, and expressed eagerness to continue working together to advance shared goals.

Vice Chair Mendoza shared her optimism for the year ahead. While acknowledging potential challenges facing higher education, she expressed confidence in the Board and the institutions' prioritization of student success. She encouraged open dialogue and collaboration throughout the retreat.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: PILLARS, METRICS, AND BOARD PROGRESS**RECAP 2024-2025 BOARD GOALS AND PROGRESS**

Blake Flanders, President and CEO, presented a review of the Board's goals, and the progress achieved over the past year. President Flanders highlighted key accomplishments and invited input on areas for future focus.

A major topic of discussion centered on technology, cybersecurity, and enterprise risk management policies across state universities. The Board acknowledged the significant strides made in establishing a systemwide security standard, including the formalization of the Information Technology and Security Council. Suggestions for improvement included encouraging institutions to centralize their systems better while maintaining flexibility for individual needs and fostering increased collaboration among institutions and with the Board to share resources and refine best practices. While recognizing that further work is needed to strengthen IT security at both institutional and state levels, the Board affirmed its commitment to continuing this significant effort.

Another key area of focus was alternative credentials. Although these credentials are currently offered in various formats across several institutions, there is a lack of standardized definitions and formal state recognition. The Board proposed reviewing definitions from national organizations as a starting point for developing consistent, state-recognized terminology. At the same time, the Board emphasized the importance of preserving the organic and innovative nature of this evolving field. The Board acknowledged the potential of alternative credentials to benefit students and support workforce development and agreed that further research and collaboration will be essential to advance this initiative.

REVIEW STRATEGIC PLAN PILLARS AND METRICS

President Flanders provided an overview of the Board's strategic plan's pillars and associated metrics, highlighting progress across several areas. The data reflect positive trends in affordability and access, improved outcomes for Kansas students, stronger retention of talent within the state, substantial growth in the research enterprise, and a wide range of benefits for Kansas communities.

Recognizing that it has been five years since the adoption of the Building a Future strategic plan, President Flanders recommended a comprehensive refresh. This process will include gathering feedback from stakeholder groups, assessing progress toward existing goals, identifying gaps, proposing necessary revisions, and enhancing metrics—particularly within the Business and Prosperity pillars.

These updated metrics and potential revisions will be discussed throughout the upcoming academic year, with a focus on refining and strengthening the plan to ensure continued alignment with the system's long-term objectives.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION WITH KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Joshua Jefferson, Deputy Secretary of Business Development for the Kansas Department of Commerce, provided an overview of Kansas's economic growth over the past six years, highlighting the attraction of \$23.67 billion in capital investment statewide. He noted that all but ten counties have successfully launched economic development projects during that period, and said the remaining counties are a priority for future initiatives.

Deputy Secretary Jefferson underscored the critical role that the higher education system plays in supporting economic development efforts. The Board expressed interest in fostering more frequent and collaborative engagement with the Department of Commerce. The partnership between the agencies aims to enhance program alignment and further support the growth and prosperity of Kansas as a whole.

SEIZING THE FUTURE: AI, HIGHER EDUCATION, AND THE KANSAS IMPERATIVE

Dr. Robert Placido, Chief Information Officer for the University of Maine System, delivered a presentation on the growing impact of artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education and its broader influence across various industries.

Dr. Placido highlighted that AI is already transforming sectors such as agriculture, technology, banking and finance, aviation, manufacturing, the military, and government, and its growth continues to accelerate. He emphasized the importance of proactively integrating AI into the higher education system. He recommended starting with the creation of small, high-tech research and development labs focused on pilot projects. These labs would serve as incubators for building institutional knowledge and fostering relationships around emerging AI.

Dr. Placido also noted that states seeing early success in AI integration have typically begun by establishing systemwide AI task forces and appointing designated system-level AI leaders to guide strategy and implementation.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair adjourned the meeting for the day at 4:05 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

The Kansas Board of Regents Budget Workshop and Annual Retreat was called to order by Chair Benson on Tuesday, July 29, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. The meeting was held at the Kansas State University College of Business Building, 1301 Lovers Lane, Room 4061, Manhattan, Kansas. Proper notice was given according to law.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Blake Benson, Chair John Dicus Kathy Wolfe Moore
Diana Mendoza, Vice Chair Alysia Johnston

WELCOME & RECAP OF DAY ONE

Chair Benson thanked President Linton for hosting the previous evening's dinner and for the tour of the Bilbrey Family Event Center and Ag Innovation Initiative Buildings. He then provided a brief recap of the prior day's discussions.

BUDGET WORKSHOP

Regent Dicus, Chair of the Fiscal Affairs and Audit Committee, opened the Budget Workshop by acknowledging the financial challenges anticipated in the coming year. He noted that while the past five years saw increased funding through COVID-related support and state allocations, current indicators suggest a more constrained fiscal environment.

Regent Dicus stressed the need for a focused and reasonable approach when making legislative requests. Referencing the previous day's discussion with Deputy Secretary Jefferson from the Kansas Department of Commerce, Regent Dicus noted that the Department had experienced an 11 percent budget reduction—an impact shared by several other state agencies. He emphasized the importance of keeping these realities in mind as the Board considers higher education funding needs. He cautioned that overly ambitious proposals could risk further budget cuts and suggested that maintaining current funding levels would be a meaningful success.

STATE OF KANSAS BUDGET PROCESS AND OUTLOOK

Elaine Frisbie, Vice President for Finance and Administration, outlined recent changes to the state budget process. In the most recent fiscal year, the Legislature opted to use its own starting point, rather than the Governor's budget proposal. This resulted in limited incorporation of the Governor's recommendations into the final budget bills. Vice President Frisbie expressed hope that lessons learned from this shift will lead to a more effective process moving forward.

Vice President Frisbie explained that there are state funds that are appropriated directly to the universities and funds that are administered through the Board of Regents. While the Board's budget appears extensive—totaling several hundred million dollars—it includes pass-through funding to institutions such as Washburn University, two-year colleges, and private independent colleges, particularly for student financial aid. These appropriations often come with provisos, which can impact administration of the monies.

Vice President Frisbie noted that materials for the Budget Workshop were included in the retreat packet and that the Board is required by its bylaws to conduct a budget workshop annually. She highlighted pages 22 to 63, which contain financial dashboards for each state university, including graphs that illustrate the important general use budgets.

As of the end of the 2025 Legislative Session, the State General Fund (SGF) was projected to close FY 2026 with a \$1.337 billion balance, supported by a \$1.8 billion Budget Stabilization Fund. Additional revenues from the April 2025 Consensus Revenue Estimate and year-end actual collections have pushed the FY 2025 ending balance close to \$1.9 billion. However, current spending patterns suggest the SGF could fall below zero by FY 2029. Budget projections through FY 2029 are provided to offer context to the Board's consideration of future funding priorities for higher education.

Vice President Frisbie also noted that according to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education's most recent report, Kansas high school graduates are expected to decline by 12 percent from 2023 to 2041. Nationally, the anticipated decline is 10 percent.

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FINANCES

Vice President Frisbie provided an overview of postsecondary education finances. The financial data centered on Fiscal Year 2023, the most recent year for which the federal Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data is available. IPEDS is the federal data system used by institutions to qualify for federal financial aid. In FY 2023, total system revenues reached \$4.7 billion, with over \$3.6 billion attributed to the state universities. Funding sources vary significantly by sector—for example, nearly 50 percent of technical college funding comes from state sources, compared to 13 percent for Washburn University.

Vice President Frisbie shared that Kansas ranked 24th nationally in state support of public higher education per FTE in 2024, up from 30th in FY 2022, according to the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association. On the expense side, approximately one-third of funding is allocated to instruction, and one-tenth to research, primarily at Wichita State, KU, and K-State. The remainder supports student services and campus operations.

Faculty data shows stability in overall employment numbers from 2019 to 2024, but a noticeable decline in tenure and tenure-track faculty positions.

Focusing on state universities' general use budgets—funds from state appropriations and student tuition—Vice President Frisbie presented a chart depicting that state funding historically exceeded tuition revenue, but recent years show a near tie with tuition holding steady or slightly increasing.

Washburn University's state funding has grown from \$14 million to over \$17 million, supported by participation in initiatives such as need-based aid, IT/cybersecurity, facilities upgrades, and the Campus Restoration Act. Two-year colleges will see a decline in State General Fund support in FY 2027, although they have seen increases in funding the past few years. The FY 2027 allocation does not include support for business partnerships or operating grants for technical colleges, though funding for tiered and non-tiered courses and the Excel in CTE program remains at the same level as in FY 2026 which will require adjustment once instructional cost model amounts are calculated for FY 2025 enrollment data.

On student financial aid, Vice President Frisbie highlighted that the state has made significant progress in funding. In 2021, state-administered programs totaled \$24 million; by 2027, the allocation will exceed \$71 million. Kansas's ranking for financial aid per FTE improved from 47th to 29th nationally, yet the state remains below the national average and behind neighboring states, with state support for student financial aid per undergraduate FTE Student being \$625.

Vice President Frisbie also highlighted several key aspects of the financial structure of the state universities. She emphasized the complex layers of university finances, particularly the presence of associated legal entities—some controlled, some non-controlled—that exist solely to serve the universities. These entities may or may not be included in the state's financial reports, depending on accounting rules. Importantly, these funds do not flow through the state treasury, adding complexity to how university finances are understood and discussed with policymakers. A list of university-affiliated corporations was included in the agenda materials.

Vice President Frisbie then turned to tuition revenue trends, noting that the University of Kansas and Kansas State University are the primary drivers of tuition revenue across the system. For FY 2026, the system's projected tuition revenue is just under \$900 million, with \$624 million coming from KU and K-State.

Vice President Frisbie reviewed how much of each institutions' budgets relied on SGF and student tuition revenue. For example, two-thirds of KU's general use budget comes from student tuition, while one-third is from the SGF. Although tuition revenue is substantial, the SGF remains essential for core operations such as utilities, staffing, and campus services.

Vice President Frisbie also touched on federal H.R. 1, the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act.” Key highlights include:

- Workforce Pell provisions were adopted but are expected to be delayed due to ongoing negotiations. Once implemented, Pell Grants will be available for short-term certificate programs.
- Changes to asset calculations for financial aid eligibility now exclude family farms, recognizing that families should not be expected to liquidate such assets to fund college education.
- A new earnings test for degree programs will apply only to program completers. Programs may lose eligibility for student loans (not aid) if graduates’ earnings four years post-completion fall below federal benchmarks.

These changes may reinforce the need to maintain the IPEDS data system, which supports program evaluation and federal aid eligibility.

Vice President Frisbie reviewed the universities’ finance materials and other metrics focusing on student enrollment, general use budgets, and how universities plan to allocate new expenditures. She clarified the difference between general use and restricted use budgets. Each university also provided details on their debt service expenses, including both current obligations and planned projects.

DISCUSSION WITH STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS AND BUSINESS OFFICERS

Chair Benson invited representatives from each university to provide a brief overview of their current landscape and offer a preview of the upcoming academic year, focusing on enrollment trends, tuition revenue projections, and other key institutional highlights.

President Linton shared that Kansas State University (KSU) is seeing positive momentum with a 5.2 percent increase in enrollment and improved retention rates, signaling a strong recovery from previous declines. Financially, the university is regaining stability. Key challenges ahead include addressing deferred maintenance, modernizing systems, closing compensation gaps, and managing increased financial demands in athletics. Despite these hurdles, KSU is strategically positioned for continued growth and long-term success.

Jeff DeWitt, University of Kansas (KU) Chief Financial Officer, outlined significant financial pressures facing both the Lawrence and Medical Center campuses, including potential reductions in federal research cost recovery rates, increased competition in student recruitment, and the financial impact of athlete revenue sharing. Despite anticipated record enrollment, challenges such as inflation, market pay gaps, and deferred maintenance persist. KU is responding through a unified “One KU” initiative, with leadership collaborating weekly to develop strategic efficiencies and budget adjustments. The University remains committed to maintaining competitive compensation and facility investments, rather than deferring them, as it navigates a complex financial landscape shaped by flat state funding and shifting federal support.

David Miller, Wichita State University (WSU) Chief Financial Officer, shared that FY 2026 budget development was shaped by three key challenges: compensation pressures, an 18 percent drop in international student enrollment, and increased out-of-state competition for students. A 4.8 percent general use budget reduction (\$7.2 million) was achieved through operational efficiencies and attrition-based staffing changes. Enrollment remains stable, though visa delays persist. Research continues to grow rapidly, with over \$500 million in awards projected. Looking ahead, WSU anticipates ongoing financial strain from inflation, compensation needs, and limited state support. The University is preparing strategically to manage those pressures.

Doug Ball, Pittsburg State University (PSU) Interim President and Chief Financial Officer, reported a strong financial outlook for PSU, highlighted by a projected 12 percent increase in freshman enrollment—the largest in recent years—driven by enhanced recruitment efforts and expanded university-funded scholarships. Overall undergraduate enrollment is up 3.5 percent, although international and graduate enrollment remain down. Tuition revenue is expected to exceed conservative projections, and the University benefited from regional growth and

development funding from the state. Key investments include expanded scholarship and aid programs, increased student success funding, targeted compensation adjustments, and ongoing cybersecurity initiatives. Despite shared challenges across higher education, PSU maintains a balanced budget and is well-positioned for the coming year.

Tisa Mason, Fort Hays State University (FHSU) President, and Wesley Wintch, FHSU Chief Financial Officer, reported a stable financial and enrollment outlook, with modest growth in student credit hours and headcount along with steady tuition revenue supported by conservative budgeting. On-campus enrollment is trending positively, though online and international numbers are down. The University is investing in student success, workforce development, and compensation through its “Move to Market” initiative, while also addressing deferred maintenance and enhancing data systems. WSU’s financial indicators, like the Composite Financial Index, have improved, aided by a \$15 million state allocation. Despite ongoing challenges from inflation, regulatory changes, and federal funding uncertainty, FHSU remains well-positioned with a balanced budget and strategic focus.

Ken Hush, Emporia State University (ESU) President, reported that ESU is experiencing its first enrollment increase in seven years, with a projected three to five percent growth. President Hush highlighted the elimination of a \$20 million deficit and reinvestment of \$10 million into student and employee initiatives, alongside progress in closing compensation gaps and optimizing campus facilities. The University has increased its scholarship offerings with the assistance of its foundation, and a new debt-free nursing and wellness facility will open in January.

JuliAnn Mazachek, Washburn University President, reported seeing growth in undergraduate and technical program enrollment, with graduate enrollment remaining stable by design and WU’s law school reaching full capacity for the first time. Retention rates have improved by nearly five percent, and the University continues to operate with a balanced budget and a unique funding structure. Strategic investments have focused on expanding need-based scholarships, streamlining staffing through attrition and reorganization, and offering competitive compensation. Significant campus renewal efforts are underway to renovate aging buildings across campus. A highlight of the year was the announcement of a bold new healthcare facility, supported by a transformative \$50 million gift, aimed at strengthening allied health and nursing programs that serve a significant portion of Washburn’s student body and regional needs.

Amber Knoettgen, Cloud County Community College President, shared that Kansas community colleges continue to face challenges shared with other higher education institutions, including limited funding and the need for operational efficiencies. Despite these constraints, the sector has shown resilience through strategic fundraising, partnerships, and cost-saving measures like attrition-based staffing changes. In 2024, community colleges accounted for 14 percent of statewide enrollment and awarded 35 percent of all credentials, underscoring their vital role. Growth in technical programs and the Excel in CTE program has added pressure to accommodate more students, even as some colleges face housing shortages. Collaboration with KBOR staff has been key in navigating funding requirements and developing solutions to maintain fiscal responsibility while meeting rising demand for programs.

Greg Nichols, Salina Area Technical College President, shared that Kansas technical colleges are seeing stable enrollment and where they are seeing declines is due to program capacity limits, especially in nursing. The sector benefits from strong state support through Excel in CTE and tiered technical education funding. Still, it faces challenges in sustaining growth, managing federal grant uncertainties, and offering competitive faculty salaries. Despite limited international enrollment, technical colleges are seeing record demand in key programs and are working to strengthen foundations and improve efficiencies to meet workforce needs.

BREAK

At 11:08 a.m., Chair Benson called for a break. The budget workshop and retreat resumed at 11:18 a.m.

REVIEW AND DISCUSS UNIFIED APPROPRIATION REQUEST

Vice President Frisbie outlined the Board's statutory responsibility to submit a unified state appropriation request for the higher education system by October 1, mandated by the Higher Education Coordination Act. The budget process begins in April with capital improvement reviews and continues through the allocations from the Division of the Budget, which determines what can be included as base funding versus enhancements. For FY 2027, the system's base budget request totals approximately \$1.14 billion, reflecting growth but still falling short of meeting all institutional needs. Notably, \$63 million was removed from the approved FY 2026 appropriations as part of the allocation process, which must be requested separately as enhancements to be restored in the FY 2027 budget. Additionally, \$5.2 million was allocated to offset rising health insurance costs under the State Employee Health Plan, though universities must cover the balance of additional expenses for their employees. Vice President Frisbie emphasized that despite increased funding, institutions continue to face significant financial pressures, including rising operational costs and limited flexibility in addressing emerging needs.

Vice President Frisbie provided a detailed overview of enhancement requests and funding challenges across the Kansas higher education system. Following a spring meeting of the Technical Education Authority, institutions—including community colleges, technical colleges, state universities, and Washburn University—submitted proposals for funding enhancements. These were compiled into a multi-section table, with the top section highlighting system-wide priorities such as student success initiatives (which received reduced funding in FY 2026 compared to FY 2025). The system is requesting current funding levels for student success initiatives, citing strong campus outcomes in retention and graduation.

Concerns were raised about the instructional cost model for tiered and non-tiered courses, and about Excel in CTE, which last year totaled \$7 million. Ongoing discussions may lead to a reduction in state support, particularly for high school students enrolled in college-level courses. Another major issue involves the Campus Restoration Act, which was underfunded by \$2.5 million in its first year. Institutions received their pro-rated disbursements, and it is hoped the full amount will be restored for future years.

Vice President Frisbie also highlighted initiatives like the Blueprint for Literacy, which previously received \$10 million to support in-service teacher training and the Colleges of Education. No new funding was allocated for FY 2026, but a \$5.5 million request is being made for FY 2027 to continue the program. The Board office is also requesting a \$350,000 increase to its State General Fund appropriation to maintain staffing and operations, as reserves from the now-defunct KanEd program have been depleted.

Technical colleges emphasized the importance of continued funding for the Kansas Promise Scholarship Act, which remains supported with \$10 million in the current allocation. The colleges also raised concerns about the future of adult education funding, noting that while state support is stable, federal funding remains uncertain. Notifications for federal allocations are arriving later than usual, but still within a workable timeframe for the fiscal year.

Additional institutional requests include funding for high-performance computing and cybersecurity at KU, apprenticeship and student success programs at two-year colleges, and operating grants for technical colleges—many of which were previously funded but removed from the current allocation. Vice President Frisbie noted that the need to formally re-request previously funded items is a recurring issue due to changes in the budget process.

Finally, Vice President Frisbie discussed a \$10 million cybersecurity funding request to address findings from a recent third-party audit conducted across the system. The audit evaluated compliance with the state's cybersecurity framework and identified areas for improvement at each institution, including Washburn University and the Board Office. This funding would support necessary upgrades and responses to those findings, continuing efforts initiated with a \$7.5 million allocation in the FY 2025 budget.

Chair Benson emphasized the importance of continued support for student success initiatives, noting that institutions across the system are already seeing measurable improvements in retention, recruitment, and graduation outcomes. He encouraged the government relations team to consider how best to communicate these successes to policymakers, highlighting the need for clear messaging that demonstrates the value and impact of this funding. He then provided an opportunity for the institutions to provide brief context for their FY 2027 budget requests, which were initially submitted at the June meeting.

BREAK

At 11:54 a.m., Chair Benson called for a break. The budget workshop and retreat resumed at 1:07 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE AND NON-BUDGETARY LEGISLATION AND POLICY PRIORITIES DISCUSSION

Chair Benson commended the group for efficiently completing budget requests and acknowledged the institutions' responsiveness to a shifting financial landscape. He emphasized the importance of early submissions, noting that budget requests were received in time for the June Board meeting and will be finalized in September. He also referenced input from the Department of Commerce and highlighted the need for further alignment of requests before they are finalized.

The afternoon session transitioned to focus on advocacy and messaging, particularly how to present a unified budget request to the Legislature. Regent Wolfe Moore, a former legislator, was invited to lead a discussion on strengthening advocacy for higher education in Kansas. The conversation aimed to explore how the Board of Regents can unify its voice, increase individual Regents' involvement, and collaborate more effectively with government relations teams and institutional advocates. President Flanders and his team were recognized for their strong advocacy efforts, and the session set the stage for deeper engagement and strategic messaging moving forward.

Regent Wolfe Moore led a discussion on enhancing legislative advocacy by encouraging Regents to become more personally engaged with lawmakers. The goal is to build trust and visibility, making Regents a reliable source of information for legislators. She proposed relationship-building visits before the legislative session begins. During the session, Regents could attend key committee meetings, participate in testimony, and maintain presence during critical legislative moments such as budget development and conference committees. Regent Wolfe Moore stressed targeted engagement and she advocated for a strategic, sustained effort to position the Board of Regents as a trusted voice in shaping higher education policy.

Chair Benson clarified that the goal is effective partnership. Regent Wolfe Moore and others stressed the power of storytelling and personalizing the impact of higher education through student success narratives, the importance of unified messaging, data-driven communication across institutions, and tying funding requests to job creation and federal matching opportunities was also discussed. The session concluded with a shared commitment to strengthening advocacy efforts in the year ahead.

President Flanders emphasized the importance of aligning systemwide priorities with the budget expectations of policymakers and encouraged early engagement with partners before the legislative session begins. He asked whether any key priorities might be missing from the current list.

Participants agreed that budget requests must be clear, practical, and easy to understand. They stressed the need to avoid ambiguity and to frame proposals in terms that resonate with policymakers—especially around economic impact and student success. Observations were made about simplified budget visuals, which often group all education spending together.

Community and technical college representatives reinforced the importance of listening to legislative signals, particularly the push for a flat budget. They emphasized the need for unified messaging across institutions and

strong relationships with both local and state leaders. The group agreed that coordinated, early communication and a shared narrative will be essential for effective advocacy in the upcoming legislative session.

BREAK

At 1:52 p.m., Chair Benson called for a break. The budget workshop and retreat resumed at 2:16 p.m.

DISCUSS AND ESTABLISH BOARD GOALS

President Flanders reviewed potential system goals, which included a review of tenure, post-tenure review, instructional workload; a strategic plan update; and suggested adding AI to the priority list. While the Board could support AI initiatives, staffing limitations are a challenge.

Molly Baumgardner, Pittsburg State University Associate Vice President for Public Affairs & Engagement recommended consulting businesses to understand which credentials they value and are willing to support. President Flanders questioned the potential shift from credit-hour to competency-based learning. President Nichols highlighted differences in credentialing and raised concerns about the potential devaluation of degrees due to reduced credit requirements and AI integration.

Vice Chair Mendoza emphasized student success and the role of open educational resources. She also asked how to better collaborate with the Department of Commerce. University of Kansas Chancellor Doug Girod noted that institutions have already made progress in this area. President Flanders proposed a “lightning round” of institutional presentations to showcase ongoing efforts and goals. President Linton and Regent Johnston suggested more frequent engagement with the Department of Commerce—such as quarterly meetings—to foster continuous collaboration, similar to the Technical Education Authority model. Chair Benson concluded by advocating for a focus on smaller, innovative wins and strengthening relationships not only with legislators but also with the Department of Commerce.

BREAK

At 2:48 p.m., Chair Benson called for a break. The budget workshop and retreat resumed at 3:05 p.m.

RECAP OF DAY TWO & ADJOURNMENT

Chair Benson provided a brief summary of the day’s discussion, expressed appreciation to all attendees for their contributions, and adjourned the meeting at 3:08 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

The Kansas Board of Regents Budget Workshop and Annual Retreat was called to order by Chair Benson on Wednesday, July 30, 2025, at 8:50 a.m. The meeting was held at the Kansas State University College of Business Building, 1301 Lovers Lane, Room 4061, Manhattan, Kansas. Proper notice was given according to law.

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Blake Benson, Chair	John Dicus	Kathy Wolfe Moore
	Diana Mendoza, Vice Chair	Alysia Johnston	

DISCUSSION OF KEY OBJECTIVES

TENURE/INSTRUCTIONAL WORKLOAD

Regent Johnston opened the discussion by noting recent collaboration between the Provosts and Vice President for Academic Affairs Rusty Monhollon, which led to a shared interest in reviewing the Board’s policies on tenure, post-tenure review, and instructional workload. Regent Johnston emphasized the potential to strengthen and clarify these policies, particularly the connection between workload and tenure. The goal is to develop a framework that reflects institutional needs while maintaining consistency across the system.

Vice President Monhollon explained that the Board Academic Affairs Standing Committee (BAASC) had requested a review of tenure and post-tenure policies. During this process, it became clear that instructional workload should also be addressed, given its close relationship to tenure. He noted that current tenure and post-tenure policies are non-prescriptive, allowing universities to create their own procedures within Board guidelines. These policies are generally consistent across institutions, with probationary periods, multiple review stages, and criteria for suspension or termination. Post-tenure policies similarly focus on faculty development.

In contrast, instructional workload policies vary widely. The current Board policy assigns responsibility to the university provosts, requires alignment with the institution's Carnegie classifications, and mandates measurement in credit hours. The University of Kansas Medical Center is permitted to follow a distinct set of criteria due to its unique mission. Vice President Monhollon shared data showing that between 2015 and 2025, 3.5 percent of tenure applicants were denied, 3.4 percent received unsatisfactory post-tenure reviews, and 3.6 percent were placed on improvement plans. A small number were dismissed, while approximately 1,400 tenured faculty left for various reasons.

Vice President Monhollon concluded that while tenure and post-tenure policies are effective, revising the instructional workload policy could improve equity, consistency, and transparency. A more structured policy would support fair treatment, better performance evaluations, systemwide benchmarking, and alignment with institutional missions. It would also protect faculty from overload and enable customized approaches at the school or department level, while maintaining core standards.

Chair Benson thanked Vice President Monhollon and emphasized the importance of viewing tenure and workload policies holistically. He acknowledged their close relationship and encouraged continued collaboration with the provosts to identify areas for improvement. He invited the provosts to share their perspectives as the review process moves forward.

Jesse Mendez, Kansas State University Provost, expressed support for separating the conversations around post-tenure review and instructional workload, noting that this distinction is strategically wise in the long term. He thanked Regent Johnston and Vice President Monhollon for facilitating informal discussions with university provosts, which he found valuable. Provost Mendez shared that Kansas State University recently revised its workload policy and is prepared to engage in broader conversations. He emphasized the importance of communicating to internal stakeholders that these efforts are intended to protect and strengthen tenure. He suggested that provosts play a key role in socializing this message on their campuses.

Regent Johnston reiterated the importance of clarifying the tenure process and acknowledged the close connection between tenure and workload. She commended the proactive work already undertaken by institutions, noting that many are ahead of the curve in addressing these issues and identifying opportunities for improvement.

Richard Muma, Wichita State University President, emphasized the need for faculty involvement in the policy review process, including collaboration with the Council of Faculty Senate Presidents. He stressed that faculty engagement is essential to achieving the intended outcomes.

Barbara Bichelmeyer, University of Kansas Provost, echoed Provost Mendez's comments and thanked Vice President Monhollon for his thoughtful and collaborative approach. She highlighted the importance of framing the policy revisions as efforts to protect tenure and noted the value of accountability and reporting in sharing success stories. Provost Bichelmeyer also emphasized the need to improve clarity around expectations, criteria, and processes to realize the benefits outlined by Vice President Monhollon fully.

Chancellor Girod appreciated the team's recognition that a one-size-fits-all solution is not appropriate, given the varied missions of institutions. He pointed out that a legislative bill related to tenure remains active and that discussions with lawmakers are expected in the upcoming session. Chancellor Girod commended the group for

proactively addressing these issues in a way that meets legislative expectations while reinforcing institutional accountability.

Chair Benson concluded by affirming that BAASC will continue to lead the efforts to review tenure, post-tenure review, and instructional workload. He thanked the provosts and Vice President Monhollon for their collaboration and requested that they return with recommendations for any Board-level actions. Chair Benson emphasized the importance of the work and expressed appreciation for the progress made so far.

EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

Chair Benson initiated the discussion on forming a presidential search committee following the announcement of President Hush's retirement. President Flanders outlined preliminary steps required before launching the search, including appointing a committee chair, developing and approving a leadership profile, and gathering input from the campus community.

President Flanders recommended that the Board determine the type of search to be conducted at a future meeting. Options include a Board-led search without a committee, a confidential committee-led search, or an open committee-led search. Both President Flanders and Chair Benson expressed support for the confidential committee-led model, noting that it has historically attracted higher-quality candidates and yielded successful outcomes.

The goal is to complete the search and make a selection by the end of the calendar year.

HOUSEKEEPING

President Flanders shared several housekeeping items. He began by confirming upcoming campus visit dates and tentatively setting the 2026 Board retreat for July 29–31, based on Chair Benson's recommendation. He also announced a reception at the September meeting to celebrate the Board of Regents' 100th anniversary, with hopes that former Regents will attend and share historical insights.

Additional reminders included updating Board member biographical information and signing up for fall commencement ceremonies. These items will be finalized at the September meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Benson adjourned the meeting at 9:37 a.m.

Blake Flanders, President and CEO

Blake Benson, Chair