

JOURNAL OF THE FACULTY SENATE
The University of Oklahoma (Norman campus)
Special session – March 26, 2018 – 3:30 p.m. – Jacobson Faculty Hall, Room 102

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Note: The remarks of the Senators and others are summarized and not verbatim. A recording of this meeting is available in the Faculty Senate office.

PRESENT: Ashby, Asprey, Bradley, Bradshaw, Burge, Burke, Burns, Davidson, Demir, S. Ellis, Elwood Madden, Fiedler, Golomb, Gutierrez, Hall, Hambright, Heyck, Hobson, Houser, Jamili, Karr, Keppel, Koch, Lamothe, Lifset, Markham, Miller, Natale, Nelson, Schmeltzer, Sprecker, Stewart, Swinkin, Trafalis, Warren

Provost’s Representative:

ISA representative(s):

SGA Representative(s):

ABSENT: Burstein, Churchman, N. Ellis, Givel, Jeffers, Keresztesi, Lai, Martens, Martin, Pepper, Shah, Stock, Volz, Wang, Weaver, Woodfin

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Faculty Senate Statement Regarding the Oklahoma Teacher Walkout 1

Once quorum was established, the Faculty Senate was called to order by Professor Sarah Ellis, Chair. The Chair announced that this was a special session with a limited agenda, thus the Senate would dispense with the normal order of business.

FACULTY SENATE STATEMENT REGARDING THE OKLAHOMA TEACHER WALKOUT

At the regular meeting of the Faculty Senate on March 12, 2018, it was decided to create and ad hoc committee to draft a statement regarding the upcoming Oklahoma Teacher Walkout. The ad hoc committee drafted the following statement:

The Faculty Senate at the University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus:

- *Supports competitive salaries for Oklahoma public school teachers.*
- *Supports Oklahoma public school teachers voicing their concerns and expressing their needs in the ways they see appropriate.*
- *Supports and encourages individual and coordinated assistance for Oklahoma children and families adversely affected by school closings.*
- *Supports the choices by individual faculty, staff, and students at OU regarding whether and in what ways to support Oklahoma public school teachers and their cause.*
- *Encourages all units of the OU community to support employees’ choices through any means feasible.*

1. **We support teachers.** *Public school teachers are essential to Oklahoma. They support the cognitive, emotional, academic, social, and civic development of the children and adolescents of our state. Regularly certified public school teachers are professionals who have undergone years of rigorous preparation in academic content, pedagogy, and field experiences. No state has disinvested more from public education over the last five years, and that does not reflect Oklahomans' high regard for teachers and public education.*
2. **Education is vital.** *Educated citizens are necessary for a functioning democratic society, and quality K12 education enables children to succeed in postsecondary education and in the workplace. For example, **Agricultural education** can prepare students for a lifetime of competing successfully in global agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources systems, and **Medical research** in Oklahoma has led to the creation of numerous successful companies such as Caisson Biotech, Altheus, and Biolytx, among many others. Oklahoma City has been among the fastest growing cities in the country. Boeing, GE, Amazon, and Google all expanded or moved to Oklahoma. We need to be able to attract and retain companies such as these, which are dependent upon a well-educated workforce that can only be sustained via a functional education system at all levels. These companies and others have helped boost the state's population by nearly 200,000 from an estimated 3.75 million in July 2010 to an estimated 3.93 million people in July 2017. Education matters, whether at the primary, secondary, or higher levels. The state's 25 colleges are engines of economic development in each of their communities throughout the state.*
3. **Funding education is a smart investment – and it is a choice. Our choices have undermined education in this state.** *We have not taken a balanced approach to creating a responsible budget. As a community, we have failed to address the lack of revenue generation to support education and the other vital public services that benefit us all. Oklahoma public schools employ 4,900 fewer workers today compared to 2009 (a 5.3 percent decrease). Over that same time, enrollment in Oklahoma increased by nearly 48,000 students (7.4 percent). Cuts to education continued, even while the economy was improving after the recession. These choices substantially reduce access to quality education in our state. A quarter of school districts in Oklahoma have gone to a four-day school week. Many rural and inner-city schools face closures. Oklahoma is increasingly losing quality teachers to other states and other professions. A state department of education survey found 34% of respondents who left Oklahoma public education did so for better pay or opportunities. In fall 2016, nearly 53,000 students in Oklahoma were taught by teachers granted emergency certification. A high proportion of alternatively certified teachers fill teaching positions in elementary schools, where the focus is basic literacy and numeracy. Thus, Oklahoma's students are being set on a trajectory of substandard education that will have consequences for their future educational possibilities and the rest of their lives. Despite the high number of emergency certifications, there still were more than 800 unfilled teacher vacancies in schools across the state. As our state has chosen to cut funding, costs to students and their families have risen to the point that despite intelligence, drive, and determination, many young people will not have access to college. Cuts to education undermine Oklahoma's economy, both today and tomorrow. Businesses are refusing to relocate here because their employees don't want to put their children in our schools. Underfunding education*

lowers the life-time earning potential of adults, reduces potential tax revenues, weakens home purchases, increases crime rates, and hurts the state economy for generations to come.

4. We call on the Oklahoma community to support education:

Feed the kids, care for all members, especially the most vulnerable.

(Provide a Link to resources and organizations – compiling to be added during special meeting Mar 26th)

We call on the entire state to find the will to invest in our community, and support and restore funding for education to healthier levels.

Chair Sarah Ellis stated that this draft came as a motion from the ad hoc committee, thus the Senate may move directly to discussion. She then opened the floor to discussion.

Prof. Fiedler asked which faculty members served on the ad hoc committee that drafted the statement. Prof. Sarah Ellis said they were Prof. Amy Bradshaw, Prof. John Schmeltzer, Prof. Amy Pepper, Prof. Firat Demir, Prof. Wayne Riggs, Prof. Neal Houser, and Prof. Michael Jablonski. Five of the committee members are currently members of the Faculty Senate and one is a former Chair of the Senate.

Prof. Ashby made a motion to specify whether the third bullet referred to schools closing due to funding or due to the walkout. Prof. Natale seconded that motion and the Senate approved the addition of “due to the walkout” to that bullet.

Prof. Hambricht stated that using only the bullet points would be more effective and garner more interest in terms of showing support for Oklahoma teachers, although he acknowledged the work the committee did in preparing the statement. Prof. Hambricht made a motion that only the five bulleted points be used for the Faculty Senate’s statement. Prof. Hobson seconded that motion. Prof. Keppel said that agreed with the idea in principle, but suggested separating the bulleted points from the other material, with the bullets being the statement and the remaining material attached as background. Prof. Natale agreed that the Senate should somehow include the background material, but not make it a part of the full statement. Prof. Schmeltzer said that he understands the reasoning to make the statement short, he would not like the background material to get lost. He suggested a transition that would allow the background to be included. The Senate voted then against the initial motion to cut everything after the bullets. Prof. Schmeltzer then made and Prof. Natale seconded a motion to make a transition with everything after the bulleted points listed as “our rationale.”

Prof. Heyck suggested that under item 4, we remove the description after the highlighted point, as feeding children distracts from the emphasis on education. Prof. Demir said that the committee left this bullet open-ended since they were not aware of all the resources available in the community and on campus for support of parents and children. Prof. Bradshaw provided a list of resources at to support students and parents during the walkout. Prof. Ashby suggested eliminating the original item 4 and create a replacement item 4 of “Here are some resources available to the community.” Prof. Hambricht suggested removing item 4 completely and listing the links without numbering them. Prof. Elwood Madden suggested making this statement an additional bullet in the list of five bulleted points at the beginning of the document. The Senate voted to approve Prof. Elwood Madden’s suggestion.

Prof. Golomb suggested in the fourth bulleted point changing “supports the choices” to “supports the peaceful choices,” as she said some choices that could be made by OU community members might not be supported by the students. Prof. Burke suggested changing it to “walkout choices,” but several senators felt that was too limiting. Prof. Lifset said that in the bullet points it does not ever really say that the Senate supports the teacher walkout. Prof. Hall said that he is concerned that if we put “walkout” in the statement, we could be encouraging faculty to walk out and since this is not binding on

OU, this could result in negative repercussions to faculty, staff, or students. Prof. Golomb moved to remove the fourth bulleted point, and this was seconded by Prof. Heyck. The senate did not pass this motion.

Prof. Miller made a motion to change the wording of the introduction to the bulleted points to "The Faculty Senate of the University of Oklahoma Norman Campus would like to make it clear to the people of Oklahoma, and the Governor, and Legislators of the state of Oklahoma strongly support:". There was discussion about how this would affect the wording and meaning of the last two bulleted points. This motion did not pass the Senate.

Prof. Ashby requested that item 3 define who "our choices" refers to and asked who we are stating made the choices. Prof. Nelson suggested changing item 3 to "our collective choices" and Prof. Ashby agreed to that. Prof. Golomb seconded the change, but it was not approved by the Senate. Prof. Bradley then made a motion seconded by Prof. Natale to change it to "our state's choices" and this wording was approved by the Senate. Prof. Schmeltzer moved to then change the wording at the end of the sentence from "in this state" to "in Oklahoma." This motion passed the Senate.

Prof. Miller asked to whom this statement is addressed. Prof. Sarah Ellis said that the statement has several audiences. Prof. Natale then suggested changing the beginning of the next sentence to "the state of Oklahoma has" and that the following sentence should change from "As a community" to "As Oklahomans." The Senate voted to approve these changes.

Prof. Davidson suggested changing the new final bullet to "Calls" from "we call," which was approved. Prof. Burns suggested in item 3 striking the sentence "Cuts to education undermine Oklahoma's economy, both today and tomorrow" and replacing it with "As an abundance of research has shown, cuts to education undermine a state's economy in the immediate- and longer-term." The Senate approved this change.

Prof. Golomb suggested changing the beginning of the next sentence from "Businesses" to "Some businesses" and Prof. Miller stated that item 3 is very lengthy. Prof. Schmeltzer asked if we can cite the businesses that are refusing to move to Oklahoma. Prof. Elwood Madden said that is based on a statement from Gov. Mary Fallin. The Senate approved these changes.

Prof. Bradshaw suggested that the wording at the bottom of the statement before the list of links to resources be changed to "Here are some resources available to the OU community related to a pending walkout."

Prof. Bradley suggested approving the full document as amended. The Senate approved this motion. The final approved version of the Faculty Senate Statement on the Oklahoma Teacher Walkout is attached.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:22 p.m. The next regular session of the Faculty Senate will be held at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, April 9, 2018, in Jacobson Faculty Hall, Room 102.


Stacey L. Bedgood, Administrative Coordinator


Joshua B. Nelson, Faculty Senate Secretary

FACULTY SENATE
The University of Oklahoma
Norman Campus

STATEMENT ON THE OKLAHOMA TEACHER WALKOUT

Approved March 26, 2018

The Faculty Senate at the University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus:

- Supports competitive salaries for Oklahoma public school teachers.
- Supports Oklahoma public school teachers voicing their concerns and expressing their needs in the ways they see appropriate.
- Supports and encourages individual and coordinated assistance for Oklahoma children and families adversely affected by school closings due to the walkout.
- Supports the choices by individual faculty, staff, and students at OU regarding whether and in what ways to support Oklahoma public school teachers and their cause.
- Encourages all units of the OU community to support employees' choices through any means feasible.
- Calls on the entire state to find the will to invest in our community, and support and restore funding for education to healthier levels.

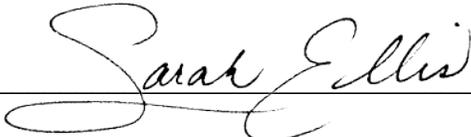
Our Rationale:

1. **We support teachers.** Public school teachers are essential to Oklahoma. They support the cognitive, emotional, academic, social, and civic development of the children and adolescents of our state. Regularly certified public school teachers are professionals who have undergone years of rigorous preparation in academic content, pedagogy, and field experiences. No state has disinvested more from public education over the last five years, and that does not reflect Oklahomans' high regard for teachers and public education.
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population by nearly 200,000 from an estimated 3.75 million in July 2010 to an estimated 3.93 million people in July 2017. Education matters, whether at the primary, secondary, or higher levels. The state's 25 colleges are engines of economic development in each of their communities throughout the state.

- 3. Funding education is a smart investment – and it is a choice. Our state's choices have undermined education in Oklahoma.** The state of Oklahoma has not taken a balanced approach to creating a responsible budget. As Oklahomans, we have failed to address the lack of revenue generation to support education and the other vital public services that benefit us all. Oklahoma public schools employ 4,900 fewer workers today compared to 2009 (a 5.3 percent decrease). Over that same time, enrollment in Oklahoma increased by nearly 48,000 students (7.4 percent). Cuts to education continued, even while the economy was improving after the recession. These choices substantially reduce access to quality education in our state. A quarter of school districts in Oklahoma have gone to a four-day school week. Many rural and inner-city schools face closures. Oklahoma is increasingly losing quality teachers to other states and other professions. A state department of education survey found 34% of respondents who left Oklahoma public education did so for better pay or opportunities. In fall 2016, nearly 53,000 students in Oklahoma were taught by teachers granted emergency certification. A high proportion of alternatively certified teachers fill teaching positions in elementary schools, where the focus is basic literacy and numeracy. Thus, Oklahoma's students are being set on a trajectory of substandard education that will have consequences for their future educational possibilities and the rest of their lives. Despite the high number of emergency certifications, there still were more than 800 unfilled teacher vacancies in schools across the state. As our state has chosen to cut funding, costs to students and their families have risen to the point that despite intelligence, drive, and determination, many young people will not have access to college. As an abundance of research has shown, cuts to education undermine a state's economy in the immediate- and longer-term. Some businesses are refusing to relocate here because their employees don't want to put their children in Oklahoma's schools. Underfunding education lowers the life-time earning potential of adults, reduces potential tax revenues, weakens home purchases, increases crime rates, and hurts the state economy for generations to come.

Here are some resources available in our community related to the pending walkout:
<http://facultysenate.ou.edu/SupportingTeachersAndCommunityDuringWalkout.pdf>.



Sarah Ellis
OU-NC Faculty Senate Chair, 2017-18