



Educational Policies Council

Meeting Minutes

Monday, 16 February 2026

[VIEW THE MEETING](#)

**Leadership present:** Chair Edward Dauterich; Secretaries Therese E. Tillett, Joanna Liedel, Jennifer S. Kellogg, Amy Nuesch, Christa N. Ord

**Administrators present:** Associate Provost Scott C. Sheridan; Deans Peggy Shadduck, Deborah F. Spake

**Faculty present:** Professors Luke Armour, Jen Cunningham, Robert D. Jewell, Karen L. Mascolo, Hyunjoo (Gerrey) Noh, Helen Piontkivska, Steven N. Rugare, J K. Vick; Associate Professors Brian R. Barber, Vanessa J. Earp, Bethany G. Lanese, Abe G. Osbourne, JD Ponder, Sue Wamsley; Assistant Professors Abdelhakim Al Turk, Tianyuan Guan, Jason Lorenzon, Janet M. Reed; Senior Lecturers Kingsly T. Berlin, Shelley K. Marshall; Lecturer Olivia B. Krise

**Guests:** Mandy Anderson, Andrew Barnes, Brenda Burke, Kelly Cichy, Alicia Crowe, Chris Dorsten, Keiran Dunne, Justin Edwards, Susan Emens, Miriam Matteson, Julie Mazzei, Liz Piatt, Amy Quillin, Dirk Remley, Jennifer Walton-Fisette, Deirdre Warren, Sharon Wohl, Sharon Wohl, Kathy Zarges, Cathy Zingrone, Melissa Zullo

Chair Dauterich called the meeting to order at 3:20p.m., on Monday, 16 February 2026, via Microsoft Teams.

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## **I. Approval of Minutes**

### **A. Meeting on 26 January 2026**

Associate Professor Armour made a motion to approve, and Professor Cunningham seconded the motion.

With no other comments or corrections, the minutes passed unanimously.

## **II. Presentations**

### **A. Federal financial aid changes related to the One Big Beautiful Bill**

[VIEW THE PRESENTATION](#)

Associate VP Brenda Burke provided an overview of the “One Big Beautiful Bill” (OB3) and its major impacts on federal financial aid. She explained the timeline from OB3’s passage on July 4 through negotiated rulemaking, notices of proposed rulemaking and implementation on July 1, noting the process is moving faster than normal due to budget reconciliation. She summarized

the work of two negotiated rulemaking committees—RISE (loan programs and definitions) and AHEAD (Pell and accountability)—and emphasized that many provisions remain subject to final regulations. Associate VP Burke outlined key FAFSA and Pell Grant changes already in effect for the 2026–2027 cycle, including revisions to Student Aid Index calculations and Pell eligibility limits, particularly restricting Pell awards when total aid exceeds cost of attendance. She also highlighted the creation of Workforce Pell for short-term programs, though implementation details are still pending and may be delayed due to state approval requirements. Associate VP Burke reviewed upcoming accountability measures that could cause programs to lose financial aid eligibility if earnings thresholds are not met and noted Kent State must finalize gainful employment reporting before these measures take effect. She also discussed significant federal loan changes, including the elimination of Graduate PLUS loans after July 1, new graduate and professional borrowing limits and a pending definition of “professional programs.” She explained grandfathering rules for currently enrolled students and introduced new loan proration requirements tied to enrollment status. Associate VP Burke concluded by noting additional OB3-related uncertainties affecting IRS data sharing and other benefit programs and announced a future presentation planned for March to provide program-level data and updates as federal guidance becomes available.

Secretary Tillett asked about the Financial Value Transparency initiative and its potential impact on programs whose graduates earn below federal thresholds. She noted that such programs could lose eligibility for federal financial aid and asked about the expected timeline for when institutions might begin facing these consequences.

Chair Dauterich said that is correct.

Secretary Tillett asked when institutions might be notified by the U.S. Department of Education that a specific program is no longer eligible for federal financial aid.

Associate VP Burke explained that prior to OB3 the timeline was a three-year window after programs met the qualification threshold. With affordability changes, the timeline may be shortened to two years, though she believes it will still effectively be about three years from the first data submission this July, placing potential determinations around 2029.

Secretary Tillett asked whether programs identified by the government as potentially ineligible for aid could regain eligibility if later reports show graduates earning higher wages, or whether the loss of aid would be permanent.

Associate VP Burke said the issue remains unclear, noting that the language has not yet been fully discussed or interpreted. She added that there appears to be an appeals process that may allow programs to reestablish eligibility for federal financial aid.

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Secretary Tillett noted that institutions may face conflicting pressures, with SB1 requiring the elimination of programs with fewer than five completers while federal policy could allow programs to continue but without eligibility for federal financial aid, which could effectively prevent the program from being offered.

Associate VP Burke confirmed that if a program lost federal aid eligibility, the institution could still offer it, but students would need to rely on institutional aid, employer partnerships or private loans rather than federal financial aid.

Secretary Tillett asked whether that would apply to both undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

Associate VP Burke confirmed that the policy would apply to certificates, degree programs and professional programs.

## **B. SB1-Simple Syllabus integration update**

### [VIEW THE PRESENTATION](#)

Associate Provost Sheridan reviewed the state SB1 requirement that all undergraduate course syllabi be publicly accessible and include the instructor's name, a general course calendar, required or recommended readings and the instructor's professional qualifications. He explained that the requirement begins in fall 2026, must be implemented by the first day of class and must be accessible without a login with a searchable public site. He reported that the university selected the Simple Syllabus system after an RFP process and completed a pilot in the College of Aeronautics and Engineering. The system integrates with Canvas or can be used through a separate portal, creates a public repository showing only required fields and maintains an internal archive useful for accreditation. Associate Provost Sheridan also outlined ongoing work on syllabus guidance, training and college representatives and noted that faculty and administrator training will begin in April ahead of full implementation in August 2026.

Professor Armour asked for clarification on the toggle switches, specifically whether "visible" and "private" have distinct meanings or implications.

Associate Provost clarified that "private" means content is available to students but not publicly accessible, while "visible" controls whether content appears at all. They confirmed that state-required syllabus statements will be automatically built into the system—for example, the religious accommodation statement will auto-populate with the official university text, allowing central updates without contacting faculty. Best-practice statements, such as guidance on student support services or accessibility resources, will also come pre-populated, with potential future customization for different campuses (e.g., Kent or Tuscarawas).

The system is designed to be flexible, with options to tailor content by program code. For instance, courses tagged for engineering (ENGR) could follow a specific accreditation format. Regional campuses and program-specific standards are being considered but have not yet been fully integrated. Images can be embedded in syllabi, and the system allows building syllabi in

ways similar to Canvas or traditional PDF formats, though it may require some adjustment for users.

Associate Provost Sheridan announced an upcoming town hall in approximately two weeks to present an overview of accessibility and the new RTP software and related updates for all faculty. He encouraged attendees to email any suggestions for content that might be helpful for a general faculty audience to ensure a successful rollout.

### **III. Policy Proposals Review**

#### **A. Action Items**

#### **GRADUATE POLICIES COUNCIL**

##### **1. Course Repeat—Revise policy for graduate students (*fall 2026*)**

##### **2. Grade Point Average (GPA) Adjustment**

[VIEW THE DISCUSSION](#)

Chair Liedel provided an overview of two new graduate-level policies: the Course Repeat Policy and the GPA Adjustment Policy. She explained that the policies are similar in purpose but apply in different scenarios. Institutional research data from summer 2019 to fall 2024 showed that graduate students rarely repeat courses, typically only when necessary to meet program requirements or raise GPA. For the Course Repeat Policy, graduate students may repeat a course once with the highest grade used in GPA calculations and all grades remain visible on the transcript. The process is automatic at the end of the semester and does not require student application. The GPA Adjustment Policy is only available for grades of C- or below, allows a maximum of three courses over a student's graduate career and requires an application with advisor or faculty review. It is intended for students who no longer need the course for degree requirements but want to improve their overall GPA. A real-life example illustrated how this policy could have helped a student pursuing dual degrees. Chair Liedel emphasized that these policies are designed to be student-focused, providing limited opportunities for students to improve outcomes due to life circumstances or initial struggles and noted that training and education will be needed to implement the policies effectively.

Associate Professor Earp made a motion to approve, and Professor Cunningham seconded.

Associate Provost Sheridan announced an upcoming town hall in approximately two weeks to present an overview of accessibility and the new RTP software and related updates for all faculty. He encouraged attendees to email any suggestions for content that might be helpful for a general faculty audience to ensure a successful rollout.

Assistant Professor Abdelhakim asked for clarification, confirming that the new policy allows a graduate student to repeat a course only once.

Chair Liedel said that is correct.

Assistant Professor Abdelhakim noted that many universities allow graduate students to repeat courses up to three times and questioned why the new policy limits repeats to only once.

Chair Liedel explained that while undergraduate students may repeat courses more than once, the committee determined that allowing graduate students to repeat a course only once is appropriate. Additional repeats would require special permission due to financial aid limitations, and the committee felt this policy is sufficient for graduate students.

Assistant Professor Abdelhakim asked if it is based on statistics.

Associate Dean Zullo explained that the policy was initially drafted to allow two repeat attempts but was revised to one repeat due to concerns about diluting the curriculum and giving students too many opportunities to retake courses containing essential concepts. She noted that the policy still provides students with at least one chance to repeat a course, and exceptions are possible.

Assistant Professor Abdelhakim noted that many graduate students are international and may lack prerequisites and suggested that allowing only one repeat may not be sufficient, proposing that two repeats could be more appropriate.

Associate Professor Zullo explained that is where an exception can be submitted.

Associate Professor Ponder asked if there is a limit on the number of courses a grad student can repeat.

Chair Liedel replied that there is no limit. A graduate student could repeat a course multiple times.

With no further comments or questions, the Course Repeat policy revisions passed with 22 yeas and two nays.

Associate Dean Wohl questioned why the policy is framed in terms of the number of courses rather than credits, noting that courses vary in credit hours and some programs have students taking large credit loads in a semester. She asked how the limit of three courses was determined and whether a credit-based approach might be more appropriate.

Secretary Tillett explained that when the Undergraduate Policies Council established the GPA Adjustment Policy, they considered using credit hours versus courses. They ultimately chose courses because it is a single, whole unit that is easier to explain and process, avoiding confusion from varying course credit hours. Counting courses provides a clear limit for students and administrators, making the policy simpler to implement. She added that during the 15-day comment period, some feedback indicated that three courses for a 30-credit hour degree might already be the maximum some felt comfortable with, and they would not want to allow more than that.

Associate Dean Wohl noted that in programs like the three-year, 101-credit hour architecture master's, limiting GPA adjustments to three courses can create an imbalance if a student has a poor semester or year. She expressed concern that this restricts opportunities for students to recover or pursue another program at Kent State and suggested more flexibility or a range might be beneficial.

With no further comments or questions, the GPA Adjustment policy revisions passed with 20 yeas and two nays.

## **UNDERGRADUATE POLICIES COUNCIL**

### **3. Graduation—Revise policy (*fall 2026*)**

[VIEW THE DISCUSSION](#)

Chair Liedel explained that while the policy falls under the Undergraduate Policies Council, graduation affects all students, so the Graduate Policies Council is also involved. Updates to the graduation policy were made to remove references to the paper late graduation application, as the online application now allows submissions to remain open, simplifying the process for students and administrative units. These revisions will take effect for the 2026 policy.

Professor Armour made a motion to approve, and Professor Cunningham seconded.

With no questions or comments, the item passed unanimously.

## **DIVISION OF STUDENT LIFE**

### **4. Class Attendance and Class Absence and 3-01.2 Administrative Policy Regarding Class Attendance and Class Absence—Revise policy**

[VIEW THE DISCUSSION](#)

Ombuds Quillin presented the proposed revisions to the class attendance policy. The revisions aim to provide clearer expectations for students regarding attendance and documentation for both in-person and online classes. The policy clarifies faculty authority to address excessive absences, allows flexibility for unexcused absences and consolidates the list of university-recognized excused absences. It also provides guidance on documentation for medical illnesses or injuries, outlines the role of SAS in accommodations and incorporates provisions for College Credit Plus students with high school-related absences.

Professor Piontkivska made a motion to approve, and Professor Cunningham seconded the motion.

Assistant Professor Lorenzon asked whether the new class attendance policy would affect his course requirement that students attend at least 80% of classes, noting that he follows ABA guidelines and that failing to meet this threshold currently results in an F grade. He expressed concern about how the revised policy might impact his ability to enforce this requirement. Ombuds Quillin clarified that the new class attendance policy sets the standard, but faculty may still discuss concerns with individual students if absences, such as 20%, are significantly impacting their ability to succeed in the class.

Assistant Professor Lorenzon asked whether a student receiving an F for attending less than 80% of classes would be flagged or appear to administrators and inquired how such cases would be handled under the new policy.

Ombuds Quillin stated that they would refer students to the policy and do not intervene directly. They noted potential challenges if absences exceeding 20% significantly affect a student's success, especially in cases involving accommodations, and suggested that such situations may require consultation with legal or policy experts.

Assistant Professor Lorenzon noted that attendance and grading issues have arisen in his role as chair of the Student Complaint Committee, including cases where students fail despite attending all classes. He highlighted that the university's attendance policy is somewhat disjointed and difficult to locate but emphasized that ultimately enforcement is at the discretion of the individual professor.

Ombuds Quillin replied that was generally the case.

Secretary Tillett clarified that Kent State University does not have a university-wide attendance policy, and attendance taking is separate from federal verification requirements for financial aid. She noted that grading and attendance remain at the faculty's discretion and asked for confirmation that the new class attendance policy does not prohibit faculty from deducting points or assigning an F for excessive absences as stated in their syllabus.

Ombuds Quillin clarified that the policy allows excused absences with proper documentation without imposing a penalty on the student.

Associate Professor Wamsley asked whether it is acceptable for a student to miss a large portion of class, such as 60%, even with excused absences. She noted concerns about how excessive absences affect participation grades in face-to-face classes and suggested alternative assignments could be used to address participation requirements.

Ombuds Quillin explained that the policy allows faculty to provide reasonable academic support after an absence but does not require reopening activities if it would compromise essential course objectives. Faculty are encouraged to discuss with students when the number of absences, even excused ones, may impact their ability to succeed. The threshold for detrimental absences varies by class, with courses that build sequentially such as labs, language or math being more affected. Alternative equivalent activities may be offered when appropriate.

Here's a concise meeting minutes summary of Associate Professor Wamsley's comment: Associate Professor Wamsley noted that defining student success can be challenging, especially in non-lab courses. She highlighted that in-class dynamics and participation can be important to a student's education, making it more complex than simply passing tests.

Ombuds Quillin suggested that faculty clarify in their syllabi what constitutes success in the class, which may include attendance, completing readings, or participation. She noted that explicitly stating these expectations can help students understand how to succeed.

Associate Professor Ponder raised concerns about the phrase “as soon as possible” for notifying faculty of excused absences, noting that interpretations vary widely between students and faculty. He explained that in cases where a student misses a significant portion of class, faculty may need to engage the student through emails, early alerts or outreach. He asked how the SF grading policy interacts with the attendance policy when students stop attending and do not respond.

Ombuds Quillin noted that the SF policy could apply if a student has excessive absences, but the timing and criteria for issuing an SF may vary. She explained that issuing an SF can alert students to the situation and prompt them to provide documentation or explanations. The decision depends on the course, the work missed, and the student’s ability to make up the work.

With no further questions or comments, the item passed with 18 yeas, one nay and one abstention.

#### **IV. Program Proposals Review**

##### **A. Action Items**

#### **COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

##### **School of Multidisciplinary Social Sciences and Humanities**

#### **1. International Studies – Minor—Establish program (*fall 2026*)**

##### [VIEW THE DISCUSSION](#)

Professor Barnes explained the rationale and development of a proposed minor in International Studies. The minor was initiated in response to student interest and feedback, including survey results from Peace and Conflict Studies majors showing strong support. The minor aims to provide students with a formal credential in international studies without requiring additional resources or pulling students from other programs. It is designed to complement existing majors by offering a structured set of core and elective courses focused on international challenges and agency, with electives selected based on consistent enrollment and relevance.

Professor Piontkivska made a motion to approve, and Associate Professor Barber seconded.

With no questions or comments, the item passed unanimously.

With no further questions or comments, Chair Dauterich concluded the meeting at 5:27pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Christa N. Ord*

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Operations and Special Projects Coordinator, Curriculum Services

Office of the Provost