

Agendum
Oakland University
Board of Trustees Formal Session
August 13, 2026

**ADOPTION OF THE NAME CHANGE FROM ACTING, B.F.A. TO ACTING FOR
STAGE AND SCREEN, B.F.A.**

A Recommendation

1. **Division and Department:** Academic Affairs, the College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Theatre, School of Music, Theatre and Dance.

2. **Introduction:** The College of Arts and Sciences is requesting to change from Acting, B.F.A. to Acting for Stage and Screen, B.F.A. This is to improve alignment with current industry norms.

3. **Previous Board Action:** None.

4. **Budget Implications:** None.

5. **Educational Implications:** The name change will allow students to have a degree that is consistent with current industry norms.

6. **Personnel Implications:** The name change does not affect or impact staff or faculty.

7. **University Reviews / Approvals:** Unanimously approved by the College of Arts and Sciences on October 13, 2025; Unanimously approved by the University Senate on April 16, 2026.

8. **Recommendation:**

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees authorizes the change in the program and degree title from Acting, B.F.A. to Acting for Stage and Screen, B.F.A.

**Adoption of the Name Change from Acting, B.F.A. to Acting for Stage and Screen,
B.F.A.
Oakland University
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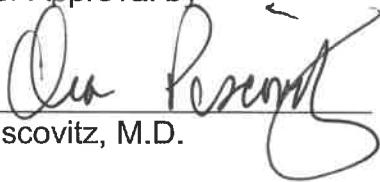
9. **Attachments:** Approved Senate Minutes from April 16, 2026.

Submitted to the President
on August 3, 2026 by



Amy Thompson, Ph.D., FESG, CHES
Executive Vice President for
Academic Affairs and Provost

Recommended on 8/4, 2026
to the Board for Approval by



Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D.
President

Reviewed by



Joshua D. Merchant, Ph.D.
Chief of Staff and
Secretary to the Board of Trustees

Senate minutes

April 16, 2026

Members present: *Al-shabrawey, Aloï, Arena, Ausloos, Ball, Bartley, Battles, blumer-Schuette, Carpenter, Carver, Chamra, Chapman, Coleman, Craig, Debnath, Demsky, DeVore, Dinda, Dunn, Dwyer, Edrisinha, Govind, Grace, Guessous, Guest, Hartmus, Hoag, Hodge, Kattner, Kauric-Klein, Kies, Knox, Landis-Piwowar, Landolt, Margerum-Leys, Mathew, Matthews, Miller, Mitton, Nielsen, Olawoyin, Ostergaard, Pierce, Piscotty, Pratt, Rawashdeh, Rohn, Shesko, Seidel, Thompson, Tilashalski, VanLoon, Wasserman, Wendell, Westergaard, Williams, Youngquist*

Members absent: *Boruff-Jones, Hansen, Hosch, Jamieson, Lasecki, Lewis, McCulloch, Merchant*

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

Motion to establish a new Doctor of Education (Ed.D)

Motion approved to establish a new online B.A. in Strategic Communication

Motion to establish a new B.S. in Engineering Technology

Motion approved to have a May 7, 2026 Senate meeting

Provost Amy Thompson called the meeting to order at 3:10 P.M. She then introduced President Ora Pescovitz who was present to make remarks.

President Pescovitz began by mentioning the success of the men's swimming team, and noted that there was a midnight breakfast coming up for students and invited anyone to come help with that.

She expressed how much she appreciated the work of the Senate, as the year comes to an end. She said it has been a special year because of all the achievements through teaching, scholarship and service, including community engagement. She expressed her enthusiasm for the upcoming commencement which she said is for her a favorite time of the year. She acknowledged Provost Thompson for the excellent retention team work that has been done. Also, she said she is encouraged by the reduced credit programs which are innovative

programs, and she asserted that these will make a difference in enrollments, and how the world looks at OU. She said these strengthen accessibility and affordability, and strengthens our reputation. She said this year the culture survey pointed out good things about the university, but there also are areas for improvement. She reminded Senators about the heating and water problem that occurred earlier this year which was a difficult situation. She noted there are significant federal challenges which present concerns about the state's budget. She said there is no proposal for OU to get an increase in support at all, adding that the current support from the legislature was zero last year and the year before, too. She observed that this is why enrollments and retention have to be at the top of OU's priorities because we cannot depend on the state. But on the plus side, she said the sense of community that exists at OU is unique and is what makes us in an enviable situation because it makes it easier to face the challenges. Her message was one of gratitude and thanks, and appreciation for everything everyone does individually and collectively at the university.

A. INFORMATION ITEMS

Provost's Updates: Provost Thompson reminded Senators that graduation is coming up. She congratulated all the graduating students. She congratulated Dean Kevin Ball for his upcoming retirement. She also wanted to acknowledge the Senate Steering Committee for their commitment, attending long meetings, and doing hard work throughout the year. Also, she said there is a recording of the State of Academic Affairs which will be accessible as of Tuesday next week. She noted that areas were covered of student and faculty success, such as OU moving to an R-1 designation, and modernizing and aligning the academic enterprise. She said these will be a mantra that she talks about in the future. She added that another piece of good news is that there is an excellent plan for retention in the future, and if we look at where we are now at 65% which is lower than last year, on the other hand we are up from where we were a year ago which is a win. She thanked everyone present for all that they do at the university.

She then provided an opportunity for Senators to comment on the following Graduate and Undergraduate submissions, as well as the combined submissions. There were no questions. They were as follows:

1.2. Graduate School Curriculum Submissions

1.2.1. Energy Engineering, MS, graduate program

modification, to 1) Rename Foundation courses to Theory courses and add math, statistics and optimization courses to the list of theory courses, 2) Remove the “Thermal-fluid Science and Engineering” depth area as it overlaps with a concentration in the MS Mechanical Engineering program, 3) Broaden the “Renewable Energy” depth area to “Conventional and Renewable Energy”, 4) Reorganize the "required" and "elective" courses within each depth area, 5) Expand the list of Engineering Electives to provide more options to students, Department of Mechanical Engineering, School of Engineering and Computer Science (Laila Guessous)

1.2.2. Master of Business Administration/Master of Science in

Safety Management Dual Program, modification for a dual degree program to provide students in either the MBA or MSSM program the option to obtain two master’s degrees in approximately 3 years and prepare graduates for careers in private, public or non-profit organizations by integrating global understanding and business fundamentals that are key for manager success as they pursue increased responsibilities and an expanded leadership role, Departments of Management & Public and Environmental Wellness, School of Business Administration & School of Health Sciences (Paul Trumbull, Darryl Hill)

1.2.3. New Graduate Course Approval for Areas without

Graduate Degree policy revision - to change the name of the policy to Graduate Coursework Not Part of a Graduate Degree, remove outdated language, to update the course numbering level to our current 4 digit framework, and to allow for any graduate level courses 5000 or above. These changes are appropriate given the growth of interdisciplinary coursework whereby a department may have expertise in a particular area from which graduate-level coursework is needed but may not have a graduate program. Additionally, the provision that such courses be

reported annually to the Graduate Council is removed as it is not how course enrollment is now monitored at Oakland. The provision about purging courses from the Catalog is removed as there is a standard practice for all courses at Oakland;; Graduate Council (Brandy Randall)

1.2.4. **Graduate Certificates, Graduate School policy revision**, to remove outdated language, to remove the provision that certificates must be associated with a graduate degree program and comprised primarily of courses present in the degree curriculum. Additionally, redundant language has been removed and clarifications have been added. This streamlines and shortens the policy. The limit of one ungraded course has been removed, and replaced with the provision that at least one Oakland University course must be taken for a letter grade to ensure that students have a GPA; Graduate Council (Brandy Randall)

1.2.5. **Secondary Education with Special Education, MAT, graduate program modification and name change** to MAT in Special Education K-12 to more accurately reflect the certification to teach special education grades K-12 that students earn through the program; the current name resulted from an experimental approach that had been allowed by the state. The revision also modifies the distribution of credits related to student teaching, Department of Human Development and Child Studies, School of Education and Human Services (Erica Ruegg, Audra Slocum)

1.2.6. **Clinical Nurse Leader, MSN, suspended the degree program in Fall 2025 and then end a graduate degree in Fall 2026**, due to low enrollment and low regional and national market demand, Department of Nursing, School of Nursing (Carrie Buch)

1.3. Undergraduate Curriculum Submissions

1.3.1. **Chinese Studies, B.A., modification** to (1) add elective choices; (2) reduce credits from 44 to 40 to accommodate student needs and meet new requirements, reducing curriculum accordingly; Department of International Studies Program, College of Arts and Sciences (Liz Shesko)

1.3.2. **Japanese Studies, B.A., modification** to (1) add elective choices; (2) reduce credits from 44 to 40 to accommodate student needs and meet new requirements, reducing curriculum accordingly; Department of International Studies Program, College of Arts and Sciences (Liz Shesko)

1.3.3. **Latin American Studies, B.A., modification** to (1) add elective choices; (2) reduce credits from 44 to 40 to accommodate student needs and meet new requirements, reducing curriculum accordingly; Department of International Studies Program, College of Arts and Sciences (Liz Shesko)

1.3.4. **Criminal Justice, B.A., Concentration in Information Security and Assurance, modification** to (1) change the Major Dependent Concentration name to Cybersecurity, due to a change in name to a minor offered by the School of Business, they changed the name to Cybersecurity Analytics and Management to keep up with the growing professional field; (2) and due to the SBA modifying the courses in this minor, it modified the courses in the major dependent concentration; Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work and Criminal Justice, College of Arts and Sciences (Jo Reger)

1.3.5. **Communication, B.A., modification to the modality**, offering Partially Online (where 50% or more of the courses can be completed online) to this program; The Department of Communication, Journalism and Public Relations, The College of Arts and Sciences (Kathy Battles)

1.3.6. **Acting, B.F.A., modification to (1) rename the program Acting for Stage and Screen, B.F.A., (2) revise the program**, with changes will focus on new courses, new requirements and a clearer pedagogical path for students to follow, offering acting majors a more robust acting training program that will prepare them not only for the theatre, but for various digital and 'screen' mediums; Department of Theatre, School of Music, Theatre and Dance, College of Arts and Sciences (Jeremy Barnett, David Gram)

1.3.7. **Human Resource Development, B.S., modification** to reduce the number of major credits from 68 to 60, the total number of the degree

requirements remains 120 credits. Department of Organizational Leadership, School of Education and Human Services (Bill Solomonson)

1.4. Combined Graduate School and Undergraduate Curriculum Submissions

1.4.1. Accounting, Combined B.S./MAcc, combined degree program modification proposal to change the modality adding partially online (half or more of the program courses are delivered online), Department of Accounting and Finance, School of Business Administration (Liang Fu)

1.5. AI Institute and Data Centers (Steve Mackey) presenting online

Mr. Mackey was online to provide an update. He said they have made a pivot and are engaging in a different way now. He informed Senators that they have had meetings with various entities, including the Town Hall, and with faculty groups. Hid committee has assessed computing needs, and identified potential industry partnerships so that they can reach out later. They continue to do the feasibility work. He said DTE is conforming power, and Fiber and ISP is being evaluated. Also, they are working on the site location of P-35 so the team has been looking at additional sites. He noted that they looked at five sites, of which one is feasible besides P-35. He discussed the pros and cons of P35 which is still a feasible site in spite of the cons. The alternative site is P37 adjacent. A good site because it is very close to the substation, close to the power source; it is not directly adjacent to the Heritage site; it's close to Squirrel Road; the site has been kind of a landfill for years, it is the most cost-effective site. The cons include that it is farther for heat offtake, it will require regrading. They are committed to not reducing green space. They have proposed re-greening part of P37 and SPRC asked instead 'rewild' it, by letting it do what nature does. Lastly, events that are held in P37 can be held in P1 in the future. He said the next steps. CDEC and SPRC are asked to make their site recommendations by April 22. They want to complete faculty interviews. In June there will be a virtual campus project update and they will conclude the feasibility phase and make a presentation to

the BOT. He then invited questions. Q: Will there be a second Town Hall so everyone including students can attend. A: Unfortunately, there will not be another Town Hall. Q: The powerpoint was not in the documents for the agenda, and could it be put on the Senate site? A: Yes, we will do that. Q: It seems they are inching forwards to having a site plan, and when will there be Town Halls about the site, and when will they provide graphics to show what is projected? A: At this point, there isn't a real site that has been selected, and they are not yet recommending that the project will go forward. If the BOT approves going forward, then that is when they start doing all the environmental impact work. They can't provide more information about that at this time. Q: Why not wait until the Fall semester? This seems designed to avoid student input. A: They are trying to be transparent and are not trying to avoid student input. This is the feasibility stage and they are not done engaging with the community.

1.6. Affordable Course Materials Initiative (ACMI): Introducing Z-majors (Julia Rodriguez) presenting in person

Julia Rodriguez gave a brief history of the ACMI, which is to promote student success with affordable materials and encourage faculty to use them. She gave updates on specific successes with the stipend program and big savings to students, noting that 28 courses have been converted. Also, the hard copy reserve textbooks in the library have grown in the library. She reminded everyone that OER are free of cost and have built in permission to retain, reuse, revise and remix the material. She said this saves students significant money and can augment and update content for faculty. All students can have their books on the first day of class, by not waiting to get the money. No-cost and low-cost materials were added as attributes by the registrar. Low-cost is \$50 or under. Next step would be a Z-degree pathway through an entire degree. Minnesota State colleges, for example, as 12 Z-degrees. We need enough Gen Ed courses at zero cost. The Sociology dept is the first to offer a Z-major at OU. She said this is the first Z-cost major in Michigan. She said it is important to let the bookstore know what you are doing with regards to textbooks. She added that ACMI is accepting

stipend applications for low and no-cost projects, as well as department grants. The Provost applauded this initiative.

1.7. Senate Mental Health Committee Update (Terry Dibble) - presenting in person

Terry Dibble provided an update on what the Committee has done. They have had meetings and reached out to numerous groups. In the future, they want to initiate a social media campaign as well as the Jed project. He said they want to reduce the amount of time students spend on social media because spending less time increases mental health.

1.8. Closing the ESL Program (Adem Althor) document provided; not formally presented

1.9. New Senate Ad Hoc Definition Committee (AmyThompson)

Provost Thompson stated that the purpose is to provide definitions of College versus School. She asserted that requests for an entity to move forward from being a School to becoming a College would need to be preceded by definitions of what a College is, and what a School is. What would the structure be, for example. Also, there could be an effect on the AAUP contract. This is why they decided to create an AdHoc committee. Ms. Demsky requested that those on the committee should very experienced with the contract and best practices so they do not run into any of the issues that could be problematic. Mr. Govind asked if this would also change the definition of Department also, because this could have a broader application. Provost Thompson agreed this has to be done in contact with the AAUP. Mr. Dinda talked about their efforts to be a Big D department in Health Sciences, but they were shut down. He said they were told it had to be the Provost's office that decides, so he wanted to know what is the procedure here? He was told it is up to OU, and he said this needs to be discussed, too. Mr. Mitton said that the contract reflects descriptions of how departments and Schools are set up whether the department is a 'Big D' or 'little d' department, how it is funded and how it works. He said this would have to go through shared

governance, and he added that it is good to have a committee that defines the issues. Mr. Dinda said the definitions of Big D and little d do not fit because Health Sciences have more faculty as a little d than some departments have a big d designation.

1.10. Update the Senate Committee (Co)Chairs for the Senate Record - Amy Banes-Berceli
AI Committee

Alcia Freeman (SEHS) Co-Chair

There were no comments.

Provost Thompson moved on to the approval of the minutes.

B. Approval of Minutes from March 19, 2026

The motion was made to approve the minutes of March 19, 2026. (Guessous, Craig), with the correction of a name in the body of the minutes. The motion was approved. (49 yes, 0 no)

C. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

D. NEW BUSINESS

4.1. **SUBSTANTIVE MOTION** from the Graduate Council to establish a new Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Applied Early Childhood Practice and Policy to begin Fall 2026 to (1) meet the need for advanced training catering to scholar-practitioners with strong foundational knowledge in early childhood systems and theories, (2) meet the need for a more rigorous research mentor/apprenticeship for OU's Ph.D. students, (3) satisfy the minimum enrollment requirement (four students per doctorate-level course), and provide prospective students an alternative to the current research-based doctorate (Ph.D.) in Early Childhood Education. Department of Human Development and Child Studies, School of Education and Human Services (Tomoko Wakabyashi) presenting virtually

MOVED *that the Senate approve the Graduate Council recommendation to establish a new Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Applied Early Childhood Practice and Policy to begin Fall 2026. (Seidel, Battles)*

Tomoko Wakabayashi (department chair) presented from Applied Childhood development. She said they did a survey and learned that a vast majority of those surveyed supported a need for a scholar-practitioner doctorate (EdD). She explained the goals and objectives of the program, that it will be an alternative to the existing research-heavy Ph.D. Program. She said the attraction is that it would appeal to the two major groups of students. She noted that they didn't find anything specific to EdD in Michigan. Nationally, they found some programs, such as Teachers College at Columbia University. She summarized the course requirements as a 3-year program. Dean Margerum-Leys thanked her for her work. He said it is a very useful design, and it can be launched with the existing faculty. So the cost to the university to try this is minimal, and it will further the progress to the R-1 designation. He said he is strongly in favor of the proposal. Ms. Guessous asked how this will affect their Ph.D. Program. Ms. Wakabayashi said it won't affect it because some students want the practical work and do not necessarily want to be in the research field. Mr. Margerum-Leys said he thinks the new proposal improves student options by having both authentic programs.

4.2. **SUBSTANTIVE MOTION** from the University Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum to establish a new, online Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Strategic Communication to begin Fall 2026 designed by leveraging the research expertise of our Communication, Journalism, and Public Relations faculty and integrating coursework primarily from three undergraduate programs (COM, JMS, and PR [plus additional elective courses from WRT]), this innovative major creates a dynamic, interconnected learning environment that bridges classroom theory with real-world application. The interdisciplinary curriculum—merging public relations, advertising, media studies, and communication—equips students with a comprehensive skill set in strategic analysis, ethical communication, and practical

execution. This program positions graduates for success in the ever-evolving landscape of strategic communication, effectively addressing both local and broader market needs; Department of Communication, Journalism, and Public Relations, College of Arts and Sciences (Robert Sidelinger, Kathy Battles)

MOVED *that the Senate approve the new, online Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Strategic Communication to begin Fall 2026. (Seidel, Youngquist)*

Ms. Battles presented a summary of the goals and objectives. She said they have done a market analysis. Job titles include social media manager, research analyst, communications officer, and public affairs specialist. There is a high demand for these professionals, and an active market in Detroit area as well as elsewhere in Michigan. She said the goal is to provide a flexible online format for working professionals and returning students. There will be a focus on diversity and cultural competency. It will be industry-aligned capstone and experiential learning. This would be the only online program in Michigan. She added that the curriculum is interdisciplinary. The courses will work on delivering professional content in a variety of ways across numerous platforms. They already have a number of online courses that can be used to support this program. Ms. Landolt asked if this will address AI usage? Ms. Battles replied that they do not specifically include AI in their proposals, but there would be practice with AI. It would be impossible not to engage with AI and its impact on the media. Mr. Hodges asked how large are the current in-person programs, and how would this affect those class sizes. Ms. Battles answered that they have 340 students in the department. She doesn't see it as a threat to their ability to teach in-person classes.

There was a motion to move to second reading: *(Youngquist, Tilahashi)*

Motion passed. (37 yes, 10 no)

The vote was then taken on the original motion.

Original motion passed. (44 yes, 4 no)

4.3. **SUBSTANTIVE MOTION** from the University Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum to establish a new Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology designed for the purpose of supporting transfer students, adult learners and traditional students seeking an applied, technical focused program in the engineering field that addresses documented state and regional workforce demand, aligns with Oakland's mission to provide accessible, high-quality, and workforce-responsive education, and offers a 90 credit program structure. The start date of this new program will be determined after HLC approval (minimum 18 months) which follows Board of Trustees approval; Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, School of Engineering and Computer Science (Asaad Makki, Vijitashwa Pandey) presenting in person

MOVED *that the Senate approve the new Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology degree program.* (Guessous, Seidel)

Mr. Maaki presented the proposal. He said it is the first designed to meet a specific regional workplace demand. He asserted that there is a high demand in automation and PLC systems, robotics and mechatronics, instrumentation and controls, and data-enabled manufacturing, and a shortage in the workforce. They will target students who are community college transfers, veterans, adult learners to upskill them in their work, and target also first generation students. He noted that there are comparable programs across the state and in the nation. The biggest difference is that they are organizing the program in a more efficient way that takes into account those competencies that employers actually need and that accreditation agencies require. He said that it will be a streamlined and transfer-friendly curriculum. He explained the curriculum structure. He said the program is financially sustainable. He noted that it is a reduced-credit program but there is quality assurance, with the same Gen Ed requirements, same assessment and

ABET alignment. He noted that HLC approval will be required prior to the program launch. Provost Thompson said this last point is important. Also, she noted that the same assessment procedure would be taking place as for any program. There were questions.

Q: Regarding the cost, why is there a loss at first, and then surpluses by the 5-year? A: The faculty hiring plan is the reason for the request of \$300,000. Also, labs would need to be upgraded for which they are also asking for money. They will use a phased approach. He added that they will not be hiring tenure-track, but rather Special Instructors who teach but do not do research. It is mainly an applied program and they do not need for them to do that much research because the program is hands-on experience labs. The workload will be 80% teaching and 20% service. Q: Ms. Aubry said she supports this program because it is the right program at the right time. She said there are hundreds of students who could choose this program, and also straight from high school in addition to adult learners. Q: Mr. Dinda asked about accreditation. Does this 90-degree program reduce the student population of the 120-credit programs? A: It is a safe engineering environment for students to complete an engineering degree. This program is very efficient but not for mechanical engineering students who are doing rigorous calculus and math requirements. This program doesn't have that requirement. It is a completely different path and will transform the students' abilities to start a job at a higher salary. Q: A student noted that this program will save students a huge amount of tuition dollars and will make a university degree accessible to some students. Q: Mr. Fails asked about the accreditation. Ms. Guessous pointed out a big difference between an engineering degree and an engineering technology degree. She said that the faculty in the technology degree will not be teaching the courses. She said this program serves a different goal and a different population. She said there is room for both. Mr. Fails said the UAC had concerns and they would like to see how the program will address the issues they expressed. Ms. Landolt asked why there is a substitution out of a Gen Ed western civilization. Mr. Ball said that it seems the program is going to be offered in Macomb, so having a different location will keep the programs distinct. He added that it is a great program to establish there. Also, he

said the number one transfer group at OU is from Macomb so it is being put in the right location for this program.

Dean Chamra said he wants to start the clock and, and so he made the motion to proceed to second reading (Chamra, Seidel).

Mr. Wendell said it was a good presentation. However, he said that the Senate can meet in May and since this is a major step for the university, there is a lot to review for Senators. He argued against proceeding to second reading. Ms. Pollard re-iterated what Mr. Wendell said because she said this has big import. Ms. Guessous asked if this is approved today, does it change the timeline to go to the BOT. Provost Thompson answered that it would not.

The motion to move to second reading did not pass (12 yes, 37 no).

4.4. **PROCEDURAL MOTION** to approve and conduct a fully virtual University Senate Meeting on May 7, 2026 for the purpose of concluding unfinished business from this April 16, 2026 meeting and items on the attached agenda. (Guessous, Battles)

Motion was made by Ms. Hartmus for there to be a quorum at the May meeting. (Hartmus, Guessous)

Having a quorum in May would mean to suspend the rules, so there would be the requirement for a regular quorum.

The motion was approved. (38 yes, 8 no)

The original motion to have a meeting on May 7 was approved: (39 yes, 7 no)

Comment: Proposed May 7, 2026 agenda

E. GOOD AND WELFARE

It was announced that Greg Patterson in MTD is retiring from MTD and there will be a disco flash mob at 4:00 Saturday April 18, to which everyone was invited.

Ms. Gilson reminded everyone that there is a student-led data center Town Hall today at 5:30 until 8:30 in the fireplace area. Students have invited experts to come and answer questions.

F. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20.

Respectfully submitted,

Dikka Berven (Senate secretary)

4 Attachments • Scanned by Gmail

Senate minutes

April 16, 2026

Members present: *Al-shabrawey, Aloj, Arena, Ausloos, Ball, Bartley, Battles, blumer-Schuette, Carpenter, Carver, Chamra, Chapman, Coleman, Craig, Debnath, Demsky, DeVore, Dinda, Dunn, Dwyer, Edrisinha, Govind, Grace, Guessous, Guest, Hartmus, Hoag, Hodge, Kattner, Kauric-Klein, Kies, Knox, Landis-Piwowar, Landolt, Margerum-Leys, Mathew, Matthews, Miller, Mitton, Nielsen, Olawoyin, Ostergaard, Pierce, Piscotty, Pratt, Rawashdeh, Rohn, Shesko, Seidel, Thompson, Tilashalski, VanLoon, Wasserman, Wendell, Westergaard, Williams, Youngquist*

Members absent: *Boruff-Jones, Hansen, Hosch, Jamieson, Lasecki, Lewis, McCulloch, Merchant*

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the BOT. He then invited questions. Q: Will there be a second Town Hall so everyone including students can attend. A: Unfortunately, there will not be another Town Hall. Q: The powerpoint was not in the documents for the agenda, and could it be put on the Senate site? A: Yes, we will do that. Q: It seems they are inching forwards to having a site plan, and when will there be Town Halls about the site, and when will they provide graphics to show what is projected? A: At this point, there isn't a real site that has been selected, and they are not yet recommending that the project will go forward. If the BOT approves going forward, then that is when they start doing all the environmental impact work. They can't provide more information about that at this time. Q: Why not wait until the Fall semester? This seems designed to avoid student input. A: They are trying to be transparent and are not trying to avoid student input. This is the feasibility stage and they are not done engaging with the community.

1.6. Affordable Course Materials Initiative (ACMI): Introducing Z-majors (Julia Rodriguez) presenting in person

Julia Rodriguez gave a brief history of the ACMI, which is to promote student success with affordable materials and encourage faculty to use them. She gave updates on specific successes with the stipend program and big savings to students, noting that 28 courses have been converted. Also, the hard copy reserve textbooks in the library have grown in the library. She reminded everyone that OER are free of cost and have built in permission to retain, reuse, revise and remix the material. She said this saves students significant money and can augment and update content for faculty. All students can have their books on the first day of class, by not waiting to get the money. No-cost and low-cost materials were added as attributes by the registrar. Low-cost is \$50 or under. Next step would be a Z-degree pathway through an entire degree. Minnesota State colleges, for example, as 12 Z-degrees. We need enough Gen Ed courses at zero cost. The Sociology dept is the first to offer a Z-major at OU. She said this is the first Z-cost major in Michigan. She said it is important to let the bookstore know what you are doing with regards to textbooks. She added that ACMI is accepting

stipend applications for low and no-cost projects, as well as department grants. The Provost applauded this initiative.

1.7. Senate Mental Health Committee Update (Terry Dibble) - presenting in person

Terry Dibble provided an update on what the Committee has done. They have had meetings and reached out to numerous groups. In the future, they want to initiate a social media campaign as well as the Jed project. He said they want to reduce the amount of time students spend on social media because spending less time increases mental health.

1.8. Closing the ESL Program (Adem Althor) document provided; not formally presented

1.9. New Senate Ad Hoc Definition Committee (AmyThompson)

Provost Thompson stated that the purpose is to provide definitions of College versus School. She asserted that requests for an entity to move forward from being a School to becoming a College would need to be preceded by definitions of what a College is, and what a School is. What would the structure be, for example. Also, there could be an effect on the AAUP contract. This is why they decided to create an AdHoc committee. Ms. Demsky requested that those on the committee should very experienced with the contract and best practices so they do not run into any of the issues that could be problematic. Mr. Govind asked if this would also change the definition of Department also, because this could have a broader application. Provost Thompson agreed this has to be done in contact with the AAUP. Mr. Dinda talked about their efforts to be a Big D department in Health Sciences, but they were shut down. He said they were told it had to be the Provost's office that decides, so he wanted to know what is the procedure here? He was told it is up to OU, and he said this needs to be discussed, too. Mr. Mitton said that the contract reflects descriptions of how departments and Schools are set up whether the department is a 'Big D' or 'little d' department, how it is funded and how it works. He said this would have to go through shared

governance, and he added that it is good to have a committee that defines the issues. Mr. Dinda said the definitions of Big D and little d do not fit because Health Sciences have more faculty as a little d than some departments have a big d designation.

1.10. Update the Senate Committee (Co)Chairs for the Senate Record - Amy Banes-Berceli

AI Committee

Alcia Freeman (SEHS) Co-Chair

There were no comments.

Provost Thompson moved on to the approval of the minutes.

B. Approval of Minutes from March 19, 2026

The motion was made to approve the minutes of March 19, 2026. (Guessous, Craig), with the correction of a name in the body of the minutes. The motion was approved. (49 yes, 0 no)

C. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

D. NEW BUSINESS

4.1. SUBSTANTIVE MOTION from the Graduate Council to establish a new Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Applied Early Childhood Practice and Policy to begin Fall 2026 to (1) meet the need for advanced training catering to scholar-practitioners with strong foundational knowledge in early childhood systems and theories, (2) meet the need for a more rigorous research mentor/apprenticeship for OU's Ph.D. students, (3) satisfy the minimum enrollment requirement (four students per doctorate-level course), and provide prospective students an alternative to the current research-based doctorate (Ph.D.) in Early Childhood Education. Department of Human Development and Child Studies, School of Education and Human Services (Tomoko Wakabyashi) presenting virtually

MOVED *that the Senate approve the Graduate Council recommendation to establish a new Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Applied Early Childhood Practice and Policy to begin Fall 2026. (Seidel, Battles)*

Tomoko Wakabayashi (department chair) presented from Applied Childhood development. She said they did a survey and learned that a vast majority of those surveyed supported a need for a scholar-practitioner doctorate (EdD). She explained the goals and objectives of the program, that it will be an alternative to the existing research-heavy Ph.D. Program. She said the attraction is that it would appeal to the two major groups of students. She noted that they didn't find anything specific to EdD in Michigan. Nationally, they found some programs, such as Teachers College at Columbia University. She summarized the course requirements as a 3-year program. Dean Margerum-Leys thanked her for her work. He said it is a very useful design, and it can be launched with the existing faculty. So the cost to the university to try this is minimal, and it will further the progress to the R-1 designation. He said he is strongly in favor of the proposal. Ms. Guessous asked how this will affect their Ph.D. Program. Ms. Wakabayashi said it won't affect it because some students want the practical work and do not necessarily want to be in the research field. Mr. Margerum-Leys said he thinks the new proposal improves student options by having both authentic programs.

4.2. SUBSTANTIVE MOTION from the University Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum to establish a new, online Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Strategic Communication to begin Fall 2026 designed by leveraging the research expertise of our Communication, Journalism, and Public Relations faculty and integrating coursework primarily from three undergraduate programs (COM, JMS, and PR [plus additional elective courses from WRT]), this innovative major creates a dynamic, interconnected learning environment that bridges classroom theory with real-world application. The interdisciplinary curriculum—merging public relations, advertising, media studies, and communication—equips students with a comprehensive skill set in strategic analysis, ethical communication, and practical

execution. This program positions graduates for success in the ever-evolving landscape of strategic communication, effectively addressing both local and broader market needs; Department of Communication, Journalism, and Public Relations, College of Arts and Sciences (Robert Sidelinger, Kathy Battles)

MOVED *that the Senate approve the new, online Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Strategic Communication to begin Fall 2026. (Seidel, Youngquist)*

Ms. Battles presented a summary of the goals and objectives. She said they have done a market analysis. Job titles include social media manager, research analyst, communications officer, and public affairs specialist. There is a high demand for these professionals, and an active market in Detroit area as well as elsewhere in Michigan. She said the goal is to provide a flexible online format for working professionals and returning students. There will be a focus on diversity and cultural competency. It will be industry-aligned capstone and experiential learning. This would be the only online program in Michigan. She added that the curriculum is interdisciplinary. The courses will work on delivering professional content in a variety of ways across numerous platforms. They already have a number of online courses that can be used to support this program. Ms. Landolt asked if this will address AI usage? Ms. Battles replied that they do not specifically include AI in their proposals, but there would be practice with AI. It would be impossible not to engage with AI and its impact on the media. Mr. Hodges asked how large are the current in-person programs, and how would this affect those class sizes. Ms. Battles answered that they have 340 students in the department. She doesn't see it as a threat to their ability to teach in-person classes.

There was a motion to move to second reading: *(Youngquist, Tilahashi)*

Motion passed. (37 yes, 10 no)

The vote was then taken on the original motion.

Original motion passed. (44 yes, 4 no)

4.3. **SUBSTANTIVE MOTION** from the University Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum to establish a new Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology designed for the purpose of supporting transfer students, adult learners and traditional students seeking an applied, technical focused program in the engineering field that addresses documented state and regional workforce demand, aligns with Oakland's mission to provide accessible, high-quality, and workforce-responsive education, and offers a 90 credit program structure. The start date of this new program will be determined after HLC approval (minimum 18 months) which follows Board of Trustees approval; Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, School of Engineering and Computer Science (Asaad Makki, Vijitashwa Pandey) presenting in person

MOVED *that the Senate approve the new Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology degree program.* (Guessous, Seidel)

Mr. Maaki presented the proposal. He said it is the first designed to meet a specific regional workplace demand. He asserted that there is a high demand in automation and PLC systems, robotics and mechatronics, instrumentation and controls, and data-enabled manufacturing, and a shortage in the workforce. They will target students who are community college transfers, veterans, adult learners to upskill them in their work, and target also first generation students. He noted that there are comparable programs across the state and in the nation. The biggest difference is that they are organizing the program in a more efficient way that takes into account those competencies that employers actually need and that accreditation agencies require. He said that it will be a streamlined and transfer-friendly curriculum. He explained the curriculum structure. He said the program is financially sustainable. He noted that it is a reduced-credit program but there is quality assurance, with the same Gen Ed requirements, same assessment and

ABET alignment. He noted that HLC approval will be required prior to the program launch. Provost Thompson said this last point is important. Also, she noted that the same assessment procedure would be taking place as for any program. There were questions.

Q: Regarding the cost, why is there a loss at first, and then surpluses by the 5-year? A: The faculty hiring plan is the reason for the request of \$300,000. Also, labs would need to be upgraded for which they are also asking for money. They will use a phased approach. He added that they will not be hiring tenure-track, but rather Special Instructors who teach but do not do research. It is mainly an applied program and they do not need for them to do that much research

because the program is hands-on experience labs. The workload will be 80% teaching and 20% service. Q: Ms. Aubry said she supports this program because it is the right program at the right time. She said there are hundreds of students who could choose this program, and also straight from high school in addition to adult learners. Q: Mr. Dinda asked about accreditation. Does this 90-degree program reduce the student population of the 120-credit programs? A: It is a safe engineering environment for students to complete an engineering degree. This program is very efficient but not for mechanical engineering students who are doing rigorous calculus and math requirements. This program doesn't have that requirement. It is a completely different path and will transform the students' abilities to start a job at a higher salary. Q: A student noted that this program will save students a huge amount of tuition dollars and will make a university degree accessible to some students. Q: Mr. Fails asked about the accreditation. Ms. Guessous pointed out a big difference between an engineering degree and an engineering technology degree. She said that the faculty in the technology degree will not be teaching the courses. She said this program serves a different goal and a different population. She said there is room for both. Mr. Fails said the UAC had concerns and they would like to see how the program will address the issues they expressed. Ms. Landolt asked why there is a substitution out of a Gen Ed western civilization. Mr. Ball said that it seems the program is going to be offered in Macomb, so having a different location will keep the programs distinct. He added that it is a great program to establish there. Also, he

said the number one transfer group at OU is from Macomb so it is being put in the right location for this program.

Dean Chamra said he wants to start the clock and, and so he made the motion to proceed to second reading (Chamra, Seidel).

Mr. Wendell said it was a good presentation. However, he said that the Senate can meet in May and since this is a major step for the university, there is a lot to review for Senators. He argued against proceeding to second reading. Ms. Pollard re-iterated what Mr. Wendell said because she said this has big import. Ms. Guessous asked if this is approved today, does it change the timeline to go to the BOT. Provost Thompson answered that it would not.

The motion to move to second reading did not pass (12 yes, 37 no).

4.4. **PROCEDURAL MOTION** to approve and conduct a fully virtual University Senate Meeting on May 7, 2026 for the purpose of concluding unfinished business from this April 16, 2026 meeting and items on the attached agenda. (Guessous, Battles)

Motion was made by Ms. Hartmus for there to be a quorum at the May meeting. (Hartmus, Guessous)

Having a quorum in May would mean to suspend the rules, so there would be the requirement for a regular quorum.

The motion was approved. (38 yes, 8 no)

The original motion to have a meeting on May 7 was approved: (39 yes, 7 no)

Comment: Proposed May 7, 2026 agenda

E. GOOD AND WELFARE

It was announced that Greg Patterson in MTD is retiring from MTD and there will be a disco flash mob at 4:00 Saturday April 18, to which everyone was invited.

Ms. Gilson reminded everyone that there is a student-led data center Town Hall today at 5:30 until 8:30 in the fireplace area. Students have invited experts to come and answer questions.

F. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20.

Respectfully submitted,

Dikka Berven (Senate secretary)

4 Attachments • Scanned by Gmail

Senate minutes

April 16, 2026

Members present: *Al-shabrawey, Aloj, Arena, Ausloos, Ball, Bartley, Battles, blumer-Schuette, Carpenter, Carver, Chamra, Chapman, Coleman, Craig, Debnath, Demsky, DeVore, Dinda, Dunn, Dwyer, Edrisinha, Govind, Grace, Guessous, Guest, Hartmus, Hoag, Hodge, Kattner, Kauric-Klein, Kies, Knox, Landis-Piwowar, Landolt, Margerum-Leys, Mathew, Matthews, Miller, Mitton, Nielsen, Olawoyin, Ostergaard, Pierce, Piscotty, Pratt, Rawashdeh, Rohn, Shesko, Seidel, Thompson, Tilashalski, VanLoon, Wasserman, Wendell, Westergaard, Williams, Youngquist*

Members absent: *Boruff-Jones, Hansen, Hosch, Jamieson, Lasecki, Lewis, McCulloch, Merchant*

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

Motion to establish a new Doctor of Education (Ed.D)

Motion approved to establish a new online B.A. in Strategic Communication

Motion to establish a new B.S. in Engineering Technology

Motion approved to have a May 7, 2026 Senate meeting

Provost Amy Thompson called the meeting to order at 3:10 P.M. She then introduced President Ora Pescovitz who was present to make remarks.

President Pescovitz began by mentioning the success of the men's swimming team, and noted that there was a midnight breakfast coming up for students and invited anyone to come help with that.

She expressed how much she appreciated the work of the Senate, as the year comes to an end. She said it has been a special year because of all the achievements through teaching, scholarship and service, including community engagement. She expressed her enthusiasm for the upcoming commencement which she said is for her a favorite time of the year. She acknowledged Provost Thompson for the excellent retention team work that has been done. Also, she said she is encouraged by the reduced credit programs which are innovative

programs, and she asserted that these will make a difference in enrollments, and how the world looks at OU. She said these strengthen accessibility and affordability, and strengthens our reputation. She said this year the culture survey pointed out good things about the university, but there also are areas for improvement. She reminded Senators about the heating and water problem that occurred earlier this year which was a difficult situation. She noted there are significant federal challenges which present concerns about the state's budget. She said there is no proposal for OU to get an increase in support at all, adding that the current support from the legislature was zero last year and the year before, too. She observed that this is why enrollments and retention have to be at the top of OU's priorities because we cannot depend on the state. But on the plus side, she said the sense of community that exists at OU is unique and is what makes us in an enviable situation because it makes it easier to face the challenges. Her message was one of gratitude and thanks, and appreciation for everything everyone does individually and collectively at the university.

A. INFORMATION ITEMS

Provost's Updates: Provost Thompson reminded Senators that graduation is coming up. She congratulated all the graduating students. She congratulated Dean Kevin Ball for his upcoming retirement. She also wanted to acknowledge the Senate Steering Committee for their commitment, attending long meetings, and doing hard work throughout the year. Also, she said there is a recording of the State of Academic Affairs which will be accessible as of Tuesday next week. She noted that areas were covered of student and faculty success, such as OU moving to an R-1 designation, and modernizing and aligning the academic enterprise. She said these will be a mantra that she talks about in the future. She added that another piece of good news is that there is an excellent plan for retention in the future, and if we look at where we are now at 65% which is lower than last year, on the other hand we are up from where we were a year ago which is a win. She thanked everyone present for all that they do at the university.

She then provided an opportunity for Senators to comment on the following Graduate and Undergraduate submissions, as well as the combined submissions. There were no questions. They were as follows:

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1.2.1. Energy Engineering, MS, graduate program

modification, to 1) Rename Foundation courses to Theory courses and add math, statistics and optimization courses to the list of theory courses, 2) Remove the “Thermal-fluid Science and Engineering” depth area as it overlaps with a concentration in the MS Mechanical Engineering program, 3) Broaden the “Renewable Energy” depth area to “Conventional and Renewable Energy”, 4) Reorganize the "required" and "elective" courses within each depth area, 5) Expand the list of Engineering Electives to provide more options to students, Department of Mechanical Engineering, School of Engineering and Computer Science (Laila Guessous)

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1.5. AI Institute and Data Centers (Steve Mackey) presenting online

Mr. Mackey was online to provide an update. He said they have made a pivot and are engaging in a different way now. He informed Senators that they have had meetings with various entities, including the Town Hall, and with faculty groups. Hid committee has assessed computing needs, and identified potential industry partnerships so that they can reach out later. They continue to do the feasibility work. He said DTE is conforming power, and Fiber and ISP is being evaluated. Also, they are working on the site location of P-35 so the team has been looking at additional sites. He noted that they looked at five sites, of which one is feasible besides P-35. He discussed the pros and cons of P35 which is still a feasible site in spite of the cons. The alternative site is P37 adjacent. A good site because it is very close to the substation, close to the power source; it is not directly adjacent to the Heritage site; it's close to Squirrel Road; the site has been kind of a landfill for years, it is the most cost-effective site. The cons include that it is farther for heat offtake, it will require regrading. They are committed to not reducing green space. They have proposed re-greening part of P37 and SPRC asked instead 'rewild' it, by letting it do what nature does. Lastly, events that are held in P37 can be held in P1 in the future. He said the next steps. CDEC and SPRC are asked to make their site recommendations by April 22. They want to complete faculty interviews. In June there will be a virtual campus project update and they will conclude the feasibility phase and make a presentation to

the BOT. He then invited questions. Q: Will there be a second Town Hall so everyone including students can attend. A: Unfortunately, there will not be another Town Hall. Q: The powerpoint was not in the documents for the agenda, and could it be put on the Senate site? A: Yes, we will do that. Q: It seems they are inching forwards to having a site plan, and when will there be Town Halls about the site, and when will they provide graphics to show what is projected? A: At this point, there isn't a real site that has been selected, and they are not yet recommending that the project will go forward. If the BOT approves going forward, then that is when they start doing all the environmental impact work. They can't provide more information about that at this time. Q: Why not wait until the Fall semester? This seems designed to avoid student input. A: They are trying to be transparent and are not trying to avoid student input. This is the feasibility stage and they are not done engaging with the community.

1.6. Affordable Course Materials Initiative (ACMI): Introducing Z-majors (Julia Rodriguez) presenting in person

Julia Rodriguez gave a brief history of the ACMI, which is to promote student success with affordable materials and encourage faculty to use them. She gave updates on specific successes with the stipend program and big savings to students, noting that 28 courses have been converted. Also, the hard copy reserve textbooks in the library have grown in the library. She reminded everyone that OER are free of cost and have built in permission to retain, reuse, revise and remix the material. She said this saves students significant money and can augment and update content for faculty. All students can have their books on the first day of class, by not waiting to get the money. No-cost and low-cost materials were added as attributes by the registrar. Low-cost is \$50 or under. Next step would be a Z-degree pathway through an entire degree. Minnesota State colleges, for example, as 12 Z-degrees. We need enough Gen Ed courses at zero cost. The Sociology dept is the first to offer a Z-major at OU. She said this is the first Z-cost major in Michigan. She said it is important to let the bookstore know what you are doing with regards to textbooks. She added that ACMI is accepting

stipend applications for low and no-cost projects, as well as department grants. The Provost applauded this initiative.

1.7. Senate Mental Health Committee Update (Terry Dibble) - presenting in person

Terry Dibble provided an update on what the Committee has done. They have had meetings and reached out to numerous groups. In the future, they want to initiate a social media campaign as well as the Jed project. He said they want to reduce the amount of time students spend on social media because spending less time increases mental health.

1.8. Closing the ESL Program (Adem Althor) document provided; not formally presented

1.9. New Senate Ad Hoc Definition Committee (AmyThompson)

Provost Thompson stated that the purpose is to provide definitions of College versus School. She asserted that requests for an entity to move forward from being a School to becoming a College would need to be preceded by definitions of what a College is, and what a School is. What would the structure be, for example. Also, there could be an effect on the AAUP contract. This is why they decided to create an AdHoc committee. Ms. Demsky requested that those on the committee should very experienced with the contract and best practices so they do not run into any of the issues that could be problematic. Mr. Govind asked if this would also change the definition of Department also, because this could have a broader application. Provost Thompson agreed this has to be done in contact with the AAUP. Mr. Dinda talked about their efforts to be a Big D department in Health Sciences, but they were shut down. He said they were told it had to be the Provost's office that decides, so he wanted to know what is the procedure here? He was told it is up to OU, and he said this needs to be discussed, too. Mr. Mitton said that the contract reflects descriptions of how departments and Schools are set up whether the department is a 'Big D' or 'little d' department, how it is funded and how it works. He said this would have to go through shared

governance, and he added that it is good to have a committee that defines the issues. Mr. Dinda said the definitions of Big D and little d do not fit because Health Sciences have more faculty as a little d than some departments have a big d designation.

1.10. Update the Senate Committee (Co)Chairs for the Senate Record - Amy Banes-Berceli
AI Committee

Alcia Freeman (SEHS) Co-Chair

There were no comments.

Provost Thompson moved on to the approval of the minutes.

B. Approval of Minutes from March 19, 2026

The motion was made to approve the minutes of March 19, 2026. (Guessous, Craig), with the correction of a name in the body of the minutes. The motion was approved. (49 yes, 0 no)

C. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

D. NEW BUSINESS

4.1. **SUBSTANTIVE MOTION** from the Graduate Council to establish a new Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Applied Early Childhood Practice and Policy to begin Fall 2026 to (1) meet the need for advanced training catering to scholar-practitioners with strong foundational knowledge in early childhood systems and theories, (2) meet the need for a more rigorous research mentor/apprenticeship for OU's Ph.D. students, (3) satisfy the minimum enrollment requirement (four students per doctorate-level course), and provide prospective students an alternative to the current research-based doctorate (Ph.D.) in Early Childhood Education. Department of Human Development and Child Studies, School of Education and Human Services (Tomoko Wakabyashi) presenting virtually

MOVED *that the Senate approve the Graduate Council recommendation to establish a new Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Applied Early Childhood Practice and Policy to begin Fall 2026. (Seidel, Battles)*

Tomoko Wakabayashi (department chair) presented from Applied Childhood development. She said they did a survey and learned that a vast majority of those surveyed supported a need for a scholar-practitioner doctorate (EdD). She explained the goals and objectives of the program, that it will be an alternative to the existing research-heavy Ph.D. Program. She said the attraction is that it would appeal to the two major groups of students. She noted that they didn't find anything specific to EdD in Michigan. Nationally, they found some programs, such as Teachers College at Columbia University. She summarized the course requirements as a 3-year program. Dean Margerum-Leys thanked her for her work. He said it is a very useful design, and it can be launched with the existing faculty. So the cost to the university to try this is minimal, and it will further the progress to the R-1 designation. He said he is strongly in favor of the proposal. Ms. Guessous asked how this will affect their Ph.D. Program. Ms. Wakabayashi said it won't affect it because some students want the practical work and do not necessarily want to be in the research field. Mr. Margerum-Leys said he thinks the new proposal improves student options by having both authentic programs.

4.2. SUBSTANTIVE MOTION from the University Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum to establish a new, online Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Strategic Communication to begin Fall 2026 designed by leveraging the research expertise of our Communication, Journalism, and Public Relations faculty and integrating coursework primarily from three undergraduate programs (COM, JMS, and PR [plus additional elective courses from WRT]), this innovative major creates a dynamic, interconnected learning environment that bridges classroom theory with real-world application. The interdisciplinary curriculum—merging public relations, advertising, media studies, and communication—equips students with a comprehensive skill set in strategic analysis, ethical communication, and practical

execution. This program positions graduates for success in the ever-evolving landscape of strategic communication, effectively addressing both local and broader market needs; Department of Communication, Journalism, and Public Relations, College of Arts and Sciences (Robert Sidelinger, Kathy Battles)

MOVED *that the Senate approve the new, online Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Strategic Communication to begin Fall 2026. (Seidel, Youngquist)*

Ms. Battles presented a summary of the goals and objectives. She said they have done a market analysis. Job titles include social media manager, research analyst, communications officer, and public affairs specialist. There is a high demand for these professionals, and an active market in Detroit area as well as elsewhere in Michigan. She said the goal is to provide a flexible online format for working professionals and returning students. There will be a focus on diversity and cultural competency. It will be industry-aligned capstone and experiential learning. This would be the only online program in Michigan. She added that the curriculum is interdisciplinary. The courses will work on delivering professional content in a variety of ways across numerous platforms. They already have a number of online courses that can be used to support this program. Ms. Landolt asked if this will address AI usage? Ms. Battles replied that they do not specifically include AI in their proposals, but there would be practice with AI. It would be impossible not to engage with AI and its impact on the media. Mr. Hodges asked how large are the current in-person programs, and how would this affect those class sizes. Ms. Battles answered that they have 340 students in the department. She doesn't see it as a threat to their ability to teach in-person classes.

There was a motion to move to second reading: *(Youngquist, Tilahashi)*

Motion passed. (37 yes, 10 no)

The vote was then taken on the original motion.

Original motion passed. (44 yes, 4 no)

4.3. **SUBSTANTIVE MOTION** from the University Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum to establish a new Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology designed for the purpose of supporting transfer students, adult learners and traditional students seeking an applied, technical focused program in the engineering field that addresses documented state and regional workforce demand, aligns with Oakland's mission to provide accessible, high-quality, and workforce-responsive education, and offers a 90 credit program structure. The start date of this new program will be determined after HLC approval (minimum 18 months) which follows Board of Trustees approval; Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, School of Engineering and Computer Science (Asaad Makki, Vijitashwa Pandey) presenting in person

MOVED *that the Senate approve the new Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology degree program.* (Guessous, Seidel)

Mr. Maaki presented the proposal. He said it is the first designed to meet a specific regional workplace demand. He asserted that there is a high demand in automation and PLC systems, robotics and mechatronics, instrumentation and controls, and data-enabled manufacturing, and a shortage in the workforce. They will target students who are community college transfers, veterans, adult learners to upskill them in their work, and target also first generation students. He noted that there are comparable programs across the state and in the nation. The biggest difference is that they are organizing the program in a more efficient way that takes into account those competencies that employers actually need and that accreditation agencies require. He said that it will be a streamlined and transfer-friendly curriculum. He explained the curriculum structure. He said the program is financially sustainable. He noted that it is a reduced-credit program but there is quality assurance, with the same Gen Ed requirements, same assessment and

ABET alignment. He noted that HLC approval will be required prior to the program launch. Provost Thompson said this last point is important. Also, she noted that the same assessment procedure would be taking place as for any program. There were questions.

Q: Regarding the cost, why is there a loss at first, and then surpluses by the 5-year? A: The faculty hiring plan is the reason for the request of \$300,000. Also, labs would need to be upgraded for which they are also asking for money. They will use a phased approach. He added that they will not be hiring tenure-track, but rather Special Instructors who teach but do not do research. It is mainly an applied program and they do not need for them to do that much research because the program is hands-on experience labs. The workload will be 80% teaching and 20% service. Q: Ms. Aubry said she supports this program because it is the right program at the right time. She said there are hundreds of students who could choose this program, and also straight from high school in addition to adult learners. Q: Mr. Dinda asked about accreditation. Does this 90-degree program reduce the student population of the 120-credit programs? A: It is a safe engineering environment for students to complete an engineering degree. This program is very efficient but not for mechanical engineering students who are doing rigorous calculus and math requirements. This program doesn't have that requirement. It is a completely different path and will transform the students' abilities to start a job at a higher salary. Q: A student noted that this program will save students a huge amount of tuition dollars and will make a university degree accessible to some students. Q: Mr. Fails asked about the accreditation. Ms. Guessous pointed out a big difference between an engineering degree and an engineering technology degree. She said that the faculty in the technology degree will not be teaching the courses. She said this program serves a different goal and a different population. She said there is room for both. Mr. Fails said the UAC had concerns and they would like to see how the program will address the issues they expressed. Ms. Landolt asked why there is a substitution out of a Gen Ed western civilization. Mr. Ball said that it seems the program is going to be offered in Macomb, so having a different location will keep the programs distinct. He added that it is a great program to establish there. Also, he

said the number one transfer group at OU is from Macomb so it is being put in the right location for this program.

Dean Chamra said he wants to start the clock and, and so he made the motion to proceed to second reading (Chamra, Seidel).

Mr. Wendell said it was a good presentation. However, he said that the Senate can meet in May and since this is a major step for the university, there is a lot to review for Senators. He argued against proceeding to second reading. Ms. Pollard re-iterated what Mr. Wendell said because she said this has big import. Ms. Guessous asked if this is approved today, does it change the timeline to go to the BOT. Provost Thompson answered that it would not.

The motion to move to second reading did not pass (12 yes, 37 no).

4.4. PROCEDURAL MOTION to approve and conduct a fully virtual University Senate Meeting on May 7, 2026 for the purpose of concluding unfinished business from this April 16, 2026 meeting and items on the attached agenda. (Guessous, Battles)

Motion was made by Ms. Hartmus for there to be a quorum at the May meeting. (Hartmus, Guessous)

Having a quorum in May would mean to suspend the rules, so there would be the requirement for a regular quorum.

The motion was approved. (38 yes, 8 no)

The original motion to have a meeting on May 7 was approved: (39 yes, 7 no)

Comment: Proposed May 7, 2026 agenda

E. GOOD AND WELFARE

It was announced that Greg Patterson in MTD is retiring from MTD and there will be a disco flash mob at 4:00 Saturday April 18, to which everyone was invited.

Ms. Gilson reminded everyone that there is a student-led data center Town Hall today at 5:30 until 8:30 in the fireplace area. Students have invited experts to come and answer questions.

F. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20.

Respectfully submitted,

Dikka Berven (Senate secretary)

4 Attachments • Scanned by Gmail

