

Deans Council
Meeting Minutes
Date: February 4, 2026

Civil Engineering Program Proposal

Dr. Childs submitted a proposal for a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering within the College of Sciences & Mathematics. There is high demand for civil engineers in Texas. The proposed program would complement existing programs and would initially require one additional faculty hire.

The program has the potential to enroll 50+ students, with a proposed start date of Fall 2027.

Action Item:

- Dr. Guidry will work with Dr. Childs on the proposal and bring it back to a future meeting for approval.

The Provost noted the need for a two-year “Horizon” planning document to help track future initiatives and support budgeting and advancement efforts.

H-1B Visa Update

Due to recent legislative changes, H-1B visas for international faculty and students remain uncertain. The UT System is preparing a tiered response and expects clarification within the next few weeks.

- Deans were asked to email Sharon with any areas in their colleges where hiring a U.S. citizen for a faculty position may be challenging.
- These considerations should be kept in mind when conducting faculty searches for the fall.

Dean Searches

Dean of the College of Health Professions

Academic Search has been retained to conduct the search. The committee will be chaired by Stacy Hendricks, with final committee members selected by next week.

The position is expected to be posted within 7–10 days and will remain open for eight weeks. The goal is to hire a new dean by July 1.

Dean of Forestry and Agriculture

Several search firms are under consideration for the new dean of College of Forestry and Agriculture, including ACES who specialize in this area. Gary Wurtz will chair the committee, with the search expected to begin in the next few weeks.

Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOPs)

Revisions are needed to the HOP related to the selection of Unit Head and Dean Search Committees to allow greater input from deans. JB will make these changes.

The return-to-faculty sections of the HOP for Unit Heads, Deans, Associate Deans, and the Provost will be reviewed.

It was noted that Chairs and Associate Deans were omitted from faculty and staff salary raises. JB and the President agreed to provide a 3% raise, consistent with staff raises.

Summer Course Planning

The Provost has been meeting with departments to clarify summer course messaging. Faculty should be informed that the institution will offer as many summer classes as feasible to support enrollment growth.

Budget Hearing

Academic Affairs will hold a budget hearing involving all deans. Information from the hearing will be shared publicly.

Group Think

A new initiative allowing deans to present ideas and receive peer feedback was introduced.

Jason Reese proposed restructuring the Business Dean's Office to include a Student Experience Coordinator, focused on retention and student success. Deans provided feedback on the proposal.

Any Other Business

JB encouraged faculty and staff to raise concerns through their deans or the Provost rather than directly to HR or General Counsel, to reinforce trust in leadership.

JB is considering a week of professional development this summer.

A special showcase for incoming freshmen is scheduled for February 7. Feedback will be provided to KW following the event.

Next Meeting

February 18, 2026

Attendees

*Jordan Barkley; Stacy Hendricks; Marc Guidry; Dustin Knepp; Gary Wurtz; Hans Williams;
Kim Childs; Christina Sinclair; Forrest Lane; Tricia Cain; Sharon Brewer*