

Deans Council Meeting

February 4, 2026

1. Civil Engineering Proposal - *Dr. Kim Childs*

- Proposal submitted for a BS in Civil Engineering in the College of Sciences & Mathematics.
- High statewide demand for civil engineers; program aligns with existing offerings.
- Would require one additional faculty hire.
- Estimated 50+ students, with a target launch of Fall 2027.
- Dr. Guidry will collaborate with Dr. Childs to refine the proposal and bring it back for approval.
- The Provost recommended creating a two-year "Horizon" document to track upcoming initiatives and assist with budgeting and donor engagement.

2. H1B Visa Update - *Jordan Barkley*

- Recent legislative changes have created uncertainty around H1B visas for international faculty and students.
- UTS is preparing a tiered response; more guidance expected in the coming weeks.
- Deans discuss with Sharon areas where hiring U.S. citizens would be difficult.
- Deans were asked to keep visa uncertainty in mind during fall faculty searches.

3. Dean Searches - *Jordan Barkley*

Dean of Health Professions

- Academic Search retained as the search firm.
- Committee chaired by Stacy Hendricks; final membership to be confirmed next week.
- Position will be posted within 7-10 days and remain open for eight weeks.
- Goal: hire a dean by July 1.

Dean of Forestry & Agriculture

- Reviewing several search firms; ACES is a strong candidate due to specialization in this area.
- Committee will be chaired by Gary Wurtz.
- Search expected to begin within the next few weeks.

4. HOP Revisions – *Jordan Barkley*

- Updates needed to the HOP regarding Unit Head and Dean Search Committees to allow greater dean input.
- Issues identified with return-to-faculty language for Unit Heads, Deans, Associate Deans, and the Provost; revisions forthcoming.
- Chairs and Associate Deans were unintentionally excluded from recent salary raises.
 - JB and the President approved a 3% raise, matching staff increases.

5. Summer Planning – *Jordan Barkley*

- Provost has met with all departments to review messaging around summer offerings.
- Faculty should be informed that the university intends to offer as many classes as feasible to support enrollment growth.

6. Budget Hearing – *Jordan Barkley*

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

7. Group Think Discussion – *Jason Reese*

- New initiative allowing deans to pitch ideas and receive peer feedback.
- Jason Reese presented a proposed restructuring of the Business Dean's Office, including a Student Experience Coordinator role focused on retention and student success.
- JR provided details; deans offered feedback and suggestions.

8. Other Business

- JB encouraged faculty and staff to bring concerns to their deans or the Provost, rather than going directly to HR or General Counsel. Goal: strengthen trust in leadership.
- JB is considering a week of professional development for the group this summer.
- A special freshman showcase is scheduled for February 7. Feedback will be provided to KW afterward.

9. Next Meeting

February 18, 2026

Attendees: Jordan Barkley, Marc Guidry, Kim Childs, Gary Wurtz, Stacy Hendricks, Tricia Cain, Forrest Lane, Hans Williams, Dustin Knepp, Jason Reese, Sharon Brewer