

**MINUTES**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting of Illinois State University**  
**October 11, 2024**

[Rapping of gavel.]

Trustee Bohn: In accordance with the board's bylaws, as Chairperson I will now call the quarterly meeting of the Board of Trustees of Illinois State University to order at 9:16 a.m. I note for the record that the notice of today's meeting was posted in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act and that the public has been notified of the date, time, and location of this meeting. As included in the notice of the meeting, the university has provided a YouTube link that allows all interested persons to contemporaneously view the meeting and hear all discussion and votes. Trustee Tillis, please call the roll.

Trustee Tillis: Thank you, Chairperson Bohn. Trustee Bohn.

Trustee Bohn: Present.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Jenkins.

Trustee Jenkins: Present.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Jones.

Trustee Jones: Present.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Merminga.

Trustee Merminga: Present.

Trustee Jones: I'm sorry. This was Trustee Jones. I'm here via phone. I didn't know if I was going to answer until later.

Trustee Tillis: Thank you, Trustee Jones. Trustee Merminga.

Trustee Merminga: Present.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Navarro.

Trustee Navarro: Present.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Russell.

Trustee Russell: Present.

Trustee Tillis: And Trustee Tillis. Present. We have a quorum, Chairperson.

Trustee Bohn: Section 7 of the Open Meetings Act allows members to attend a public meeting by video or audio conference if they are prevented from physically attending the meeting because of (1) personal illness or disability (2) employment purposes or the business of the public body (3) for family or other emergency purposes. In advance of the meeting, Trustee Jones and Trustee Navarro notified me of their request to join

by audio conference to attend and participate in today's meeting. Trustee Jones, please state the reason you're requesting to attend this morning's meeting by audio conference.

Trustee Jones: Employment obligations.

Trustee Bohn: Thank you. Trustee Navarro, please state the reason you're requesting to attend this morning's meeting by audio conference.

Trustee Navarro: Employment obligations.

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Trustee Jones and Trustee Navarro. Can I have a motion and a second to permit Trustees Jones and Navarro to join us by phone to officially attend and participate in today's meeting?

Trustee Jenkins: So moved.

Trustee Bohn: Motion if made by Trustee Jenkins. Is there a second?

Trustee Tillis: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Second by Trustee Tillis. All those in favor say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The motion is approved. Trustee Jones and Trustee Navarro, you may participate in today's meeting by audio conference.

Trustee Jones: Thank you, fellow members.

Trustee Navarro: Thank you.

### **Agenda Approval**

Trustee Bohn: You have before you the agenda for today's meeting. May I have a motion and a second to approve the agenda?

Trustee Russell: So moved.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Russell made the motion.

Trustee Jenkins: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Jenkins second. Is there any discussion? Hearing no discussion, all those in favor say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The agenda is approved.

### **Public Comments**

Trustee Bohn: Next on the agenda is Public Comments. We have several people who have indicated an interest in making public comments to the board today. In accordance with the established and recorded

policy, the Board of Trustees will allow up to 30 minutes in total. And I would like to repeat that - up to 30 minutes in total for public comments and questions during a public meeting. An individual speaker is permitted five minutes for his or her presentation. If two or more persons wish to speak on a single item, it's recommended that they choose one or more persons to speak for them. The Board of Trustees will accept copies of the speakers' presentations, questions, and other relevant written materials. If you have any written materials that you want to share with the trustees, you may send them to [bot@ilstu.edu](mailto:bot@ilstu.edu). When appropriate, the Board of Trustees will provide a response to a speaker's questions within a reasonable amount of time. And, again, I just want to reiterate it's a total of 30 minutes.

Our first speaker. . . at this time I would like to invite Erica Schneider to come up to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board.

Erica Schneider: Thank you. Good morning. I am Erica Schneider, niece of Jackie Schneider, a full professor in the Department of Criminal Justice. I come to share my experiences of her as a disabled faculty member. It is not physically safe for her to be here today, despite the protection she may wear. I am here because ISU administrators are not listening, and people with disabilities like her absolutely must be heard. I will read her statement. I joined ISU as a department chair in 2009 and returned to faculty in January of 2017. I have enjoyed success in my career, and I offer her CV as evidence of that. I will provide copies. In February of 2021, I was diagnosed with a rare incurable illness that requires weekly treatments without which I would die. In basic terms, I have no immune system. It does not function at all. I have no immunity to childhood diseases for which I received vaccines. I have no natural ability to produce antibodies to protect me from illness. If I get the slightest infection, I am at risk for hospitalization or even death. Those are my specialist's words, not mine. My illness is recognized as a disability and is protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act, ADAAA. These require an employer to offer reasonable accommodations for the disability so long as it is not a hardship, which is typically financial, to that employer.

Immune disorders are specifically mentioned as a disability by the ADAA, and my doctors have stated that a reasonable accommodation for my disease is remote work. Since diagnosis, I was able to stay relatively healthy because my then-department chair accommodated my illness and allowed me to work remotely, and I am grateful to Dr. Teasdale. Unfortunately, my accommodations were changed to the current academic year despite the following facts: My disability has not improved; in fact, it has worsened. The current semester included in-class instruction, which I appealed. The appeal was denied based on pedagogical factors and student outcomes, which is still very unclear what that means. There was no hardship on the department for me to remain online. There are, in fact, 11 CJS asynchronous courses being taught this term, one of which is an online section of the class I am teaching in person. The instructor is a non-disabled faculty member. Further, in spring 2025 there are five sections of this course being offered – three hybrid, one online again being taught by a non-disabled male faculty member, and one face to face being assigned to me, a disabled faculty member who has no immune system. I appealed the spring modality, but I do not hold out hope for that appeal. Susan Woollen will further this statement. And in hand I want to show the file that I have for her EEOC complaint in addition to her most recent medical records, which as you can see both are quite lengthy. Thank you. [applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Erica. At this time I invite Susan Woollen to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board.

Susan Woollen: Good morning. My name is Dr. Susan Woollen. I am a friend and colleague of Dr. Jackie Schneider, and I will read the remaining part of her statement.

Despite social distancing, mask, and surgical glove-wearing on my part, I entered the extra-large classroom, their accommodation. After two class periods, I became seriously ill and was diagnosed with an antibiotic-resistant uncommon bacterial respiratory infection that led to dangerously low white blood cell counts. My doctor signed me off on FMLA on August 26<sup>th</sup> and released me to work on September 30<sup>th</sup> with the restriction

of remote work. My chair said she could not support my return to remote work, so I am still off despite being able and willing to work. I want to work, and I can work, and actually I am working but being forced to remain on sick leave. The disruption to students' education and my illness could've all been avoided had I been approved for the accommodation stipulated by my medical team. There is a belief circulating that if I can travel, I can teach in person. First, this is between me and my physicians, not ISU.

Second, despite my HIPAA rights, I disclosed in my appeal how my medical protocols changed to allow travel. The changes are not sustainable physically or financially, nor are they foolproof. I've been told that people in administration do not believe that I am sick or that I even have this illness. After all, if I had this illness "I'd have to live like a hermit." I shared this with my board-certified immunologist with years of expertise in treating my disease, and she said "labs don't lie." She also said that of all her patients, I am her only one who's remote working accommodation was refused by an employer. She was going to come with me today, but she has obligations in D.C. The ADA supports disabled people like me so we can remain productive members of the workforce. ISU does not appear to want to support disabled faculty like me in ways that keep us healthy and safe and adhere to medical expertise. Regrettably, I have had to file a discrimination complaint with the EEOC. They are investigating the claim. As well, the Illinois Department of Human Rights and the Board of Trustees received notification of this some weeks ago. I agreed to mediation with the EEOC, but ISU did not. ISU has become an unfriendly place for faculty with unique needs and, in my case, are not providing an appropriate accommodation, given my disease. Per the EEOC, retaliation is a crime, and I believe not permitting me to return to work is an instance of retaliation. I just don't understand why an employer would knowingly put an employee in such physical risk, and I don't understand the inhumanity of these decisions. Thank you. Dr. Schneider. [applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Dr. Woollen. At this time I invite Carrie Anna Courtad to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board. Carrie Anna Courtad. [applause]

Carrie Anna Courtad: Good morning, trustees. My name is Carrie Anna Courtad. I am in my 16<sup>th</sup> year here at ISU, and I am a professor in the Department of Special Education. I have also been a labor activist on this campus, a proud member of the United Faculty of ISU, University Professionals of Illinois Chapter 4100, and a member of our Contract Action Team which invited all my wonderful faculty colleagues here to join us this morning. [applause]

It may surprise you, as I know it will surprise my colleagues, that I bring a message of harmony and cooperation. We understand that public higher ed in Illinois is in trouble. Years of inadequate state support along with enrollment decline have weakened our Illinois siblings at Eastern and Northeastern Universities, and it has brought Western Illinois almost to the breaking point. Thankfully, here at ISU, our enrollment is strong. Our net position is strong, and our foundation accounts are strong. We recognize our university has been hurt by generational decline and financial support from the state government. Illinois has an adequately funded higher ed since 2015, and in 2023 the state appropriations amount to roughly \$0.40 on the dollar compared to the early 80s. Springfield must do better by our institutions. On this I think we can all agree. We could also agree that the education at ISU profoundly benefits our students and that what we teach here drives growth and innovation across the county, the entire region, and the state, just as Illinois Senator Koehler declared at Wednesday's Academic Senate meeting.

ISU is an institution providing a public good worth fighting for, and so for the past two years United Faculty members have trekked to Springfield to talk to our representatives about this public good and the need for adequate funding, not only for the university but for also what our students need, including need-based scholarships like the MAP Grant and unfunded mandates such as the special education waivers as well as the greater provision for mental health services. Last spring I took three trips to the General Assembly. On my most recent trip to Springfield with UPI or University Professionals of Illinois, in the bowels of the capital building I crossed paths with Brad Franke, ISU's Director of Public Affairs and Policy. Brad and I knew each other from other coordinated lobbying efforts.

After a brief conversation it became evident that the two parties, ISU and United Faculty of ISU, were communicating similar messages, but the difference is that ISU administration was working without the voice of faculty. If admin and faculty combined our efforts, we could be stronger advocates for our schools, our students, and our greater Redbird community. This is precisely why UFISU proposed holding a joint lobby day with university administrators. When UFISU's bargaining team approached this subject or this issue at the bargaining table, your lawyer was somewhat suspicious, asking such question as, 'How will we know that faculty are actually doing what they said they would do and just not taking a day off?' That line of questioning was downright insulting to our membership. But I digressed because this is supposed to be a message of harmony. [laughter] The administration's team, the team representing you all, finally countered our proposal of a joint lobby day this week, only to tell the United Faculty, "Go it alone", which, as I stated, the union already does on its own time and is not at all a joint matter.

Trustee Bohn: Please wrap up. You have 30 seconds left.

Carrie Anna Courtad: Thank you. There are a few ways to read this counter, either (a) they didn't understand the assignment (b) they're willfully neglecting their responsibilities to our students, or (c) they want to continue building an adversarial relationship. So I ask you, will you work with us to have an annual joint lobby day so we can convince our state representatives to invest in this tremendous value of ISU. Thank you. [applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Carrie Anna Courtad. At this time, I invite Jeritt Williams to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board.

Jeritt Williams: Good morning. My name is Jeritt Williams. I'm an assistant professor in the Department of Technology here at ISU. Although I've only held this rank for a few years, I'm proud to have called ISU my home for more than 20 years as both a former student and former non-tenure-track faculty member. I truly am a proud Redbird. Unlike my colleague here, Anna, I've not considered myself an activist. I became a member of the UFISU because I felt the faculty union was the best vehicle to make sure the faculty voice was heard when important decisions regarding our work and our students' education were being made. Since bargaining for our first contract began over seven months ago, I've attended a few sessions but have mainly followed from the sidelines, supporting the process but trusting that the rational and reasonable negotiation would yield positive results that we can all live with. Therefore, it brings me no pleasure to share with you that things are not going well. Faculty have been told that the administration will not bargain economic issues until all non-economic issues have been resolved. This is despite the fact that the administration's team has had our comprehensive proposal since February 28<sup>th</sup>. This refusal has frustrated my colleagues who wonder why is it taking so long to get to the financials. What has caused an even greater alarm and even anger in some cases is that wherever you look, the administration's representatives are talking about dire financial conditions at ISU.

President Tarhule and Provost Yazedjian are quite liberal in spreading this message with the media, the Academic Senate, and in negotiations with other unions. Yet, the administration remains silent with us, the tenure-track faculty. My questions are these: How can we believe the administration when they will not speak directly on a subject with us and share their data? How can we believe President Tarhule when on Monday he told WGLT he was aware of the so-claimed budgetary problem a year ago? And how can we believe the administration when they have record enrollment and money for substantial capital investments but tell faculty in some departments to help identify places to save 2% here? Find \$50,000 there or, as we've heard, pay back their as-yet-utilized startup funding promised for research. The lack of progress has surprised our friends in the Redbird community and moved some of my colleagues to take bold action. After waiting six months, UFISU began to distribute a petition calling on the administration to quicken the pace of bargaining. As of this morning, over 1100 signed, and it's still open today. That includes students, alumni, faculty, community members. I'm pleased to share it with you, and I'll do so after I speak. I've heard that some faculty have begun to reach out to the trustees individually with their concerns as well. So what I'm asking is please take these as signs that we are all eager for negotiations to reach a fast and equitable

conclusion so we can return to our work, teaching, conducting research, working on creative projects in service. Therefore, we call upon you, the trustees, to direct the administration to submit its financial proposals to us at our next bargaining session on October 18<sup>th</sup>. Thank you. [applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you. At this time I invite Andrew Franson to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board.

Andrew Franson: Good morning. My name is Andrew Franson. I'm a freshman at Illinois State University, the activism chair of the Young Democratic Socialists of America, and I am in charge of the Instagram account known as Franson for Just Campus. As part of my civic duty, I take time to call out the Board of Trustees and President Tarhule over their continued failed administration over Illinois State University. You fail to advance bargains with United Faculty. Eight to nine months without a contact is ridiculous. You won't take any sort of economic proposal or put forth any economic counters, but you'll take out a loan for an inflatable dome, and you will know that there is a potential budget deficit a year in advance. Comrades in United Faculty presented to Kathryn Bohn a petition signed by Illinois State University faculty, staff and students and community members. Bohn proceeded to ignore that petition, and that's a shame. You continue to fail to bargain with the Illinois State University Education Association. Our non-tenured faculty are just as important as any other position on campus, yet again you neglect to support them. [applause]

One could genuinely wonder why, but I think we all know. Silence speaks words. Tarhule, in multiple speaking to the press, you have claimed that there is a budgetary crisis looming. Yet with a year in advance knowledge, you take out a loan for an inflatable dome, you spend \$2,000,000 on a new staircase when there's plenty of other functional staircases on campus. [applause] You choose to spend \$17,000,000 on a new College of Engineering building, which I'm going to tell you right now no one comes to Illinois State for engineering. How could you have not told this crisis beforehand? As a freshman, I'm ashamed, not for me, not for us, but for you. It's embarrassing. In multiple instances you have claimed that we've had the highest admitted freshmen in Illinois State history, and Illinois State University administration has claimed that years before. We've had the highest amount of freshmen on campus. That's not something to be proud of, Tarhule. You stuffed students into lounges to live in. You stuffed three kids into double rooms. You stuffed four kids into triples. Use the same excuse that you've always used when bargaining with Illinois State faculty and staff. You can't afford it.

And you loomingly judge on our faculty and staff and our students for standing against you. I hereby present the five principles on Hovey Hall that came up with in my social media account. One, that ISU is not a democracy. Hovey Hall does not include our voices. It does not include the voices of our unions. It does not include the voices of our students. And it surely doesn't include the voices of our community. It's intriguing how you can make so many decisions on behalf of us, yet most of them are borderline ridiculous. It is time for Hovey Hall to become transparent and accountable. It is time to acknowledge that (1) to the student trustee directly, half the student body doesn't know who you are. I didn't even know who you were. It is time for a mass movement for a just campus in that we can work together for with our faculty, with our staff, and with our students. We want a better campus. Together we can do this. And, of course, it is time for an end of the university monopoly on media. Of course, the debt, WGLT, TV10 are awesome services that provide decent great coverage. However, what we do lack at Illinois State University is a media source that is democratically run. Solidarity forever with United Faculty, the Illinois State University Education Association, solidarity for the . . .

Trustee Bohn: You have 30 seconds. Please finish up.

Andrew Franson: . . . Students for Justice in Palestine, and may you realize that in collective power we will win. And if you won't fix it, we will. [applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you. At this time I invite Laine Sullivan to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board.

Laine Sullivan: On October 1<sup>st</sup>, the Students for Justice in Palestine, SJP, at ISU published a Google form that contained the revised demands. The form allowed signees to endorse the state that calls for action of the SJP at ISU. The form was disseminated through word of mouth, social media, QR code shared on fliers this week. Within the 11 days the form was shared, there were 236 total endorsements, 42 from ISU employees, 15 from faculty. Of the respondents, 121 decided to identify themselves by names. The demands were e-mailed to all of the Board of Trustees and the Office of the President this past Tuesday morning. To protect faculty from retaliation, none of these names were made available to anyone outside of the SJP Executive Board. Today I would like to speak more to our demand for divestments, specifically from Caterpillar.

This past Monday marked one year since hundreds were horrifically murdered at the Nova music festival, and I believe all human life hold immeasurable value. No one should have to endure the pain of losing a loved one to violence. We will continue to mourn those who have been harmed and lost their lives in systemic violence as our rage is directed at the state and not towards innocent people. For the love of humanity, we will continue to show solidarity and refuse to be silent in the face of unimaginable terror, loss, and genocide. May the lives and memories of those who have lost their lives to conflict be a blessing. If our future is to be loving, just and caring, we must fight for it, as our healing must be as interconnected as our freedom. According to a journal article published by the Lancet on July 5<sup>th</sup> of this year, genocide in Gaza will likely have a death toll of more than 186,000 people due to the sheer intensity of killing, destruction, including but not limited to disease, destruction to shelter, healthcare facilities, and water infrastructure. As of October 6<sup>th</sup> of this year, 80% of commercial facilities and 68% of road networks in Gaza were damaged. The IDF emitted 281,000 tons of carbon dioxide just within the first 60 days of its siege on Gaza. The destruction and contamination of agricultural land, air quality, and water supplies and native wildlife in Gaza is a deliberate act of ecocide, which is a critical dimension of Israel's genocidal campaign. President Dr. Tarhule, as a climatologist who has published research regarding promoting resiliency measures in the face of disaster caused by the climate crisis and water resource development and as the President of the university that prides itself on its sustainability initiatives, I'm disappointed to see your lack of concern and action regarding ISU's financial partnerships and their role in enabling the mass degradation of the natural environment.

There is no viable justification for continuing to partner and finance a company that capacitates one of the worst humanitarian crises of this century. It is unnerving that ISU has remained complicit in systemic attacks on education in the healthcare system and has continued to invest in companies that further enable the occupation and mass surveillance of apartheid and genocide. It is well documented and transparent that Israel uses bulldozers manufactured by companies, including Caterpillar, to violate international humanitarian law. An e-mail sent out by Dr. President Tarhule on Monday, October 7<sup>th</sup> of this week, and I quote, "I encourage all of us to unite and not deepen divides and to foster understanding and empathy." While I agree with the sentiment, Caterpillar has continued to capacitate the terrors of mass horrific scales, killing tens of thousands of innocent people and children, displacing over 1,900,000 people, and decimating the natural environment and the ancient relics of the holy land in Palestine while dozing the very essence of a nation which has affected dignity and a future. To acknowledge that the trauma and loss of Palestinian people while partnering with a company that profits from the manufacturing of the Caterpillar D9 armored bulldozer that enables the scale of destruction and displacement is hypocritical. The work of dismantling systems of oppression and brutality wards responsive and intentional actions. Do you acknowledge ISU's positionality of the mass displacement and dispossession of the Palestinian homes and livelihoods as a profiteer of Caterpillar? Do you vow to work to dismantle ISU's complicity and role in aiding the deepening of these divisions Dr. Tarhule has spoken of with action and divestment? I speak for myself and on behalf of the Students for Justice in Palestine at Illinois State University when I ask you all to take direct and progressive action beyond offering recognition of suffering and to work to divest and dissociate from Caterpillar, which would be a commitment to bridge divides instead of further deepening them. Thank you. [applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Lane Sullivan. At this time I invite Caleb Wiessing (I probably mispronounced that) to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board.

Caleb Wiessing: Good morning. My name is Caleb Wiessing. I'm here to discuss the matter of ISU's corporate investments in particular companies that fund the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people. Siemens is a German tech conglomerate with footholds in many aspects of society. Siemens infrastructure provides security systems and fire alarms all around the globe. A separate division, Siemens Mobility, provides transportation products and infrastructure for both commercial and passenger use. Since 2001, Israel has been conducting a railway expansion project titled the Jerusalem Fast Train, also known as the A1 Train. This project spans dozens of kilometers and not incidentally reaches past the Green Zone into the occupied West Bank. Siemens has an exclusive deal with Israel to provide all the train cars needed for the specialized electric rails. The A1 train being an Israeli-owned operation is not open to the Palestinian people. Throughout Israel's decades of aggression, they have only increasingly been stifling Palestinian movement. Building a new train route that extends beyond Israel's borders for the expressed use of their own citizens is, in fact, a violation of international law. Additionally, the division of Siemens Energy was given a contract for VSC HVDC converter implementation in the Great Sea Interconnector, formally known as the EuroAsia Interconnector through Greece, Cyprus, Israel, and by default the Palestinian territory.

Construction is still underway but if completed would displace even more Palestinians in the wake of great expansion. This type of colonialism is more subtle but is one of the many ways that Israel maintains control over Palestine. Caterpillar is direct, however. Manufacturing specialized armored D9 bulldozers on which machineguns can intentionally be mounted once shipped to Israel. These bulldozers have been manufactured since 1954 and have been used in combat since the Suez crisis in 1956. A D9 was the bulldozer that killed civilians outside the Kamal Adwan Hospital in Gaza in 2023. In 2003, a D9 was the bulldozer that killed Rachel Corrie, an American journalist who was documenting and defending the Palestinian cause peacefully. When ISU purchases through companies such as Siemens, which ISU spent at least \$108,655 on for the course of the 2023-24 school year, you were sending a particular message to this community. You tell students that corporate loyalty is more important than human lives overseas even though we have brought to your attention again and again how these companies are operating. This is but a symptom of a broader pattern in ISU's current administration. The Students for Justice in Palestine have been attempting to have good-faith discussions with the administration regarding our demands for the better part of a year, yet we are ignored. United Faculty has been in negotiations for months, and the administration still refuses to comply.

Literally everyone has been complaining about over-admission and over-crowding of housing, yet the price tag and admission numbers just keep increasing. Although this is a public university, I often do not feel well served by it. So please meet with us to discuss divestment. We have our list of demands and are willing to work with you to figure out how you can better meet students' needs and questions of morality. You have a say in where our money goes, and it is of the utmost importance to me and many others that the money we pay in tuition does not go towards unjust murder and displacement of innocents. Thank you. [applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Caleb Wiessing. At this time I invite Mike Bloomfield to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board. We have about three minutes.

Mike Bloomfield: Cool. Hello. My name is Mike Bloomfield. I am a senior philosophy major here at ISU, and I'm also a tour guide, right, which puts me at an odd position, right, because I'm considered a public face of the university. I'm one of those faces that grants ISU that record-breaking enrollment. Wow. Awesome. On top of that, right, I also, like Tarhule, wear many hats as the organizing chair of YDSA. And today I'd like to raise some concerns about LGBTQ safety on campus. [applause] During this school year on August 28<sup>th</sup>, students received an emergency alert about a student riding a scooter near the Bone Student Center who was assaulted by four other students in a homophobic hate crime. A couple of days ago, right, we got updates from that crime alert saying that none of the suspects had been found. And queer students on campus have only been given the bare minimum, and barely that, with a crime alert and not a public statement from Tarhule himself nor the Board of Trustees. So the question I want to raise here today is how many more queer students have to be assaulted before Tarhule and the Board of Trustees speaks up and shows that they actually care. How many more queer students have to deny themselves medical care and

also disclose their identity before Tarhule and the board that's sitting right there right in front of us makes a public statement saying that they want an inclusive campus?

And, lastly, as a tour guide, right, and as a queer student myself who came to this university looking for an inclusive environment and interacts with queer students almost every day asking me, hey, is this campus for me, right. Is this campus safe for me? What do I tell those students who have genuine concerns at this university knowing that hate crimes can occur, right? People can go unaccountable for them. And still, even now, months later, Tarhule and the board have nothing to say. No public statement, no support. How long does this have to happen before we get change here? [applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Mike Bloomfield. At this time we have about one minute left.

Unknown speaker: Motion to extend public speaking.

Trustee Bohn: There is one minute left. So I have three people left. There's one minute left.

Unknown speaker: Is nobody on the board going to make a motion to extend? This is why people come. It's a public institution that deserves to be heard. [applause]

Trustee Bohn: I would invite at this time Trish Gudeman, Cobi Blair, or Sarah Hall to come and give comments. They have about one minute.

Unknown speaker: You [unintelligible] but you won't give her more than a minute?

Unknown speaker: [unintelligible] your students.

Unknown speaker: You need to listen to all of us.

Cobi Blair: Good morning. My name is Cobi Blair. I have the honor to serve as Student Body President this year, and some of the members of the student government found out about the proposal to purchase the General Electric Road property, and they had several questions for me that they asked me to relate to the board regarding the transportation logistics for students going to the College of Engineering there, specifically because the building is roughly two-and-a-half miles away from campus, and some of them were worried about students without cars being able to travel there. It would seem for those students that public transportation would be the best option through Connect Transit; however, some members of student government were wondering logistically how strong that plan was. Now I'm sure the university has very likely discussed with Connect Transit the possibility of a partnership or a changing of things like Redbird Express to be able to transport those students, and I'm confident that something could be worked out.

However, some members were wondering to what extent those discussions had taken place and how solidified that plan was, especially for students who might have just ten minutes to travel from a class closer to our campus to the College of Engineering or vice versa. So, in general, this is not a statement on saying that purchasing the property is a good or a bad decision. I'm very excited for us to get a College of Engineering. It was mainly just to point out that some people have those concerns and to make sure that some of those conversations had been had and included. So whatever the plan might be with that, I know we always do things right here and we always do have a plan. But several members had those questions for me. They asked me to relay those to the board, and I promised to do that today. So essentially the main question was what sort of discussions have been had and plans have been put in place to ensure students are able to access that building and not be late to class due to insufficient busing. Thank you very much. [applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Cobi Blair. That is all the time we have for Public Comments today. The Board of Trustees will accept copies of the speakers' presentations. [Rapping of gavel.]

Unknown speaker: I've asked a question. Boards across this state extend public due time for public comment because they recognize the importance of hearing [unintelligible], the students in the community. Why is this board afraid of doing that?

Trustee Bohn: The board has allowed more than 30 minutes this morning.

Unknown speaker: [unintelligible] extended . . .

Trustee Bohn: The Board of Trustees will accept copies of the speakers' presentations, questions, and other relevant materials. If you have written materials and you want to share them with the Board of Trustees, you may send them to [bot@ilstu.edu](mailto:bot@ilstu.edu). When appropriate, the Board of Trustees will provide a response to a speaker's questions within a reasonable amount of time. Thank you.

Well, good morning and thank you for joining us for today's meeting . . .

Multiple people: [yelling]

Trustee Bohn: . . . on October 11, 2024.

Multiple people: [yelling and chanting]

Trustee Bohn: Earlier this morning, the Campus Communication Committee hosted a highly informative discussion hour. I want to thank David Kirk, Director of Redbird Esports, for his presentation about Illinois State Esports program and its many successes. Thank you for your team's innovative efforts in creating an engaging and highly competitive program. Since the board's last meeting, many of us have enjoyed attending Family Weekend and homecoming events. Each year I am genuinely moved by the number of students, families, faculty, staff, alumni and friends I see on campus and throughout the community. I want to thank our students, faculty, and staff who are involved in planning and implementing so many meaningful activities. Your efforts create opportunities for all of us to make lasting Redbird memories. I also want to acknowledge the efforts of the Illinois State University Police Department and our local police agencies in response to the pop-up party that occurred during the early morning of September 29<sup>th</sup>. I want to echo the sentiments of President Tarhule that the safety and security of our students, faculty and staff and university community is the university's top priority and that of the Board of Trustees. I look forward to learning more about the collaborative efforts of the university and the Town of Normal regarding the safety and security of our campus and larger communities.

At the August board meeting, the Board of Trustees noted the disturbing and widespread trend in institutions facing significant budget deficits with many having to take extreme actions, including laying off faculty and staff and even closing academic departments. The three-year forecast President Tarhule and the administration has produced showed that, sadly, Illinois State too would face a similar situation in the next few years if we did not take immediate action. Accordingly, the board charged President Tarhule with taking necessary preventative actions to ensure Illinois State avoids that fate. On the one hand I'm glad the administration has initiated several proactive strategies and budget cuts to achieve that goal. On the other hand, the board acknowledges that these actions are painful and create hardships for faculty and staff, but they are necessary to avoid even more damaging cuts in the future. I'm pleased to see the many actions and steps President Tarhule and the administration are taking to communicate with the campus regarding this problem and to ensure complete transparency. It's my hope and the hope of the entire Board of Trustees that all university stakeholders, whether internal or external, will unite in shared purpose to position Illinois State for long fiscal viability and strength. I urge all to understand. While we undoubtedly have some work to do to strengthen internal processes and decision making, my understanding is that the crux of the current financial problem is driven by factors and dynamics largely outside of the control of anyone at Illinois State. I'll now turn to President Aondover Tarhule for his remarks.

## President's Remarks

President Tarhule: Thank you, Chairperson Bohn. First, I also want to acknowledge the Campus Communication Committee and David Kirk, who gave an excellent presentation just prior to the board meeting regarding the amazing success of our Esports teams and program. I must admit I've never played Overwatch or Rocket League. Honestly, I'm not sure what they mean. But I'm proud of our programs and our students and that in a very short period of time, it has become one of the top collegiate Esports programs in the country.

I want to reiterate that the safety and security of our campus community remains the top priority for university leadership. I am grateful and appreciative for the collaborative efforts of local police agencies regarding their response to the pop-up party that occurred in the early morning hours of September 29<sup>th</sup>. I want to assure our community that we will continue to explore additional collaborative innovative campus and campus-safety initiatives in partnership with the Town of Normal.

I also want to thank our students, faculty and staff who worked tirelessly to plan every detail of very successful Family Weekend and Homecoming from engaging activities to a warm welcoming and colorful atmosphere. Every detail reflected the hard work and dedication you all put into making these events memorable. Your Redbird energy and enthusiasm from our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and guests were everywhere on display.

As I mentioned in the State of the University address, Illinois State University welcomed 4,285 first-time-in-college students for the 2024-2025 academic year, the largest incoming class in the university's history. This is up 3% from last year. The new class of students is also the most diverse in school history. Total enrollment is 21,546, a 2.7% increase over the previous year. The university's total student population includes 19,107 undergraduates and 2,439 graduate students. Official enrollment figures were computed after the tenth day of class.

Illinois State's student body is also becoming more diverse. Nearly 45% of these first-year students come from traditionally underrepresented groups; 34% of the total student population comes from historically underrepresented groups. In 2018, this percentage was at 25%. Our continued enrollment success is the result of hard work, dedication, and commitment by many students, faculty, and staff throughout the university.

Also during the State of the University address I shared information about Illinois State's financial outlook. As I stated during my address, I firmly believe that simply weathering the current storm is not enough. Illinois State must thrive to position itself for long-term success in a rapidly changing world. As promised, we are taking the necessary steps to do so. Since September 1, I have met with 13 campus leadership teams, including Shared Governance, to discuss Illinois State's path to resilience, innovation, sustainability, and excellence or RISE. Nominations have been received for representations on the RISE Task Force. The task force comprises of 33 members, including 10 from the Division of Academic Affairs, 7 from Shared Governance Partners, 4 each from the Divisions of Student Affairs and Finance and Planning, 2 each from the Department of Athletics, the Division of Advancement, and Alumni Engagement, and the Office of the President, and 2 from the Chairs and Directors Council. We have made every effort to ensure that all constituents are represented and have a voice in the task force. In short, the task force will be charged with communication, transparency, and campus engagement as we embark on the next stages of RISE implementation. They will also work closely with an external consultant to review how past practices and decision-making processes have led us to this point. Finally, they will work with the consultants and the campus community to recommend changes necessary to ensure Illinois State's long-term fiscal viability, including recommending a new budget model. I want to thank Dr. Martha Horst, Professor of Music Theory and Composition and Chair of the Academic Senate, and Amanda Hendrix, Interim Associate Vice President for Budget and Planning, for serving as Task Force Chairpersons. I look forward to giving the task force its charge, hopefully as early as next week. More information about the task force and its membership will be

shared with the campus community as soon as possible. Additionally, in the coming weeks, I will schedule RISE open forums where students, faculty, and staff will receive more information about the status of the higher education sector, Illinois State's financial outlook, next steps, and participate in a question-and-answer series.

As you may know, artificial intelligence is considered one of the most disruptive technological advancements of our time and is expected to transform various industries, including higher education. Illinois State continues to explore innovative applications for artificial intelligence. A few notable initiatives include the steering team of the Committee on the Responsible Use of AI met throughout the summer months to plan for the upcoming academic year, and the full committee will convene this fall. Plans include gathering feedback on the draft statement of the responsible use of AI at Illinois State University from university stakeholders and developing faculty and staff communities of practice or COP. COP will serve as collaborative learning environments where members can collectively investigate, experiment with, and implement generative AI technologies in their respective domains. We anticipate COPs will begin convening at the start of the spring semester.

The scholarly teaching unit in the Center for Integrative Professional Development has created a slate of evidence-informed resources for the campus community to use to support teaching in the age of generative AI pages. Highlights include recommended syllabus language guidance on AI detectors, a gen AI decision tree for planning assignments or courses, and a scale of AI usage levels to help instructors clearly communicate their expectations regarding AI use to their students.

Additionally, there are exciting developments within the College of Engineering. In addition to the resolutions to be considered today, the college recently welcomed its first set of tenure-track faculty members and just received a \$2,400,000 software donation from Simio. Simio is simulation AI software platform. On October 30<sup>th</sup>, the college will host an industry-sponsored event, BuildersStage. This event will bring three well-known YouTube engineering creators to campus. The event is sponsored by three local companies, Precision Planting, Rivian, and Cybernautic.

As I near the end of my remarks, I want to share a few additional points of pride. At the university's request, the Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council recently completed an economic impact study of Illinois State University. The study indicates that the university contributes \$1,000,000,000 in output to the region, supports 9,702 jobs, and generates tax revenues totaling \$187,900,000. The same study shows that for every dollar spent by the university, \$1.75 is returned back to the community. ISU is recognized by a growing list of publications as one of America's top colleges in 2025. Washington Monthly and Wall Street Journal ranked Illinois State in the top 150 colleges and universities nationally, and Forbes and Money Magazine also ranked us in their top colleges list this year.

The College of Applied Science and Technology has launched a new year-long cast LEAD, which stands for leadership, exploration, and development, to help emerging faculty leaders interested in exploring leadership in administrative roles. Six faculty comprised the first cast LEAD cohort, working with Dean Chad McEvoy and Executive Associate Dean Cara Rabe-Hemp to develop leadership skills in 2024-25. Topic areas include strategic planning leading teams of people, diversity, equity, belonging and inclusion and managing financial resources.

The Redbirds Launch Internship Grant, RLIG, successfully awarded \$250,000 to 75 eligible students with unpaid internships for the summer and fall of 2024 semesters. The Office of the Provost funds the RLIG and entered divisional partnership with Career Services. This grant helps support students who are low income or are first-generation college students and are completing an unpaid internship. Illinois State University has recently earned the ALL IN Action Plan Seal for its 2024 Election Cycle Action Plan. The ALL IN Democracy Challenge is a national non-partisan initiative to increase student democratic participation on college and university campuses with 1,036 participating institutions. Illinois State is one of 192 institutions that have

earned the highly established Action Plan Seal recognizing campuses leading the way with innovative strategies to increase democratic engagement on their campus.

Illinois State Athletics recently collaborated with DESTIHL Brewery to launch two new officially licensed beers, Redbird Ale and Battle Bird Lager. Royalties from the sale of Redbird Ale and Battle Bird Lager will go back to the university to support various initiatives. The beers will be available at Hancock Stadium and CEFCU Arena for Redbird athletics events, served by Sodexo Live and DESTIHL Breweries Beer Hall and DESTIHL Restaurant.

And as a reminder, the Mennonite College of Nursing Simulation Center dedication will be held at 2 p.m. on Thursday, October 17<sup>th</sup>. Please join us for this exciting event.

We look forward to the Higher Learning Commission, HLC, site visit on October 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. For over a year and a half, the Accreditation Steering Committee and working members representing all university areas have been compiling supporting documents that reflect the university's outstanding work in the areas of institutional mission, ethical and responsible conducts, teaching and learning practices, institutional resources and planning, and compliance issues. Thank you for your incredible and sustained efforts to prepare for this important visit.

As you may know, the university is in the action planning stage for our new strategic plan, Excellence by Design. Currently, 16 teams are working to develop actions and metrics to support the strategic plan's goals and objectives. I am excited and energized by this plan and look forward to sharing the outcomes of the action planning process with the campus community in the coming weeks.

It seems hard to believe that we are already halfway through the fall semester. Despite its quick pace, we have made great progress on the following key leadership searches: The search for the Vice President for Finance and Planning launched last week. The initial review of applications will begin on November 1, 2024 and continue until the position is filled. The search for the Dean of the College of Education has just launched, and I anticipate on-campus finalists towards the end of January. The university is working with Collegiate Sports Athletics to manage a national search for the athletics director. The search will begin this fall with a goal of hosting final candidates on campus in late January. A search for the Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer will commence in the spring 2025 term. I anticipate the successful candidate will be in this role by July 1. I want to thank Dan Petree, Todd McLoda, Jeri Beggs, and Byron Craig, who continue to serve in these roles in the interim.

Today's consent agenda includes a resolution to name the Kathleen Murray Farner, RN Faculty Suite in the Mennonite College of Nursing Simulation Center. Charlie's mother, Kathleen Murray Farner, was a long-time nurse who compassionately cared for persons. Please join me in thanking Charlie for this generous support of Illinois State University. [applause]

Finally, as we approach the presidential election on November 5, I urge you to lean into the university's core value of community and civic engagement by exercising your right to vote. Please take advantage of the many Redbird voter events on campus in the coming weeks. Information can be found easily by visiting the Center for Civic Engagement website. Additionally, I call on our campus community to observe another of our core values, respect. This value states faculty, staff and students promote understanding, acknowledge each other's rights to express different opinions, and listen and respond to opposing views with civility. As we enter this election season let's not forget that although we may not all share the same political views, we are all members of this diverse and inclusive Redbird community. And that concludes my remarks.

I would now like to call on today's spokesperson for the Campus Communication Committee, Dr. John McHale, Professor of Communication. Dr. McHale is filling in for Dr. Martha Horst who cannot be with us today. John.

John McHale: Again, it's an honor and a privilege to be able to speak on behalf of the Academic Senate and the university communication committee as a professor in the School of Communication. I am grateful for this opportunity. I also want to thank David Kirk, the Director of the Redbird Esports for the informative and exciting presentation today on ISU's progress in the Esports program.

Members of the entire Illinois State University community recently received several e-mails from the administration regarding the current financial situation at the university. In addition, President Tarhule and others who have given presentations on the budget challenges facing the university to shared government and its leaders and internal committee members of the senate. We appreciate the frank and honest tone of these discussions through communication. We sense a genuine attempt for the administration to be transparent and open regarding our university's current financial situation. This is a difficult message for the community to hear and process. And obviously we appreciate the intended public forums by the president in the days ahead, and we encourage continued transparency as a way of community to understand the situation. President Tarhule's communication regarding the financial situation at the university also stated there would be no annual raises for most employees. We acknowledge that raises would exacerbate the financial situation of the university, but not providing those raises for staff and faculty make it extremely difficult for us to try to keep up with the increases in the cost of living. Providing no raises cannot be a long-term solution. Pay increases must be part of a long-term plan to maintain a healthy organization. So we encourage the university leadership to consider other cost-saving measures so that the future of ISU will be able to maintain an excellent workforce.

In addition to receiving difficult news regarding the budget, members of the Campus Communication Committee are shocked regarding the recent crimes committed near the university by people attending so-called pop-up parties. Although no university students were injured, the close proximity of the pop-up parties to the university leave the members of the committee asking a lot of questions about what can be done to ensure our safety. We want to hear more about how ISU police are collaborating with local law enforcement to ensure the safety of our community. This concern for safety stems as well from the incident that occurred on August 24<sup>th</sup> that was investigated as a hate crime initially.

Finally, we suggest that more diverse engaging and safe opportunities for student entertainment on weekends such as that weekend be provided. The Campus Communication Committee recognizes that this is a difficult letter in a troubling semester, but we remain positive about the future of Illinois' oldest highest education institution, and we thank the administration and the Board of Trustees for their continued leadership. Thank you very much.

President Tarhule: Thank you, John. I invite Brad Franke, Director of Public Affairs and Policy, to the podium for a brief legislative update.

Brad Franke: Good morning and thank you Chairperson Bohn, President Tarhule, and members of the board. I am Brad Franke and serve as Illinois State's Director of Public Affairs and Policy and oversee the university's state and federal government affairs. This morning I will highlight some of the recent work and successes in both state and federal affairs and the status of some current legislation.

On September 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, in coordination with Mercury Public Affairs, President Tarhule, Chief of Staff Katy Killian, and I traveled to Washington, D.C. to conduct in-person meetings with federal legislators and officials in a continued effort to advocate for federal funding for a new STEM building on campus. We met with Senator Dick Durbin, Senator Tammy Duckworth's leadership team, congressman Eric Sorensen, congressman Darin LaHood, the United States Department of Education, and members of the White House Government Affairs team. ISU will request \$15,000,000 in federal funding through the federal legislature's congressionally directed spending appropriation process. Follow-up meetings with additional federal officials are ongoing as ISU continues to advocate for federal assistance and explore additional methods of funding. University leadership has been working in coordination with the State of Illinois Capital Development Board, members of the Redbird Caucus, including Senator Dave Koehler, representative

Sharon Chung, representative Jay Hoffman, and Mercury to secure funding for the proposed STEM building. I am pleased to share that ISU has secured \$850,000 through the federal congressionally directed spending appropriation process last spring, an effort led by congressman Eric Sorensen. As previously mentioned, ISU will apply for an additional \$15,000,000 through the same process this year. ISU looks forward to hosting the new director of the Capital Development Board and her leadership team on campus on October 16<sup>th</sup> to talk about the STEM building project and the overall capital development process.

Senate bill 3965, the Adequate and Equitable Public University Funding Act, is a newly drafted legislation regarding a new funding formula for Illinois public universities. The sponsors of this bill are Senator Kimberly Lightford and State Representative Carol Ammons. This bill is in draft form, and the sponsors are hosting meetings with various stakeholders currently. ISU is actively participating in these meetings. Additionally, the sponsors are hosting listening sessions that are open to the public throughout the state. There is no set timeline on when this bill will be active in legislative session.

The veto session in Springfield is scheduled for November 12<sup>th</sup> through the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup>. The veto session is an abbreviated fall season session at the capitol, often based around particular legislation or priorities of the governor and senate and house leadership. This schedule is subject to change.

There is a possibility of a lame-duck session at the beginning of 2025. This would be a special session based around the priorities of the governor.

Lastly, spring session. The bulk of state legislative affairs is likely to begin in February and conclude in May. I will keep you updated as these schedules become more concrete.

That concludes my report, and I thank you for your time.

President Tarhule: Thank you, Brad.

Trustee Bohn: Brad, I had one question. Sorry.

Brad Franke: No, absolutely.

Trustee Bohn: The senate bill that has been drafted for new funding - that is for any new money; is that correct?

Brad Franke: That's my understanding. Yes.

Trustee Bohn: Okay. Thank you.

Brad Franke: Yep.

### **Consent Agenda**

Trustee Bohn: We will now move to the Consent Agenda. All items listed on the Consent Agenda are routine and will be enacted in one motion. There will be no individual discussion of these items unless a trustee so requests, in which event the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and be considered at the appropriate point on the agenda. Do any trustees wish to have any items removed from the Consent Agenda? If not or hearing none, may I have a motion and a second to approve the Consent Agenda, items A through D?

Trustee Navarro: I so move.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Navarro made the motion. Is there a second?

Trustee Russell: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Russell second. Is there any discussion? All those in favor of the resolution, please say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? Items included in the Consent Agenda are approved.

President Tarhule: Thank you.

There is one report today, the promotions, tenure, and sabbatical leave report, which was included in your board materials. The promotions, tenure, and sabbatical leave report provides information about promotion, tenure, and sabbatical personnel decisions that take effect in the fiscal year 2025 and are completed in the fall and spring of 2024. The report outlines the application and review process for promotion, tenure, and sabbaticals. Also provided are summary data on this year's application's, rank distributions over the past decade for tenured faculty, and list of the fiscal year 2025 changes in status. Are there questions or comments from the board about this report?

Trustee Jenkins: One quick question.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Jenkins.

Trustee Jenkins: Yeah, President Tarhule, am I reading the data right that the percent of full-time faculty by tenure status, like 55% of our full-time faculty have tenure? Is that an accurate interpretation of the . . .

President Tarhule: Let me invite the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs to confirm.

Provost Yazedjian: Yes. [laughter] I can explain a little bit more, too. You'll see that unlike other institutions that have a ratio of much higher non-tenured track faculty to tenure-tracked faculty, not only is 55% of our faculty tenured, but an additional percentage is probationary faculty that are the assistant professors and about 20-something percent are the other category, which is faculty associates at the lab schools and non-tenured faculty members.

Trustee Jenkins: And a quick followup, Madam Chair?

Trustee Bohn: Yes, please. Trustee Jenkins.

Trustee Jenkins: Thank you. Excellent information. And of our peers that we would identify as our peers, are we in line with those, are we above them, or are we below them in the marketplace?

Provost Yazedjian: Our percentage of tenure-tracked faculty is higher.

Trustee Jenkins: Okay. Thank you.

Trustee Bohn: Are there any other comments or questions? I would just like to add that, contrary to popular belief, I read all of this. [laughter] And I look forward to all of the publications, the books, the chapters, everything that these sabbaticals are going to give us in the future. So I will be asking the Provost about that in the near future. President Tarhule, you may proceed with the resolutions.

## Resolutions

President Tarhule: Thank you.

### ***Resolution 2024.10/54. Authorization to Approve FY2025 Operating Budget.***

By Illinois Board of Higher Education Policy, each public university governing board must review and approve an official budget for the university it governs each fall. Table 1 in your package shows that revenue resources utilized from all fund sources in FY24 totaled \$558,400,000. Resources include operating revenues in the given fiscal year as well as reserve funds as needed to cover expenses. Looking ahead to FY25, total revenues, including reserves, would be approximately \$585,700,000, which is \$24,400,000 or 4.3 percentage points higher than the FY24 budget. Illinois State expects to spend \$194,000,000 in FY25 on the activities associated with its core functions of instruction, research, and public service, representing 83% of the estimated total university expenditures. Most of these funds are derived from general revenue appropriations or university income fund. Another \$28,700,000 is expected to be spent on activities directly supporting those core functions referred to in Table 3 as academic support.

The largest allocation within this function is for the operation of Milner Library, but it also includes educational and administrative functions. \$99,800,000, which is \$26,000,000 higher than last year, is estimated to be spent on operations and maintenance and includes the cost of utilities, custodial and ground maintenance, fire protection and security, transportation and space rental, as well as the university's planned capital project. Deferred maintenance of facilities will continue to be addressed as funds allow. The university's accumulated backlog of maintenance required to bring all campus facilities up to top working condition is estimated at \$400,000,000 with \$225,000,000 needed for state-supported facilities and \$175,000,000 for bond revenue facilities. The university continues to allocate its resources to its highest priorities and support the initiatives outlined in the strategic plan. I ask for your approval of this resolution.

Trustee Bohn: May I have a motion and second to approve this resolution?

Trustee Jenkins: So moved.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Jenkins made the motion. Is there a second?

Trustee Merminga: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Second by Trustee Merminga. Is there any discussion? All those in favor of the resolution, please say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The resolution is approved.

President Tarhule: Thank you.

### ***Resolution 2024.10/55. Authorization to Approve FY2026 Appropriated Budgets Request Operating and Capital.***

Each year at this time, the university must ask the board to approve its appropriated funds operating budgets request and its capital appropriation request to the Illinois Board of Higher Education for the next fiscal year. For FY2026, Illinois State University requests an appropriation increase of \$20,000,000 or 25% over the FY2025 operating appropriation of \$79,800,000. The capital projects for which funding is requested for FY26 are instrumental in addressing the goals and priorities articulated in the university strategic plan, Excellence by Design, as well as the recommendations in the Master Plan 2010 to 2030, Looking to the Future. These

projects are important to enhancing a healthy safe and environmentally sustainable campus and to ensuring the university has a fiscal infrastructure necessary for excellence in instruction, research, and service in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The university's request for state funds for capital improvements in FY26 is \$653,400,000, including \$613,000,000 for seven major capital improvement projects and \$40,400,000 for capital renewal projects. I ask for your approval for this resolution.

Trustee Bohn: May I have a motion and second to approve the resolution?

Trustee Tillis: So moved.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Tillis made the motion. Is there a second?

Trustee Russell: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Russell seconded the motion. Is there any discussion? All those in favor of the resolution, please say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The resolution is approved.

President Tarhule: Thank you.

***Resolution 2024.10/56. Authorization for Consulting Services for Cost of Education and Resource Allocation Agreement.***

To meet the university's long-term needs, a consulting firm would be engaged to perform a comprehensive review of ISU's financial planning and strategic budget processes. This review will enhance the university's operating effectiveness by creating a new and improved budgeting and resource allocation process. The new budgeting process will improve understanding of the cost of education, promote collaboration across units, and provide better multi-year financial planning. This new budgeting process will allow for better resource allocation across the university. By better allocating financial resources, the university will become more mission focused, improve governance and accountability, and provide greater transparency. Furthermore, the new financial processes will enhance communication, flexibility, and planning efforts for the university's long-term strategic efforts. Upon completion of the consulting engagement, additional integrated software is likely to be required. Once that determination is made, additional financial resources and resolutions may be presented to the board for review and approval. The university seeks approval to enter a contract with a third-party consulting firm at a total cost not to exceed \$1,000,000 paid for by general revenue, bond revenue, and auxiliary facility systems funds. I ask for your approval for this resolution.

Trustee Bohn: May I have a motion and second to approve the resolution?

Trustee Jones: So moved. Trustee Jones.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Jones made the motion. Is there a second?

Trustee Merminga: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Second by Trustee Merminga. Is there any discussion? Trustee Jenkins.

Trustee Jenkins: Yeah, I would just like to thank President Tarhule and the leadership team. It is a really, really difficult task in leadership to call down fire on your own organization from an outside party. That is not something that you've done taking as anything but a profound expression of your leadership over the

institution and that those that might say, well, why can't we just do this internally probably aren't coming from a perspective of trying to understand the holistic view of a very, very complex and complicated organization where they might have research specificity within their discipline. This organization, led by the people that lead it, are experts in higher education and understand how the industry works and what it means and that this is akin to a very large city that you run here. And by doing this you're putting your stake in the ground that you actually campaigned on when you were running for president to say I need this. I need this authority. And I give you my willing support to be engaged and to be involved and hope that we come back with updates on how this progress is going and if you're having any difficulties and things like that. Because even at the end of this research project and what we get back from this consulting practice, that's really going to be the end of the beginning. We then begin the hard part of selecting systems and bringing people together and understanding what types of tech support we need to make sure that situation with this institution to now doesn't happen ever again. Thank you.

President Tarhule: Thank you.

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Trustee Jenkins. Any other discussion? All those in favor of the resolution, please say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The resolution is approved.

President Tarhule: Thank you.

***Resolution 2024.10/57. Authorization of Expenditures for College of Engineering Projects Temporary Space.***

In May 2021, the Board of Trustees approved three new units of instruction in engineering: the College of Engineering, a Department of Electrical Engineering, and a Department of Mechanical Engineering. In fall 2025, the first engineering student cohort will be on campus. Since the engineering building will not be open until the fall of 2026, the university is seeking authorization for funds to modify space in Williams Hall as a temporary space for these students. Temporary space would consist of engineering design labs and collaboration spaces requiring specialized equipment and furniture which will also be used in the College of Engineering building when it is complete. Minor electrical power and data modifications will also be required to support the lab equipment. The source of funds is general revenue reserves financed through tax exempt COPs debt, which is not to exceed \$750,000. I ask for your approval for this resolution.

Trustee Bohn: May I have a motion and second to approve the resolution?

Trustee Jenkins: So moved.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Jenkins made the motion. Is there a second?

Trustee Russell: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Russell second. Is there any discussion? All those in favor of the resolution, please say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The resolution is approved.

President Tarhule: Thank you.

**Resolution 2024.10/58. Authorization to Acquire Real Property Located at 1709 and 1711 General Electric Road, Bloomington, Illinois.**

Illinois State University seeks board approval to purchase real property located at 1709 and 1711 General Electric Road in Bloomington, Illinois. The property consists of 28.32 acres of improved land with three interlinked buildings offering 392,000 square feet of usable space and 1,334 paved parking spaces. The first building located at 1709 General Electric Road, Bloomington, Illinois, called the ISB, is a dual-story facility with approximately 215,000 usable square feet. Closing for the ISB is anticipated to be on or about November 15, 2024. The owners will continue to occupy space at the ISB through April 30<sup>th</sup> of 2025 pursuant to a lease-back arrangement to allow the opportunity to transition operations and decommissioning the building. With board approval, the university plans to use the ISB building at 1709 General Electric Road to provide the necessary faculty instructional labs and student collaboration spaces needed for the new College of Engineering. Current instructional and lab space limitations at the university require new construction to provide lecture, labs, research, and collaborative learning spaces unique to the engineering programs. The ISB building will be renovated to provide a new engineering facility to house electrical, mechanical, and general engineering degree programs to support 520 new engineering students. The building will have additional space capacity to eventually allow the new engineering programs to accommodate up to 1,000 engineering students.

The second building located at 1711 General Electric Road, Bloomington, Illinois, called the CSB, is a three-story facility with approximately 150,000 usable square feet. The CSB consists primarily of office space. The owners will maintain ownership of the CSB after the first closing until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026 with \$3,000,000 put in escrow until the closing on the CSB building is complete. The third building, called the Link, is a one-story facility with approximately 27,000 usable square feet that connects the ISB and the CSB buildings. The Link consists of a main lobby, walkway between the buildings, and cafeteria area. The owners will maintain and occupy the Link until the closing on the CSB building is completed. The total acquisition price is \$17,500,000 plus reasonable and customary closing and related costs, and the source of funds is tax-exempt COPs debt. I ask for your approval for this resolution.

Trustee Bohn: May I have a motion and second to approve the resolution?

Trustee Tillis: So moved.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Tillis made the motion. Is there a second?

Trustee Merminga: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Merminga is second. Is there any discussion? Trustee Russell.

Trustee Russell: Thank you, Chair Bohn. As student trustee, I'd like to ask about the concerns some students have regarding the distance of the property on GE Road. And what your plans to address the challenging distance that comes from the location of the building?

President Tarhule: Thank you, Trustee Russell. May I ask the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs to update us?

Provost Yazedjian: Sure. Thank you for the opportunity. I took some notes as Cobi Blair was sharing some of his concerns. I will start by saying that when I arrived at Illinois State University, I was located in Turner Hall, so I'm well aware of how much time it takes to get across campus. So the question is can students get from GE Road to their buildings on campus in ten minutes. The answer is no. But they also probably would be unable to do that if the facility was still located at John Green. So the other question was have these discussions happened with Connect Transit? The quick answer is also no because we were under a non-

disclosure agreement. Will those questions and will those discussions occur by the time students are in the building in fall of '26? Of course. And they will involve students. So one of the nice things about this is that from the very beginning the plan was to open the building the second year when we had students on campus. So we'll have the benefit of having engineering students on campus for a year who will be able to participate in those discussions, who will be able to think about how they maneuver across campus, across town. The other thing is we're not going to be inventing this from scratch. There are many other universities across the country that have buildings that are not located in the main area of campus. In fact, our dean went to visit another university in the Midwest where their engineering building is about five miles away. They've already figured out how to transport students from one place to the other, and we will, you know, learn from their mistakes and learn from their successes.

The other thing that I would say is one other challenge that we have on campus, even for students on campus right now, is issues with block scheduling. And this is where we really are going to have to collaborate across academic units to ensure that academic units are scheduling their classes during the scheduled blocks that we have for students. If we do that, that'll also help this situation. And, of course, that involves the work of our academic advisors as well in collaboration across disciplines and departments to make sure that we're not creating our schedules in such a way that a student has to be back on campus in ten minutes. So it's going to be really a systematic approach to ensuring that students can take the classes that they need in the buildings that they need to do so.

Finally, the other thing I would add is I understand that change is difficult because students right now are imagining what would my life be like. But these are going to be new students to campus who won't have known any different. Right? And so their experience as an engineering student at Illinois State University is that they'll take some classes in one building and some classes in another. And as a university, of course, we're going to commit to ensuring that they're going to be able to get across campus and across town. Thank you.

Trustee Russell: Thank you.

Trustee Bohn: Is there any other discussion? Trustee Jenkins.

Trustee Jenkins: Yeah. So the one question I have, and I know you all have thought about this. And it's really one of those things, a question for the community, and I think it's emerged. How does the community of Illinois State hold two things in their head? The one thing is, hey, we've got a structural financial deficit. And then the other thing is, hey, we need to expend \$17,000,000 to buy this property. I know you all have thought about that, but can someone kind of maybe square that so that people watching and people engaged in this process understand, okay, how does this work.

President Tarhule: Thank you so much, Trustee Jenkins. Indeed, this is one of the challenges of communicating about a very complex budget and also a very complex circumstance. In very simple terms, I think the way I would describe this for everyone is we are taking out a mortgage to buy a building. Nobody, if you want to buy a house . . . well, maybe I shouldn't say nobody, but most of us don't have enough money in our accounts to go buy a house. You take out a mortgage, and you pay for that building over time. And while you're taking out that mortgage, you still owe money on your credit card. You may owe money on other accounts that you have, but that doesn't stop you, you know, from taking out a mortgage to find a place where you are going to live. So that's essentially what we are doing. And, in fact, the next resolution I'm going to read asks for the permission, if you all allow us, to buy this building, then the next step is the permission to then take out the mortgage to pay for this building. So the two are not connected. The budget deficits that we're talking about is a cashflow problem. It's strictly the difference between revenues and expenses in any given year, and our projection is that the expenses are going to exceed the revenues, and that's what we're trying to deal with. And on the other hand in a parallel vein, we would still take out a mortgage and acquire this property to house the engineering students.

Let me quickly make one more point. As I have said on several different occasions, when you are facing a deficit, you don't necessarily have to be in a bunker mentality. We are not saying Illinois State will not spend money on anything. We are taking a very strategic approach, which means even as we try to save money and cut costs in some areas, it is absolutely essential that we continue to invest and identify those areas that will support the university in the long term. So we will simultaneously be investing, maybe even spending more money in those areas that will ensure long-term sustainability as we're cutting other areas where we feel there is not an immediate need or maybe the return on investment may not be as significant. So that is the strategy that we are employing. I do admit that for people who have not walked through the numbers and the complexity of the issues, it can come across as mixed messaging or contradictory. But I want to assure the board and all community members, this is something we have analyzed very thoroughly in great detail, not just with the university leadership but with financial consultants who have helped us think through how we are going to manage this.

Trustee Bohn: Is there any other discussion or questions? I would just like to ask, also. . . we had been looking at the John Green facility. And my understanding is if we were to move forward with the John Green facility that would house approximately 520 students. Is that correct?

President Tarhule: That is correct. One of the main attractions of what we're doing here is that if we went ahead and developed John Green, that building, engineers have told us, at maximum capacity will have 520 students. That means that the college if successful, at 520 we will not be able to expand anymore. That is small for a college. We have no college that is only 520 students. Then we would be stuck. In order for the college to continue to grow, we would have to build a second building next to the John Green building, which we have estimated would cost \$150,000,000 in order to bring in a thousand more students. We would have no money and no ability to build that building. We would be stuck waiting on the state to help us build that building. The record of the state in building these facilities is not very good. The money we got for the College of Fine Arts project renovation was approved in 2009. We still have not done that renovation 16 years later. So waiting on the state to get funding for the second phase of the College of Engineering is not a good idea. The current project and the current facility makes it unnecessary to wait for the state. The space is big enough that we would no longer have to wait on the state for a second \$150,000,000 building if the college is successful. So in the long term, this facility saves Illinois State at least \$150,000,000, and it also allows the College of Engineering, if it is successful, to grow at its own pace without restrictions due to space or state funding bureaucracy.

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, President Tarhule. Any other questions or discussion? All those in favor of the resolution, please say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The resolution is approved.

President Tarhule: Thank you. I'd like to note that the building was acquired from Country Financial, and we have two representatives of Country Financial here, Carl Bridges, who is a Senior Vice President and Chief Risk Officer and also Jennifer McDade from Public Relations and Corporate Social Responsibility. From the inception when we started this discussion, I think it's fair to say both of our teams recognized that these are two excellent anchor organizations in the Bloomington-Normal area and that we are working together not just to support each other but also to ensure the continued strength of the region and ties. Country Financial is one of ISU's largest donors, and we have excellent relationships with them, and the discussions and negotiations were carried out in that faith. And I would like Carl, if you don't mind, to stand, and Jennifer, so we can acknowledge your collaboration in this partnership. Thank you. [applause] Thank you.

**Resolution 2024.10/59. Authorization of Expenditures for College of Engineering Project Preconstruction Services.**

In preparation for the new College of Engineering, the university must outfit appropriate academic space. The College of Engineering project plan will be conducted in two phases. The first phase is to accommodate up to 520 new engineering students. The recommended location for phase 1 implementation is the property at 1709 General Electric Road in Bloomington, Illinois. Phase 2 implementation will include the cost of renovating additional space within the property at 1709 General Electric Road to accommodate up to 1,000 students. This resolution requests the Board of Trustees to authorize expenditures not to exceed \$4,500,000 for all necessary College of Engineering phase 1 preconstruction services for a project to plan, design, and produce the required documents for the renovation of the property at 1709 General Electric Road and direct the university administration to establish a budget and appoint architects and engineers and other necessary project consultants. The source of funding is general revenue reserves financed through tax-exempt COPs debt. I ask for your approval for this resolution.

Trustee Bohn: May I have a motion and second to approve this resolution?

Trustee Russell: So moved.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Russell made the motion. Is there a second?

Trustee Tillis: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Tillis second. Is there any discussion? All those in favor of the resolution, please say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The resolution is approved.

President Tarhule: Thank you.

**Resolution 2024.10/60. Authorization to Issue Certificates of Participation, Series 2024.**

In addition to the authority provided to the Board of Trustees by the State of Illinois to issue revenue bonds for the construction and operation of auxiliary facilities, the Illinois State University law 110 ILCS 675/20-1 et seq. provides the board with the authority to issue certificates of participation to finance or refinance other capital improvements. These certificates of participation evidence payments under an installment purchase agreement and are limited to a maximum 30-year term. The installment payments made under an installment purchase agreement are payable both from state-appropriated funds and from budgeted legally available funds of the board derived from sources other than state appropriations on an annual basis. The Certificates of Participation Capital Improvements Projects, Series 2024, will be issued in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$82,000,000 to fund the total project cost associated with the School of Engineering construction project approved by the Board of Trustees at the May 7, 2021 meeting. Additional academic building projects (e.g., Milner Library elevator repairs, Fell Hall roof replacement, and renovation of the former fire station on Adelaide Street) and to refund the Certificates of Participation Capital Improvement Project Series 2014a-2. The portion of the issuance of the 2024 certificates used to finance the improvements will result in annual payments that are not expected to exceed \$4,000,000, depending on the final interest rate secured at closing. Issuance of the 2024 certificates to refinance the prior improvements will decrease annual debt service payments as a result of the lower interest rates currently available in the market. The funding source includes general revenue funds, foundation funds from private donors, and federal grant funds. I ask for your approval of this resolution.

Trustee Bohn: May I have a motion and second to approve this resolution?

Trustee Jenkins: So moved.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Jenkins made the motion. Is there a second?

Trustee Russell: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Russell second. Is there any discussion? All those in favor of the resolution, please say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The resolution is approved.

President Tarhule: Thank you.

***Resolution 2024.10/61. Authorization to Name Dr. John C. and Emma K. Stutzman Faculty Collaboration Suite***

The Mennonite College of Nursing respectfully requests naming the Faculty Collaboration Suite in the Nursing Simulation Center as the Dr. John C. and Emma K. Stutzman Faculty Collaboration Suite. This name reflects and recognizes the generous estate gift of John and Emma Stutzman for the new nursing building. Dr. John Stutzman, 1928-2019, was born in Bloomington as the son of Clarence and Clara Stutzman. Clara was a 1923 graduate of the Mennonite Nursing School. In 1972, John married Erma Hunsberger from Ontario Canada, and they resided in Bloomington for many years. John was a graduate of Bluffton College and later became a physician starting a Central Illinois Urology Practice Affiliated Urology. John and Emma later moved to Canada so Emma could be near her family before passing in 2021. One of the first scholarships established for the Mennonite College of Nursing was in memory of John's mother, Clara. For more than 20 years, the Clara Stutzman Endowed Scholarship has helped nursing students with their financial need who demonstrate brotherhood, sharing, and servanthood. The Stutzman family strongly valued education and medicine. As a result, their estate gift designated for the Mennonite College of Nursing will have a profound impact on nursing students and the Nursing Simulation Center. I ask for your approval of this resolution.

Trustee Bohn: May I have a motion and second to approve this resolution?

Trustee Tillis: So moved.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Tillis made the motion. Is there a second?

Trustee Meringa: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Second by Trustee Meringa. Is there any discussion? All those in favor of the resolution, please say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The resolution is approved.

President Tarhule: Thank you. This concludes the resolutions for today.

Trustee Bohn: Thank you. I would now entertain a motion to move into closed session for the purpose of discussing collective negotiating bargaining matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/3C2 to discuss litigation that's been filed and is pending before a

court or administrative tribunal pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2C and for the purpose of discussing minutes of meetings lawfully closed under the Illinois Open Meeting Act pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2C21. I'm sorry. . . the pending before a court of administrative tribunal pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2C11. I forgot that part. May I have a motion and second to move into closed session?

Trustee Tillis: So moved.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Tillis made the motion. Is there a second?

Trustee Russell: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Second by Trustee Russell. Is there any discussion? Hearing no discussion, will Trustee Tillis please call for a roll call vote.

Trustee Tillis: Thank you, Chairperson Bohn. Trustee Bohn.

Trustee Bohn: Yes.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Jenkins.

Trustee Jenkins: Yes.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Jones.

Trustee Jones: Yes.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Merminga.

Trustee Merminga: Yes.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Navarro. Trustee Navarro.

Trustee Jones: That's a leave. He's not on the call right now.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Russell.

Trustee Russell: Yes.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Tillis. Yes.

### **Move to Closed Session**

Trustee Bohn: The motion is approved. We will now move into closed session. Following the closed session, the board will move back into public session solely for the purpose of adjournment. Thank you.

### **Reconvene in Open Session**

The Board of Trustees reconvened to public session at 12:13 p.m.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:14 p.m. The motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Tillis and seconded by Trustee Navarro. All voted in favor – none opposed. Motion carried.