

MINUTES  
Board of Trustees Meeting of Illinois State University  
February 21, 2025

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 9:15 a.m. I note for the record that notice of today's meeting was posted in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act and 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 Navarro, please call the roll.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Bohn.

Trustee Bohn: Present.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Jenkins.

Trustee Jenkins: Present.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Jones.

Trustee Jones: Present.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Merminga.

Trustee Merminga: Present.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Navarro present. Trustee Russell.

Trustee Russell: Present.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Tillis.

Trustee Tillis: Present.

Trustee Navarro: We have a quorum.

**Approval of Agenda**

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

Trustee Jones: Approved.

Trustee Tillis: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Jones made the motion. Second by Trustee Tillis. Is there any discussion? Having no discussion, all those in favor say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The agenda is approved.

At this time we're going to take a moment to congratulate this year's student laureate of the Lincoln Academy of Illinois, Gabriela Ledesma. Gabriela, will you please join me at the podium?

[applause]

Trustee Bohn: I'm short. So I have to bring this down (microphone). [Laughter] Each year, the Lincoln Academy awards one senior student from each of the state's four-year degree-granting colleges and universities for their leadership and service in pursuit of the betterment of humanity and for overall excellence in curricular and extracurricular activities. Gabriela is a senior International Business major at Illinois State University, preparing to graduate in May. Originally from Panama, Gabriela is also a student at the University del Istmo where she will complete her Bachelor's Degree in Maritime Business Administration in December 2026. After graduation, she's planning to pursue a graduate degree. Gabriela's academic achievements are many. In fact, earlier this year she received the most prestigious university-wide honor bestowed on undergraduate students, the Bone Scholarship – no relation to me. [laughter]

This award is presented to undergraduate students who combine excellent academic achievement and community engagement activities on and off campus with exceptional qualities of character and leadership. The competition for this scholarship is rigorous, and she was one of the few students to receive this award for the 2024-2025 academic year. She also received the Country Financial Management Award. The International Business Service Award is an Honor's Degree Program student and has been named on the Dean's List during her academic journey at Illinois State. Gabriela is a very involved student. She has pursued multiple leadership roles, including service as a representative at the General Assembly Commission for Human Rights at Model United Nations, President of Illinois State University's International Business Association, President and Founder of Leadership Panama, mentor for the Illinois State University's College of Business Week Mentor Program, and was a participant in the San Diego State University's International Business Case Competition and the CUIBE International Business Case Competition. She also received fifth place in Central America's Oratory National Contest. Gabriela, we wish you the best as you pursue your future endeavors. Please join me in congratulating Gabriela. [applause and presentation of medallion]

### **Public Comments**

Next on the agenda is Public Comments. We have several persons who've indicated an interest in making public comments to the board today. In accordance with established and recorded policy, the Board of Trustees will allow 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 more than two persons wish to speak on a single item, it is recommended 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 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. I just want to reiterate that we allow 30 minutes for Public Comments, and each speaker has up to five minutes. If they choose to speak a little less, then we have the chance to hear from more speakers. And so having said that, at this time I invite Jessica Rick to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board. [applause]

Jessica Rick: Good morning. My name is Dr. Jessica Rick, and I'm a current ISU faculty member and member of the United Faculty ISU. I'm also a mother of young children and an expert in organizational communication. My area of research is on work-life balance, workplace flexibility, organizational policies, and any leaves associated with those issues. Today I want to draw your attention to our stalemate in contract negotiations regarding paid parental leave for faculty. But first let me tell you my story. When I was pregnant with my second child back here, I was diagnosed with a placenta previa, a placenta accreta, and gestational diabetes. I was considered extremely high risk and unsure if I'd be able to deliver her at the local hospital because I would have put too much strain on the local blood supply. I was at the OB's office several times a week. During that pregnancy, I had a total of 42 prenatal doctor visits and three separate ER visits. I was placed on pelvic rest and had minimal mobility. Luckily, everything worked out okay, and both my daughter and I are here today. But I'm new to ISU and had my daughter almost four years ago. But let me tell you how I would have fared under ISU's current proposal. As a new faculty member, I currently have 45 hours of sick leave. I would not have been able to make half of my prenatal appointments without those 45 hours being used up. What would've happened had I been teaching at ISU. I currently teach four days a week. I would've missed several days of class to go to my doctor's appointments. My life was at risk. I had no other choice. Let's fast forward to my planned C-section delivery. I'm in the hospital for four days. But with your current proposal I have no paid leave options. I used up all my sick leave, and I don't have

any vacation. I also have no unpaid leave options. I'm not eligible for FMLA since I haven't been at ISU for a year. What do I do?

Now let's think about postpartum issues. I did not receive medical clearance to drive until six weeks after giving birth. But according to your current offer I would need to return to work because I could not afford it otherwise. I have all my other bills to pay. I have another child in childcare, and you haven't offered raises concurrent with the cost of living in years. I'm still healing from a major surgery with my leaky body, and I would need to be back at work. No leave options would have been available to me. My situation isn't uncommon. Due to the nature of biological clocks, most faculty members have children before earning tenure. Therefore, they do not have the time to make up sick leave as your current proposal suggests that we do. My current research focuses on how new working parents navigate organizational policies while meeting childcare needs. A large piece of this puzzle is paid parental leave. Many studies have shown that paid parental leave policies benefit infants, organizations, and parents. Most importantly for you, organizations that offer paid parental leave have higher employee satisfaction, less turnover, higher employee engagement, and an edge over their competitors in recruiting and retaining top talent. In fact, many younger workers identified paid parental leave as one of the most important factors when looking for new jobs. ISU offers faculty no paid parental leave, and so far the administration's bargaining team has not been willing to change that. Your team claims we can use our sick time instead of a formal paid policy. I wouldn't have had that option. My sick time would've already been used up. It's not hard to imagine that your employees would need to use their sick days for things like actually being sick. Is it fair that only those who have not been sick or have complicated pregnancies can actually enjoy the paid leave? Other institutions have figured out that this is an essential way to invest in their faculty's mental and physical health. On average, other Illinois public four-year institutions offer three-and-a-half weeks of paid leave. ISU's peer institutions, as listed on your website, offer five weeks of paid leave. Your bargaining team claims that faculty make choices if and when we have children. However, you have chosen not to provide parental leave to your faculty members. Your bargaining team has chosen to stay below average compared to our peer and competing institutions. My research shows that when people feel valued by their employers, they are willing to give more back to their employers.

Trustee Bohn: Your time is almost up.

Jessica Rick: Thank you. You have the choice to make tenure-track faculty feel valued at ISU. If the Board of Trustees wants faculty to continue to teach gladly, we must see meaningful and substantial movement from the administration's bargaining team on the critical issue of paid family leave. Thank you.

[applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Jessica. At this time I invite Joe Zompetti to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board. Joe Zompetti. Probably pronounced that incorrectly. I'm sorry. [applause]

Joseph Zompetti: Good morning. My name is Dr. Joseph Zompetti. I'm a full tenured professor specializing in political messaging in the School of Communication, and I'm also a proud UPI UFIUS union member. During my 21 years here, I have worked with amazing students, have had the honor of representing ISU with three Fulbright grants, have conducted workshops on political and pro-democracy training in places like Bosnia and Burma, and I've also represented ISU in at least 30 countries, taught hundreds of our excellent students, but yet despite everything I have done the administration continues to make excuses to not compensate us with a reasonable salary while continuing to expect us to embrace Redbird pride.

I'm also an alum. While many in our administration were celebrating the most recent holiday season, my wife and I had to retain a bankruptcy attorney. As a result, we are now on a highly structured monthly payment plan that seriously hamstrings our ability to function every single month for the foreseeable future. And I'm not alone. ISU tenure-tracked faculty are straining to provide for their families. Our wages don't keep up with the cost of living. Auto insurance has doubled. Housing and childcare in McLean County have ballooned, yet ISU continues to ignore how our faculty struggle. Higher administration tells us about record enrollments and new projects while they simultaneously claim that they need to make cuts and that they're out of money. But we're not stupid. We know that ISU has hundreds of millions of dollars, but the administration secretly hides its actual finances from their public messaging. If what they say about the finances is even partially true, then their decisions, like a new College of Engineering and hiring a labor buster at nearly half a million dollars who has stalled our union for a year. . . these

kinds of actions are financially reckless and irresponsible. Meanwhile, many of us have to consider bankruptcy just to survive. That shows you where their priorities lie. Now some might say if you feel this way you can quit and go somewhere else. But in the academic world, once we earn tenure it is nearly impossible to transition to another university because those institutions also want to minimize their costs. But that's really beside the point. Look, I love what I teach. I love my colleagues, and I love working with our terrific students. And isn't that why we're here? Shouldn't we create and maintain a university that cultivates, encourages, and values a climate where we are inspired so that we can turn around and inspire our students? Shouldn't our administration value our hard work? And that makes them and our entire institution look good. Shouldn't our faculty, the lifeblood and core reason for the existence of a university, be valued so we can do what all of us in this room really want, to do the best we can in order to help our students be the best they can be?

What we in our union are demanding is not unreasonable. If we were truly valued members of this institution, we wouldn't need to make these demands. And, what's worse, we know the administration can meet our demands, contrary to their claims otherwise. Listen, Board of Trustees, you oversee the president and a litany of vice presidents. And you also endorse and support the rest of higher administration. But if some of these arguments that the administration makes are even partially true, they are either being disingenuous or incompetent. Either way, you really should listen to us. Simply put, as Fannie Lou Hamer once said, we are sick and tired of being sick and tired. My ability to do my job, my lifelong passion to try to make this world a better place, is being invalidated and subverted as I try to just afford basic necessities. You know, a dozen eggs now are almost \$7 in some places. But all of our faculty share that same passion, to do our very best. We are now at that point, though, where we will do what we need to just to survive, including striking, all because the administration arrogantly refuses to do what is fair, just and reasonable. I implore . . .

Trustee Bohn: Your time is almost up.

Joseph Zompetti: . . .you to urgently push your bargaining team to secure an agreement and faculty that we can work and live with. Thank you for listening. [applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Joe. At this time I invite Ashley Farmer to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board. Ashley Farmer. Oh, thank you.

Ashley Farmer: Good morning, everyone, including all of our many members sitting in the overflow room. My name is Ashley Farmer. I am a proud member of UFISU UPI and the lead negotiator for the United Faculty ISU bargaining team. [applause]

My message today is simple. We need a fair contract now. The faculty at ISU are frustrated and angry at the slow pace of negotiations. After almost one year of bargaining, we now have three more mediation sessions on the books. We've requested to meet more often and were told no. So we are here to urge you to tell your bargaining team to do the responsible thing and take the necessary steps to avoid a disruption to student learning because the faculty are ready. We care deeply for ISU, a place that many of us consider our career home, and we care deeply for our students. But if the administration continues to choose the path of antagonism rather than swiftly reaching a fair contract, it could lead to a majority walkout on this campus. I am not just here to tell you this. I'm going to show you. [applause] Many have seen these cards on office doors. This stack represents the tenured and tenure-track faculty who are willing to do whatever it takes to get a fair contract. Everyone in this stack, a militant majority, has committed to vote to authorize a strike, withhold their labor during the strike, and walk a picket line should we fail to reach an agreement in a timely manner. [applause] We want a respectful and productive relationship with the administration, but that cannot happen when their negotiating team chooses brinksmanship, conflict and delay. Direct your team to settle a fair contract now, and then together we can all focus on the issues that lie ahead. Thank you. [applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Ashley. At this time I invite Buffy Zompetti to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board.

Unknown speaker: She just signed on the list to be in attendance.

Trustee Bohn: Oh, okay. Okay. Sorry about that. Okay. I invite Richard Sullivan. I think that's right if I can read it correctly. S-U-L-L-I and then I'm not sure what the last. Richard Sullivan.

Unknown speaker: Again, I think he . . .

Trustee Bohn: He was just signed up to be here. Okay. Aya Hussein. [applause]

Aya Hussein: Good morning. My name is Aya Hussein, and I am a student, junior year, at Illinois State University. And today I speak to the Board of Trustees partly on behalf of Students Justice for Palestine and partly of my own volition. I have had enough of keeping silent, had enough of seeing colleagues come to this very podium to plead with you to come to your senses. And for what? For it to be disregarded with a terribly written e-mail to silence them? Or a half-thought response meant to give you reprieve from thinking of it any more than you already have? If they cannot be heard, then I will come to present to you my own story. The struggles of my own family and my own people and the devolution of my Levant.

First, I must recognize that the strife of my people cannot be represented in five minutes or under, and as such I must make you understand that the very people you wish to hear from are not given enough time to air out their grievances with the state of the university. You speak of community. You paint a picture of our worth in your eyes, and yet you cannot stand to listen to us for an extended period of 30 minutes. As such, for my first demand, I ask from the Board of Trustees the dates and the time it takes for us to speak for the staff, the faculty, and students that truly make this university work. I have two cousins who I have never hugged, for war has torn us apart and across worlds. I have ailing grandparents that I cannot come to serve as they have served me when I was sick and young. My friends I will never come to see again, never come to celebrate their achievements, to give them a bittersweet goodbye as many within this country are given the opportunity to. I am constantly checking the news, constantly worrying about never properly saying goodbye to my family should next week hellfire rain upon them. And yet for all of this injustice and all the fear that stirs within my heart, I have not seen the worst of it. I have seen corpses piled on top of one another, children dismembered, mothers in need of carrying their beloved in both life and death. I have seen fathers unable to speak to their sons about the beauty of life, marriages forged too early in life for the fear of having never known love before the inevitable.

And in all of this I am reminded of when the SJP hosted the Week of Rage, how by the end of it we came together to mourn as we read the poetry and stories of those who have yearned for the very freedom that could so easily be given to them. And I remember how I cried and forced myself to read, how it felt as though the world was crashing on me, and yet I forced myself to read, how I imagined our very administration too happy to listen to the jingle in their pockets to hear the hoarseness in my voice. And still I forced myself to read. And I am not alone; 318 members of our local community have endorsed divestment. Will you tune them out, too? How long until the very students you welcome as a part of your diversity can feel as though they truly belong?

The next few words go to none other than President Tarhule. I have heard that you protested the apartheid of South Africa. So then I must ask, do you remember the way your blood boiled? How did you cry out with the crowd? Did you raise your voice at all? Did you feel the way the fear within you goes for every passing moment you spent out in the cold, chanting to be a voice that others cannot? I still feel it, and I only hope that you can remember. Thank you. [applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Aya. At this time I invite Aidan Marcikic – I'm sure I mispronounced that – to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board.

Aidan Marcikic: Good morning. Faculty, students, staff, President Tarhule, and of course the undemocratically elected, or not elected, appointed Board of Trustees who hence forth will be referred as genocide profiteers, highlighting the true nature of their position. I come to you today as a member for Students for Justice in Palestine but especially as a fellow community member similarly engaged in this vibrant academic environment, all of which is made possible through us and, of course, not through the ineptitude of these individuals to my left. Unfortunately, though, I do not speak to you in just times. If our system was just there would be no need for me to be up here. I must speak as our earth, as our community, our university is on a geopolitical knife's edge. Climate in imperialist capitalist homophobic injustices run rampant in our community as our university continues to shift responsibility from itself onto the people most in need of institutional support, all under the guise of apolitical leadership.

Yet again and again we see the subversive commitments to neutral spaces, apoliticism, which obscures the very real, very political decisions, which is, of course, their goal. For instance, continuing to ignore the existence of an ongoing Palestinian genocide while simultaneously accepting donations and investing in companies actively doing harm, such as HP and Siemens, a conservative, short-sighted, cold, calculated, political choice. For you are hypocrites at best and genocide profiteers at worst. I implore audience members to think of examples of other contradictory “apolitical choices”, examples of which I’m sure are readily available. All right.

To be frank, genocide profiteers, nothing as a mother, a father, a sister, brother, grandma, grandpa, uncle, aunts, president, friend, activist, researcher, trustee, dean, teacher, student, mentor, advisor, mobilizer, or organizer will ever be enough to outweigh your continued support for the ethnic cleansing, murder, and oppression of the Palestinian people. If you had any morals at all, all this shame, this guilt should rightfully eat at you every single night you stare at that ceiling trying to fall asleep, every single moment you breathe in those shoddy thrones at you continue your miserable work. But as you might have figured, the focus should not be on the genocide profiteers after all. They are simply willing cogs that only move out of self interest in a death-making system. Then, of course, there will never be a moral platitude convincing or satisfying enough when these ghoulish genocide profiteers see fellow human beings as simply dollar signs on a one-way street. The focus should be on us, the people doing the work, and that we don’t listen to them, and that our organized numbers simply imply that they answer to us.

We have the inalienable steel rod of collective power within our grasp, and our role is simply a matter of jamming it through these clogs to put a stop to their death-making careers. Only our level of ambition will determine how deep this rod is lodged and will determine whether our actions will be enough to free us from the shackles of this destructive, disembodied, and unelected Board of Trustees. Regardless of their beloved bylaws, their formalities, and their apparatuses which they use to silence and oppress us, like simply refusing to extend time on public comments or a noise citation for chanting our collective for will for true justice and liberation for all is really what will remake this university anew.

Trustee Bohn: Your time is almost up.

Aidan Marcikic: In the words of late Diane di Prima, a prolific organizer, activist, and poet, the taste in all of our mouths is the taste of our power, and it is as bitter as death. I thank you for your time. [applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Aidan: At this time I invite Caleb Wiessing to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board.

Caleb Wiessing: Hello. My name is Caleb Wiessing. I am here today to speak partly on behalf of the Students for Justice in Palestine. Even more so I'm here to speak for my nearly three years' experience at this university. To sum up my time in one word, I'm tired. We are tired. This is my second time speaking at a Board of Trustees meeting for public comment, my third time speaking my peace regarding our demands as an organization, and my fourth time attending a Board of Trustees meeting listening to my peers and professors share their vision for a just university that we can all be proud of.

In my opinion, we students are not asking for a lot. We humbly implore you to divest your money from companies tied to the nation of Israel, a terroristic nation hellbent on eradicating the Palestinian way of life. We ask that you divest from Siemens, HP, and subsidiary Indigo America, and Caterpillar. At this point it seems redundant to describe the ways in which these companies contribute to the modern apartheid and subsequent war crimes against Palestinians. You know what they do, and you know how your financial ties assist in heinous acts. That we have told you time and time again. We have our list of demands with us. Read them if you haven't, and read them again if you have. Respond to us and work with us and give us the transparency that we owe. We have stated plainly and tirelessly how your complicity in financial ties with the companies formerly stated goes against your supposed values as an institution. If you truly value a campus that fosters inclusivity, diversity, and equity, you would enact tangible change towards this vision. Yet every change I have witnessed at this university appears to be drive by financial gain.

In addition, the new Excellence by Design strategic plan states Illinois State University prepares students to be informed, ethical, and engaged global leaders who will shape, uphold, and advance civic engagement as a lifelong responsibility for the betterment of society. Your goal is to instill the responsibility of civic engagement. So here we are, the exemplary students who fulfill your vision for the student body attempting to better society. Yet the very engagement you wish for us to embody falls on deaf ears. How can you expect students to continue civic engagement for a lifetime if you can't respond to us now? I wish there were more students here, asking questions and making comments about the important changes they hope to see. But what would it matter to them if nothing would come of it? This hypocritical foundation of the trustee system at ISU is a travesty, personally speaking. I only ask that you take the time now to align your actions with your views and take the responsibility upon yourselves to listen to us, the students and faculty alike. Thank you. [applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Caleb. At this time I invite Benjamin Rodriguez to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board. [applause]

Benjamin Rodriguez: Good evening, everyone, and thank you so much for coming out so early in the morning. And what a stressful time it is as everyone is sharing their criticisms of ISU administration, the Board of Trustees, Tarhule himself for the lack of transparency, for their lack of initiative when it comes to solving the problems on campus that concern students, staff, and faculty. Let's name the lie that we've been fed. ISU sells itself as a gateway to opportunity. But what does that actually mean? For most of us, it means drowning in debt, scrambling to pay rent in a town controlled by corporate landlords, and chasing a degree that trains us to prop up this rigid system. We're told to become good economic actors. But let's call it what it is, cogs in a machine that prioritizes profit over care for the people that make up ISU, that make it so beautiful.

Career Services teaches us to polish resumes, not fight for living wages. Gen Ed classes encode us to pay extra money for things that are not related to our degree while gutting courses on climate justice or anything concerning Palestine. Internships sell unpaid labor as experience while businesses pocket the profits. This isn't education. This is a credential factory, a conveyor belt stamping us with debt and funneling us into jobs that exploit us. When Tarhule brags about record enrollment, he's not celebrating us. He's counting tuition dollars. Let's dissect Tarhule's latest masterpiece of hypocrisy. His e-mail claims federal directives require us to dismantle race-based programming. Our institutional resiliency steering team will ensure compliance. Here's the translation. Federal directives are a license to slash scholarships for black, Latino, and indigenous students. Resilience is a euphemism for protecting ISU's endowment, not its people. And compliance within 14 days is a mad dash to appease politicians while ignoring the safety concerns of our students, staff, and faculty. Tarhule boasts of leveraging partnerships with peer institutions. Let's name those peers.

Universities bankrolling apartheid, an administration that prioritizes corporate donors over student survival. This isn't leadership; it's complicity. They claim neutrality, but their actions scream collusion. Over \$400,000,000 in the ISU Foundation while our students rely on food pantries. Over a million dollars spent on a useless staircase while claiming that they will put their full cooperation with ICE to deport our peers with zero protection for undocumented students. When the law enforces genocide and inequality, compliance is cowardice. We don't need their steering team. We need our own. Here's how we dismantle the factory. Divestment audit. Expose every dollar ISU funnels into Caterpillar, Siemens, and slum lords like SAMI, redefine resilience to meaningful action by redirecting ISU Foundation funds to universal housing, legal aid, and scholarships they try to erase. And help form a student bill of rights that advocates for a ban on collaborating with ICE as well as investments in companies complicit in genocide. Through a mutual aid network, workshops in developing a rapid response network, we can work to keep each other safe because we cannot rely on ISU to fulfill that mission. Pack board meeting with stories of mold-filled apartments and empty stomachs, teach what they won't, climate justice, anticolonial organizing, community care, and withhold tuition until they divest from death and invest in us.

Tarhule ends his e-mail with I thank you for your patience and resilience. We're done being patient. We're done surviving their resiliency. You're told to stay apolitical, but politics is in the tuition hikes, the racist policies, the stairways built while departments starve. We won't burn this factory down. We'll repurpose it. As Diane di Prima wrote, the only war that matters is the war against the imagination. Let's fight it and win. Our university, our power, our future. And just as a quick note . . .

Trustee Bohn: Your time is almost up.

Benjamin Rodriguez: Thank you. As a quick note, I would ask every student, staff, and faculty member to please communicate with each other in this very scary and volatile time in so many peoples' lives. Your students need you. Your peers need you. Your friends need you.

Trustee Bohn: Your time is up.

Benjamin Rodriguez: Thank you.

Trustee Bohn: Thank you. [applause] Thank you, Benjamin. We have about two to three minutes left, and I would invite Anthony Espinoza to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board.

Anthony Espinoza: My name is Anthony Espinoza, and I'm a first-generation Latino senior student with a major in Spanish Education and a minor in Latino Studies. At ISU I have found a community of other Latinos like me. I am striving to work with them to make ISU a place where we belong. For the past three years I have worked with ALAS and other organizations to do just that, and we have succeeded to some degree. I am here today because our community has been speaking with no one to hear us. If you do not know what is happening in Chicago right now, I strongly urge you to get informed. It is a service to the students who are supposed to serve that our pleas for help have gone unanswered. I say unanswered because a simple e-mail we received felt like nothing more than an attempt to save face when your students are under attack, especially since ISU is very close to becoming an emerging HSI. After meeting with various groups of students at ISU, we have come to have these demands met. We demand ISUPD and ISU Admin not comply/work with ICE if and when they arrive. We demand a centralized web page with a list of resources for DACA and undocumented student resources. The current page on the website has not been updated since 2022, and as such it needs to be updated with current resources. The people listed there to contact – but are they even knowledgeable enough to help us? We demand a knowledgeable and certified undocumented support liaison and a permanent chief of diversity and inclusion officer. Right now there is an interim in this position, but we have yet to even hear from this person regarding our students that are under direct fire from these raids. Where are they and why haven't they reached out to us.

We demand no pre-compliance/overcompliance with a Dear Colleague letter. We have read the letter, and we know what it aims to do. It is not law. I will say that again. It is not law. And until it is and wins the court cases it will be hit with, we demand the university not comply with these demands. We demand the university set up plans for when ICE visits. We want defined safe places, a rapid communication response network, resources, color-coded maps of the university and safety levels. We want this to be added to the centralized network and have a map physically be present in the high-student areas like the Bone and in the Redbird Safety App. We demand a student resource center. NIU has an excellent model for what the liaison and the center should look like. They have the resources for all kinds of issues and situations that our community faces, and we need to follow their example. We demand an immigration lawyer on retainer to support students if necessary and more legal support in general for students. Samantha is currently the only student lawyer and has no legal experience with immigration law. Many other campuses have a separate immigration law support. Why can't we?

Last but not least, the reinforcement of DEI values. We should not be scared of having our safe place and be threatened when we have worked and fought so hard for them. It would be a dishonor and disgrace to lose them now. We, as students, spend so much money to be here. Yet many of us don't even feel safe here because of a lack of attention and resources we get. We understand that this university is struggling financially, but we the students should not suffer for the lack of planning on the part of the Board of Trustees. I will end my statement with a chant. No hate, no fear, immigrants are welcome here. And best believe, we will fight until that statement is true. Thank you. [applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Anthony. That concludes the public comments for today.

Chanting by several people: No hate, no fear, immigrants [inaudible]

Trustee Bohn: As many of you know, Dr. Glen Nelson . . .

Chanting by several people: No hate, no fear, immigrants are welcome here. No hate, no fear, immigrants are welcome here. No hate, no fear, immigrants are welcome here.

[Pounding of the gavel].

Trustee Bohn: As many of you know, Dr. Glen Nelson recently joined Illinois State University as Vice President for Finance and Planning, replacing Interim Vice President for Finance and Planning, Dan Petree, who previously served as Treasurer. I believe President Tarhule will formally introduce Dr. Nelson a bit later this morning. At this time, it is the duty of the board to select from the university staff an employee to serve as treasurer of the Board of Trustees. The treasurer serves in an ex-officio capacity and receives and disperses all monies and reports to the Board of Trustees on the financial status and fiscal affairs of the university. At Illinois State, that person traditionally has been the Vice President for Finance and Planning. We will continue with that tradition, so Vice President for Finance and Planning, Dr. Glen Nelson, will serve as Treasurer.

Good morning and thank you for joining us for today's meeting of the Board of Trustees on February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025. Earlier this morning, the Campus Communication Committee hosted a highly informative discussion hour. I want to thank Cobi Blair, Student Body President, for his presentation regarding the Student Government Association. As you know, SGA has been in existence for more than a hundred years, serving as the official student governing body at Illinois State and a strong member of our university's shared governance. We have enjoyed participating in this year's founding celebration activities and appreciate the opportunity to acknowledge the achievements of our students, employees, and alumni. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to extend my sincere congratulations to all faculty and staff award winners recognized this week.

Additionally, President Tarhule has kept the board informed on the progress of the RISE initiative. I'm pleased to hear that the project is moving forward. The RISE Task Force and Grant Thornton as well as other campus stakeholders are working collaboratively toward the goal of developing a new and sustainable university budget process. I look forward to hearing more about the RISE town hall forums that are scheduled for next week. Although we will formally recognize Trustee Julie Annette Jones at the end of today's meeting, I want to end my comments today by extending my most sincere appreciation for the leadership and dedication that Trustee Jones has demonstrated throughout her tenure on the Board of Trustees. She has been steadfast in her commitment to students, faculty, and staff and the board. She's thoughtful in her decision making, always a strong advocate for students, and a proud Redbird. Thank you, Trustee Jones.

[applause]

I will now turn to President Aondover Tarhule for his remarks.

### **President's Remarks**

President Tarhule: Thank you, Trustee Bohn, and good morning. I would also like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Gabriela Ledesma on her selection as Illinois State Student Laureate of the Lincoln Academy of Illinois. Additionally, thank you to Cobi Blair for your presentation this morning. I have enjoyed working with you this year as Student Body President and recognize the important role of SGA in Illinois State's shared governance.

I want to begin my comments by reiterating that the university is closely monitoring and analyzing federal directives and how each directive impacts Illinois State University and members of our Redbird community. As I stated earlier this week in a message to students, faculty, and staff, I recognize the confusion these directives may cause and want to reiterate that our intent is to uphold the values of Illinois State University and to follow the law. As the landscape is quickly evolving, I have convened an institutional resiliency steering committee that will work with the Office of General Counsel to advise leadership regarding potential impacts of current and future directives on institutional policies, practices and initiatives. This team will collaborate with stakeholders and advisors from across the university to assess the directives and recommend suitable actions to the cabinet. I will provide updates to the campus community as appropriate. Additionally, we are working to develop a website to help keep our community informed. I am confident that together we will successfully navigate these developments. I thank you for your patience and resilience as our teams work through the many details and impacts of these directives.

At this time, I would like to introduce Dr. Glen Nelson, Illinois State's new Vice President for Finance and Planning. Dr. Nelson joined Illinois State University on January 6 after a national search. He most recently served as the Vice President for Administration and Finance/Chief Financial Officer at California State University Monterey Bay and brings 27 years of experience in senior leadership positions at a system, university, and college levels. I look forward to working closely with Glen, especially as we work collaboratively with Grant Thornton, the RISE Task Force, and our campus partners on the RISE initiatives. Glen, will you please rise so we may give you a warm Illinois State welcome. [applause] Thank you.

Additionally, I'd like to introduce Carlos Garcia, who joined Illinois State on December 2<sup>nd</sup> as Associate Vice President for Financial Administration and Comptroller in the Division of Finance and Planning. As a member of the Finance and Planning leadership team, he serves as Illinois State's Chief Accountant and ensures compliance with all applicable university, state, and federal regulations and policies and provides financial stewardship, vision, and innovation to implement best practices in support of the university's strategic plan. Carlos, would you please stand so we can give you a warm Redbird welcome. [applause] Thank you.

With the introduction of our new members of the Finance and Planning leadership team, this seems like an appropriate time to provide a brief update on the RISE initiative. Illinois State University, with input from the campus community through the RISE Task Force, has begun an effort to enhance strategic budgeting practices to promote mission focus, sustainability, accountability, and transparency across the institution. The university is partnering with external consultant Grant Thornton to closely review current processes for budgeting and financial planning. The process review is intended to identify enhancement opportunities to increase alignment and design new budgeting processes that will position the university for continued success. I want to encourage members of our community to attend one of the RISE Town Hall Forums at 3 p.m. on February 25<sup>th</sup> or 10:30 a.m. on February 26<sup>th</sup> in the Brown Ballroom. In these, we will learn more about the redesign project and guiding principles governing the redesign. Significantly, we want to hear from all stakeholders, because no one person has all the right answers. Working together we can design a process that works best for Illinois State University now and for the future.

The institutional Action Committee of the Higher Learning Commission has recently reaffirmed Illinois State University's accreditation through 2034-2035 academic year. This decision affirms that Illinois State University meets established higher education standards, which ensures recognition by state and federal bodies. Accreditation is important for students, because many employers and graduate schools require degrees from accredited institutions.

I'm happy to report that Spring 2025 enrollment remains strong with 20,114 students, an increase of 2.7% from Spring 2024. The retention of new FTIC students is very exciting with nearly 95% of our FTIC students returning for the spring term. This is the highest fall to spring term retention that we have seen in ten years. Additionally, freshman applications, admits, and deposits are also trending up for the fall 2025 term as well as applications and admits for new transfer students.

I'd like to take a moment to recognize our undergraduate and graduate students who participated in the annual Image of Research competition hosted by the Office of Student Research. Students from across campus are invited to submit one static image of their research innovation or creative inquiry along with a short abstract that explains the image and its connection to their project. Entries are then evaluated by a professional artist and creatives who judge the submissions for visual impact, uniqueness, and clarity of connection between image, text, and project. I invite you to learn about their research by browsing the posters displayed around the room today. And speaking of research, for the fourth year in a row there has been an increase in participation in the University Research Symposium. And for the second year in a row, the Center for Integrated Professional Development partnered with the symposium to print posters at no cost to the student presenters from units that do not provide poster printing assistance.

The graduate school is proud to announce that the Helen Plevka-Jones from the Department of English as the Clarence W. Sorenson Distinguished Dissertation Award recipient. The Sorenson Award recognizes dissertations of the highest quality, which are nominated in the fall semester by academic departments and schools. The competition is open to students who have earned a doctorate at Illinois State University during the preceding fall, spring, or summer term. For the second year in a row, an Illinois State student has been named the Research Assistant of the

Year by the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center's Construction Engineering Research Laboratory or ERDC-CERL. Bob Skudnig is a graduate student in the Accelerated Peer and Applied Mathematics Program and is expected to complete his degree this spring. ERDC-CERL is part of the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Its mission is to discover, develop, deliver, and sustain innovative engineering and scientific solutions to address the most demanding challenges faced by the military and the nation.

Among Illinois State's numerous points of pride is the civic engagement of our campus community. According to data from the McLean County Clerk's Office, 3,586 people voted in the Bone Student Center during early voting, and 3,233 people voted in the Bone Student Center on election day. Both numbers represent record-breaking voter turnout since the campus location became a universal polling place open to all registered county voters. The Center for Civic Engagement presented a Collaboratory Civic Engagement Champion Award which recognized a continued partnership between Tanya Scott's Art 204 class, the Boys and Girls Club, and University Galleries that has served over 200 Illinois State students and at least 150 Boys and Girls Club youth over the past five years. The ISU community further demonstrated its commitment to local youth again this year through the Holiday Helper Initiative providing gifts to 261 children served by five partner organizations, the Boys and Girls Club, Western Avenue Community Center, the Center for Youth and Family Solutions, Lifelong Access, and the YWCA.

As the calendar has moved to a new year, Redbird Athletics has strong momentum moving into the spring season. The end of 2024 rounded out strong for the Redbirds as the football team made it to the FCS playoffs for the first time in five seasons and picked up a first-round win at Southeast Missouri State before falling in the second round to number five national seed, UC Davis, on the road. In December, over 20 current and former Redbird student athletes received degrees as part of winter commencement ceremonies. As the calendar moved to January, student athletes and fans were treated to the new Doug Collins Court at CEFCU Arena. Thanks to the generous support of donors and supporters, the new court will serve Redbird community athletes for years to come and continue to make CEFCU Arena one of the best venues in the MVC and in the Midwest. The women's basketball team held its annual Play4Kay game in support of the Kay Yow Cancer Fund. The Kay Yow Cancer Fund has recognized Illinois State as a national winner for its fundraising efforts. And this year ISU went even bigger, raising the most money to date with over \$40,000 pledged and donated. We are grateful for our donor support and certainly do not take their investment in Illinois State for granted. It seems appropriate to share that Illinois State advancement reports of fiscal year 2025 product support production is over \$30,900,000 as of February 12<sup>th</sup>, already exceeding the fiscal-year goal of \$29,000,000 by more than 6.5%. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge Jim and Carol Mounier for naming the Jim and Carol Mounier Golf Performance Lab which is included on today's consent agenda. We appreciate your continued generosity which will make a difference in the lives of our current and future students. Illinois State's seventh annual Birds Give Back Day of Giving will be on Thursday, February 27<sup>th</sup>. Please mark your calendars and visit [BirdsGiveBack@illinoisstate.edu](mailto:BirdsGiveBack@illinoisstate.edu) to give to your favorite campus department or area. When we reach our goal of 4,000 gifts, it will lock a \$960,000 gift to support scholarships at Illinois State University.

Alumni Engagement recently hosted inaugural LGBTQA+ Alumni Reunion Weekend, a celebration of pride, community, and connection. Alumni enjoyed a weekend of events, campus tours, and a film festival at the Normal Theater.

Before I conclude my remarks, I want to welcome Mary O'Mahoney, who will serve as Illinois State's next Executive Director of Well-Being and Recreation. Mary joins us from California State University Bakersfield where she has been Director of Campus Recreation and Well-Being since 2014. This role also marks a homecoming for Mary, as she previously served as Illinois State's Associate Director of Campus Recreation from 2013 to 2014. Mary, if you're in the audience, please stand so we may recognize you. [applause] And as we welcome Mary, we must also celebrate Dawn Pote, who is retiring as Executive Director for Well-Being and Recreation on March 1 with over 15 years of service at the university. Dawn began her Student Affairs career in 1986 while working for Campus Recreation at Illinois State and earning her Master's Degree in Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Administration. She returned to Illinois State in 2009 when she once again joined Campus Recreation, this time as Executive Director. Dawn, if you are in the audience, please rise so we may recognize you. [applause]

Please also join me in celebrating Jill Benson, Associate Dean of Students, who will retire from Illinois State University on March 1 after 31 years of dedicated service. Jill's career in Student Affairs began at Illinois State University in August 1994 as Assistant Director in the Office of Student Life. She went on to serve as Director of

the Office of Student Life in 1999 and was appointed Associate Dean of Students in 2005. Throughout her tenure she has been deeply involved in nearly every aspect of the Dean of Students Office, including most recently the Dean on Duty Program, Parent and Family Services, Student Navigators, commencement, and the Student Organization Fee Board. Unfortunately, Jill is not able to join us this morning, but please let's acknowledge her service with a round of applause. [applause]

And lastly, at Mennonite College of Nursing, Dr. Judy Neubrander has announced that she will return to faculty effective June 30, 2025. We are grateful to Dean Neubrander for her commitment to the college over the last nine years. She has developed a strong foundation upon which a future dean will be able to build. Notably, the college grew 55% under Judy's leadership, secured funding through a partnership with Memorial Health, and opened an instruction center in Springfield, and most recently opened a new 16,000 square foot additional simulation center on campus. A national search will take place next academic year. Please join me in thanking Judy for her leadership in the Mennonite College of Nursing. [applause] I don't know if Judy is in the audience.

Trustee Bohn: She's not.

President Tarhule: She's not. Okay. With that, I would like to call on today's spokesperson for the Campus Communication Committee, Dr. Martha Horst. Dr. Horst is a Professor of Music Theory and Composition in the School of Music. She has served as Chair of the Academic Senate since 2021 as chairperson of the Campus Communication Committee, and as co-Chair of the RISE Task Force. Dr. Horst. [applause]

Dr. Horst: The Campus Communication Committee wishes to thank Cobi Blair, Student Body President, for his presentation on the Student Government Association this morning to the Board of Trustees. This organization is more than 100 years old and has been part of Illinois State University from almost the very beginning. Its longevity is a testament to the strength of shared governance here at Illinois State University. Members of the Campus Communication Committee who are also serving on the RISE Task Force wish to report that they are satisfied with the progress made so far with the consultants from Grant Thornton. Grant Thornton has worked with the task force to create a Guiding Principles document which was endorsed by the Academic Senate at its meeting on February 19<sup>th</sup>. This process will not be easy or quick. We feel confident that Grant Thornton will help the university achieve a solid financial outlook at the end of our collaboration. The Campus Communication Committee wishes to commend our administration's handling of the rapidly changing policy landscape that we have all experienced in these first few weeks of the new presidential administration. We appreciate the e-mails that President Tarhule sent addressing the announced and then retracted statement regarding the proposal to freeze federal grant funding. This was deeply concerning to many of us, and we appreciated the timely communication from the administration.

Another policy item that is rapidly changing is the federal government's position on Title IX. We appreciated OEOA Director Ashley Pritts's briefing on the evolution of Title IX regulations and procedures during the Academic Senate meeting of January 22, 2025. We hope that this office continues to have open conversations with shared governance groups about this evolving area of the law. In this letter we hope to bring forward to the Board of Trustees not only points of pride but also points of improvement for our university going forward. The Campus Communication Committee notes a pattern of discordant labor relations at Illinois State University spanning across multiple presidents. The Board of Trustees has heard testimony several times over the past years of continuing frustration expressed by multiple unions during the negotiation process. During President Dietz's tenure in 2019, Renee Nestler representing ASFCME Locals 1110 and 3236 discussed the low morale amongst union members resulting from frustrating negotiations. In 2020, Rebecca Forsythe, a member of SEIU Local 73 stated to the board that what she's seen in the bargaining room is a lack of collaboration in any capacity. The negotiation team draws out the negotiation process for as long as possible, showing a clear lack of collaboration in trying to achieve a fair contract for all. In 2022, during President Kinzy's tenure, Ms. Nestler visited the board and stated that far too many times the university dismisses what we tell them. We demand change. We demand that ISU has front-line workers makes them a priority, and we demand respect. In 2024, during President Tarhule's tenure, Dr. Akman of United Faculty ISU commented to the board that the administration team has refused to even discuss any of our economic proposals until everything they deemed non-economic has been settled. Our members start another year feeling undervalued, overworked, and underpaid. Just this year the ISUEA Union and the United Faculty of ISU both resorted to bringing in a federal mediator. This continuing discord between ISU and its staff, faculty, and student unions affects the entire campus community. Left unchecked, it could potentially create a negative public image for

Illinois State University. We call on the Board of Trustees to work with the administration to develop strategies for building a more productive and collaborative relationship with union groups at Illinois State University.

We close this letter mindful of the strong legacy of Illinois State University that we all celebrate every year on Founder's Day. We hope that through open communication and dialogue such as through this letter are university will continue to thrive for years to come. [applause]

President Tarhule: Thank you, Martha. 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 for this opportunity to address the board. I am Brad Franke and serve as the university's Director of Public Affairs and Policy and oversee the university's state and federal government affairs. This morning I will provide an update on legislative session in Springfield, ISU's legislative priorities and legislation that ISU is currently monitoring. In Springfield, session is underway, and the deadline for filing new bills has now passed. We have a good idea of what to expect this spring regarding legislation that could impact the university and higher education. Session will continue through the end of May as bills move through the legislative process. We are certainly monitoring all bills pertaining to ISU and higher education and having conversations with the appropriate personnel regarding these bills. Additionally, ISU will continue to work with state legislators and the Capital Development Board regarding the construction and completion of the new STEM building, and we continue to advocate for increased operational funding through the state budget. As you may be aware, the university's operating funds would increase 3% under the budget presented by Governor J.B. Pritzker during his State of the State and Budget Address on Wednesday, February 19<sup>th</sup>. The \$2,398,000 increase from FY25 would provide ISU with a total general fund appropriation of \$82,205,000 for the coming fiscal year beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>. Additionally, we are watching a variety of bills that, if passed, would have an impact on ISU and higher ed in general. Senate Bill 1987 would appropriate \$6,000,000 in financial assistance to ISU for the purpose of a state-mandated special ed teacher waiver tuition program. House Bill 2332 would change university police retirement age eligibility to 55 from 60. This would match State Police policy and aim to help our recruitment efforts. Senate Bill 1988 would protect public media broadcasters on higher education campuses from civil action and firings based on the content being broadcasted. Senate Bill 2482 and House Bill 3717 (these are the same bill filed in each chamber) would allow community colleges in the state the ability to give out baccalaureate degrees. This is a governor's office priority, and we are working with the sponsors, stakeholders, and the governor's office on best practices regarding the content of this bill. Senate Bill 13 and House Bill 1581 (again, the same bill filed in each chamber) are the equitable funding formula for public universities legislation. Conversations between sponsors and stakeholders are ongoing. Regular meetings are taking place, and ISU will continue to be present in these negotiations.

Senate Bill 1748 would allow capital projects at public universities under \$2,000,000 to not need approval from the State Board of Higher Ed. House Bill 2930 would allow higher ed institutions to manage their own capital projects under \$20,000,000. House Bill 3522 would establish a direct admission program for public universities. This legislation is a State Board of Higher Ed priority. That concludes my report. Happy to answer any questions.

Trustee Bohn: On the equitable funding formula – that, as I understand it, it is for new money that would be appropriated.

Brad Franke: That's correct.

Trustee Bohn: And have we been made aware that there is a possibility of any new money?

Brad Franke: Not at this time.

Trustee Bohn: Thank you.

Brad Franke: Thank you.

President Tarhule: Thank you, Brad. There's one report today. The FY24 Grants and Contracts Report. This FY24 Grants and Contracts Report captures grants and contracts directed through Illinois State University's restricted

account monies by research and sponsored programs. ISU is committed to making a positive impact in our community through our scholarly and creative activities, student experiential learning, and university outreach. Our students, faculty, and staff engage in research, creative scholarly activities, or other forms of scholarly activities to that end. ISU has a long tradition of strong internal support for scholarship, including through programs like the recent Advancing Research and Creative Scholarship Program and the University Research Grant Program. In addition to the support we provide internally, external funding sources make substantial contributions to advancing these efforts. The work made possible by such funding supports the university's strategic direction to elevate institution excellence as outlined in Excellence by Design which supplanted Educate, Connect, Elevate in FY25.

External support, and more often the expenditures using that support, is a key factor in several rankings for the university, including our recent Carnegie classification as research to high research spending and doctoral production. Support comes through various channels (e.g., grants, contracts, agency dollars, and foundation support) and for several functions, including research, instruction, public service. This report captures the grants and contracts directed through Illinois State University's restricted accounts managed by research and sponsored programs. Are there any questions relating to this report?

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Jenkins.

Trustee Jenkins: Thank you, Madam Chair. I apologize to my fellow trustees for a little windup here. But since we don't live kind of in a free resource utopia envisioned by some of our speakers today and we have to live in a world of scarce resources, diminishing public reception of higher education, a wafer-thin budget margin, previous anemic support from state government, and a federal government prepared to impose its will by any means necessary on the inclusive values of ISU – with that context in mind, could you talk a little bit about how something seemingly as small as reducing the overhead on federal grants that ISU receives can put at risk our budget, can put at risk salaries of staff, can put at risk our Carnegie classification, and ultimately put at risk our ability to be an institution of higher learning that is well respected?

President Tarhule: Yes. Thank you so much for that question, Trustee Jenkins. So just to give a background, when we apply for research grants from the federal government there is what we call direct components of the research. That is how much money we need to do the research. But there is also substantial cost associated with managing that research and making sure that it gets done. This is called indirect cost, sometimes referred to as F&A. The federal government recognizes that there are real costs associated with managing research. Somebody has to get the money. Somebody has to approve the money. Somebody has to search the compliance. We need to use utilities. We need to use space and equipment, all the technology, all that the university has to make sure that grant runs. So the federal government has traditionally negotiated what these cost rates are with universities. For us I believe it's 48.5% that we've negotiated. The new directive is to cut that amount down to 15%. For us that translates to about \$238,000 lost in real money to support the research. One of two things will have to happen. Either the university comes up with that money to make up that money to make sure the research gets done, or we don't do the research. And if you don't do the research, this changes your classification as a research institution. So as we get to the point where more and more of the monies that we need to do research, to support research, cannot be provided by the university, as you rightly say given very tight fiscal situations, we'll give up a lot of ability to do research, and therefore we may no longer remain a Research 2 university. So it looks small. It looks like it's a minor step, but in fact it could completely change the identity and character of what Illinois State University is.

Trustee Jenkins: Thank you.

Trustee Bohn: Are there any other questions or comments? Okay.

### **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 even the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered at the appropriate on the agenda. Do any trustees wish to have any items removed from the Consent Agenda? Okay. Hearing none, may I have a motion and a second to approve the Consent Agenda items A through E?

Trustee Russell: So moved.

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

Trustee Jones: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Second, Trustee Jones. Is there any discussion? Trustee Meringa.

Trustee Meringa: Thank you. I would like to bring up two corrections to the minutes of the November 7<sup>th</sup> Board of Trustees Retreat. In two places Trustee Ash Ebikhumi is named in lieu of Trustee Ryan Russell, so I request the corrections to be made please.

Trustee Bohn: Thank you. So this is on page 2 and 3 of those minutes for the trustees. So all those in favor of the resolution with November 7<sup>th</sup> and November 8<sup>th</sup> corrections on page 2 and 3, please say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? Items included on the Consent Agenda are approved. President Tarhule, please proceed with the resolutions.

### **Resolutions**

President Tarhule: Thank you, Chairperson Bohn.

#### **Resolution 2025.02/04. Approval of Tuition Fees, Room and Board Rates for Academic Year 2025 to 2026.**

Setting tuition and fees is always a complex exercise. It requires balancing on the one hand affordability for students and their families and, on the other hand, the resources necessary for maintaining high educational standards while also managing the increasing cost of campus operations. For fall 2025, there is no proposed increase in tuition or mandatory student fees. But housing continues to be impacted operationally due to expense increases, including but not limited to utilities, facilities maintenance and repairs, property insurance, university overhead and scholarships. In addition, personnel costs have increased due to minimum wage law. With approval of the Board of Trustees, room and board costs will increase 5% over academic year 2024-2025. With this increase, services will continue to be funded to meet operational costs, provide funds for debt relief, and fulfill repair and replacement reserve requirements. If approved, the overall cost to new undergraduate students and programs with differential tuition will be \$29,942, an increase of \$578 or 2.2% compared to FY2025. For all other new undergraduate students, the total cost will be \$28,132, an increase of \$578 or 2.1% compared to FY25. I ask for your approval of 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 Meringa: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Meringa second. Is there any discussion? Trustee Russell.

Trustee Russell: Yeah, I'd like to just add in something. I think when it comes to student fees and student expenses it's important to hear from student groups and student constituents. So I wanted to read an e-mail that the association of our residence hall president had sent in alongside their vice president, because I think it's important for all of the board to hear. It goes, "After a conversation among the leadership associations, diversity coalition, ARH Executive Board, and all other students in attendance, an official vote was held. After tallying the votes, ARH leadership and members would formally support a budgetary increase of 5%. With this decision we trust that both departments will be good stewards of this money and will use it to better the student experience." So I think it's always good to hear the students' voice, and this is a direct representation of that.

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Trustee Russell. Is there any other discussion? Trustee Jenkins.

Trustee Jenkins: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to say a thank you to Dr. Tarhule and your executive team for really sharpening your pencil on the operational side so that we could freeze tuition and fees for the time being. Keeping tuition affordable and competitive against our peers is something that's a primary concern. And so living within our means and making sure that we can serve students in an affordable way is incredibly valuable. And thank you for that good service.

Trustee Bohn: Is there 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 2025.02/05. Authorization for Additional Capital for the Bone Student Center Parking Lot.**

The Bone Student Center visitor parking lot is in a state of accelerating deterioration. In 2017, ISU hired architects with design and engineering services with a primary scope of repairing and improving the lot and also improving the approach and arrival experience to the newly renovated Bone Student Center and ISU campus. At the February 21, 2020 ISU Board of Trustees meeting, a repair and improvement project was approved for \$4,100,000. When the coronavirus pandemic began in March of 2020, a hold was placed on this project due of the financial uncertainty. Since that time, the parking lot has continued to deteriorate, and drainage issues have developed and are increasing. In 2023, ISU Facilities Planning solicited proposals to complete the design and construction build documents for this project. The university seeks Board of Trustees approval for additional project capital authority to spend up to an additional \$1,000,000 to repair the Bone Student Center north parking lot, construct a new pedestrian entry walkway, and install a new visitor parking ticketing system in the Bone Student Center visitor parking lot. Therefore, the university is seeking board authorization for additional capital authority not to exceed \$1,000,000 for a total of \$5,100,000 capital projects for the Bone Student Center visitor parking lot and pedestrian safety improvement project. The source of funding of this project includes AFS revenues and reserves. I ask for your approval of this resolution.

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

Trustee Jones: So moved.

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

Trustee Russell: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Second, Trustee Russell. Is there any discussion? Trustee Jones.

Trustee Jones: Madam Chair, thank you for recognizing me. I'd also like to speak and commend Dr. Tarhule and his team for making sure that even in these tough financial times that we still do not neglect the safety and the upkeep of our campus. We know it's tough to hear, ask for a million dollar, but it would also be tough to hear of some sort of liability we would have as a result of neglecting that parking lot. Not only do our faculty and staff and our students use that parking lot, but that is a high visitor area. And so we need to make sure that we keep that up. And there are a couple other resolutions today that we will hear that, again, while we know times are tough financially, we have to make sure that we keep the standards up for our facilities. And I commend you and your team, Dr. Tarhule, for making that a priority and making sure that ISU is a safe space for our students, our faculty, our staff, and our visitors. So thank you.

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Trustee Jones. Is there any other discussion? Trustee Merminga.

Trustee Merminga: Thank you, Madam Chair. What is the confidence level that the \$1,000,000 will be sufficient to complete the scope of work?

President Tarhule: Let me invite my Vice President Glen to the podium to answer the question.

Vice President Glen Nelson: Thank you for the question, Trustee Merminga. We are very confident that the number we're giving you is what will be able to get the completed project. There's really no concern on my part that we'll be coming back and asking for more money.

Trustee Merminga: Based on what? [laughter]

Vice President Glen: We don't have the bids yet, but we have estimates of what the cost will be. So we're very confident that the bids will come in close to that estimate.

Trustee Merminga: Okay. Thank you.

Vice President Glen: We are also very confident in that earlier price, but that was five years ago. And so the increase that you're seeing is really related to inflationary factors over the last five years, not scope creep, not completely missing the mark before. So the new dollars are really related to the delay since the pandemic.

Trustee Merminga: Thank you.

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

Trustee Jones: I just want to add, based on the comment that we just received, that it is important that we do these things in a timely fashion. Because every time we delay, that's more money.

Trustee Merminga: Yep.

Trustee Bohn: I agree. And I'd just like to point out that it's in the record now that you said that you're not coming back for more money. [laughter] 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 2025.02/06. Authorization for School Street Garage Spare Replacement.**

The School Street parking garage located at 400 South School Street opened in 1991. It provides 371 parking spaces used by faculty, staff, and students. While the garage has undergone maintenance on a regular basis, due to its age, the university engaged Farnsworth Group to do an evaluation of the stair towers to identify any work necessary to maintain pedestrian egress. Once the evaluation was developed, the university engaged CORE Construction to work with their subcontractors to develop a design and provide a proposal to address the issues found in the Farnsworth evaluation. The project to be completed in summer 2025 includes removal of metal and concrete stairs and replacement with precast stairs, repair precast and stair connections, removal and replacement of lighting and electrical systems, and replacement of doors and frames, including painting. The university is requesting authorization for expenditures not to exceed \$1,300,000 for this project funded by Parking Services. I ask for your approval of this resolution.

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

Trustee Jones: So moved.

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

Trustee Merminga: Second, Trustee Merminga.

Trustee Bohn: Is there any discussion? Trustee Russell.

Trustee Russell: Thank you. You mentioned summer 2025. Is the goal to be done when students come back in August. Or do you know the ETA on the project?

President Tarhule: Mike, are you going to be able to answer this question? Please come to the podium.

Mike: I don't have the exact date yet. We have to bid everything before we come up here for that and get them in with the staging and everything. You've heard the government talk about putting tariffs on steel and some different things that has just come around, so it could delay some of the steel. So we're hoping to get it done this summer. That's what we're trying for the bids and everything like that, because we've done some painting in there, and I asked my people if they had come up with a new structural paint, but I don't think paint works as structure. So we're trying to get it done as quickly as we can. Most likely, if we do something like this and instead of trying to delay it, we may do one stair at a time to try to keep one open while we do the other ones. So we will work with anything that comes up if we can't get it done over the summertime just to keep the project moving. Again, we don't want to delay things because the longer we delay it, again it adds costs to what we're doing. So . . .

Trustee Russell: Thank you very much.

Trustee Bohn: Is there 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 2025.02/07. Authorization for the DeGarmo Hall Roof Drain Replacement.**

The DeGarmo Hall located on the west side of the ISU Quad was built in 1972. It has a basement level and five upper floors. A roof drain system and infrastructure are passed their useful life span and have developed leaks. In areas of the fourth and fifth floors, ceilings will need to be removed for access to the roof drain piping. The ceilings and affected light fixtures will need to be replaced at completion of the project. The university is seeking board approval for a capital project to complete the DeGarmo Hall roof drain replacement project for a cost not to exceed \$1,100,000. The source of funding for this project is general revenue funds. I ask for your approval of this resolution.

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

Trustee Russell: So moved.

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

Trustee Navarro: I'll second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Navarro 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 2025.02/08. Authorization to Name Barnett Family Field.**

Illinois State University Athletics respectfully requests naming the field inside the OSF Healthcare Athletics Training Facility. This naming reflects and recognizes the generous financial commitment by Danny Barnett for the Redbird Athletics program. Danny Barnett is an alum, former Redbird football player, and a great friend to Illinois

State University's football program. He enjoys coming back to campus and attending games and supports the current team. Danny has been a vital proponent of the OSF Healthcare Athletics Training Center, recognizing the opportunities the facility provides for students and athletes. He encourages others to give with his example of generosity and wants to invest in the lives of student athletes to ensure they make a difference on the field and in the classroom and in the community. Danny Barnett's financial commitments to ISU Athletics will continue to elevate and enhance student athletes' experience. As a result, we propose naming the field inside the OSF Healthcare Athletics Training Facility as the Barnett Family Field. I ask for your approval of 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 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, and we definitely thank the Barnett family.

President Tarhule: Thank you.

**Resolution 2025.02/09. Authorization to Name Lynch Family Court.**

Illinois State University Athletics respectfully requests the naming of the court in the north gym of Horton Fieldhouse. This naming reflects and recognizes the generous financial commitment by Glen and Janet Lynch for the Redbird Athletics Program. Glen and Janet have been strong supporters of ISU Athletics. They have been long-term season ticketholders for men's basketball, generously creating the Lynch Family Fund three years ago, which allowed Athletics to purchase new hot and cold tubs within CEFCU Arena to help in the treatment and recovery of student athletes. Glen and Janet wish to make a lasting impact on Illinois State University and provide enhanced experiences for student athletes. The court will be used as a practice space for the volleyball, men's basketball, and women's basketball as well as KNR classes throughout the academic year. Glen and Janet Lynch's financial commitment to ISU Athletics will continue to elevate and enhance student athletes' experiences. As a result, we propose naming the court in the north gym of Horton Fieldhouse as the Lynch Family Court. I ask for your approval of this resolution.

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

Trustee Merminga: So moved.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Merminga 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? Thank you to the Lynch family again, and the resolution is approved.

President Tarhule: Thank you. This is a big one.

**Resolution 2025/02/10. Recognition of Trustee Jones.**

Whereas in the fall of 1995 the 89<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the State of Illinois passed Senate Bill 241, which was sent to and signed by the governor to become Public Act 89-0004 which established autonomous governing boards for seven state universities as part of a continuing evolution of the State's higher education system, and whereas Julie Annette Jones was appointed by former Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner to the Board of Trustees of Illinois State University and participated in her first meeting on February 17, 2017, and whereas Julie Annette Jones accepted her responsibility as a member of the Board of Trustees and a representative of the state and its citizens to govern and to provide direction for the university. Ms. Jones' understanding and appreciation of the values inherent in higher education enabled her to bring a level of expertise to the board that was of great value and appreciated by her trustee colleagues. She served the Board of Trustees with the highest standard of professional integrity to the lasting benefit of Illinois State University.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Trustees expresses its sincere appreciation to Julie Annette Jones for her tireless efforts as a trustee on behalf of Illinois State University and confers on her the honor and title of Trustee Emerita for her outstanding service and dedication to Illinois State University. I ask for your approval of this resolution.

Trustee Navarro: I so move.

Trustee Bohn: Motion is made by Trustee Navarro. Is there a second?

Trustee Tillis: Second.

Trustee Merminga: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Second by Trustee Tillis.

Trustee Bohn: So many seconds. [laughter] Is there any discussion?

Trustee Tillis: Yes.

Trustee Bohn: I'm sorry. Trustee Tillis.

[laughter]

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Jones, it won't be long. It won't be long. But first of all, throughout the State of Illinois when you mention your affiliation with ISU, the first person they normally mention is Trustee Jones. They always say, "Do you know Trustee Jones?" Like, yeah, I know her. I know her well. Prior to me joining the board, I was aware of your commitment and dedication to Illinois State University, and I've enjoyed your perspective and your leadership in preserving the institution's integrity. Your institutional knowledge will greatly be missed, and wish you and Tracy and the family just well wishes. You'll sorely be missed.

Trustee Jones: Thank you, Trustee Tillis. I appreciate that.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Jenkins.

Trustee Jenkins: I just wanted to say that as a relatively new member on the board, I guess now a couple of years, Julie, Trustee Jones really made me feel welcome, gave me kind of the, you know, here's the lay of the land. Here are the landmines. Here are the guardrails. You've been a mentor. You've been a friend. You're always the person I count on to send us a text with an article from AGB on how to be a better board. And you are both the heart, the conscience, and a lot of times the brain of the trustees as we think through things. And your legal background and your professionalism will be sorely missed. So thank you so much for everything you do.

Trustee Jones: Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Trustee Bohn: Any other discussion? Trustee Navarro.

Trustee Navarro: In addition to acknowledging and appreciating Julie's very thoughtful decision making, especially as it relates to students, I do want to acknowledge her time as Chair of the Board and the time commitment that that took during that time. And she served our board well and served the university community well. So I do appreciate that and want to acknowledge her time as Chair of the Board.

Trustee Jones: Thank you, Trustee Navarro.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Merminga.

Trustee Merminga: Thank you. I, also, as a relatively new member of the board as well, would like to express my sincere appreciation for the thoughtful and deep and probing questions and the good nature. You always have the best interest of the university in your heart and in your brain and it shows. Thank you so much.

Trustee Jones: Thank you.

Trustee Bohn: We've got one more. Trustee Russell.

Trustee Russell: Yeah, echoing what everyone says as a relatively new member as well. Trusting Jones welcomed me in right from the start, and I really appreciate that and everything you've given back to Illinois State University and all the students that you've impacted that you may never meet. I also want to mention that I know that the past Student Trustee Ash, you had a huge impact on him, and he always told me a lot about you. So I appreciate everything you've done for the board and for the university.

Trustee Jones: Thank you.

Trustee Bohn: Well, Trustee Jones, I'm very sad that you're leaving the board. I think we all are. You have been a wonderful Chair, a wonderful member. There are times when you bring a perspective forward in our discussions that we may not think about, and I cherish those perspectives and want you to know that you will be greatly missed.

Trustee Jones: Thank you.

Trustee Bohn: And everything you've done for this university is really felt by the Board of Trustees and the whole university, and it will be felt for years to come. And we don't want to say goodbye. We want you to remain with us and keep coming back to lots of things here.

Trustee Jones: Thank you. Thank you.

Trustee Bohn: Do you have anything to say?

President Tarhule: Yes, I had the opportunity yesterday to share dinner. And I think I'll say it again that I think if you were to ask AI to develop a visual of Redbird pride, it would probably come up with something that looks very much like Julie Jones. You know, her commitment to the university and the dedication that she brings each and every day shows. You don't have to be with her for very long before you see that authenticity, and you have been an inspiration to all of us. I want to echo what Chairperson Bohn has said. Even though you're stepping off of the board, I hope you continue to remain engaged and to continue to inspire and to lead us. So thank you very much on behalf of the university for your service, all the students and staff and faculty you have helped through your wise actions and decisions, many of whom you probably will not meet and many of whom will not know you. But that is the true definition of service, and we could not be more appreciative. Thank you.

Trustee Jones: Thank you, President Tarhule. Madam Chair, I have a few comments. [laughter]

Trustee Bohn: Yes, Trustee Jones.

Trustee Jones: Just a little privilege. I know we have presentation, but I want to make sure I get this out. And I usually don't use notes, but I want to make sure I don't miss anything. First of all, just a great big thank you to everyone. Serving Illinois State University as a member of the Board of Trustees for the last eight years has been a

rewarding and humbling experience. There are a few people that I must thank for all they have contributed to this journey. Past Board Chair Rocky Donahue was, from the moment I was appointed to the board, he was incredibly supportive and generous with the knowledge that he had. And I wanted to continue that legacy.

Also, in a time when many are trying to minimize or erase the accomplishments of black Americans, there are three phenomenal Illinois State leaders who shoulders I stand on, and I believe without their exemplary service to this university I wouldn't be here today. Trustee Emerita Anne Davis, who served this board for many years and encouraged me to consider the role of trustee.

Our dearly departed distinguished alum, Andrew Purnell, a 1957 graduate of Illinois State University who during his time on campus became one of the founders of the campus NAACP chapter and as an alum helped establish the Black Colleagues Association, which is the alumni group here dedicated to keeping our university affordable and accessible to black students. Andrew served with dignity and grace. He was a role model to so many campus leaders through his contributions to the university from the 1950s as a student until his death in 2020. I am very proud to have called him a mentor and a friend.

One of my dearest friends, a 1989 graduate who has served Illinois State in so many ways but most notably as former President of the Black Colleagues Association and also former President of the Alumni Association, Janessa L. Williams. Over 25 years ago, she saw me in a Target store and recognized me as an Illinois State alum and invited me to come to a meeting of the black alumnae who continue to support the university by assisting black students and connecting black alums across the world. She was the epitome of what it meant to be a proud alum and a Redbird ambassador. Her enthusiastic service brought me here back to the university over 25 years ago. And as they say, the rest is history.

To all of the current students, alums, faculty, staff, and friends of the university who have supported me, prayed for me, and encouraged me, thank you. Representation matters. I hope that my service has shown that you don't have to have lots of friends in high places, and you don't have to have lots of money to be given an opportunity to be of service to Illinois State University in a meaningful way. I hope that folks who look like me and have a similar background as I do are hopeful about the possibilities that exist for them at Illinois State University. At my core I am a black woman from the south side of Chicago who was a first-generation college student who was able to serve this university in one of the highest positions on the campus, and it was truly an honor to serve as an example for others.

Last but not least, I want to thank two of my favorite honorary Redbirds, both who hailed from other universities but have been some of the strongest supporters of this university, sometimes by force [laughter], mostly by choice. The unconditional support of your family makes the heavy load of service much lighter. Thanks to my wonderful husband, Tracy, in his absence, and my amazing daughter Elainy who surprised me today to showing up to this meeting. I thank them for their love, their sacrifices, and their support during my time serving on this board. Thanks again to my fellow trustees and all the members of the university community for the privilege of service to Illinois State University.

[applause]

Trustee Bohn: Now, before we give you that, all those in favor of the resolution [laughter] say aye.

Trustee Jones: I hope that there is a vote... on the resolution.

Trustee Bohn: All those in favor of the resolution, say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The resolution is approved.

[applause]

[Background talking]

[laughter]

President Tarhule: This concludes the resolutions for today.

Trustee Bohn: 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 5ILCS120/2C2 discussing the minutes of meetings lawfully closed under this act for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes pursuant to 5ILCS120/2C21 discussing litigation that has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal pursuant to 5ILCS120/2C11. May I have a motion and a second to move into closed session.

Trustee Jones: So moved. [laughter]

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

Trustee Navarro: I'll second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Navarro second. Is there any discussion? Hearing no discussion, Trustee Navarro please call for a roll call vote.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Bohn.

Trustee Bohn: Yes.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Jenkins.

Trustee Jenkins: Yes.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Jones.

Trustee Jones: Yes.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Merminga.

Trustee Merminga: Yes.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Navarro. Yes. Trustee Russell.

Trustee Russell: Yes.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Tillis.

Trustee Tillis: Yes.

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.

[End of recording.]

Time of adjournment