

MINUTES
Board of Trustees Meeting of Illinois State University
May 9, 2025

[Sound of pounding gavel.]

Trustee Bohn: In accordance with the board's bylaws, as Chairperson I will now call the quarterly meeting of the Board of Trustees of Illinois State University to order at 9:15 a.m. I note for the record that notice of today's meeting was posted in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act and that the public has been notified of the date, time, and location of this meeting. As included in the notice of the meeting, the University has provided a YouTube link that allows all interested persons to contemporaneously view the meeting and hear all discussion and votes. Trustee Navarro, please call the roll.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Bohn.

Trustee Bohn: Present.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Hoeniges.

Trustee Hoeniges: Present.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Jenkins.

Trustee Jenkins: 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.

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Trustee Navarro. At this time, I ask Trustee Hoeniges to approach and take the Oath of Office.

Please repeat after me. I do solemnly swear . . .

Trustee Hoeniges: I do solemnly swear . . .

Trustee Bohn: . . . that I will uphold the Constitution of the United States . . .

Trustee Hoeniges: . . . that I will uphold the Constitution of the United States . . .

Trustee Bohn: . . . and of the State of Illinois . . .

Trustee Hoeniges: . . . and of the State of Illinois . . .

Trustee Bohn: . . . and that I will faithfully discharge the duties . . .

Trustee Hoeniges: . . . and I will faithfully discharge the duties . . .

Trustee Bohn: . . . of the office of the Board of Trustees . . .

Trustee Hoeniges: . . . of the office of the Board of Trustees . . .

Trustee Bohn: . . . of Illinois State University . . .

Trustee Hoeniges: . . . of Illinois State University . . .

Trustee Bohn: . . . to the best of my ability.

Trustee Hoeniges: . . . to the best of my ability.

Trustee Bohn: Congratulations.

Trustee Hoeniges: Thank you.

[applause]

Trustee Bohn: Congratulations, Trustee Hoeniges. We are thrilled to welcome you to the board and look forward to working together to benefit Illinois State University during the coming year. Would you like to say a few words?

Trustee Hoeniges: Sure. As an ISU alum and as a longtime member of the Bloomington-Normal community, I'm honored and just very excited to be a part of the board. I feel like ISU really put me on the trajectory that I needed to be on to be successful in life and in my career, and it's an honor to be able to give back.

Trustee Bohn: Thank you very much.

Approval of Agenda

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

Trustee Tillis: So moved.

Trustee Bohn: Motion by Trustee Tillis. Is there a second?

Trustee Navarro: I'll second.

Trustee Bohn: Second by Trustee Navarro. Is there any discussion? Having no discussion, all those in favor say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The agenda is approved.

Approval or Meeting Minutes from February 21, 2025

You have before you the meeting minutes of February 21st, 2025. Could I have a motion and a second to review and approve the minutes of the February 21st, 2025 meeting?

Trustee Russell: So moved.

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

Trustee Merminga: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Merminga second. Any discussion? All those in favor say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The minutes of the February 21st, 2025 meeting are approved.

Next on the agenda is Public Comments.

Public Comments

Trustee Bohn: 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 the 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 written materials you want to share with the trustees, you may send them to bot@ilstu.edu. When appropriate, the Board of Trustees will provide a response to a speaker's questions within a reasonable amount of time.

At this time, I invite Vanessa Hernandez to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board.

[applause]

Vanessa Hernandez: All right. Good morning. My name is Vanessa Hernandez. I'm a second-year graduate student in the Department of Anthropology and am now a former graduate assistant of the Latin American and Latino Studies Program. As I approach the end of my time here at ISU, I feel compelled to speak up about the many problems I witnessed and was subject to this spring semester. To be clear, I'm deeply thankful for my time with the LALS program and will address broader issues, institutional problems outside of the program's responsibility. In doing so, I hope you understand how deeply challenging being a Latina student or student with an immigrant background at ISU is. This semester began relatively normally, but by the second week reality shattered. It seemed norms suddenly went out the window. For Latinos and immigrants, times became alarming. It seemed like we no longer had a space here. Validity of Latinas and immigrants belonging in this country became the primary concern at the center of political debate. Students and faculty bound to these communities did their best to not be paralyzed with fear as we saw our familiar lively neighborhoods only two hours away become ghost towns. During this time, we continued with our daily responsibilities, hoping to be comforted by our school's leadership. As we did our best to keep going, official university communications were sparse and relayed with passive, unassertive language, leaving many of us wondering whether there was any allegiance to our values when it came to these communities. As useful communications did not roll in, students, faculty, and community members turned to each other and created a system of support and productivity. In our grief, anxiety, and loneliness we came together for the same cause – or, better said, CAUSA, to connect a range of individuals and make our university a better and safer place, particularly for undocumented students, Latinos, and immigrants. Together, students of all grade ranges, from freshmen to graduate students, faculty, and administrators spent long days together trying to make sense of and figure out the best way to approach the world. Today you'll be hearing from various students in this network of support who shared space and their bright ideas with us throughout the semester. I invite you all to meet with these students. I'm sure they will welcome it. I will close my statement by reiterating something you heard at the beginning of the semester, the very tangible demands our students put together. So, number one, we hope for ISU to reinforce their commitment to DEI values. Second, we would hope for no overcompliance with federal directives. Three, we would like an immigration lawyer on retainer for more legal support. Four, we would like centralized resources, a website, an undocumented student resource center. Five, we want ISU to commit to not cooperate with ICE and a statement from support. Six, we would also appreciate emergency alerts if ICE is present, and we want defined safe spaces. And seven, we would like for you to reconsider your budget to account for other demands. Thank you.

[applause]

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

[applause]

Benjamin Rodriguez: Good morning. I stand before you today, outraged by Illinois State's hypocrisy. This institution proclaims lofty commitments to decolonial values, diversity, and inclusion, but its actions tell a different story. We celebrate civic engagement and justice in our mission statements, and yet our university's decisions betray those ideals. It is painfully clear that ISU's moral rhetoric has become a mask for immoral behavior, and we cannot continue to pretend everything is fine when our money, our leadership, and our policies are actively causing harm. This disconnect between what ISU says and what ISU does is shameful and unacceptable. Right now, our university invests in and accepts funding from corporations that are complicit in violence and oppression abroad. Take Caterpillar, the company whose bulldozers demolish Palestinian homes. ISU has gladly taken over a million dollars from Caterpillar for a campus lab and even named an auditorium after them, effectively profiting off of the suffering of Palestinian families. Not only that but the board saw fit to appoint a Rivian executive who spent 20 years at Caterpillar into its ranks, effectively welcoming the influence of corporations known to aid the destruction of Palestinian communities. For a university that teaches students to stand for the right side of history, this is a gross contradiction. Our hearts break when we see Illinois State's name effectively stamped on the machinery of injustice. And we must ask, "Where is ISU's conscience?" How can our leadership preach human rights in classrooms yet sell out those same principles for corporate donations and investments? The pattern of neglect and harm extends further to those in our community who are the most vulnerable. I'm talking about undocumented and DACA students who are part of the ISU family yet far too often treated as an afterthought. Undocumented students are struggling at ISU with insufficient support, and the administration's lip service isn't paying their tuition or easing their fears. These students face unique hurdles from not qualifying for federal aid to living under constant uncertainty. Yet where is ISU's so-called inclusivity when they knock on the door for help? What concrete resources has ISU provided where the scholarships, the legal aid, the dedicated staff train to guide these students? Instead, undocumented students get platitudes. This negligence is cruel, and it flies in the face of our core values of diversity and inclusion. A community is best measured by how it treats its most vulnerable, and on that count, ISU is failing. We, the students of ISU, see our friends living in fear and uncertainty, and we cannot accept the status quo where our institution stands by and watches. Perhaps the most fundamental promise any university makes it to keep its students safe. And on this, too, ISU's leadership has failed. We are reminded of this in the most harrowing way when an active shooting occurred at the Bone Student Center not too long ago. As shots rang out, students ran for their lives. And in those critical moments, where was ISU's much-touted emergency preparedness? Many of us found out about the danger not from a timely university alert but from social media or terrified texts from friends. The official alert came about 20 minutes after the gunfire began, and even then, it lacked clear instructions. No immediate shelter in place order was given. Some students in the library didn't know whether to hide or evacuate, and others on campus had no idea anything was wrong until the sirens started to play. We were essentially left on our own in a moment of chaos, and this was the second school shooting near campus this year. And still our administration seemed caught off guard. ISU has failed its students in their time of need. And the administration, although it can swiftly threaten protesters, the administration had no swift plan for an actual life-and-death emergency. This is the administrative failure of the highest order, and we as students no longer feel secure that our school would protect us when it truly counts. Empty assurances will not cut it anymore. We refuse to accept nice words in place of moral action, and today I join my fellow students, staff, and faculty members in demanding that ISU finally align its actions with its values.

Trustee Bohn: Please finish soon. Your time is almost up.

Benjamin Rodriguez: Okay. Thank you. We ask that you divest from oppression, divest from companies that are complicit in genocide in violence against Palestinians, cut ties with war profiteers such as Caterpillar, provide more resources for undocumented students in the form of scholarships, legal aid, or resource center. We present these demands with urgency and unwavering resolve, as this is not a radical agenda, but it is the basic expectation of a university that truly values its students and its principles. Thank you.

[applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Benjamin. At this time I invite Riley Newman to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board.

Riley Newman: Good morning. Yesterday was May 8th, the 80th anniversary the Nazis surrendering to the allied powers. And today, 80 years later, the fight against fascism is still raging on. The school has not properly prepared for this moment that we are living in. They have ended the DEI programs and are willing to cooperate with the modern gestapo forces known as ICE. The school has been quiet in the face of injustice in accepting money from genocide profiteers. Despite this blood money, the school is unwilling to spend money to protect its students while at the same time raising the price of tuition and spending millions on a new engineering building and other far away future projects while not spending money for this moment, for its students. This includes international students who are under threat by this current administration. The school needs to act with more urgency. During the chaos after the shooting, the school has no set plan to evacuate people at the library. I was on the third floor, and I heard conflicting things from the police officers down below. One told me to stay. The other one told me to leave. And it had to wait for the floor to come together. We all, as students, had to vote basically to decide what to do. And I think the school should better prepare to protect the students so we don't have to resort to this. This incident makes me wonder, after all of this, all these Board of Trustees meetings, do you even listen to us. How can you listen to members of SJP and still accept Caterpillar money? You don't even give us enough time to give our complaints. Sorry. When will this administration be active against anti-learning, anti-diversity forces inside and outside the White House? This is an urgent threat and needs to be met now. Yes, it is a tough fight but so it was 80 years ago. If we come together as the allied forces did, we can create a better campus for teachers, students, and staff. Times might be dark now, but there is no reason to get complacent and surrender to the darkness. We need more resources for international students. We need things like a lawyer and liaison. Thank you.

[applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Riley. At this time, I invite Nicté . . . I can never pronounce this . . . Rivadeneyra-Braswell. You can pronounce your name for us since I always butcher it. Sorry, Nicté.

Nicté Rivadeneyra-Braswell: Good morning. My name is Nicté Rivadeneyra-Braswell. I am here to speak on behalf of CAUSA, the coalition advocating for undocumented student support. We advocate for the hiring of an undocumented student support liaison. This liaison is necessary for compliance with Public Act 102-0475, which was passed by the Illinois General Assembly and is legally required for all state universities. This liaison is legally required to be available on campus to provide assistance to undocumented students and students from mixed-status families. Furthermore, this act encourages institutions to implement an undocumented student resource center. ISU is currently lacking in many of these resources. We still do not have anyone who's primary job is to serve as an undocumented student support liaison. In underestimating the work that being liaison takes, our current liaison has the title tacked onto a list of several other responsibilities. He is unable to focus on helping undocumented and mixed-status students or to be in community with groups such as CAUSA, which are currently doing much of the would-be liaison's job, such as organizing professional development and identifying resources for students. In addition to the liaison, we are hoping to work for more legal support for students. There is currently only one students' attorney for over 20,000 students. ISU student attorney used to represent students in court, but it can no longer. One solution is to hire lawyers on retainers, specifically one with specialty in immigration law to support these students. General counsel, the legal support for ISU's administration, is able to hire lawyers on retainer, so students should have similar resources. As mentioned previously by my friend, ISU's general [sounds like volunteer 19:18] crisis is to forward students to counseling services which are nonspecialized and lack resources for our most vulnerable communities. I'll note that the Multicultural Center also offers a few resources, but there is no comprehensive resource center or support group for undocumented students. Centralized resources are critical in uncertain times like these. What plans does ISU have to comply with the Public Act 102-0475 for the liaison and to increase support services and programming for the unique needs of the undocumented student community? What plans are there to increase legal support, to prove that ISU sticks to its values? CAUSA is willing to work with you to find solutions, and we hope that you will continue to work with us.

[applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Nicté. At this time, I invite Trish Gudeman to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board.

[applause]

Trish Gudeman: Good morning. I've spoken here before, wearing green as a union representative on behalf of AFSCME 3236 Clerical Union. Many times, I've been here. And I stood here with my brothers and sisters in AFSCME 1110 and the faculty union and the nontenure track. And I'm excited that the faculty union got the good contract. I was thrilled and encouraged. I stand here today wearing red because I am part of the university, and I'm part of the university that is unrepresented now. My title is administrative aid. I am one of many. There are office administrators, there is IT, there are graduate student advisors, there are advisors. Many of you in here unrepresented. We don't have a contract. We don't have anything that says we're going to get a 2% increase or 3% increase. We are at the mercy of the Board of Trustees, the President, the Vice President of Financing. And I just read the WGLT article which said that there will be no campus wage increase for all of us. I'm livid. We're all livid. I am one of many. I have a petition. The last I looked, it was at 185 and that was started yesterday just before noon, and it continues to grow, and it is full of faculty, staff, directors, chairs. We see what's going on, and we're not happy. And I know you all are very aware of it, so I'm not saying anything new. I just want you to realize that it is not fair. I make 51,000. I'm a single income with two kids at home. If inflation continues to go up and I stay here, I'm getting a wage decrease. I'm getting a pay cut. And I can't fix that car that's in my driveway. I can't finish that bedroom in my basement. I can't hardly even go see my mother in Ohio because things are going so high, and nothing is able to keep up with it. I will either have to get a second job, I'll have to get a different job, and it seems you don't care. One of the things in the WGLT article that the President said was that if you start to unionize, we're going to have to start shedding people. So, you would think that you would have some foresight to know that there will be inflation every year. If there is inflation every year, you can count on that and you can build that into your budget. You can know that those unrepresented people should be getting similar account for that. They're not getting the special other things. Sure, fine. But you should at least be able to compensate for inflation and put that in your budget and plan on it. You found it for the faculty. You found it for all the other unions. Find it for the rest of us. Figure out how to at least give us a living wage that keeps up with inflation. Or at least throw us a bone once in a while that you tried. A thousand for you might not mean much, but it means a lot to me.

[applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Trish. At this time, I invite Gregory Ferrence to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board.

Gregory Ferrence: Good morning, Chairperson Bohn, President Tarhule, and board members. Thank you for the opportunity offer public comments today. My name is Dr. Gregory Ferrence. I joined the ISU faculty in 1999 and have been a full professor in chemistry since 2009. I'm also a proud member of the United Faculty of ISU Chapter of University Professionals at Illinois Local 4100. In my 26 years at ISU, I've observed the ISU community consistently striving to make ISU iteratively better. Gradually at continuous efforts to improve ISU have made this an amazing institution. Today I stand before you as a representative of UFISU to first and foremost thank all of you as well as the ISU administration for working in good faith with UFISU to reach an agreement on comprehensive, fair and equitable first contract. Truly we thank you. Thank you. We are a stronger campus community because we're unionized. The agreements and guardrails contained in the contract and written in legal plain and clear language diminish the cost of institutional instability and help ISU thrive by improving faculty recruitment and retention, favoring mitigation over litigation, and reducing waste due to missed communication and vague expectations. Stability and transparency make for sound fiscal management and a thriving institution that attracts capable, enthusiastic, degree-seeking students, excellent staff, top-tier faculty, and investment from the greater Redbird community. I do have an ask. ISU has the opportunity right now to leverage the very organized UFISU membership as well as the broader ISU community to help advocate for House Bill HB1581 and Senate Bill SB13 that seek to create the adequate and equitable Public University Funding Act. I urge you to share with the ISU community how we can help advocate for these bills through collective actions. Together we can make a difference and help make both ISU and all of Illinois better through investment in higher education. Finally, the collaborative work between ISU and UFISU defined common ground and negotiate a powerful contract for all parties are exemplary of making ISU iteratively better. We understand AFSCME 1110, the union representing ISU's BSW Dining and Grounds workers, are in bargaining. The members of ISU hope the employer gets you to a speedy resolution, and we stand by to support you in solidarity to help realize the next iterative improvements to make ISU better. Thank you and Go Redbirds.

[applause] [End of Public Comments]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you.

Well, good morning and thank you for joining us for the May 9th, 2025 Board of Trustees meeting. I would like to again welcome Trustee Hoeniges to the Board of Trustees and thank the Office of the Governor for the appointment.

Additionally, on behalf of the Board of Trustees I would like to extend heartfelt congratulations to our May graduates. The board will participate in commencement today and tomorrow, and we look forward to sharing in the excitement of our students and their families as they celebrate this milestone achievement.

Earlier this morning, the Campus Communication Committee hosted a highly informative discussion hour. On behalf of the Board of Trustees I want to thank Mary O'Mahoney, Executive Director of Well-Being and Recreation, for sharing an outstanding presentation about the university's various student mental health initiatives, specifically the Red Folder Project and the TimelyCare App.

On today's agenda is a presentation by Glen Nelson, Vice President for Finance and Planning. The board is eager to learn more about the progress made on the RISE Initiative. One of the goals we set for President Tarhule when we appointed him was balancing the budget. The board understands that the work of RISE and the development of a new budget model are vital to the university's financial sustainability. Furthermore, the board understands that accomplishing this goal entails many difficult choices and decisions, and we offer our full support to the administration as the process continues.

I want to take a moment to thank the Illinois State University Police Department and the staff at the Bone Student Center for their quick response to the incident on Sunday, April 27th. Additionally, I must recognize the outstanding work of our partnering law enforcement agencies and the Normal Fire Department that evening. We are grateful for your support. The board will continue to collaborate with the administration on matters related to the safety and security of the campus community.

And lastly on behalf of the board I want to thank Jean Ann Dargatz, who retired on April 30th from Illinois State University after 25 years of service. Although she didn't want any formal recognition, I want to get on the record how much we have appreciated her support for the Board of Trustees. It's hard to put into words what Jean Ann has done. But to summarize, she's helped coordinate our meetings and our retreats, gotten us to where we need to go, answered more questions from board members than we can count, and kept us organized. She told us that she wouldn't be in today's meeting but may be listening on YouTube. So Jean Ann, if you're listening, we will sincerely miss working with you, and we wish you a wonderful and well-deserved retirement.

[applause]

I will add – this year 78 individuals are retiring from Illinois State, including 21 faculty and 57 staff. Collectively, these individuals have served Illinois State University for 1,680 years with the average length of service being 21.5 years. The board deeply appreciates the sacrifices, commitment, and dedication of these retiring faculty. On behalf of the Board of Trustees I congratulate all retiring faculty and staff and wish them the very best in all that comes next. Please join me again in recognizing and acknowledging Jean Ann and all of our retirees with another round of applause.

[applause]

Lastly, the Board of Trustees receives regular updates on the potential impacts of current and future federal directives on institutional policies, practices, and initiatives. We support the university's efforts to navigate these uncertainties and appreciate their efforts to help those in our community who are feeling anxious or overwhelmed at this time. I will now turn to President Aondover Tarhule for his remarks.

President's Remarks

President Tarhule: Thank you, Chairperson Bohn, and good morning. Welcome, Trustee Hoeniges. We look forward to working with you, and welcome back home to Illinois State University, your alma mater.

Although he needs no introduction, I am pleased to share that Ryan Russell has been re-elected as Student Trustee. Ryan is a junior majoring in marketing with a minor in organizational leadership. He has served as a Student Life Senator in the Student Government Association, Vice President of Sigma Pi Fraternity, President of Businessweek, and is currently the President of the Interfraternity Council. He is passionate about making a positive change at Illinois State University. Please join me in congratulating Ryan on his re-election.

[applause]

I would like to introduce Noah Mathew Montoya, who has been elected Student Body President for the 2025-2026 academic year. Noah is a sophomore majoring in public culture and advocacy communication with a minor in political science. He is passionate about student advocacy, shared governance, and ensuring equitable access to campus resources. Previously, he served as a Student Life Senator and Vice President of the Assembly in the Student Government Association. Noah is honored to serve his fellow students and is eager to get started. Noah, would you please stand so we can recognize you.

[applause]

Thank you. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge former Student Body President Cobi Blair. Cobi is graduating from the College of Business and the BS/MPA Program and will be working for State Farm. Cobi, I have enjoyed getting to know you over the past year and wish you well in your future endeavors. We will celebrate you as you walk across the stage tomorrow night. Please join me in congratulating Cobi. Will you stand, please.

[applause]

I also want to acknowledge Dr. Martha Horst. Martha has served in the Academic Senate for 14 years and has also served as its secretary. Her last meeting as Academic Senate Chair was April 23rd. In this role, Martha has provided steadfast leadership and unwavering commitment, serving as a passionate supporter of shared governance. Although we have not agreed on all issues, I have appreciated her professional approach to our discussions and will miss working with her in this role. Thank you, Dr. Horst, for all that you have done as Chair of the Academic Senate on behalf of our students, faculty, and staff. Martha is not here with us, but please join me in congratulating her.

[applause]

I want to take a moment to congratulate all of our May graduates. As many of you know, commencement is one of my favorite moments of the year. This weekend we celebrate the achievements of over 4,000 students who earn degrees, including more than 1,200 undergraduates who will graduate with honors, meaning they have achieved a GPA of 3.65 or higher. I would like to recognize the Dean of Students Office, specifically Terri Haerr, Amy Miller, and Michelle Whited for their efforts in coordinating Illinois State University's commencement ceremonies for our graduates and their families. Commencement weekend involves more than 200 university volunteers. On behalf of the administration, our graduate students and their families, I would like to thank all of our commencement volunteers who generously sacrifice their time and work tirelessly to ensure that all students and guests have an exciting and memorable experience. With that said, we look forward to another memorable commencement weekend. Like our Board Chair, I also extend my thanks to the Campus Communication Committee for hosting the Discussion Hour and providing an opportunity to learn more about the significant efforts being made to support the well-being of our students. The importance of initiatives such as the Red Folder Project and the TimelyCare Act cannot be overstated.

I want to take a moment to address the incident that occurred at the Bone Student Center on Sunday, April 27th. As I shared with the campus community the following morning, the safety and security of our Redbird community remains our highest priority. The university is committed to investing in programs and initiatives that promote a safe and secure environment for all. I'd like to commend the Illinois State University Police Department and the staff at the Bone Student Center for their swift response and assistance to those nearby. I also sincerely thank the Normal Police Department, Bloomington Police Department, McLean County Sheriff's Office, Illinois State Police, and Normal Fire Department for their support and assistance. I am proud of how our community came together

during such a frightening and challenging moment, and I sincerely appreciate the compassion and care shown towards fellow Redbirds.

On Friday, April 4th, Illinois State University and the United Faculty of Illinois State which represents tenured and tenure-track faculty at the University reached a tentative overall agreement. On Monday, April 14th, UFISU notified the University that its members had ratified the tentative agreement. The union and the university was working to finalize the terms of the contract. This accomplishment would not have been possible without the collective energy, commitment and collaboration of our community. Thank you to all who served on both sides of the table and for your incredible efforts during the final hours of negotiations. Illinois State's goal in these negotiations was to ensure that tenured and tenure-track faculty at every rank are compensated competitively relative to our peer institutions which are [sounds like our two 39:01] schools in the Midwest U.S. Census Bureau's Region, while also supporting the long-term fiscal viability of Illinois State and its ability to provide excellent and affordable educational opportunities for all students. With the ratification of this contract, we now have an opportunity to move forward together in support of the university. Across the nation, colleges and universities are facing multiple challenges, including declining enrollments, public concerns about the value of a college degree, rising student debt, and rapidly evolving workforce demands. Institutions must also navigate technological disruptions in teaching and research, increasing expectations for student mental health support while fostering diverse, equitable and inclusive environments and facing changing mandates and funding cuts from the federal government. Keeping these in mind, Glen Nelson, Vice President for Finance and Planning, will provide an update on the RISE Initiative this morning. Furthermore, the Office of General Counsel continues to work with the Institutional Resilience Steering Team to provide legal guidance to leadership on the potential impacts of current and future directives on institutional policies, practices, and initiatives. Illinois State continues to provide support to affected students, faculty and staff and is evaluating the various current and future impacts on research funding. Despite these challenges, the Illinois State community's resilience and our successes are many. I am pleased to share that as the spring semester draws to a close, planning for the fall 2025 term is well underway. Enrollment deposits look strong and are comparable to those of 2023 and 2024. We anticipate another remarkable high-achieving class. Additionally, we expect more than 150 students in the first College of Engineering class, which, if realized, will exceed our original target of 135. In the recently released candidate classifications, ISU was named an opportunity university higher access, higher earnings. We are one of 479 institutions out of the 3,055 listed this way, placing us in the top 16% of institutions for our transformational impact. This represents external third-party validation of what we have known about the value of an ISU degree. Our other classifications are professions focused, undergraduate/graduate masters, and large/medium, one of 31 new classifications that focus on slightly different metrics than the old classifications, and this classification includes 129 institutions. We also have maintained our designation as a Research 2 institution.

The end of the spring semester presents numerous opportunities to recognize members of our Redbird community for their hard work and dedication. I'd like to share just a few examples. First, the Impact Awards established by University College honors individuals for their contributions to enhancing student experiences at Illinois State. This year, we recognize 13 academic advisors, 19 staff members, 8 students, and 93 faculty members and instructors. All award winners were nominated by current students.

Next, the Alumni Association recognized the outstanding achievements and contributions of seven alumni at the Alumni Awards Ceremony on April 25th. Recipients included Melinda Fischer, Jyl Madlem, Dr. Ricia A. Chansky, Dewitt Bingham, Linda Foster, Dr. Ericka Wills, and Erica Lauren Maholmes. On December 26th, John Tworok from University Marketing and Communications and Illinois historian Tom Emery were awarded the Certificate of Excellence by the Illinois State Historical Society for this month in Illinois State history, a monthly online series that highlights the noteworthy dates and rich history of Illinois State University.

I'm excited to share that Illinois State boasts two new Goldwater Scholars, Claire Campbell in Physics and Trent Kobulnicky in Chemistry. This marks the fourth consecutive year that an Illinois State student has received this honor. The program was designed to identify, encourage, and financially support outstanding undergraduate students in pursuing research careers in the sciences, engineering, and mathematics. The University Research Symposium occurred on April 11th in the Bone Student Center. This symposium featured over 160 presentations by 213 student scholars. This represents a 31% increase in presentations compared to last year and a record high for the symposium since the COVID-19 pandemic, the maximizing impact through intentional partnerships program and assessment series co-led by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Center for Civic Engagement brought together staff from Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to strengthen collaboration and

advance institutional priorities through intentional programming and outcome-based assessment. The series led to the creation of nine new initiatives that staff will implement in the coming year, reflecting a strong shared commitment to enhancing student engagement, driving institutional success, and fostering deeper cross-divisional collaboration.

As we celebrate commencement this weekend, it seems fitting to share that our students are utilizing resources to support their preparation for their next steps in their academic journey. Students are actively using Kaplan's All Access for free career development, test prep, and certifications. This new program, called "Prepare for Illinois' Future," powered by Kaplan's All Access license is administered by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. Users increased from 193 to 270 in just two months with enrollment and preparatory courses such as LSAT, MCAT, Bar Review, and CPA rising by 48%. This program helps students enhance their academic and career readiness at no cost.

Our student athletes excel both in and out of the classroom, and this has been a fantastic year for Redbird Athletics. Both basketball teams concluded their seasons on high notes in post-season play with the women's team advancing to the Fab Four of the WNIT and the men's team winning the 2025 Purple CBI Championship.

The Redbirds recently secured three team championships, earning spots in the NCAA Regional Championships for gymnastics, women's golf, and men's golf. We look forward to a great finish to the year and to hosting the 2025 NBC Basketball Championship from May 20-24, which will cap a memorable athletic season on campus.

I'm pleased to report a historic achievement for Illinois State University. For the first time in our proud 168-year history, we have reached a level of private support unmatched in our past, raising a record \$39,300,000. Amongst this year's successes is the seventh annual Birds Give Back Day of Giving on February 27th. We achieved a record-setting 4,452 gifts during the 24-hour giving period, raising over \$1,900,000 through challenges, pledges, and gifts, which included a recent \$960,000 gift commitment for student scholarships. While these figures are worth celebrating, they represent far more than just dollars raised. This amount signifies a powerful vote of confidence in Illinois State's mission, momentum, and direction. The \$39,300,000 reflects a comprehensive total of cash gifts, pledges, gifts in kind, estate commitments, and non-governmental grants. Of that total, more than 58% is designated for academic and programmatic support, 35% is earmarked for student support, and the remainder is directed towards faculty resources and facilities.

With six weeks remaining in the fiscal year, we are not finished yet. We are pressing forward, committed to securing the investments Illinois State deserves to continue advancing our excellence. These results highlight the trust that our alumni and friends have in Illinois State University. They also reflect outstanding work being done daily across campus from academic leaders, the Development Team, and the many faculty and staff who nurture and maintain these important relationships. This success is both well-deserved and genuinely appreciated. To all donors and everyone who made this milestone possible, thank you. You inspire and help shape a bright future for Illinois State University.

And lastly, to everyone who celebrates Mother's Day, happy Mother's Day to you.

[End of President's Remarks]

I would now like to call on today's spokesperson for the Campus Communication Committee, Angela Bonnell. Angela is an Associate Professor and Head of Government Information at Milner Library. She has served multiple terms on the Academic Senate and was just recently elected, as of Wednesday, evening the new Academic Senate Chair. She is also the Chair of Government Publishing Office, Federal Depository Counsel, and has published in the role of academic libraries and history and civic engagement as well as in the university's first full-time librarian, Angeline Vernon Milner. Congratulations, Angela. We look forward to working with you in your new role as Academic Senate Chair. Please proceed with your report.

Angela Bonnell: Thank you, President Tarhule. Good morning, everyone. The Campus Communications Committee would like to thank Mary O'Mahoney, Executive Director of Well-Being and Recreation as well as Nicky Culbertson, Well-Being Program Coordinator for this morning's presentation at the Red Folder Project, TimelyCare, and other student mental health resource initiatives on campus. The entire community must continue to

work together to prioritize student mental health. The Campus Communications Committee traditionally meets on the Monday approximately 12 days prior to the board meeting to discuss what we would like to say in this letter. This particular Monday happened to be the day after the deeply concerning shooting event that took place at the Bone Student Center on the evening of April 27th. The committee wishes to thank the ISU police and all other staff involved at Illinois State University for their professional handling of this incident. We acknowledge that this was a traumatic event for everyone on campus but are thankful that only person was injured. This incident reminds us that we all must be prepared and ready for such events as a matter of course. We ask the administration to prioritize making Illinois State University prepared and ready for another event like this in the future. We acknowledge that the administration recently agreed to spend a significant amount of money to install modern lock systems around the campus. This project should be expedited and completed ahead of schedule. We also call upon the administration to perform a safety audit of Illinois State University properties to ensure that they meet current best-practice safety protocols. This may require bringing in an external consultant. Finally, we encourage all staff, faculty and students to attend annual active shooter training to ensure that they are prepared if such an event would incur in the future on our campus or anywhere else in the community.

Since our last letter in February, the contract negotiations between Illinois State University and UFISU reached a successful conclusion. We are grateful to all those on both sides who committed a significant amount of time and energy to bring this successful conclusion to resolution.

Also, since February, there have been further attacks on higher education and academic freedom by the federal government. We support President Tarhule's endorsement of the call for constructive engagement statement which was made by hundreds of university presidents via an American Association of Colleges and Universities and was issued on April 22, 2025. Here in Normal, Illinois the Academic Senate recently unanimously passed a resolution in support of freedom of thought and inquiry. This resolution was also endorsed by our AP Council. The text of this resolution is available on the Academic website at academicsenate.illinoisstate.edu/documents.

Along with the attacks on academic freedom, many of us are deeply concerned about the recent immigration actions of the federal government. We thank the ISU administration for organizing information sessions and support programs for students from immigrant families and for our international students. We hope that such informational sessions continue as this situation evolves in the future.

In addition to the previously mentioned resolution, the Academic Senate has also recently passed a major revision to the General Education program of Illinois State University. This new program features discipline-specific writing courses and do disciplinary work and course work and civic engagement and experiential learning. We are thankful to the numerous faculty, students, and staff who worked on this proposal for several years and are excited to implement it in upcoming years.

Despite all the difficulties we are facing during these trying times, we see the month of May as a time to celebrate the success of the class of 2025. The hope and joy of these graduates brings all of us hope and joy and reminds us of why we love working at an institution of higher education. So, congratulations, class of 2025 and Go You Redbirds.

[applause]

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

Brad Franke: Good morning. Thank you, Chairperson Bohn, President Tarhule, and members of the board. I am Brad Franke and serve as ISU'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 current monitoring. In Springfield the legislative session is in its final month, and legislation continues to move through the General Assembly. Session in Springfield is scheduled to conclude May 31st. At this time, it is likely that the final state budget will be approved by the House and Senate on the final day of session. With that being said, we in the public universities are slated to receive a 3% increase in state operational funding as proposed by the governor. This amounts to approximately \$2,400,000 in additional appropriation for ISU. ISU

conducted its ISU Advocacy Day in Springfield at the capital on Wednesday April 30th. President Tarhule, cabinet members, and I spent the day meeting with ranking members in the House and Senate, including the Speaker of the House, [sounds like Chris Welch 56:15] to discuss our priorities. The university's priorities include advocating for increased operational funding through the state budget, working with state legislators in the Illinois Capital Development Board on the construction and completion of a new STEM building on campus, and advocating for Senate Bill 1987. This bill is an ISU initiative. This bill will allocate \$6,000,000 to ISU to reimburse lost tuition revenue related to the state-mandated Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver Program. We support House Bill 2332, which would change university police retirement age eligibility to 55 from 60 years old. This change mirrors the police retirement age eligibility for all other law enforcement agencies in the state of Illinois.

I also want to briefly share some information about a few bills that would have an impact on the university if passed. Senate Bill 2482 and House Bill 3717. These are the same bill filed in each chamber. Would allow community colleges in the state of Illinois to award baccalaureate degrees. This is a governor's office priority, and we are working with the sponsors, stakeholders, and governor's office on best practices regarding the content of this bill. The public universities are in current negotiations with the governor's office and bill sponsors.

Senate Bill 13 and House Bill 1581, again the same bill filed in each chamber. The equitable funding formula for public universities legislation. Conversations between sponsors and stakeholders are ongoing. Public university presidents and stakeholders provided testimony on Wednesday, April 30th in support of Senate Bill 13 to the Senate Executive Committee. Both bills are still active and have the opportunity to pass this session. With that being said, with session concluding on May 31st time is limited. ISU will continue to advocate for its passage this spring.

Senate Bill 1748 would allow capital projects at public universities under \$2,000,000 to not need approval from the State Board of Higher Education.

House Bill 3522 would establish a direct admission program for public universities. This legislation is a State Board of Higher Education priority, and we are working with them on implementing best practices.

That concludes my report, and I'm happy to answer any questions from the board. Thank you very much.

President Tarhule: Thank you, Brad. We have a unique opportunity this morning to learn about the Three Minute Thesis Competition. At this point I invite Dr. Gavin Weiser, Interim Director of the Graduate School, to come to the podium and introduce Kathleen Tierney, the winner of the Three Minute Thesis Competition.

Gavin Weiser: Good morning, members of the Board of Trustees, colleagues and friends. It is my distinct honor to introduce Kathleen Tierney, a graduate student in the agriculture program to present her Three Minute Thesis. Kathleen won the College Level Award, which then she was invited to participate in the Illinois State University Three Minute Thesis back in February. She was named the overall winner at the Illinois State level and then went on to compete at the Midwest Association of Graduate Schools in March. And while sadly she was not selected as the Midwest winner, her research informed, delighted, and inspired many people at the conference, as I am sure that it will do for all of you as well. Without further ado, I would like to turn it over to Kathleen for her incredible work.

Kathleen Tierney: Picture this. It's your first day at your new college. Your parents just dropped you off, and you are now left to navigate life on your own for the very first time. You have to make new friends, find your own food, and adjust to living in a new environment with roommates. I'm sure you can all remember some of the stress and uncertainty that you were feeling as you adapted to your new normal. Believe it or not, animals go through this, too. In a process called weaning, animals learn to live without parental support, and this generally causes a lot of stress for the animals. In the livestock industry, artificial weaning or weaning before it would occur in nature, poses threats to the animal's health and efficiency. Reducing weaning stress is important to maintain the health and productivity of the animals. But to do so we must first determine exactly how much stress the animals actually undergo. That's where my research comes in. Cattle are one of the most widely studied species in relation to weaning, but most studies have assessed the behavioral stress signs associated with that process. My research utilizes heart rate monitors to look at the physiological stress on beef calves during weaning. I compared two common commercial methods of weaning. The first is called abrupt weaning where the cow and the calf are completely separated, allowing no further physical or visual contact. You could consider this group of calves the on-campus residents.

[laughter]

The second method of weaning is called fence line weaning where the cow and the calf are separated only by a fence between them. It is expected that if a calf can still see and hear its mom it would predictably be less stressed than an abruptly weaned calf. You could consider the fence line group the commuter students. I utilized 19 calves for my study. Ten were abruptly weaned, and nine were fence line weaned. I used heart rate monitors that recorded heart rate variability and respiration rate. I placed the elastic stretch band with the monitor attached around the chest of the calves every other morning for two weeks following weaning. Results of my study indicated that there no differences in heart rate or respiration rate based on the method of weaning that the calves were assigned. This is indicative. While behaviorally calves may be less stressed when fence line weaned, their physiological stress actually remains the same. It is important to note, however, that the stress on both groups of calves was relieved in time. So, when the time comes that your firstborn goes off to college, whether they decide to live on campus or commute, remember that they will likely undergo similar amounts of stress. But with time that stress and uncertainty will be eased. Thank you.

[applause]

President Tarhule: Thank you, Kathleen. Are there any questions from the board?

Trustee Bohn: I usually ask a question, Kathleen, so come back. So, interestingly, I have a friend in northern Illinois that takes cattle and weans them. You know, they take 50 at a time, and they feed them with bottled, you know, milk, etc. So how long does the weaning process usually take?

Kathleen Tierney: Usually, it's a relatively quick process. It just occurs over the course of a couple of weeks. But it kind of depends on the breed or purpose. Dairy calves are weaned at a much younger age than beef calves. So that would probably be a much faster process.

Trustee Bohn: Okay. And when you separate them to wean them, approximately how much do they weigh at that point?

Kathleen Tierney: They were probably about 700 pounds on average when we weaned them.

Trustee Bohn: Okay.

Kathleen Tierney: They were about six months old.

Trustee Bohn: Six months.

Kathleen Tierney: Yeah.

Trustee Bohn: And then do we have the . . . I mean you did the experiment at our farms?

Kathleen Tierney: Yes. I did all of my research at the ISU Research Farm.

Trustee Bohn: And how many were you weaning? Do they wean at a time there?

Kathleen Tierney: I think it depends like year to year how many they have. But all of the spring calves were weaned at the same time.

Trustee Bohn: And then do we keep them to a certain weight and then sell them?

Kathleen Tierney: I believe so, yes.

Trustee Bohn: Okay. Well, thank you.

Kathleen Tierney: Thank you.

President Tarhule: Thank you, Kathleen.

About this time last year, it became clear to the cabinet and me that ISU's expenses were rising significantly faster than revenues. Our forecast indicated that without urgent and decisive action the institution would end the fiscal year 25 with a \$9,000,000 budget deficit. Among the many actions taken, I established a RISE Task Force to review the situation, get campus input, and collaborate with a third-party consultant to help the university to reimagine its budget process. I'm grateful to the many individuals who have worked diligently on RISE and outlined the principles and parameters enabling our consultant to develop a new budget model for Illinois State. At this time, I'd like to invite Dr. Glen Nelson, Vice President for Finance and Planning, to the podium to provide an update on the RISE Initiative.

Dr. Glen Nelson: Thank you, President Tarhule, Chairman Bohn, and members of the board. I'd like to give you an update on where we are at this point in time with the budget redesign and resource allocation model. So today what I'm going to do is give you a brief project overview, talk a little bit about the stakeholder engagement which is extremely unique to the process that we're doing here at Illinois State University versus what's been done in terms of stakeholder engagement at other universities. I'm going to share with you the guiding principles that have been developed through the process and endorsed by the Academic Senate and also the future state framework that the RISE Task Force came up with and also has been shared with the Academic Senate. And then talk about some key considerations for going forward. Building on what President Tarhule just said, we had an acute budget crisis, if you will, or acute budget situation (I won't term it a crisis) last year that caused us to look more deeply at how we manage our fiscal resources. But if we look across, and that's what generated the RISE Task Force, the market in higher education space right now, in terms of being able to manage our fiscal management strategies we have to be able to be aware of the financial budgetary pressures that are out there. As President Tarhule said, our expenses were rising faster than our revenues. That's one way to look at it. Another way to look at it is the long period of disinvestment by states across the country, including Illinois, in higher education has put pressures on us as well. We're very grateful that our appropriation has continued to rise but at a very small rate. It has not kept up with inflation. Shifting enrollment patterns. One of the things we've talked about in the past is the demographic cliff that's out there. We have weathered that storm very well. We've continued to grow our enrollments. And so what I have found surprising on this campus is I hear a lot of feedback as to is the demographic real. Because from a parochial perspective, if we look at where we are, we see our enrollments growing. But I can assure you it is very real. It is very real across the country, the declining number of high school seniors that are out there. The declining number of high school students that we can tell from birth rates is going to continue. And if we look at the State of Illinois, for instance, community colleges from 2019 to 2023 have declined enrollments from 140,000 to 114,000. The four-year sector, we've declined from 166 to 163. So, we are facing those headwinds. We've just been weathering them very well at Illinois State, but the tide could turn at any point in time. So, it's a very real headwind that we're facing. In terms of economic uncertainty, I don't think I have to point to anything in particular in the last six months. We can just see what's been happening in the economy in the last six months and for a greater period of time, looking back over the last few years. And then what does that mean for the future? We get a new executive order out of Washington periodically, much more frequently than we have in the past. And how are each of those going to impact us? We don't always know. And so, we need to be in a position to respond to that. We have evolving student expectations. From the time that we all attended college - as I'm going to collectively speak for the board, I think you had the same experience as I had, we did not face the number of mental health issues that our students are facing today. And there are different expectations of the services we provide our students and how we support our students for their success. That's added also expenses to us. If we go away from that, just the student life area - a lot of us were used to the standard residential dorm and not a lot of activities on campus other than the activities we made of our own. Students today are expecting more and more amenities on campus, and that leads to costs as well. Or it leads to us spending time figuring out how to appeal to those desires. And then, finally, labor market dynamics. We just recently came to successful conclusion in negotiating that first contract with our faculty. We have other aspects of the university that are unionized that we have contracts that we are continuing to negotiate and just the general economic forces on the rest of our labor force as to what types of increases occur in that area. So we're facing all of these headwinds, and we need to have a budget and a budget process that allows us to respond to all of those collectively. And so the budget redesign or resource reallocation aspect of the RISE Task Force is what I'm really going to be talking to you about today, just one of the things that the RISE Task Force has been doing. And so with that initiative, one part of that initiative is to both enhance our budgeting practice and tools and

to enable us to strategically grow and adapt to these changing market forces. If we develop an effective budget focus or a budget process, we should be able to improve our financial transparency, have data-driven decisions, which while we talk a lot about data-driven decisions, as I found out with our historical practice here, the budget process has not allowed us to do that at an institution-wide level. Also, if we have the right type of budget process in place, it should help us identify opportunities and risks much more easily than we have today and that it will integrate our financial and strategic plan together. And so those are what we challenged the RISE Task Force with, the feedback that they gave us, and in working with our consultant. I would be remiss if I didn't thank President Tarhule for putting something into place with the RISE Task Force before I arrived, and that was hiring Grant Thornton to be our partner in this process. I've worked through several budget redesigns at other universities, and like many universities across the country we tried to do it in house. And when you do that in house, we have our day jobs, and you then have to balance how you get today's work done while you're trying to envision something new and move a project forward from a resource standpoint. Number two, I learned a long time ago in one of my first corporate jobs when we were doing a redesign process. We took the experts from our payroll and our accounts payable area from three different companies that were within our newly formed company, put them in a room and said design a new process that's more efficient. Well, they were all experts in today's process. They did not have experience in other processes. And so, you can imagine that was a very long, drawn out activity that didn't necessarily come up with the best or best-in-practice process at the end. Bringing in Grant Thornton advisors to partner with us brings in industry experts who have experience with other budget models, have experience in higher ed and what's happening in the higher ed space. So, I would just like to thank Dr. Tarhule for putting that in place so when I arrived on campus, I didn't have to try to figure out how do I take my staff off of daily work, which we are doing and that's happening around the campus, but that we have this extra help. And so, Rick Strasser is the managing director with Grant Thornton and is here today with us. Where we are in terms our timelines. The chevrons that are on the slide in front of you and the timeline that started at the end of December of last year. We spent the first two months of this year – the RISE Task Force spent the first two months of this year – defining and refining the guiding principles. They created the guiding principles for what should our new budget process, our new budget model, operate under. If we want to take where we are today to the future, what should the new budget process look like? That was completed at the end of February. Then they've been working on a budget framework. So, these two documents together are going to guide us as we go into the summer months in developing a new budget model. We'll be testing the new budget model that Grant Thornton will be working with our finance team to develop against these guiding principles in this budget framework with the goal that we will achieve the goal of having a new budget model that operates within that framework in those principles. At the same time the Grant Thornton team is helping us to identify what budget and forecasting software tools are out there in the higher ed space that we can eventually purchase and put into place so that we have the right tools to use with our new budget model. Today we're lacking in any really effective or efficient budget forecasting and planning tools. So those two activities will take place this summer. When faculty returns in the fall and everyone's back with the RISE Task Force, we will have a straw document, or a straw budget model, built that we will then begin testing with input from the RISE Task Force. So, I'm happy to report at this point in time we are still on budget, and we are on time. And so that's where we are with the timing of the project.

The next thing I'd like to talk about. I want to go back to that stakeholder engagement piece where I was saying it was very unique to this campus and these types of projects that I've been associated with, and Rick and his team have validated that my experiences are what they're seeing at other universities across the country. Typically, these models are built without a lot of input from campus. It's the finance team trying to come up with something new. I can let you know that to begin with, the RISE Task Force has over 35 members or has 35 members on the Task Force that represent various areas of campus, chairs, deans, faculty, staff, not just finance individuals. So, it's our campus users, our end users of the budget process. We had over 500 people attend spring semester town hall forums as we did outreach to both share where we were on the project, where we are on the project, and to gain support and answer their questions. The Provost and I presented at those and took all questions. We had an e-mail or a memo from the RISE Task Force that went out to over 25,000 stakeholders this spring. We had 80+ deans, chairs, and directors providing input to the process. There have been over 50 meetings with ISU leadership and other stakeholders. And one of the other things that the RISE Task Force did was ask the campus to come up with ideas for efficiencies, and they've received over 160 comments and questions, whether they were specific idea for an efficiency or something to do with the project. I'm not going to walk through this next slide, but this is the kind of activity that is happening, and the Grant Thornton team is helping us manage. This is just some of the meetings from March 18th scheduled through May 22nd. And as you can see, there are several meetings every week involving

various stakeholders or various members of the administration in trying to get input and to move the process forward so that we have a very inclusive process that's happening.

I'd like to share with you the guiding principles that have been adopted. The first is mission and vision. We want to make sure that the new process will allow us to strategically align our resources with our mission and vision so that we can advance excellence in student, faculty, and staff success, education and research. Again, we're trying to link the budget process to where our strategic plan is and what our values and mission are. Transparency – we want to make sure that we have a process that will allow transparent communication of where we are and what decisions we're trying to make and how the decisions are made. In terms of accountability, we want to promote both institution-wide accountability and unit-level accountability with the new budget and that we're aligned with our strategic goals again. Adaptability – we want to make sure we have a flexible process that will allow us to quickly pivot to changing market dynamics and even changing student enrollments. Our current budget process today, as we've talked about in the past, is just simply rolling last year's expense budget. And so we have some areas of the university who have grown, who are still receiving relatively the same resource allocation they had five or ten years ago in terms of percentage versus other areas of the university, and we have some areas of the university who have fewer students than they had at that time, and they are still receiving the same level of support that they received before. So, the current process doesn't allow us to quickly adapt to those changing dynamics that the colleges are facing. Sustainability – the current budget process simply looks at next year, and we really want to have a process that's in place that allows multi-year planning and allows us to forecast some of those changes so that we can be adaptive to the changes in the workplace. So, when we're talking about sustainability, we're talking about fiscal sustainability in this regard. I know usually when we're talking sustainability in the higher ed environment, we're in the facilities area and thinking of environmental sustainability, but this is fiscal sustainability. The institution has been around for 167 years, and we want it to be around for another 167 and more. So, we need to be fiscally sustainable. We also want the process to be as simple as possible. When you have a large organization that's highly decentralized like universities are, the more complex the process is, the harder it is for everyone in the community to see what's happening and to understand the decisions that are made and to see the transparency. We also want the budget process to be data-informed and linked to key performance indicators. And finally, we want to have a spirit of collaboration that we can work collaboratively across all areas of the institution so that we can align our resources in the best way possible to meet our mission and vision. So that was passed or that was endorsed by the Academic Senate. It came through the RISE Task Force. It worked its way up through the project team, worked its way up to the Executive Team, also went up the Academic Senate side of the house. The RISE Task Force then moved on to look at the future state framework. And within that we identified that we would want to have some type of performance-based model that was a hybrid budget model. And when we're talking a performance-based hybrid model, there's on a continuum within the higher ed space. On one end we have the incremental model like we have today, and we are definitely at the end of that continuum, whether it's on the right side or the left. We have an incremental model that is based on decisions that were made in response to collective input over the last 10 or 15 years and collective market forces that may not be in existence today. On the other end is a full-blown resource-centered management or RCM model, which some of you in the corporate world may be familiar with. Those are great models for a manufacturing firm. We're not a manufacturing firm. Some universities went down that road over the last 15 years. Most of them who went down that road have now backed off because the models are not well suited for higher ed. A lot of the concepts are. And so they backed off to more of a hybrid space. We believe we're going to end up in that hybrid space going forward, based on what we're getting advice from Grant Thornton and from the RISE Task Force. So, the key components are going to be that it's going to be a revenue-based budgeting model. This is the first this upcoming year, and you have a resolution in the board today that talks about basing next year's budget on our estimated revenues for next year. That's not something we have done here in the past. The second is an all-funds approach. That's probably a term more specific to higher ed, but historically universities prior to 2000 were run as auxiliaries or a separate unit. You have your Gen Ed as a separate unit. You have other aspects of the university that are all treated budgetarily as separate units, and you can have one side of the university doing very well and another side being in deficit, which is exactly what we have here. Or if you look at our financial statements, we are okay. We balanced our budget last year. However, our general fund or our GR budget has a structural deficit, and that's being offset by increases in our auxiliaries and service funds. So, we want to make sure we have a model that takes all funds into account as we're making strategic decisions. Another aspect of the framework is that the budgets will be college-level-based. In today's environment because we rolled the budget from last year, it's rolled at the lowest level of all departments across the university, all the departments within the colleges. And so that allows a lot of local strategic decisions to be made but within that framework of that local area, not a framework of the overall college or the overall university. So, we want to move to that college level or

that higher level allocation aspect. When we were talking about performance-based, we're talking about dollars following students. We're talking about credit hour production and also about college major, the time needed to advise the students within a college, but also, we're going to build a component in that will link to student success outcomes, staff outcomes as well. And those are still being developed. So that's what we're talking about with performance based. So hopefully there will be an emphasis to achieve some of those metrics so that dollars follow. While we also want the model to allow us to do multi-year planning and being able to focus on enrollments and being revenue-based, I believe that will get us there. And then finally we want to also have a way within the model to create a dedicated funding for strategic initiatives. At this point in time, because of the way our budget process works at Illinois State University, we don't have that. And that's something that most universities have. And so, we have to look at . . . do we have to take money from reserves, do we have to come back to you as the board to ask for those types of expenditures? And so, we want to make sure the new model can operate within this framework. The key considerations that we're facing now as we go forward are around what type of systems do we need to purchase or change that we have in order to get the data to where it needs to be to put into the budget model. The real focus of this is around change management, and we need to continue to have the stakeholder engagement that we've had. It'll be very vital in the fall when we roll out the straw model that we get feedback from the campus community on what's working, what's not, and I will have failed if we roll out a model that doesn't live within those guiding principles and that framework. And so, we'll be expecting the campus to give us feedback on that as well that we're true to what they told us they want the model to look like. And then we need to clarify a number of processes and procedures and expectations. So that's where we are right now. We're on time and on budget. So, I welcome any questions or comments that you may have.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Jenkins.

Trustee Jenkins: A tremendous presentation. It really hit a lot of the questions I would've had as you were walking through it. You hit upon the principles. And this is just really vital but incredibly unsexy work that has to happen, and you have a lot of cooks that are trying to tell you how to make the soup, and so I don't want to be one of those people. I really appreciate how you did the principles, because I think that then will guide the administration, it'll guide your efforts, it'll allow you to communicate more easily. One thing that struck me as you were saying, if we budget at the kind of disaggregated lowest number – so your department level. Micro-decisions that are made by a chair or by senior faculty within a department, it then rolls up to the college where the dean has decisions made for them, from both a leadership and a management style. Then it rolls up to the administration. It rolls up to this table where we then have to tax our students and families to end where to pay for those decisions that are made that someone at a very micro level made a change. And so, I really do like how you talk about budgeting to the college level, making this much more transparent, and it makes me think what did you reveal? As you were doing this, it sounds like you had a couple of ah-hah moments of how Illinois State does the kind of legacy and the structural legacy of how it's done budgeting over time. Are there some areas where you think the principles that you've laid out are going to create kind of challenges in communication or opportunities to change? But kind of what are the risks within that? I mean, you talked a little bit, but I'd love to hear a little bit more if you can.

Dr. Glen Nelson: Okay. I think there are two categories. One is a technical. And you're talking about ah-hah moments. We also have a new comptroller and a new chief budget officer that both started like three weeks before I arrived. Amanda is the chief budget officer, has been in the budget office, and is an Illinois State employee, and it was a promotion. But Carlos Garcia came from another institution, and he's been at several higher ed institutions as well. And so, we are having these ah-hah moments together, coming in with outside eyes. One of the things we've discovered as technical basis is our chart of accounts was set up less than optimally. It was set up from a different type of reporting than it is. So, we're finding now, and we're working with Grant Thornton that we're going to have to try to change the chart of accounts while the plane is flying. That's going to be a technical challenge. We also don't use something called position control, and that makes it very difficult to manage the institution strategically. When you face a budgetary challenge like we had last year, if I had position control in place I could immediately inform my cabinet colleagues that if we stop hiring for the rest of the term, how much money would that save us. I can't answer that quick question with the way we are built today. A lot of people have to do a lot of work and go to a lot of spreadsheets to get that answer, and then I don't have visibility into how successful we are until the end of the year in that regard. So those are a couple of the technical things. On a more global level, the fundamental level is that we're going to be changing the thought process of how we approach our fiscal decisions at the university. Our university, because of the way the budget has worked in the past, is extremely expense management focused. And what I mean by that is, and we've been very good as a university community at living within that expense

budget and knowing how to adhere to an expense budget, but what we don't do is think from a revenue or margin basis. And that's a 180-degree shift from where we're at. An example that I can give you is there are times that if we could do something that students want that would generate money that would pay for itself, that would generate more revenue but it would cost more, if the costs were not in the budget that was rolled, we don't even think to go forward because we have been rewarded in the past by living within the budget that's been given, that's been rolled. And so this is a 180-degree culture shift that has to occur from the cabinet to the chairs, from the cabinet to the lowest level of the administrative units. We can get there. It's going to take a lot of education, but it's going to be a heavy lift. So those would be the challenges.

Trustee Jenkins: That's great. Thank you.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Merminga.

Trustee Merminga: Thank you. So, Glen, thank you so much for this presentation. I appreciate it a lot, and it really gave an excellent perspective of where you are and where you want to go. So, my question is this. You talked a lot about revising processes and putting in place robust processes. But as we know, tools and peoples' expertise are also important finally in order to have a comprehensive financial system. So, can you elaborate a little bit what tools or systems? You alluded to a little bit. I want to share more. You feel Illinois State University needs to acquire as part of your overall plan and what the funding for this is and where it would come from. And also, in terms of people, can you comment whether you feel you have within your organization adequate expertise in order to put this new budgeting process in place. Thank you.

Dr. Glen Nelson: Thank you for the question or questions. The first thing, in terms of systems, I can lower everyone's blood pressure that I am not asking for a new ERP system.

Trustee Merminga: Okay. [laughter]

Dr. Glen Nelson: Those are usually \$50,000,000 to over \$100,000,000 for those. Although our financial system is extremely old and it's not a state-of-the-art system anymore, it still works. But what we don't have is a reporting capability. One of the things I've heard about since I've come here is the difficulty we have at getting data or the right data in a timely manner to make decisions or that our systems don't talk as they're not necessarily from the same family, from the same company. What we're looking at with the help of Grant Thornton this summer – there are products out there that in a layman's terms I call it an umbrella that sits on top of our other systems. And this umbrella has a budgeting format within it, a forecasting format, and we map the calls, if you will, to the various financial systems or other data systems we have at the university. And so, what the campus community will work with in the future is whatever the format and the forms in that umbrella are as opposed to pulling detailed reports out of our base systems, for instance. And so that's what been done at a number of universities. A number of my colleagues have used these types of systems, and Grant Thornton is familiar with the major products that are out there, and they'll be working with us to identify. I don't know the costs of those, but they are significantly, significantly less than a new ERP system. And once we identify what that is, we will have to look at how we're going to fund that. So, I don't have a plan for that yet, but this is, again, one of those things that as we started down this project, moving forward we had to do with the help of Grant Thornton, and then we're finding some of these things out along the way. The second question I think you asked was about do I have the right resources. I have a very strong team, and what's most important, I think Carlos will agree with me, is we have a very eager team and eager to learn. Because we are bringing a lot of new ideas to the table. They're listening to our partners at Grant Thornton, and Carlos and I are undertaking that kind of education effort to just try to refocus people because they have the right skills. They have the right aptitudes. But most importantly they have the right attitude. Now do I have enough? Not quite. I have a plan that I'm going to be laying out to my cabinet members shortly and the President to add a few more resources. However, they won't be costing any more money. I'm actually reorganizing and funding those dollars within my division from open positions in other areas so that we will be able to get some additional resource, because we will also need to have those resources to help the campus community transition to this new environment.

Trustee Merminga: Very helpful. Thank you.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Tillis.

Trustee Tillis: Chairperson Bohn, this is more of a statement than a question. Ever since I joined the board, I've had multiple various concerns about our financial system, and I've had multiple conversations with Trustee Jenkins regarding our financial system. And I just want to applaud Dr. Tarhule and his visionary leadership around our financial future. He decided to draw a line in the sand and say we're not going to continue to do things like they have been done in the past. And I know that was a hard decision on your part, Dr. Tarhule. And your team, Dr. Glen, with Amanda – I have not had an opportunity to meet Carlos, but I think Amanda is probably saying to herself finally somebody that has the same vision as me, somebody that's willing to listen to me and all the thoughts that I have about where the university can go. So, I'm excited about our future and where we're going. I think the future of the university is right now, and the decisions that you guys are making with the RISE Task Force is super, super important. So, whatever we can do, or I can do as a board member of this university, I'm just truly excited. And I'm excited that he brought you on because you have the same passion and the visionary leadership that's needed in this position to keep us going for the next 150 or 200 years. So, thank you.

Dr. Glen Nelson: Thank you.

Trustee Bohn: Any other questions?

President Tarhule: Thank you, Glen. And that concludes the report.

Consent Agenda

Trustee Bohn: Thank you. We will now move to the Consent Agenda, and I note that the meeting minutes of February 21st, 2025 have already been addressed. We got a little ahead of ourselves, but we will include them in the Consent Agenda as written. 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 requests it. In that case, the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered at the appropriate point on the agenda. Do any trustees wish to have any items removed from the Consent Agenda? Okay. If not, may I have a motion and a second to approve Consent Agenda items A through E?

Trustee Jenkins: So moved.

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

Trustee Merminga: Second.

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

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The items included in the Consent Agenda are approved. President Tarhule, please proceed with the resolutions.

Resolutions

President Tarhule: **Resolution 2025.05/15. FY 2026 Spending Authorization.**

Because this is the last scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees before the start of a new fiscal year on July 1, the university requests your approval to spend budgeted funds beginning July 1, 2025, prior to the final approval of the state appropriation funding level and the FY 2026 university operating budget. The university will present a resolution seeking authorization for the fiscal year 2026 operating budget at the board's first quarterly meeting after the FY 2026 state appropriations are enacted. The table included in this resolution presents FY 2026 spending authorization by fund which is based on stable student enrollment, a projected 3% increase in state appropriations, and a 5% increase in room and board rate approved by the board at the February 21, 2025 meeting. The total spending authority relies on projected operating revenues for each fund type. It should be noted that fiscal year 2026 is a transition year for university budgeting in preparation for implementing a new budget model effective FY 2027. The university is transitioning to a new budget calendar and process and current budgets to projected operating revenues for fiscal year 2026. As the campus navigates these changes, the FY 2026 spending authorization is based on revenue projections at the fund level. I ask for your approval for this resolution.

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

Trustee Navarro: I so move.

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

Trustee Tillis: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Tillis second. Is there any discussion? Trustee Jenkins.

Trustee Jenkins: Thank you, Chair Bohn. Just a quick question. I know that this includes the anemic increase in funding from the state to support the institution. I'm wondering, though, it does not include the special ed fee waiver. We didn't envision that within this spending plan.

President Tarhule: That is correct because that is still a bill that will be tackled in the state budget. So, if it is approved, that gives us that additional money, and at this point we have not accounted for it in the budget.

Trustee Bohn: 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 2025.05/16. Authorization of Expenditures for College of Engineering Construction Services.

In support of the College of Engineering, the University is planning phase one construction services for the property located at 1709 GE Road. This construction project will accommodate up to 520 new engineering students and includes projected renovation costs as well as total expected expenses for classrooms, laboratories, and audiovisual equipment. This resolution requests authorization for expenditures not to exceed \$41,500,000 for all necessary construction services related to the College of Engineering phase 1 as well as for classroom, laboratory, and audiovisual equipment. It also requests permission to enter into contracts with all necessary contractors, vendors, and suppliers. The funding source is the general revenue reserves financed through tax-exempt COPS debt. I ask for your support for this resolution.

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

Trustee Tillis: So moved.

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

Trustee Russell: Second.

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

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The resolution is approved.

President Tarhule: Thank you.

Resolution 2025.05/17. Authorization for School Street and South University Street Parking Garage Repair Projects.

The School Street Parking Garage and the South University Parking Garages opened in 1991 and 1999, respectively. These garages provide over 1,300 parking spaces for faculty, staff, and students. Although the garages have

undergone regular maintenance, the university engaged Walker Consultants to evaluate them due to the age of the facilities and subsequently contracted Valdes Engineering to design the repairs and restoration of the garages. This item seeks board authorization for a capital project addressing repairs at the School Street Parking Garage and the South University Street Parking Garage. The project aims to complete essential repairs and restoration of the top parking level, the ramp to that level, and the underside of the ramp. Upon board approval, the project is expected to commence in summer 2025 and is anticipated to become completed by winter 2025. The source of funds for this project is AFS Parking Services. 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 second. Is there any discussion? Actually, I have one question. I realize this is safety and we need to move forward with this. When is the anticipated time of renovating Bone Student Center Parking Lot?

President Tarhule: Mike, are you here?

Mike Gebeke: How does Monday sound?

[laughter]

Trustee Bohn: Very good.

Mike Gebeke: It's starting Monday. So, we've got everything going over there, and they're staging right now.

Trustee Bohn: And probably be finished by the end of the summer?

Mike Gebeke: The parking lot and the lights should be done. The canopy will take a little longer.

Trustee Bohn: Okay.

Mike Gebeke: But we will have it open for parking, and then the canopy will take a little longer to finish after that.

Trustee Bohn: That's great. Thank you. 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 2025.05/18. Authorization for Golf Team Hitting Facility Project.

Donor contributions to both the men's and women's golf teams have enabled Redbird Athletics to pursue the purchase and installation of a golf team hitting facility and two golfing simulators. This project also includes all necessary design and construction costs with a total project cost not exceeding \$600,000. I want to thank our donors for their generous contributions to this project, and 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: Motion is made by Trustee Merminga. Is there a second?

Trustee Jenkins: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Second by Trustee Jenkins. 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 2025.05/19. Authorization to Name the Barro Family Office.

Illinois State University Athletics respectfully requests naming the offensive line coach's office inside the Kaufman Football Building. This naming reflects and recognizes the generous financial commitment made by Bruce Barro to the Redbird Athletics Program. Bruce Barro is an alumnus, a former Redbird football player and a great friend of Illinois State University's football program. He enjoys attending an ISU football game each year and supporting the current team. Bruce was coached by the current offensive line coach, Harold Etheridge, during his time at Illinois State, making the proposed name fitting. Bruce and his family are passionate about creating sustainable improvements that enhance the football program and enable the Redbirds to achieve greater successes during their time at ISU and beyond. Bruce Barro's financial commitment to ISU Athletics will continue to elevate and enhance student athletes' experiences. Consequently, we propose naming the offensive line coach's office inside the Kaufman Football Building the Barro Family Office. I want to take a moment to thank Bruce Barro for his ongoing support for Redbird Athletics and Illinois State University. Thank you for investing in the future of our student athletes and the Redbird football program. 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.

President Tarhule: And that 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 minutes of meetings lawfully closed under this act for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes pursuant to 5ILCS120/2C21 and discussing litigation that has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal and when an action is probable or imminent pursuant to 5ILCS120/2C11. May I have a motion and second to move into closed session?

Trustee Jenkins: So moved.

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

Trustee Tillis: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Tillis second. Any discussion? Hearing no discussion, Trustee Navarro please call for a roll call vote.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Bohn.

Trustee Bohn: Yes.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Hoeniges.

Trustee Hoeniges: Yes.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Jenkins.

Trustee Jenkins: Yes.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Meringa.

Trustee Meringa: 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 closed session, the board will move back into public session solely for the purpose of adjournment. Thank you.

[Sound of pounding gavel.]

The Board moved into closed session at 11:11 a.m.

[End of recording.]

Reconvene in Open Session

At 12:20 p.m., the Board reconvened in public session.

Adjourn

At 12:20 p.m., Trustee Tillis, seconded by Trustee Hoeniges, made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The Board unanimously agreed to adjourn. The motion carried.