

MINUTES  
Board of Trustees Meeting of Illinois State University  
October 17, 2025

[Sound of rapping 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 meeting notice, the University has provided a YouTube link that allows anyone interested to watch the meeting in real time and hear all discussion and votes. Trustee Tillis, please call the roll.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Bohn.

Trustee Bohn: Present.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Hoeniges.

Trustee Hoeniges: Present.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Lutt.

Trustee Lutt: Present.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Merminga.

Trustee Merminga: Present.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Navarro. Trustee Peterson.

Trustee Peterson: Present.

Trustee Lutt: Trustee Russell.

Trustee Russell: Present.

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

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Trustee Tillis. At this time I ask Trustee Lutt to approach and take the oath of office. Please repeat after me. I do solemnly swear . . .

Trustee Lutt: I do solemnly swear. . .

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Trustee Lutt: . . .of Illinois State University. . .

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

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

[applause]

Trustee Bohn: Well, congratulations, Trustee Lutt. We are excited to welcome you to the board, and we look forward to working together to benefit Illinois State University in the upcoming year. Additionally, I'm pleased to share that Trustee Lutt has been appointed to the Audit Committee of the Board of Trustees. Would you like to say a few words?

Trustee Lutt: Yeah, thank you very much. It's a great honor and pleasure for me to join the Board of Trustees. I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to study an MBA here at Illinois State and graduated in 2006, and that really was the beginning of a long and fantastic relationship that I've been able to have with the university, both as an alumnus and as a member of Board of Advisors for the College of Business and am proud to say that both of our daughters attended Illinois State here and are graduates of the College of Business and College of Education. And my wife and I are fantastic proud sponsors and supporters of the university and look forward to a continued relationship at even a higher level. So thank you again, and I'm super happy to be here.

Trustee Bohn: Thank you so much, Trustee Lutt.

#### **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 is made by Trustee Tillis. Is there a second?

Trustee Hoeniges: Second.

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

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The agenda is approved.

#### **Public Comments**

Trustee Bohn: Next on the agenda is Public Comments. Several people have indicated an interest in making public comments to the board today. In line with the established and recorded policy, the Board of Trustees will allocate a total of up to 30 minutes for public comments and questions during public meeting. Each individual speaker is given five minutes for their presentation. If more than two people wish to speak on a single item, it is recommended they select one or more representatives to speak on their behalf. The Board of Trustees will accept copies of speakers' presentations, questions, and other relevant written materials. If you have any written materials you'd like to share with the Board of Trustees, you may send them to [bot@ilstu.edu](mailto:bot@ilstu.edu). When appropriate, the Board of Trustees will respond to a speaker's questions within a reasonable period.

At this time I invite Abdallah Alkodah, and I apologize if I mispronounced it. [laughter]

Abdallah Alkodah: [foreign language spoken] In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate. President Tarhule, members of the Board of Trustees, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Abdallah Alkodah, and I'm a nursing student at the Mennonite College of Nursing. I decided to enter nursing school because of my training and work as an emergency medical technician. It was there that I saw how dedicated and competent medical care can save lives and improve the quality of living. I'm a compassionate, resilient, and dedicated nursing student who takes patient care seriously and goes above and beyond. I made the Dean's List in spring 2025. I also provided you with a letter of recommendation from a faculty member who taught also at the college for more than 20 years. On the first anniversary of the Simulation Lab opening last year, I met President Tarhule briefly along with his assistant, Chris, and we discussed several important subjects to help the community. I even advocated for fixing Locust Street and lowering tuition fees. So thank you, President Tarhule, for listening and for your advocacy. I truly appreciate it.

I would like to inform you that there have been several Illinois State University policies and codes violated by some faculty members and by the current interim dean at my college against me, including Student Handbook pages 21-22, Student Handbook pages 3-4 and 19, ADA Policy 1.3, and ISU Policy 1.2. The mishandling of this process by ISU leadership has delayed my graduation by a full semester and caused me significant mental distress and embarrassment in front of my colleagues and family. In a last effort to be heard by university authorities I tried contacting the President and Vice President and requested meetings on multiple occasions, but my requests were denied. My clinical instructor failed me in Adult Nursing III, Nurse 325, for unjust and unfair reasons during the final week of the summer semester. My grade in clinical was an A and in the theory course was a B. I was not given the opportunity to respond to those allegations, which, by the way, violated both of my religious accommodation and my medical documentation. I went to the Provost Office for guidance and was advised to file an appeal. I submitted two appeals; both were denied. I was convinced to re-take the class while waiting for a response to the second appeal, but to my surprise I was failed again two weeks into the new semester and was dismissed from the program by the interim dean which I believe violated ISU policies and the Student Handbook. Dear members of the board, I kindly request the following:

1. I respectfully request an extended review of my summer 2025 grade appeal for NUR 325 under the board's guidance to ensure a fair and transparent process. I believe the grade I received violated ADA Policy 1.3 which guarantees equal access to academic programs and university Policy 1.2 on antiharassment and antidiscrimination. President Tarhule, members of the board, I also respectfully ask the board to review the current grade appeal policy which allows only two levels of appeal with the second being final and consider adding an additional level of review focused on fairness and policy compliance.
2. I would also like to bring to your attention that I have submitted by grievance letter according to page 21 of the Student Handbook, requesting that I be allowed to complete my final requirement so I may graduate. President Tarhule and members of the board, I am a peacemaker and someone who seeks solutions. I came to you today to find a fair and workable resolution. If we cannot reach an agreement on this matter, I intend to pursue legal action, which would make this issue public. But that is not what I want. I love my school, my college, and this university, and I'm only seeking what is fair and right. This one grade needs to be corrected; I will graduate.

Finally, I urge the board to ensure proper oversight and accountability so that all students at Illinois State University have equal access to fair and transparent process. If you have any questions, you may contact me at 312-632-3855.

Finally, I thank the board for your time, for listening, and for your service to our university. Thank you.

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Abdallah. At this time I invite Jason Stefanich (I may have mispronounced that, too) to come to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board.

Jason Stefanich: Good morning. I am Jason Stefanich, a storage laborer here at ISU. I am also an Executive Board member of AFSCME Local 1110 and an ISU alum. Local 1110 members work in Campus Dining, Grounds, and Building Services workers and other skilled positions. Many of our positions are essential and require us to come in to work during inclement weather to ensure students are fed, snow and ice removed, and other campus services continue. I am here today to voice frustration and anger regarding our long, drawn-out contract bargaining. Our first bargaining session was held on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. We have completed 23 sessions, and we are far from reaching an agreement. Our contract expired June 30<sup>th</sup>. Our members are concerned about pay rate increases for this year and

for the next few years. As you all know, prices of everyday items such as groceries, electricity, insurance are all increasing at incredible rates with some of our wages not far above minimum wage. Most of our wages are not a living wage. Our lowest full-time paid member is \$16.66 per hour. This is unacceptable. Keep in mind that approximately 25% of our bargaining members are laid off during the summer and academic breaks. This is only further increases our stress and academic struggles. Furthermore, we are not eligible for unemployment. During bargaining our committee asked management, in an attempt to expedite the bargaining process, what pay increases could the university provide during the term of our contract. Unfortunately, our committee was met with a denial of the request and a statement that HR's job is to provide as little to the union as possible. Is this really what you think of employees? Is this how they should be treated? Frustration is high while morale is low. Not only is not having a contract distressing but also the relationship between management and the union has been challenging for quite some time. Management has the pattern of not communicating, not sharing information, not being responsive to our concerns, and does not take suggestions when it comes to improving working conditions. Here is an example: When attempting to address the ongoing concern of having parking spaces working during events, we attempted to learn in advance and guarantee that employees will have parking spaces during football games. On September 6<sup>th</sup>, we had several members along with other ISU employees while they were working found their vehicles missing. This caused confusion and frustration. After some time, they found their vehicles were towed to another lot halfway across campus. When they found their vehicles, they discovered that they were also ticketed \$95. This was due to a lack of communication from supervisors and systemic flaws on informing ISU employees where they could park during football games. We have asked that the employees' tickets either be refunded or waived and to improve the process. We are still waiting for a response. This has created fury and no fair resolution. Our hope is that once we have a fair contract we can work to address many of the other issues contributing to low morale, but it is frustrating that it seems that we are the only side working to make a positive change. Our proud union members are frustrated with the slow process. We are tired of our ideas being dismissed. Three years ago during that contract bargaining, our union was five days away from going out on strike. Earlier this year, the ISU faculty were just hours away from striking. ISU, stop abusing your employees. Respect them and work. . .

Trustee Bohn: You have 30 seconds left.

Jason Stefanich: . . .with them to reach fair agreements. Local 1110 wants respect and a fair contract now. Thank you.

[applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Jason. Well, good morning, and thank you for joining us for the October 17, 2025 Board of Trustees meeting. I would like to again welcome Trustee Lutt to the Board of Trustees and thank the Office of the Governor for the appointment. Since the board's last meeting, many of us have enjoyed attending various campus events, including Family Weekend, and we look forward to this weekend's Homecoming activities. Each year, I'm excited by the number of Redbirds I see on campus and throughout the community who return to Illinois State for Homecoming. I want to thank our students, faculty, and staff involved in planning and executing so many meaningful activities. Your efforts create opportunities for all of us to make lasting Redbird memories. Now earlier this morning, Campus Communication Committee hosted a highly informative Discussion Hour. On behalf of the Board of Trustees I want to thank Angela Bonnell, Chair of the Academic Senate, for sharing an outstanding presentation about the role of the Academic Senate at the university.

As an aside, Angela and I just figured out that we grew up less than ten miles apart in very small towns in northern Illinois. So we're going to go back to those towns and figure out if we know anything else about each other.

[laughter]

Finally, I understand that the university has made significant progress on a new budget model. This crucial task is essential to help the university achieve greater transparency in our financial processes invest in the university's strategic priorities as outlined in Excellence by Design and develop improved monitoring systems to more quickly identify and respond to fiscal risks. While we may have a new budget in place, it's important to remember that this alone won't make our financial challenges vanish. The budget model is a tool for informed decision making, not a source of new funds. Its value lies in offering fresh insights into how existing resources can be allocated, not in increasing those resources themselves. To be successful, we must avoid the kind of legacy practices that created the

budget crisis. We also must avoid actions that would undermine the budget success. As a board, we support the core principles of the new budget process, tie all expenses to revenues, strictly adhere to the allocation criteria in the new model, and ensure quarterly reconciliations. We understand that some choices will be difficult and that compromises will be necessary, but we strongly encourage the administration and all campus constituents to remain resolutely focused on the university's long-term fiscal resilience and sustainability consistent with the precepts of RISE. The board fully supports the administration in these efforts and stands ready to do our part to ensure the new budget is a success. I'll now turn to President Aondover Tarhule for his remarks.

### **President's Remarks**

President Tarhule: Thank you, Chairperson Bohn. I also want to welcome Trustee Lutt. Welcome back to your alma mater, and we look forward to working with you. Like our board chair, I also thank the Campus Communication Committee for hosting the Discussion Hour and for giving us a chance to learn more about the role of the Academic Senate.

Since the Board of Trustees July meeting, students, faculty and staff have actively planned and carried out a range of programs and initiatives to kick off the academic year, including Welcome Week, Move In, Family Weekend, and of course Homecoming. I want to thank our campus community for their creativity, dedication, and their many hours of hard work needed to successfully offer these opportunities to all of us at Illinois State. With Homecoming Week in full swing, I hope you get a chance to take part in the weekend's activities, Saturday's Town and Gown 5K, the Homecoming Parade, and the football game where we expect to beat Youngstown State. For more details about the Homecoming events, please visit [homecoming.illinoisstate.edu](http://homecoming.illinoisstate.edu).

As I mentioned in the State of the University address on September 25<sup>th</sup>, about a year ago it became clear that ISU's expenses were increasing much faster than revenues, a trend that has reflected similar patterns at many other universities across the country. Our forecast showed that without urgent and decisive action the institution would end FY25 with a \$9,000,000 budget shortfall. As President, I committed to addressing the situation transparently, collaboratively, and decisively. I appreciate the many individuals who worked hard on RISE and outlined the principles and parameters allowing our consultants to create a new budget model for Illinois State. The actions we took were difficult, even painful, including foregoing a campus wage program. However, due to the tough decisions and sacrifices, the FY25 budget is projected to balance after nearly \$12,000,000 in cost savings were implemented over the last year. With the deficit addressed we were able to announce a 3.5% merit-based salary program for staff not covered by a bargaining contract. While we are all justifiably proud of this accomplishment, our work is not yet done. As we begin FY26, we have introduced several new strategies to ensure ISU's continued fiscal resilience.

Examples include the following:

1. All future budgets will be based on projected revenues.
2. Budget allocations will be provided at the division level.
3. Internal service and rental rates will be held flat during the FY26 transition year.
4. Position control introduced in the spring will continue to be refined and implemented.
5. Budget offices will be required to produce quarterly reconciliations, reporting, and monitoring.

These steps are essential for us to quickly identify and resolve issues during the budget year instead of waiting until the end of the fiscal year as was common in the past. The budget's redesign started last year will give ISU its first new budget model in many decades. I encourage you to attend one of next year's RISE town halls on October 22 and 23 where we will share more updates, answer questions, and discuss the future. Your feedback will be used to refine the new budget model which I anticipate will be fully implemented for FY27.

As you know, the federal government is currently shut down. While the immediate effects on university operations is limited, we are carefully monitoring potential impacts on federally funded research, student financial aid processing, and federal agency partnerships. As stated in an earlier message to campus, we will provide timely updates to affected faculty, staff and students. We are also working with our legislative partners to stay informed about developments and advocate for continued funding that supports our academic and research missions. Additionally, concerns remain about shifting federal policies that may affect you personally, someone you know, or higher education as a whole. The institutional resilience's Steering Team works closely with the Office of General Counsel regarding the potential impacts of current and upcoming directives on institutional policies, practices, and initiatives. While the effects of these directives are still being assessed, the university remains committed to its mission of promoting learning and scholarship in an inclusive, supportive, and responsive environment for the

Redbird community. You can find additional information and resources on the Government Relations website. Despite the uncertainty at the federal level, the university continues to experience strong momentum across many areas, including enrollment. Illinois State added 448 students, representing a 2.1% increase in total enrollment for fall 2025. This marks the fourth consecutive year of growth, bringing our total enrollment to nearly 22,000, specifically 21,994 students, at a time when many public institutions are facing declining enrollments. This is Illinois State's highest total enrollment since 1991. Retention rates rose to nearly 82%, and graduation rates increased by an impressive 2.8% from the last year to 67.3%. Additionally, the College of Engineering enrolled 169 students, well above our target of 135 students for the inaugural class. We welcomed 110 new international students this fall, 30 more than we projected. Moreover, graduate student applications increased by 3.4%.

In addition to our enrollment success, the university continues to make important progress in developing new academic programs, advancing research, improving student success, and strengthening community engagement. For example, Illinois State was named one of only 27 institutions nationwide to end both the [sounds like attitude 25:09] and opportunity colleges and universities designations, recognizing campuses that promote student success and research. I'm especially excited about two new opportunities to foster creativity and momentum toward achieving the goals outlined in Excellence by Design, the university's strategic plan. First, with cabinet support, I have established the Excellence by Design Strategic Initiative Fund. This \$500,000 fund will offer one-time financial awards to help implement strategic initiatives that directly support the goals and metrics detailed in our Strategic Plan. Strategy proposals must be submitted by October 31. Second, the Living Our Values in Excellence Award, also known as the LOVE Award, honors individuals and groups whose work exemplifies Illinois State's core values. The strategic planning Steering Team will select recipients throughout the year. On October 9, I was excited to join the Director of Planning, Research, and Policy Analysis, Angela Engel, and her staff along with College of Business Dean, Ajay Samant, and the Accounting Department Chair, Bahae Samhan, to recognize our inaugural LOVE Award recipient, Kristen Bernas, in the College of Business, Department of Accounting. More information about both initiatives is available in the Strategic Plan website.

Illinois State students, faculty, and staff continue to make their mark in exciting and innovative ways, advancing groundbreaking research, leading creative academic initiatives, and contributing to meaningful projects that address real-world challenges. Their efforts not only boost the university's reputation but also create a lasting impact on the communities we serve and the broader scholarly landscape. For example, the College of Applied Science and Technology has developed a competitive CAST Research Fellows Program to enhance scholarly productivity. The fellowships provide faculty scholars with additional time to submit proposals for external funding or to complete their research projects. Drs. Xing Fang, Scott Pierce, and Dawn Beichner-Thomas were selected in spring 2025, and Drs. Michael Gizzi, Liancheng Yang, Qi Zhang, and Haiyan Sally Xie have been selected for the 2025-26 academic year. Dr. Marilyn Prasun, in collaboration with Principal Investigator Dr. Nariman Ammar in Computer Science, were funded by NIH for a program for artificial intelligence readiness, building on AI for health sciences research. Illinois State is dedicated to implementing comprehensive student success initiatives that improve student retention, enrich the students' experience, and support students' academic, personal, and professional development. I want to take a moment to share just a few of those programs and initiatives with you. CAST Scholars, a donor-funded program, focuses on retaining students beyond their first two years, led by the new Director of Student Success, Retention, and Recruitment, Katie Raisner. CAST Scholars receive personalized academic coaching, professional development, and additional social support. Students also receive mini-scholarships of \$500 which can be renewed each semester if they meet academic benchmarks. The goal is to track and support this cohort until graduation, ensuring that all students persist to graduation. As we know, mental health is a vital part of student success, and we provide resources and support that encourage well-being, resilience, and a healthy campus environment. Recently, Student Counseling Services improved mental health support by creating a Mental Health Task Force, renovating counseling spaces, and launching the National Healthy Mind Survey for students in partnership with the JED Foundation. Additionally, the Division of Student Affairs received \$545,000 in Mental Health Early Action on Campus funding to support Redbird Well Initiatives. Those initiatives include implementation of Timely Care, a student-focused virtual health and well-being platform. To date, 1,321 students have registered for this program. Three new private counseling pods in Watterson Towers and free wellness events that have engaged 2,911 students across multiple dimensions of health. The College of Business Redbirds Financial Literacy Initiatives or Redbirds FLI help students across campus as they get ready to graduate and work towards financial wellness. Redbirds FLI guides students, faculty, and community members in making informed financial choices through interactive lessons on spending, saving, borrowing, investing, and protecting their assets. The Dean of Students Office will host its first-ever National Non-traditional Students Week Breakfast and Resource Fair in November in partnership with Dr.

Stacey Wiggins from the School of Social Work. This pilot program will showcase institutional support for non-traditional students, connect them to campus and community resources and scholarship opportunities and provide faculty and staff with best practices for supporting this expanding student population. Student success efforts not only enhance the academic experience but also translate into strong post-graduation outcomes. To that end, Career Services hosted a series of highly successful events this fall, including the fall Internship and Career Fair, the Accounting Career Fair, the Part-time Job Fair, and the You Can Work at ISU Event which set a record with 1,055 students in attendance. I am pleased to share that the university's continued commitment to excellence has been reflected in numerous significant accomplishments and external recognitions. During the 2024-25 academic year, Milner Library hosted its first-ever Fulbright Scholar Chloe Vicente, who worked with Associate Dean Sue Franzen on organizational development. University High School earned the Exemplary School Library Award for the Association for Illinois School Libraries, one of only four schools so honored. Thomas Metcalf Laboratory School is ranked in the top 8% of Illinois elementary schools and in the top 3% of Illinois middle schools, according to U.S. News & World Report. In May of 2025, Illinois State University School of Theater, Dance, and Film made history when its dance program received its first-ever invitation to perform at the American College Dance Association National College Dance Festival in Washington, DC. The 2024 Title II Report showed that Illinois State University graduates nearly 1,000 teachers annually, making it the top provider of teachers among all public universities in the United States. The School of Teaching and Learning lured the implementation and training for the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan this summer, hosting professional development for school and district leaders in partnership with the Regional Office of Education #17 and the Illinois State Board of Education. Milner Library reached a milestone in the use of our institutional repository ISU ReD, celebrating the 2,000,000<sup>th</sup> download of material. ISU ReD collects and provides current and long-term access to the research and scholarship of faculty, staff, and students at Illinois State University. The Center for Civic Engagement has a new partnership with the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation. A group of ISU students will be selected as Redbird Impact Philanthropy Leaders and will learn grant-making skills and receive \$10,000 from the IPCF to donate to campus and community groups. The Illinois Center for Professional Support located within the College of Education received \$2,800,000 in external funding to organize 45 webinars and 25 events for professionals throughout Illinois, including the September Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Meeting. Our student athletes also exemplify the same dedication and drive that define our institution by bringing that spirit of excellence to classroom and competition. I am proud to share that Redbird football is in the top ten of the AFCA Coaches Poll and is making a strong push toward another post-season run in 2025. Meanwhile, Illinois State men's basketball is turning heads, named the Missouri Valley Conference preseason favorite for the first time since 2001. Over the past year, Illinois State achieved its most successful fund-raising year in the university's 168-year history. Illinois State raised a record \$44,500,000 in private support during fiscal year 2025, reflecting the strength of our mission, the trust of our community, and our shared commitment to students' academic excellence and long-term impact. Today, I am pleased to share that University Advancement reports more than \$18,000,000 raised in private support generated in the first quarter of FY25-26. Additionally, today's Consent Agenda includes a resolution to name the Student Success Office at 1709 GE Road the Cumby-Garrison Student Success Office. This name reflects and acknowledges the generous financial support from Todd Garrison for the College of Engineering. I understand Todd is not in the room but is listening online, so we thank you for your generous contribution to Illinois State University.

[applause]

I would also like to take a moment to extend a warm welcome back to Ross Richards who returns to Illinois State University with a deep connection to our campus community. As a student, Ross served as Student Body President, and he now brings that same spirit of leadership to his new role as Chief Operations Officer for Advancement and Foundation Operations. He officially began in this position on September 29 and brings with him valuable experience from his previous roles as Carle Health Center and the University of Illinois Foundation. I believe Ross is in the audience. Please stand so we can give you a warm welcome.

[applause]

Additionally and also returning to Illinois State is Gordon Duguid as the next Donald F. McHenry Visiting Professor in Diplomacy and International Affairs, a position made possible by a gift from Ambassador McHenry. Duguid brings a wealth of experience to the role, having served as a U.S. diplomat for three decades from 1990 to 2020. He ascended through the ranks of the U.S. Foreign Service, retiring as minister-counselor, the third highest diplomatic

rank. His distinguished career includes significant assignments such as Chargé d’Affaires at the U.S. Embassy to Montenegro, Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy to Serbia, and the Deputy Spokesperson of the State Department. His diplomatic assignments also include roles as senior advisor on Bosnia for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, and in public diplomacy positions at the U.S. Mission to NATO and U.S. embassies in India, Burundi, Zambia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A seasoned veteran of public and multilateral diplomacy, Duguid also served as Executive Secretary for the Interamerican Committee Against Terrorism at the Organization of American States from 2010-2012. Since retiring from the Foreign Service, Duguid has continued to serve as a public diplomacy consultant for various entities, including the U.S. State Department, the Office of the Prime Minister of North Macedonia, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. His extensive academic and diplomatic careers will enhance the educational experience of Illinois State University at student and partner organizations. As the McHenry Visiting Professor, Duguid will teach one seminar each semester, participate in in- and off-campus events, and engage in recruitment and outreach activities. His two-year appointment began in August. Please join me in a welcoming round of applause for Gordon Duguid back to Illinois State.

[applause]

And finally, I am pleased to announce the return of the Presidential Speaker Series this fall. I firmly believe that universities must provide avenues and opportunities that enhance the academic and cultural experiences of our students, faculty and staff and promote respectful dialogue on contemporary and [sounds like thematic 40:11] issues. This series will provide invaluable opportunities for the college community to engage with influential individuals from various fields, foster intellectual growth and a deeper understanding of complex topics. The series will begin with Kevin Surace, the father of the virtual assistant, Silicon Valley innovator, serial entrepreneur, CEO and futurist as our first speaker on November 4<sup>th</sup>. I look forward to seeing all of you at this exciting event. With that, I would now like to call on today’s spokesperson for the Campus Communication Committee, Terry Jackson, Jr., who serves as the Data Coordinator in the Lauby Teacher Education Center and an ex-officio member of the Civil Service Council. Terry.

Terry Jackson, Jr.: Good morning. The Campus Communication Committee would like to first thank committee member Angela Bonnell for her presentation this morning, giving an overview of the Academic Senate and its function within the university. On behalf of the committee we would like to thank the Board of Trustees for the continued opportunity to share the pulse of the campus. The committee would like to acknowledge the many accomplishments of the university in the past few months, many which were noted in the State of the University address a few weeks ago. From opening the College of Engineering this fall to seeing enrollment climb to the highest it’s been in over a quarter century. The Student Government Association notes that participation in student organizations and Greek life has seen a significant increase this semester. Student involvement is a vital ingredient for all measures of student success, so we would like to commend the work of the Student Affairs staff and all involved in providing students with exciting co-curricular experiences. And, of course, the excitement of Homecoming Week reminds us all that the impact of our shared commitment to Illinois State is felt throughout many generations of Redbirds and many generations to come. Illinois State is growing at a time when challenges abound in higher education, but even that growth promote challenges. Growing enrollment has re-ignited student interest in new plans for housing facilities and campus renovations while faculty and staff speculate what departments and offices will be impacted by the new facilities on GE Road. Combined with the overhaul of the university’s budget model and the staggering number of recent federal mandates, many on campus share a strong sense of uncertainty. The committee respectfully requests that senior administration provides more frequent, clear, and comprehensive communications on all the topics that affect us. Additionally, the committee recognizes staff members who’ve been impacted by changes to their remote work agreements. The committee would like to remind campus leaders that work flexibility remains a free and vital component of staff retention and positive employee morale and should be afforded to all employees whenever possible. As always, the Campus Communication Committee and the groups that we represent are committed to helping Illinois State meet the challenges ahead and look forward to raising the banner this weekend with our fellow Redbirds. Thank you again for this opportunity to share the pulse of campus and the topics that matter to our constituents.

[applause]

President Tarhule: Thank you, Terry. Today there is one report included in your materials, the Promotions, Tenure, and Sabbatical Leave Report. This report provides details about promotion, tenure, and sabbatical personnel



decisions that will take effect in fiscal year 2026 and are finalized in fall and spring of 2025. It outlines the application and review process for these decisions. Additionally, it includes summary data on this year's applications, tenure, and distributions over the past decade, and list of changes in status for fiscal year 2026. Are there any questions or comments from the board regarding this report?

Trustee Bohn: As always, I look forward to the reports after the sabbatical.

President Tarhule: Thank you.

Trustee Bohn: To see all the things they're going to do.

President Tarhule: We'll provide them.

### **Consent Agenda**

Trustee Bohn: We will now move to the Consent Agenda. All items listed on the Consent Agenda are routine and will be enacted in one motion. There will be no individual discussion of these items unless a trustee 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? Hearing none, may I have a motion and a second to approve the Consent Agenda, items A to C?

Trustee Hoeniges: So moved.

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

Trustee Merminga: I second.

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

Multiple people: Aye.

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

### **Resolutions**

President Tarhule: Thank you.

#### **Resolution 2025.10/34. Authorization to Approve the FY2027 Appropriated Budget Request, Operating and Capital.**

By Illinois Board of Higher Education policy, each public university governing board must review and approve an official budget for the university it governs each fall. Illinois State's request is in alignment with both the university's and the Illinois Board of Higher Education's strategic plans. For FY2027, Illinois State requests an additional \$20,000,000, a 24.3% increase over the FY2026 appropriations. This increase is to support replacement revenue for state-mandated waivers which total \$12,000,000, student financial aid for need-based students, and expansion of high-needs disciplines, including engineering and nursing.

Table 1 in your packet summarizes the university's proposed appropriated operating budget request for FY2027 as well as a request for distribution from the State College and University Trust Fund which is used for student financial aid. The total appropriated operating request is \$102,200,000. The FY2027 capital projects for which funding is requested are instrumental in addressing the goals and priorities articulated in the university's Strategic and Master Plans. These projects are essential to enhancing a healthy, safe, and environmentally sustainable campus and to ensuring the university has the physical infrastructure necessary for excellence in instruction, research, and service in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Table 2 in your packet summarizes the university's request for state funds for capital improvements for FY2027, totaling \$445,000,000, including \$418,000,000 for seven major capital improvement projects and \$27,000,000 for

capital renewal projects. Illinois State University is seeking board approval for an appropriated operating budget request totaling \$102,200,000 and the capital appropriation request totaling \$445,000,000.

I ask for your approval of this resolution.

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

Trustee Tillis: So moved.

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

Trustee Peterson: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Peterson made the 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 2025.10/35. Authorization for Consulting Services for Budget Model Implementation.**

In alignment with Excellence by Design's goal to improve efficiencies across campus through optimizing resource allocation and improving business processes, Resolution 2024.10/56 Authorization for Consulting Services for Cost of Education and Resource Allocation Agreement was approved by the Board of Trustees in October 2024, giving the university authority to contract with a third-party consulting services to provide a comprehensive review of ISU's financial planning and resource allocation processes. Grant Thornton Advisors, LLC was engaged and has worked with university leadership and the broader campus community to develop a new revenue allocation budget model and corresponding best practices to support university budgeting and resource planning. Resolution 2024.10/56 indicated that upon completion of the consulting engagement, additional financial resources and resolutions would be presented to the board for review. The initial consulting engagement is nearing completion, and the university is moving into the next phase of deploying a new budget model and supporting processes. Additional professional services are required during this phase to assist the university in ensuring the successful implementation of the strategic budget practices and financial management processes. The university seeks board authorization to extend the current consulting services engagement at a cost not to exceed \$375,000. This project is funded by general revenue and auxiliary facilities system, AFS, funds. I ask for your approval of this resolution.

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

Trustee Russell: So moved.

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

Trustee Merminga: I second.

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

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The resolution is approved.

President Tarhule: Thank you.

**Resolution 2025.10/36. Authorization to Purchase Financial Planning and Analysis System.**

In alignment with Excellence by Design's goal to improve efficiencies across campus through optimizing resource allocation and improving business processes, Resolution 2024.10/56 Authorization for Consulting Services for Cost of Education and Resource Allocation Agreement was approved by the Board of Trustees in October 2024, giving the university authority to contract with a third-party consulting service to provide a comprehensive review of ISU's financial planning and resource allocation processes. Grant Thornton Advisors, LLC was engaged and has worked with university leadership and the broader campus community to develop a new revenue allocation budget model and corresponding best practices to support university budgeting and resource planning. Resolution 2024.10/56 indicated that integrative software would likely be required and additional financial resources and resolutions would be presented to the board for review. Current university budgets are stored and maintained across multiple platforms and [sounds like stables 52:42], leading to inefficiencies, lack of transparency, and significant time and effort spent in managing and maintaining the data and integrations. The university must acquire and implement an integrated financial planning and analysis system to effectively manage a new resource allocation model and best-practice budgeting processes. The university is requesting the purchase and implementation of a financial planning and analysis system not to exceed \$1,750,000 over two years. The funding source for this project is general revenue and auxiliary services funds. I ask for your approval of this resolution.

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

Trustee Hoeniges: So moved.

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

Trustee Merminga: I second.

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

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The resolution is approved.

President Tarhule: Thank you.

**Resolution 2025.10/37. Authorization to Approve the Remodel of the Linkins Dining Center Dish Room.**

The university is seeking Board of Trustees approval remodel the Linkins Dining Center dish room. This investment of up \$850,000 is necessary to replace critical failed infrastructure and implement modern high-efficiency systems that will reduce operational cost, enhance staff productivity, and improve safety and sanitation. The dish room at Linkins Dining Center is a high-volume continuous operation facility that processes of thousands of plates, glasses, and utensils daily. The current space and equipment have the end of their operational life with significant deterioration of the ware washing machine, conveyor systems, floors, walls, and ceiling. This state of disrepair has created operational bottlenecks and ongoing maintenance challenges. The project is estimated not to exceed \$850,000 and is funded by EMDH bond reserve funds. I ask for your approval of this resolution.

Trustee Bohn: May I have a motion and a 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: Second by Trustee Russell. Is there any discussion? I would just like to add that I've asked for the Board of Trustees to be able to see the new room when it's finished. So we're going to have a little field trip out there, and maybe we'll even be able to eat there. That's what we're hoping. 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 2025.10/38. Approval to Replace the Hancock Stadium Video Board.**

The university is seeking Board of Trustees approval to spend up to \$2,000,000 for the purchase and installation of a new outdoor video board at Hancock Stadium. Hancock Stadium is a vital resource that supports Illinois State University's intercollegiate athletic programs, university-wide events, and community activities. As the home of Redbird football, the facility is also used by the School of Kinesiology and Recreation, local high schools, and state-wide organizations such as the Illinois Special Olympics. The existing video board at Hancock Stadium was installed in 2013 and has reached the end of its service life. Technological advancements in display, resolution, audio, and control systems have made the current system outdated in comparison to peer institutions. Upgrading the video board is essential to enhance the in-game experience for fans, student athletes, and broadcast partners while maintaining the university's ability to host high-profile events. The proposed video board package from Daktronics includes a significantly larger and higher resolution display, a modern control room system, and integrated audio support. This project will ensure Hancock Stadium remains competitive and continues to serve as a premier venue within the Missouri Valley Football Conference and beyond. The cost of this project is funded through Foundation funds. I ask for your approval of this resolution.

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

Trustee Peterson: So moved.

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

Trustee Lutt: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Lutt 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 2025.10/39. Authorization to Name the Melinda Fischer Field.**

Illinois State University Athletics respectfully requests that the field at Marian Kneer Stadium be named the Melinda Fischer Field. This naming reflects and recognizes the generous financial commitment by friends and supporters of Melinda Fischer. Melinda Fischer is a two-time alumna of Illinois State University and a former head softball coach who amassed 1,159 wins over 37 seasons to become the winningest head coach in both ISU and Missouri Valley Conference history. Fischer guided the Redbirds to eight post-season appearances and ten conference championships, and she was named MVC Coach of the Year five times. Donors Pat Johnson and Kevin Hoffman led efforts to raise funds for the group to honor Melinda's legacy and celebrate her tremendous impact. The generous financial gifts and commitment support Redbird Athletics. As a result, we propose naming the field at Marian Kneer Stadium the Melinda Fischer field. I ask for your approval of this resolution.

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

Trustee Merminga: So moved.

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

Trustee Hoeniges: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Hoeniges second. Is there any discussion? I would just like to point out that Melinda Fischer is with us today, and I think of her as a true Redbird and someone we should all aspire to be as Redbirds. She's given so much to ISU, and she continues to be involved at ISU. And if you go to many functions here, you see Melinda here, and we really appreciate everything you've done and continue to do for ISU. All those in favor of the resolution, please say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The resolution is approved.

[applause]

President Tarhule: This concludes the resolutions for today.

Trustee Bohn: I now entertain a motion to move into closed session for the purpose of discussing minutes of meetings lawfully closed under this act for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes pursuant to 5ILCS 120/2C21, discussing collective negotiating bargaining matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives, pursuant to 5ILCS 120/2C2, discussing litigation that has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal and when an action is probably or imminent pursuant to 5ILCS 120/2C11, and discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees pursuant to 5ILCS 120/2C1. May I have a motion and a second to move into closed session?

Trustee Tillis: So moved.

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

Trustee Peterson: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Peterson second. Is there any discussion? Hearing no discussion, Trustee Tillis please call the roll call vote.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Bohn.

Trustee Bohn: Yes.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Hoeniges.

Trustee Hoeniges: Yes.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Lutt.

Trustee Lutt: Here.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Merminga.

Trustee Merminga: Yes.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Navarro. Trustee Peterson.

Trustee Peterson: Yes.

Trustee Lutt: Trustee Russell.

Trustee Russell: Yes.

Trustee Tillis: Trustee Tillis. Yes.

Trustee Bohn: The motion is approved. We will now move into closed session. Following the closed session, the board will move back into public session to vote on board action discussed during closed session specific to the approval of the closed session meeting minutes from July 25, 2025 and for the purpose of adjournment. We are adjourned.

[Sound of rapping gavel.]

[End of recording.]

The meeting recessed at 10:17 a.m. to closed session and reconvened at 11:41 a.m. with the same attendance noted in the initial roll call. Trustee Peterson moved to approve the closed session minutes as presented. Trustee Russell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

With there being no further business, Trustee Hoeniges moved to adjourn. Trustee Tillis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 11:42 a.m.