

ILLINOIS STATE  
UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF  
TRUSTEES

Resolution No. 2026.02/09  
Authorization for STEM  
Building Financing Plan

**Resolution**

Whereas, Illinois State University (ISU) has long recognized the need for a new STEM Building to support its academic mission; and

Whereas, the Felmley Science Annex (FSA), which opened in 1963, is an 80,784 gross square foot facility housing instructional spaces for Geology/Geography, Health Sciences, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and general classrooms; and

Whereas, over the past 60 years, FSA has undergone numerous incremental modifications rather than a comprehensive renovation, resulting in outdated infrastructure, aging systems, evolving pedagogical needs, and updated building codes that have rendered the facility unable to function as designed or required; and

Whereas, the adjacent FSA Greenhouse, constructed in 1964 and comprising 4,000 gross square feet, has been deemed an unsafe instructional environment and is no longer used for teaching, though it continues to support the Biological Sciences Department's plant growing needs; and

Whereas, FSA is currently performing well below ISU's instructional and research requirements, with several biology and chemistry laboratories no longer fully functional, thereby reducing the College of Arts and Sciences' laboratory teaching capacity; and

Whereas, demand for STEM teaching and research laboratories, driven by current ISU programs, projected enrollment growth in the Mennonite College of Nursing, and the development of the new College of Engineering, necessitates additional modern STEM laboratory capacity on campus no later than 2028; and

Whereas, ISU has engaged an architectural firm to complete the preliminary design for the new STEM Building, after which, upon completion of 100% construction documents, project management responsibilities will transition to the Illinois Capital Development Board (CDB); and

Whereas, the Illinois General Assembly has appropriated \$29.2 million, representing approximately half of the project's total cost, and this funding has been released to the CDB, which requires verification of ISU's available funds to support the University's cost share before proceeding;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Illinois State University identifies the Academic Enhancement Fee (AEF) as the funding source for debt service associated with the University's share of the new STEM Building.

Board Action on: \_\_\_\_\_  
Motion by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Second by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Vote: \_\_\_\_\_ Yeas: \_\_\_\_\_ Nays: \_\_\_\_\_

Postpone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Amend: \_\_\_\_\_  
Disapprove: \_\_\_\_\_  
Approve: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST: Board Action, February 20, 2026

Secretary / Chairperson

**Board of Trustees  
Illinois State University  
Authorization for STEM Building Financing Plan**

**Background**

Illinois State University (ISU) administrators, in collaboration with state legislators, have worked diligently to secure legislative funding for the proposed STEM Building. The State of Illinois has appropriated approximately 50% of the building's originally estimated cost. A final, updated project cost will be determined once design documents are completed.

Because state funds are being used, the Illinois Capital Development Board (CDB) is required to assume management and oversight of the project once the design documents reach 100% completion in spring 2026. The project must also adhere to a tight construction timeline to ensure that the facility is ready for student use by Fall 2028.

The Academic Enhancement Fee is utilized to aid in the delivery of instruction through appropriate learning environments and supportive infrastructure. This may include construction of new academic buildings and physical structures, maintenance and upgrades to existing academic buildings and physical structures, or installation and maintenance of related technology, hardware, systems and software. This fee generates nearly \$17 million in funding annually to support academic buildings and spaces.

**Justification**

The CDB requires the University to formally identify and validate its funding source for the institutional share of the project prior to initiating construction activities. The required Fall 2028 occupancy date necessitates an aggressive project schedule. If the design documents are completed by the end of February 2026 but the Board of Trustees has not yet confirmed a funding source, the project will be paused until the Board takes action at its May meeting.

This resolution secures and confirms the funding source for ISU's share of the STEM Building Project, ensuring continuity of work and preventing schedule delays.

**STEM Building Projected Total Cost**

The target for the STEM Building's total cost is between \$60 million and \$70 million. The final cost will be presented to the Board of Trustees at the May 8, 2026, meeting, once design development is complete. This resolution requests that the Board of Trustees authorize expenditures, not to exceed \$4 million per year from the Academic Enhancement Fee (AEF), to pay debt service on the University's portion of the project costs.

**Source of Funds:** Academic Enhancement Fee