

**ILLINOIS STATE
UNIVERSITY**

**BOARD OF
TRUSTEES**

Resolution No. 2026.05/19
Re-Authorization to Upgrade
Center for Performing Arts'
Audio and Lighting Systems

Resolution

Whereas, the Center for Performing Arts (CPA), completed in 2002, serves as a primary instructional and performance facility for Illinois State University, supporting academic programs in the arts, student productions, visiting professional performances, and community events; and

Whereas, the CPA's existing sound and lighting systems have exceeded their useful life, are no longer supported by manufacturers, experience frequent failures, and no longer meet current instructional, performance, or industry standards; and

Whereas, outdated equipment in the theatre and concert hall negatively affects instructional quality, limits performance capabilities, introduces safety and reliability concerns, and increases operation and maintenance costs; and

Whereas, a comprehensive upgrade will modernize performance technology, enhance instructional opportunities, improve reliability and safety, and reduce long-term operational risks; and

Whereas, an upgrade to the CPA's public address systems is required to integrate with the fire alarm system, providing life-safety voice enunciation throughout the facility; and

Whereas, a competitive public bid resulted in five vetted bids, with Zeller Electric identified as the lowest responsible bidder with a total bid of \$2,566,650; and

Whereas, the total project budget, including design fees and contingency, was \$3,200,000 and was approved by the Board of Trustees on February 20, 2026; and

Whereas, Zeller Electric withdrew, and Weber Electric was identified as the 2nd lowest responsible bidder with a total bid of \$3,736,100; and

Whereas, the total project budget, including design fees and contingency, is \$4,400,000 funded by bond revenue reserves, Academic Enhancement Fee (AEF) funds and supported by eligible LED lighting utility rebates; and

Whereas, the new total project budget is \$1,200,000 more than the board approved project budget; and

Whereas, timely completion is necessary to support academic programming and performance schedules, with construction to begin in the Concert Hall in May 2026, and substantial completion required by September 2026;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Board of Trustees of Illinois State University rescind Resolution No. 2026.02/10 authorizing awarding the project to Zeller Electric with the project budget of \$3.2 million and now authorize the University to proceed with the construction activities necessary to upgrade the Center for Performing Arts' sound, lighting, and public address systems, including award of the contract to Weber Electric as the lowest responsible bidder, and to execute all actions, contracts, and expenditures required to complete the project within the approved total budget of \$4.4 million.

Board Action on:	_____	Postpone:	_____
Motion by:	_____	Amend:	_____
Second by:	_____	Disapprove:	_____
Vote:	Yeas: _____	Approve:	_____
	Nays: _____		

ATTEST: Board Action, May 8, 2026

Secretary / Chairperson

**Board of Trustees
Illinois State University
Re-Authorization to Upgrade Center for Performing Arts' Audio and Lighting Systems**

Executive Summary

The proposed project will replace aging and obsolete audio and lighting systems in the theater and concert hall that no longer meet current instructional, performance, or industry standards. It will also upgrade the public address system which will be integrated with the existing fire alarm system, a life safety upgrade. Approval of this resolution will authorize the University to proceed with construction activities necessary to modernize the Center for Performing Arts' (CPA) performance technology, improving reliability, safety, instructional quality, and operational efficiency.

Background

The Center for Performing Arts (CPA) was completed in 2002. It is a primary instructional and performance facility for Illinois State University, supporting academic programs in the arts, student performances, visiting professional productions and community events. The CPA's sound and lighting systems in the theater and concert hall have been in service for many years and have experienced frequent technology failures which are no longer supported by the manufacturer. As a result, some systems no longer function as designed, required increased maintenance, experience reliability issues, and limit the technical, as well as teaching, capabilities expected of a contemporary performing arts venue at an education facility.

A comprehensive upgrade of the sound and lighting systems will address these deficiencies by installing modern, industry-standard equipment and control systems, including LED house and theatrical lighting, speakers, booth control panels, and associated wiring. The project will enhance the educational teaching for students, improve performance quality and flexibility, increase system reliability and safety, and reduce long-term maintenance and operational risks. The proposed improvements are consistent with the University's commitment to maintaining high-quality facilities and supporting its academic and cultural mission.

An upgrade to the fire alarm system is also required for life safety in the form of adding public address enunciation through new devices located throughout the entire facility.

Justification

It is imperative that the sound and lighting project continue this summer because the variables driving the urgency for this project have not changed. The University has determined that the existing systems in the Center for Performing Arts are beyond their useful life—no longer supported by manufacturers, prone to frequent failures, and unable to meet current instructional, performance, and safety standards—creating immediate operational, academic, and risk-management concerns. Delaying the project would increase the likelihood of disruptions to instruction and performances, elevate safety risks (including the need to integrate a modern public address system with life-safety fire alarms), and lead to higher long-term maintenance and emergency repair costs. Importantly, the project is tied to a tightly defined construction window aligned with the academic calendar, and the Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts has already undertaken significant planning to relocate summer programming out of the facility to accommodate this work. Failing to proceed now would extend exposure to known risks and waste considerable time, effort, and coordination already invested by faculty, staff, and partners to ensure continuity of programming during renovations. In short, moving forward this summer is essential to maintaining instructional continuity, upholding safety and compliance standards, and avoiding both financial inefficiencies and unnecessary operational disruption.

From a facilities and fiscal perspective, replacing the systems at this time is expected to reduce ongoing maintenance costs, minimize emergency repairs, and mitigate safety and operational risks associated with outdated equipment. Deferring the project would likely result in higher future costs, increased downtime, and continues limitations on instructional and performance capabilities.

Project Plan

Scope and Scale

An outside consultant was hired to develop a set of bid documents that were publicly advertised. The documents were fully reviewed by ISU Facility Services and WKCFA staff/administrators.

Current Project Status-Schedule

- A public bid opening was held on December 16, 2025. Five bids were received and vetted. Zeller Electric, the lowest responsible bidder, withdrew after finding an error in the supplier's quotes. Weber Electric is the next responsible bidder with a total bid of \$3,736,100. The overall project budget, including design fees and contingency, is \$4,400,000.
- Given the importance of this space for the University and future planning, substantial construction must start in the Concert Hall in May 2026 and be substantially completed by September 2026.

Source of Funding

- Bond revenue reserves and Academic Enhancement Fee (AEF).
- Leverage utility LED lighting rebates to offset project costs.