

MINUTES
Board of Trustees Meeting of Illinois State University
May 8, 2026

[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 noted in the meeting notice, the University has provided a YouTube link that allows all interested persons to view the meeting live and hear all discussion and votes. Trustee Navarro, please call the roll.

Roll Call

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Bohn.

Trustee Bohn: Present.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Hoeniges.

Trustee Hoeniges: Present.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Lutt.

Trustee Lutt: Present.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Merminga.

Trustee Merminga: Present.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Navarro present. Trustee Peterson.

Trustee Peterson: Present.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Russell.

Trustee Russell: Present.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Tillis.

Trustee Tillis: Present.

Trustee Navarro: We have a quorum.

Approval of Agenda

Trustee Bohn: Thank you. 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 made by Trustee Tillis. Is there a second?

Trustee Lutt: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Second by Trustee Lutt. 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

Next on the agenda is Public Comments. Several people have indicated 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 the public comments and questions during the public meeting. Each speaker is permitted five minutes for their presentation. If more than two people wish to speak on a single item, it is recommended that they designate one or more people to speak on their behalf. 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 Ben Matthews to come up to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board.

Ben Matthews: Good morning, President Tarhule and members of the Board of Trustees. My name is Ben Matthews. I'm here this morning as I was in February as a lab school graduate, a legacy alum, a loyal donor, and a lifelong Redbird. I've been working for the Illinois Education Association since 2007, advocating for public education and public education employees throughout Bloomington-Normal and especially now at our lab schools, Metcalf and U. High. I want to start by acknowledging the good news. While many of us, myself included, are disappointed of a fair settlement with AFSCME Local 1110 took longer than it needed to, we remember that progress delayed is not progress denied, and I applaud the members of Local 1110 for standing up and showing up for each other to earn not only the pay increases they need but the respect that they deserve. And I want to express my appreciation to ISU for coming back to the table and getting the deal done. Since I was here in February representing the Lab School Education Association asking for you to reconsider your approach to our labor management relationship, things have improved. Rather than stalling, we've seen slow, steady progress rather than constant conflict. We've seen more cooperation and collaboration. Thank you.

Dr. Tarhule, we appreciated your words this week, encouraging our campus community to unite in the spirit of collaboration and respect and to re-establish our sense of shared values and mission. Our LSEA members remain committed to that approach in our labor management relationship and at the bargaining table. We're hopeful that we will continue to see that from ISU's representatives at the table as well. We've also been encouraged to hear that for every category of employee the university makes sure to benchmark what a comparable salary in the comparable market is, because collectively we have our work cut out for us to help our educators and support professionals at the lab schools catch up to their counterparts in our local public-school districts. We do have a lot of work to do, but I believe if we continue to see each other as partners, lean into our shared values, and commit to collaboration and respect we can accomplish that work, get a fair contract for our lab school employees, and have more good news to celebrate in the near future. Thank you.

[applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Ben Matthews. At this time I invite Chuck Carver to come up to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board.

Chuck Carver: Good morning. I'm Chuck Carver, a building service worker here at ISU and President of AFSCME Local 1110. I want to talk to you about our recent strike - four weeks, the longest in the history of the university, why it happened and why we hope we will take responsibility for moving forward in a better way. As I am sure you know, this week our union and the administration settled a new collective bargaining agreement. It was ratified with the approval of more than 95% of our members, approximately 350 hard working men and women who clean the residence halls, classrooms and other campus buildings, the ones who cook, serve food in our dining centers, the ones who cut the grass, trim the trees, and shovel the sidewalks, and those who do so much more to keep the university community going every day. The last month has been incredibly difficult, but we are very proud of all we have accomplished. We have had overwhelming support of thousands of students, their families, the faculty and alumni. We secured better pay and fair treatment. We insisted on respect for the jobs we do. We earned that respect. Now we are back to work, which we never wanted to leave anyways. But make no mistake. We're not happy. All of this is not well. So we urge you, the members of the Board of Trustees who have the ultimate responsibility for the guidance and direction of this institution, to take a hard look at the top leadership you have chosen and the decisions they've made that took this university down a very problematic path. Vice President Nelson arrived on this campus January of 2025, just as our negotiations were starting. Those negotiations were immediately bogged down by demands from the university to take away basic provisions that ensured fairness in our contract, basic provisions that we have long had and that are common in many other contracts on this campus and on other university campuses throughout Illinois, basic provisions that have very small cost. We don't think is a coincidence. If you look at Mr. Nelson's record, there are a number of examples of poor labor relations in the past. I don't have the time to detail them all today, but if any of the trustees want to know more, reach out. Then there's President Tarhule. He misrepresented the facts at stake in our strike when he testified at the State Capitol. Those misrepresentations and actions of the university leadership over the 28-day strike damaged the university's reputation. We need lawmakers to be allies and advocates for this university. I and a group of other leaders from our local were at the Capitol earlier this week for our union state-wide University Lobby Day that brought together employees from many campuses. Legislators received us warmly and thanked us for advocating for ISU. In the future we want to be able to go to the Capitol together to ask for what our students, faculty, and employees and entire community needs. But to do that, you, the trustees and the top leaders you hire have to make different choices, better choices, choices that involve working together constructively, not causing conflict that drives our campus community apart. Thank you.

[applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Mr. Carver. At this time I invite Andrew Franson to come up to the podium and proceed with your comments to the board.

Andrew Franson: Good morning. My name is Andrew Franson. I'm a sophomore here at Illinois State University, and I remember the first day that AFSCME Local 1110 walked out. Emotions were high. Feelings were just incredible. The strength that our workers had to stand up for themselves is remarkable. Having the honor to walk with AFSCME Local 1110 throughout the last month has been . . . I'm so beyond incredibly proud of the workers at ISU. But in that same vein I'm going to echo Chuck Carver's concerns. Tarhule, I remember when in the early days of the strike I was outside Hovey Hall at a picket line and you walking up to our picket, walked up to me and you said, "Hi, Andrew." Why do you talk to me when there are workers here who have been here longer than I have been alive? These are people I think you need to know more than you need to know me. In seeing the comments by Tarhule and Vice President Nelson at the Illinois Senate, I'm disgusted that you have the audacity to lie to our representatives, saying that you didn't hire strike breakers when I saw them in my dorms and in my dining halls, dining halls and dorms that I pay for. I want to be proud to be a Redbird but I can't. I used to brag to my parents and my families that I go to ISU. I go to Illinois State

University. I can't do that anymore because of how you treated our workers, how you treated our community. I remember being terrified to go into my own dining hall because I got caught taking pictures of food and of the menus because my mother wanted to see what was being served. And as someone who pays for it, I think she has the right to know what is being served in our dining halls when our workers aren't there. And one of the admins walked up to me and told me you can't take pictures. You have to leave. A dining hall that I pay for, that my family pays for. And without my money you wouldn't have it. I want to be proud but I'm ashamed. I'm incredibly ashamed. And the only reason that I'm staying at ISU is because of those workers. If they weren't here, I would pack up my things and go somewhere else. So I urge the board, I urge our leaders to reconsider and think about what you have done, because you messed up really darn bad. And if you want me and other students like me to be proud of our university, then you need to get your act together. Thank you.

[applause]

Trustee Bohn: Thank you, Andrew.

Well, good morning and thank you for joining us for the May 8th, 2026 Board of Trustees meeting. 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 family members as they celebrate this milestone achievement. Although we will formally acknowledge Trustee Russell later in the morning in this meeting, we can't mention commencement without also congratulations to our student trustees. Congratulations, Ryan. Earlier this morning the Campus Communication Committee hosted a highly informative Discussion Hour. On behalf of the Board of Trustees I want to thank Kris Harding, Executive Director of Alumni Engagement, and Doris Groves, retired Executive Director of Alumni Engagement, for sharing an outstanding presentation about the School Street Food Pantry. Kris and Doris serve on the pantry's Board of Directors. This year, 81 individuals are retiring from Illinois State University, including 24 faculty and 57 staff. Collectively, these individuals have served Illinois State University for 1,659 years with the average length of service being 20.5 years. The board deeply appreciates the sacrifices, commitment, and dedication of these retiring faculty and staff. Please join me in acknowledging our retirees with a round of applause.

[applause]

And lastly, the board was pleased to hear that an agreement was reached with AFSCME Local 1110, which reflects a shared commitment to moving forward together and fulfilling the mission of Illinois State University.

[applause]

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

President Tarhule's Remarks

President Tarhule: Thank you, Chairperson Bohn. Good morning. I'm also pleased that the university and AFSCME Local 1110 reached an agreement, that the union members voted to ratify the agreement and that the strike has concluded. This accomplishment would not have been possible without the collaboration of those at the bargaining table.

I want to briefly acknowledge the ongoing Canvas outage affecting institutions across the country, including Illinois State University. Our focus remains on supporting students, faculty, and staff as we work through this disruption during finals and grade submission. I want to thank our faculty and staff for their flexibility, professionalism, and continued commitment to students during an evolving situation. The university has extended the final grade submission deadline to provide additional time and support, and we continue to

work closely with Canvas structure and our internal technology teams to monitor developments and communicate updates. We appreciate the patience and resilience of our campus community as we navigate this together.

At this time I would like to introduce Tyler Kropp, who was elected Student Trustee for the 2026-2027 academic year. Tyler grew up in the small town of Manteno, Illinois and is a junior undergraduate in the history, social science, teacher education program. He is a founding father and former president of Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity, the Vice President of Public Relations on the Fraternity Council, and serves as an ex-officio member of the Student Government Association. Tyler also shared that he is an Eagle Scout, a leukemia survivor, and has served in the Illinois Army National Guard as a motor transport operator for five years. Tyler, thank you for your service. Please join me in giving Tyler a big welcome.

[applause]

I would also like to reintroduce Alondra Zagal, who was elected Student Body President for the 2026-2027 academic year. Alondra is a junior from north Alabama majoring in public relations. She's a proud member of Alpha Delta Pi. Illinois State has become a second home to her, and she considers it an honor to give back to her community by advocating for students. Congratulations, Alondra.

[applause]

Congratulations to 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 re-elected as of Wednesday evening as its Chair. Congratulations, Angela. We look forward to continue working with you. Angela . . .

[applause]

Additionally, I would like to take a moment to introduce three new members of our Illinois State University leadership team. Dr. Russell Morgan has been named Associate Vice President for Faculty Affairs and will provide leadership for faculty development, academic level relations, and initiatives that support teaching, research, and professional growth across Illinois State University. He brings extensive experience in academic leadership and faculty relations from both Illinois State University and Western Illinois University. Please join me in congratulating Russ. Russ . . .

[applause]

Jon Gibb has joined Illinois State as Associate Vice President for Facility Services. Jon will oversee the university's facilities operations, planning, energy management, environmental health and safety, parking and transportation, and campus development efforts. He brings extensive experience in facilities planning, capital project management, and campus master planning from leadership roles at Utah Tech University and in the construction industry. Please join me in welcoming Jon to Illinois State University. Jon . . .

[applause]

Jenny Faust was recently appointed as the Associate Vice President for Strategy and Operations in the Division of Finance and Planning at Illinois State University. Jenny's background spans more than 30 years in higher education and includes experience as a faculty member, department chair, consultant, and senior administrator. Her work has emphasized systems thinking, institutionally effectiveness, organizational performance, and cross-unit collaboration to support strategic institutional goals. Please join me in giving Jenny a true Redbird welcome. Jenny . . .

[applause]

I also want to take a moment to congratulate all 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 4,400 students who will earn degrees, including more than 1,400 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 Angie Mitchell, Terri Haerr, and Amy Miller 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 thank all of our commencement volunteers who generously give up 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 thank the Campus Communication Committee for hosting the Discussion Hour and for providing an opportunity to learn more about the significant efforts of the School Street Food Pantry and this organization's initiatives. The School Street Pantry not only provides access to food and non-food items but also helps educate students on healthy eating habits and cooking as well as on budgeting and applying for additional governmental assistance. I am pleased to share that as the spring semester draws to a close, planning for the fall 2026 term is well underway. Enrollment deposits are strong, and we anticipate steady total enrollment. We look forward to another remarkable high-achieving FTIC class.

The end of the spring semester presents numerous opportunities to recognize members of our Redbird community and participate in special events. I would like to share a few examples. The 2026 U.S. News & World Report rankings named Illinois State University one of the top 100 best education schools in the nation. At Illinois State University's inaugural freshman engineering design project symposium on April 27, nearly 140 first-year engineering students showcased 35 team-based projects addressing real-world challenges for partners like OSF Healthcare and Quality Craft. Working in small groups, students applied skills learned throughout the year, such as CAD, circuit design, and hands-on fabrication to redesign tools like a solar-powered toolbox and an emergency response ATV, emphasizing creativity, problem solving, and customer-focused solutions. More than 500 Illinois State University students participated in the 35th annual University Research Symposium, representing a wide range of academic and creative projects across 32 programs in one of the event's largest turnouts ever. Overall, the symposium demonstrated the university's commitment to fostering undergraduate and graduate research while building confidence, collaboration, and scholarly engagement among students.

Dr. Ella Javadi, an Associate Professor of Information Systems at Illinois State University, has been selected as one of 25 inaugural NSF NAIRR AI educational fellows by the Computing Research Association. Chosen as a national ambassador for advancing artificial intelligence education, she will collaborate with faculty across 23 states to expand access to high quality AI teaching resources and support curriculum development through the NAIRR pilot classroom initiative. Recognized for her leadership in curriculum design and community outreach, Javadi will help guide national efforts to strengthen undergraduate AI education while leading seminars, mentoring faculty, and contributing to a broader network aimed at improving AI learning opportunities.

University College and the Office of the Provost held the 2026 Impact Awards on April 13th. Students submitted 907 nominations, recognizing 517 unique individuals, including 6 students, 30 academic advisors, 71 other staff, and 410 faculty who showed exemplary support, care and encouragement during their Redbird experience.

As part of the Presidential Speaker Series, I was thrilled to welcome renowned theoretical physicist and science communicator Michio Kaku to Illinois State University on April 2, 2026 where he delivered a public lecture to an estimated audience of more than 900.

Illinois State University's 2026 Earth Day breakfast brought together nearly 400 attendees for a celebration of sustainability, highlighted by a new farmer's market and a keynote address from author Kelsey Timmerman. Inspired by his book *Regenerating Earth*, the market featured local produce, handmade goods, and ecofriendly products, giving us a chance to directly support regional farmers while learning about sustainability practices.

On Thursday April 16th, the Division of Student Affairs celebrated an enduring impact of outstanding alumni at the annual Steve and Sandi Adams Legacy Hall of Fame. This year's distinguished inductees were Rhona Israel, Daniel Printz, Trustee Emeritus Julie Annette Jones, and University Registrar Stacy Ramsey.

Illinois State University's mobile app received the 2026 Mobile App Academy Award for best role/user-based experience, marking the second consecutive year the university has earned national recognition for innovation in digital campus platforms.

Redbird eSports hosted a third annual Missouri Valley Conference eSports Finals in the eSports Arena on Saturday, April 11th and Sunday, April 12th. Redbird eSports swept all full-game titles and earned the Missouri Valley Conference Championship.

As another successful year for Illinois State athletics draws to a close, April stands out as one of the most memorable months in Redbird history. The women's basketball team advanced to the national invitational championship game against Marshall University. They completed a remarkable season highlighted by 24 wins overall and 17 at home. Under head coach Kristen Gillespie the program has now achieved four consecutive 20-win seasons. At the same time, the men's team advanced to the NIT semifinals for the first time in program history. The Redbirds finished the season with 23 wins, and head coach Ryan Pedon became the fifth coach in program history with back-to-back 20-win seasons.

The women's tennis and men's golf teams each captured Missouri Valley Conference Championships with tennis earning its first NCAA tournament berth since 2022 and golf securing back-to-back conference titles.

Off the field, student athletes excelled in the classroom with approximately 90 student athletes expected to participate in commencement ceremonies this weekend.

University commencement continues to show strong momentum. Private support has already surpassed \$42,000,000 with nearly two months remaining. As you will recall, last year was a record at \$44,500,000. I am confident our team is well positioned to close out the fiscal year with continued investments from our alumni and friends.

We also celebrated six outstanding alumni at the April Awards Banquet. Congratulations to each recipient. You can learn more about this impressive group on the alumni website. They exemplify the very best of Illinois State University and make us Redbird proud.

We are strengthening operations by improving scholarship processes. A new platform will be launched this fall to streamline the award process and provide greater support to more students in a simpler, more efficient way. In addition, University Marketing and Communications has partnered with the Adaptive Edge Institute to develop an AI-powered writing tool that strengthens consistency in our voice and brand.

As I conclude my remarks this morning, I want to acknowledge the following university leaders who are retiring from Illinois State University after distinguished careers marked by years of dedicated service. Each has left a legacy of commitment, mentorship and impact that has profoundly shaped the experiences of students, colleagues, and the broader campus community. We offer our deepest gratitude for their contributions and celebrate the enduring influence of their work which will continue to be felt across the

university for years to come. Dr. Amy Hurd, Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Education and Professor in the School of Kinesiology and Recreation, will retire May 31st following 25 years of distinguished service. Hurd joined Illinois State in 2001, taught recreation administration, served as the school's graduate program director, directed the graduate school from 2018 to 2019 and has served as the university's Chief Undergraduate Academic Officer since 2019. Dr. Hurd is here this morning. Please join me in recognizing Amy's remarkable career and dedicated service. Amy . . .

[applause]

Following 26 years of distinguished service, Dr. Craig Gatto, Interim Associate Vice President for Research and university Professor of Biology will also retire May 31. Gatto joined Illinois State in 2000 as an assistant professor in the School of Biological Sciences. He led the School of Biological Sciences as Director from 2010 to 2020, served as Interim Chair of the Department of Chemistry from 2020 to 2022 and has held senior leadership roles in the Office of the Provost since 2022. Dr. Gatto is here this morning. Please join me as we congratulate and acknowledge Craig for his service to Illinois State University.

[applause]

After more than two decades of dedicated service to Illinois State University, Kris Harding will retire on July 1. Throughout her distinguished career she had a variety of impactful roles at Illinois State University, serving in University College, the Office of Admissions, and the College of Education before being named Executive Director of Alumni Engagement in 2018. In this role Harding provided strategic vision for engaging more than 243,000 alumni, strengthening lifelong relationships between the university and its graduates while advancing institutional pride, volunteerism and philanthropic support. Please join me in giving Kris a heartfelt round of applause. Kris . . .

[applause]

Toni Tucker will retire July 1 from Illinois State University as Director of the Ewing Cultural Center after 38 remarkable years at Illinois State University, 14 of those dedicated to Ewing Cultural Center. Her career has been defined by purpose, unmatched dedication, and a true passion for Ewing and its mission. Please help me recognize Toni for her many years of service to Illinois State.

[applause]

I would now like to call on today's spokesperson for the Campus Communication Committee, Terry Jackson, Jr., who serves as Data Coordinator in the Lauby Teacher Education Center and an ex-officio member of the Civil Service Council. Terry . . .

Terry Jackson, Jr.: Thank you. Good morning. First, the Campus Communication Committee would like to thank Doris Groves and Kris Harding for their presentation on the School Street Food Pantry this morning. The pantry continues to provide an essential service to the Redbird community. The purpose of the Communication Committee is to communicate the climate of the campus and to amplify the voices of the people that we represent. The committee has agreed that there is only one appropriate message to express today. Students, faculty, and staff all around campus celebrate the agreement with the members of AFSCME Local 1110, bringing an end to one of the longest strikes in the history of ISU. We are happy to see our fellow Redbirds return to work, and we look forward to a finalized contract in the very near future. It is our hope that the senior administration commits to developing more productive labor relation strategies to prevent future disputes from turning contentious, strategies that prioritize collaboration, communication, and respect so that ISU hopefully never has to endure the effects of another strike. We want to wish everyone a great summer, and congratulations to all those graduating this weekend.

[applause]

President Tarhule: Thank you, Terry. We have a unique opportunity this morning to learn about the Three-Minute Thesis Competition. At this time I invite Dr. Claudia Petrescu, Associate Vice President for Graduate Education and Internationalization Initiatives, to come to the podium and introduce Laura Botros, the winner of the Three-Minute Thesis Competition.

Dr. Claudia Petrescu: Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to share with you what the Three-Minute Competition is about and to showcase an amazing student, Laura Botros, who is going to join me very soon at the podium. So the Three-Minute Thesis Competition is an opportunity for students to showcase their research with limited aid, one static PowerPoint, absolutely no notes, no whispering from the audience what they have to say. I don't know how many of you can do it, but I would have a huge challenge doing it so. However, we have very talented students who have been competing from every college in this competition. They have been showcasing their research, their ability to speak unassisted by technology, and really to amaze all of us. So Laura is the winner of the 3MT Competition at Illinois State University. She has represented us very well at the Midwest Association of Graduate School, so it's my greatest pleasure to welcome her to the podium to practically showcase to you the power of graduate education and the smartness of graduate students. Laura . . .

[applause]

Dr. Claudia Petrescu: So I would like to say that Laura is a graduate student in the Department of Psychology, and she is absolutely phenomenal.

Laura Botros: Hello. Thank you for having me here. So I will start with my three-minute speech. I would be willing to bet that everybody in this room has been asked at least once what they wanted to do with their life. We, as a society, are so curious about career aspirations that we ask individuals as young as five years old what they want to do when they grow up. So I wanted to dig a little bit deeper. I wanted to ask first- and second-generation immigrants about the cultural influence that impacted their career aspirations. So to do this I interviewed them, and I asked them to fill out this cognitive map where in the center they placed their desired career aspiration. What followed were four factors that influenced that career aspiration - following that, two reasons for that factor, and then finally a bigger picture, a connection that connected that branch to their career aspiration that allowed me to interpret their career aspirations as accurately as possible. Once I analyzed and collected this data, I was able to find four major themes. Theme one, family support in yellow. Within this theme, when first- and second-generation immigrant families supported and encouraged their children, those first- and second-generation immigrants were more motivated to pursue those career aspirations that they chose. Theme two, cultural expectations and pressures in purple. Within this theme there was a bit of a split. Some first- and second-generation immigrant families had an emphasis on job stability and financial security while others had predetermined careers for their children, like engineers, lawyers, and doctors. Theme three, cultural values of hard work and community. Within this theme, first- and second-generation immigrants wanted to make a meaningful impact with the career that they chose as well as work as hard as they could within that career path. Finally, theme four, mobility and fulfillment in red. Within this theme, first- and second-generation immigrants recognized their parents' sacrifices immigrating to the United States. And so they wanted to make their parents proud with the career aspiration that they chose. So you might be wondering, well, this is great. But why does this matter? Well, it was very clear from these responses that these career aspirations weren't just a passion or source of income, but they were a means to an American dream that their parents had bought into and made a reality for their family. It's important to understand that these decisions are not always individual as we may think but can be a representation of generational sacrifices. It's important to understand the benefit and strength that immigrant communities provide to our society and our economy, especially today when they're oftentimes used as scare tactics. So the next time you ask somebody about their career aspiration, think about all of the possible influences that could have impacted that decision. Thank you.

[applause]

President Tarhule: Thank you, Laura. You may be going back too soon. There may be questions for you.

[laughter]

Are there any questions from members of the board?

Trustee Bohn: I have a couple. So approximately how many participants did you interview?

Laura: I interviewed 12 participants. I interviewed them and then I gave them 15 minutes to fill out the cognitive map, and then I finished with the second part of the interview.

Trustee Bohn: And how did you find them?

Laura: So there was a lot of different sampling methods. There was some convenience sampling. So I was able to find some ISU students that fit within the requirements. They only had to be 18 to 25 and first- or second-generation immigrants, as well as I was able to reach out to an administrator from my high school and asked for some of the alumni contact numbers because I knew that we had a large immigrant population as well.

Trustee Bohn: So some of the participants were in their careers already?

Laura: Yes, a few.

Trustee Bohn: Okay, a few. Okay. And did you find any areas that they seemed to gravitate to more than others – like any careers?

Laura: Um, it was actually a pretty nice split. There was a few people that . . . I guess the most out of the 12, which is not really a lot to make like a decision of it, but there were like 3 that were in business, but it was kind of like 2 specifically that were like in tech business-related fields.

Trustee Bohn: Okay.

Laura: And they were all as well like very like a year or less into their careers. So very early on.

Trustee Bohn: Great. Thank you.

Laura: Uh-huh.

Trustee Merminga: I have a question. Fantastic presentation, Laura. Congratulations. My question is . . . your sample . . . how was it distributed geographically around the world?

Laura: Yeah. Um, so because I had only 12 there wasn't . . . like I couldn't really say anything about a certain culture, but I had people from Latin America. I had people from eastern Europe, Asia, and I believe that was about it. So it was a little bit kind of diverse, but those were the main cultures.

President Tarhule: Okay. Now you can sit down.

Laura: Thank you. [laughter]

[applause]

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 which 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? If not or hearing none, may I have a motion and a second to approve Consent Agenda items A through E?

Trustee Hoeniges: So moved.

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

Trustee Navarro: I'll second.

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

Multiple people: Aye.

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

Resolutions

President Tarhule:

Resolution 2026.05/16. Approval of Academic Senate Proposal to Amend the Illinois State University Constitution.

At its February 4, 2026 meeting, the Illinois State University Academic Senate voted unanimously to revise portions of the Illinois State University Constitution. The revisions focus on using updated accurate terms and position titles, adopting more inclusive language and mentioning the newly created Staff Council which replaces the previous Administrative/Professional Council and Civil Service Council. I ask for your approval of this resolution.

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

Trustee Lutt: So moved.

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

Trustee Peterson: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Second, Trustee Peterson. 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 2026.05/17. Approval of BA and BS in Film.

The proposed Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in Film in the School of Theater, Dance and Film will elevate the existing film and digital media sequence within the theater degree to a standalone major that more accurately reflects students' academic and professional preparation without creating duplicative programs. Driven by significant enrollment growth from 11 students in 2020 to approximately 124 in 2025 along with expanded faculty capacity, the new degree responds to sustained student demand and aligns with disciplinary and industry norms. The curriculum combines hands-on film production with study in film history, theory and global cinema. It offers flexible concentrations in production, screenwriting of film studies, and prepares students for careers in media or for graduate study. The program is expected to be implemented with minimal operational impact, existing resources, and reallocated funding with projected enrollment of 150 majors and approximately 35 annual graduates once fully established. 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 Lutt: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Lutt, second. Is there any discussion?

Trustee Navarro: Yes.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Navarro.

Trustee Navarro: Could you explain how we went from those students that were interested to the sequence to now how we're considering the new degree program?

President Tarhule: Provost Yazedjian?

Provost: Thank you for the question, but could you clarify? You're talking about the process or just how the program grew or what?

Trustee Navarro: How the program grew. How we got to this point where it's now, how we're considering a new major. I know it currently exists as a sequence and what that means and how we got to this point, the number of students that are interested and currently enrolled.

Provost: Sure. Yep. So in terms of how a sequence or a major develops, the curriculum starts with the faculty. And so if the faculty see a particular need, you know they're interacting with students, they look at what's happening in their discipline or the industry, they hear from students. We can partner with Admissions to see what kinds of key words students are searching for. So those are all starting points for when we decide about a new program. Then in the Provost Office we have a partnership with EAB, which is a higher education consulting enterprise, and they can do a market analysis, a feasibility study for us to see, you know, what is the market demand, what do the Bureau of Labor projections look like moving forward. Then, in the case of this film sequence, we decided to start smaller with the sequence, which can be integrated into a broader degree to see if the demand that we thought was out there was actually going to be actualized in terms of students selecting the program. What we found in the last five years is that there is indeed demand. Students are choosing Illinois State, partly also because there isn't anything in this major in

the central region. So there are some private colleges and universities in the Chicago area. There is one actual public school in southern Illinois that is offering this degree. But, otherwise, in the central Illinois region we don't have anything like this. And so the continued demand from students and the lack of other programs in this area gave us the confidence that we can increase it or elevate it into a degree program, and we believe this will actually drive even more students to the university. Any other questions?

Trustee Navarro: No. That's it. Thank you.

Provost: Alright.

Trustee Bohn: Any other questions? Okay. 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 2026.05/18. Authorization to Complete Comprehensive Campus Master Plan.

Illinois State University last completed a comprehensive campus master plan in 2011, outlining the long-range vision for the university's fiscal development through 2030 with a subsequent update in 2018 reflecting changing financial and operational conditions in higher education. Since that time, the university has experienced significant shifts in instructional delivery, learning environments, teaching technologies, space utilization, student support services, transportation, and campus infrastructure, necessitating a new comprehensive master plan. This updated master plan would be closely aligned with and informed by the university strategic plan, ensuring that future capital investments, campus group vitalization and space planning directly support institutional priorities and long-term goals. This action authorizes expenditures not to exceed \$1,500,000 to develop a new master plan and directs the administration to engage an expert architect and planning firm to complete the work. The source of funds is Facility Services Account Reserves. 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 Russell: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Russell, second. Is there any discussion? The only question I had is when will this be finished, approximately?

President Tarhule: Glen, you want to address that?

Glen Nelson: We don't have a date on when it will be finished because at this point in time this authorizes us to enter into an RFP process to identify an architect. And then once that firm is identified, they'll develop a project plan for us. It's probably a year away because these are fairly involved, if not longer than a year, before we see a final product back to the board.

Trustee Bohn: Okay. 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 2026.05/19. Re-authorization to Upgrade Center for Performing Arts Audio and Lighting Systems.

The Center for Performing Arts, CPA, was completed in 2002 and remains a primary instructional and performance facility for Illinois State. The CPA's sound, lighting and public address systems have exceeded their useful life and are no longer supported by the manufacturer, fail frequently, and do not meet current instructional performance or industry standards. A comprehensive upgrade is required to modernize performance technology, enhance instructional opportunities, improve safety and reliability, and reduce long-term operational risk. Improvements to the public address system are also necessary to integrate with the fire alarm system and provide compliant live safety voice communication throughout the facility. A competitive public bid process resulted in five vetted bids, and at its February 20, 2026 meeting the Board of Trustees approved a project budget of \$3,200,000 which included design fees and contingency. However, since that time, the lowest responsible bidder, Zeller Electric, withdrew its bid, and Weber Electric was identified as the next lowest responsible bidder with a bid of \$3,736,100. The revised total project budget, including design fees and contingency is now \$4,400,000, representing an increase of \$1,200,000 above the previously approved budget. Timely completion of the project is necessary to support academic programming and scheduled performances. Construction is planned to begin in the Concert Hall in May 2026 with substantial completion required by September 2026. Accordingly, it is requested that Resolution Number 2026.02/10, which authorized the award of the project to Zeller Electric with a project budget of \$3,200,000 be rescinded. It is now requested that the board authorize the university to proceed with the construction activities necessary to upgrade the CPA sound, lighting, and public address systems to award 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 revised total budget of \$4,400,000. The project is funded by bond revenue reserves, academic enhancement fee funds, and eligible LED lighting utility rebates. 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 Lutt: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Lutt, second. Is there any discussion? Trustee Navarro.

Trustee Navarro: So with Zeller recalling their bid, we didn't incur any expenses to that company, correct?

President Tarhule: Vice President Glen is saying correct, but you may wish to give his voice.

Trustee Navarro: So we didn't pay them any money since they recalled their bid?

Glen Nelson: No, we incurred no liabilities with them.

Trustee Navarro: There were no penalties or anything?

Glen Nelson: Unfortunately, no. Well, you mean penalties for them or penalties . . .

Trustee Navarro: Either.

Glen Nelson: There were no penalties.

Trustee Bohn: Any other questions? So I have a question. How sure are we that Weber Electric is going to stick to this amount?

Glen Nelson: I'm very confident they will stand behind their bid, they will do the work, and I know with our new management team within Facilities and Planning that they will not let it go over budget.

Trustee Bohn: Okay. I appreciate that. Any other question or 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 2026.05/20. Authorization to Demolish 300 North Street.

Illinois State University seeks authorization to demolish 300 North Street, a 2,544 square foot building constructed in 1949 and purchased by the university in 1967. Originally designed as a medical dental office and later used for various campus programs, including the university Professional Development Center, Honors Program, and most recently the Center for Civic Engagement, the building has never undergone major renovation and now suffers from failing mechanical systems, a deteriorating condition, and an interior layout that no longer meets academic or student support needs. Consistent with the university's 2010-2030 Master Plan which calls for demolition of the structure, the site will be cleared to enable development of the Teaching and Research Greenhouse Facilities as part of a new science complex. Demolition, including required asbestos abatement and state notifications, is included within the Teaching and Research Greenhouse Facilities construction project. 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. Trustee Hoeniges, second. Is there any discussion?

Trustee Tillis: I have a question.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Tillis.

Trustee Tillis: Is the cost of demolition a part of the greenhouse construction?

President Tarhule: I'll let the CFO answer the question.

Glen Nelson: Yes, the cost of the demolition is in the greenhouse budget.

Trustee Tillis: And how much is that?

Glen Nelson: \$300,000.

Trustee Tillis: Thank you.

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 2026.05/21. Authorization for Design and Construction Services for Research and Teaching Greenhouse Facilities.

Felmley Science Annex, which opened in 1963, and its adjacent greenhouse facilities are outdated, increasingly non-functional, and no longer meet the instructional and research needs of Illinois State University's STEM programs. Aging infrastructure, ad hoc modifications, and code changes have significantly reduced laboratory capacity in biology and chemistry while the original greenhouse has been deemed unsafe for teaching and is currently out of service, forcing the university to rely on temporary off-campus space. A second research greenhouse built in 1996 is also nearing the end of its useful life and is limited in its ability to support growing demand for undergraduate and graduate research. To address these challenges, the university proposes relocating and constructing a new 11,850 square foot Research and Teaching Greenhouse Facilities divided into two facilities as part of a broader Science Complex. The project improves instructional capacity, consolidates research and teaching space, and aligns with the university's strategic plan to expand STEM education and support its institutional growth. The project also enhances constructability, reduces risk, and supports future academic and community engagement opportunities. The university seeks board authorization for expenditures not to exceed \$7,118,639 for design and construction services and directs the administration to establish the project and engage the necessary architects, engineers, and consultants in accordance with university procedures. The university will issue debt to finance the project and use academic enhancement fee revenue to re-pay the debt. A comprehensive resolution on debt issuance will be brought to the July 20, 2026 Board of Trustees meeting. 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: Second, Trustee Peterson. Is there any discussion? All those in favor of the resolution, please say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The resolution is approved. I might add that I'm very happy about the greenhouse moving forward. We won't talk about how old I am, but I used the old greenhouse when I was a student. [laughter] And so this is exciting for me to think about that, and I look forward to Pat Vickerman finding some help with this. [laughter] The resolution is approved.

President Tarhule: Pat accepts the challenge. Thank you.

Resolution 2026.05/22. Authorization for Design and Construction Services for Science Laboratory Building Annex, SLB-A.

In alignment with the 2018 Campus Master Plan, Illinois State University has collaborated with the architectural firm, Stantec, to re-evaluate the proposed STEM building's location to better support the College of Arts and Sciences and the university's long-term academic goals. The revised location enables the creation of an integrated science complex which will include new research and teaching greenhouse facilities and an annex to the existing Science Laboratory Building, SLB. The construction of this complex aligns with the university's strategic and academic priorities, will increase essential instructional and research capacity, modernize facilities, improve accessibility, reduce project risk, and enhance programmatic efficiency. The Science Laboratory Building Annex, a three-story, 24,810 square foot building addition will provide 40 general laboratories, 4 recitation rooms, 6 research laboratories, and 6 research offices along with a universal toilet room and a second elevator to enhance accessibility and circulation. The addition will also provide a swing space to support a future renovation of the Felmley Science Annex. Together, Illinois State and Stantec developed a preliminary concept plan and a budget to implement all necessary project components. This resolution requests the Board of Trustees to authorize expenditures not to exceed \$27,401,173 for all necessary Science Laboratory Building Annex project construction services. The university will issue debts to finance the project and use Academic Enhancement Fee revenue to repay the debt. A comprehensive resolution on debt issuance will be brought to the July 20, 2026 Board of Trustees meeting. I ask for your approval of this resolution.

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

Trustee Hoeniges: I move.

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

Trustee Lutt: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Second, Trustee Lutt. Is there any discussion?

Trustee Peterson: Yeah, I have a question.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Peterson.

Trustee Peterson: Can you explain a little bit more about the source of revenue and just explain the AEF revenue?

President Tarhule. Yeah. I'll take a stab at it, and CFO Glen Nelson can provide more details. So, ideally, all academic buildings should be financed and supported by state-appropriated revenues. However, in the state of Illinois there is a huge backlog of maintenance and construction projects for which the state should provide revenue, the money that has not been provided. So in 2019, in order to keep the facilities updated, the university instituted a fee that the board approved at the time. It's called the Academic Enhancement Fee. So it's a fee that every student at the university pays. The sole purpose of that fee is to use the money in order to upkeep academic buildings since the state is not providing the money. There are strict regulations and restrictions about how we can use the fee. It can't be used for salaries. It can't be used for anything other than academic buildings and technology. So that is the fee that we anticipate using to pay for this complex. We have also used it to pay for other construction projects, such as the rotunda which was about \$9,000,000. And then when we renovated the DeGarmo Building, which was \$6,500,000, that's how we paid for it.

Trustee Bohn: Any other questions?

Trustee Peterson: Maybe just one more question just for sort of awareness. In terms of timing, these three projects, when do we expect that, if all things go as planned, we would . . .

President Tarhule: We would like these projects to be completed by fall of '28. One of them, which we haven't talked about, is in the next resolution. It would be handled, if you approve it, primarily by the CDB, and so we will have to work with the CDB, but they have assured us that they are able to meet that deadline. The Science Laboratory Annex and the greenhouses, the university will handle using separate contractors. And so we're reasonably confident that we can have those finished in 2028.

Trustee Tillis: I have a question.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Tillis.

Trustee Tillis: If I have my numbers right, today we potentially are signing off on \$34,000,000 in debt, Dr. Glen. And so my question is are we taking into consideration other future projects that we're having when we're looking at this debt that we're taking on, knowing that probably within the next year or two that we are going to taking on some major projects?

Dr. Glen Nelson: Yes we are. We're taking a comprehensive view of our debt, and I'll be sharing that this summer with the board to get everyone back up to speed with where we are with our future debt. And when we're talking about future debt we're also factoring in a potential new residence hall project. So this is not jeopardizing that project. These are a separate set of funds. They're not coming from operating. They'll be coming from AEF. Funds for any type of housing come out of the AFS operations, and then the debt for the solar project on GE Road will come from utility savings associated with that project. So that will come out of GR. Does that answer your question?

Trustee Tillis: That was exactly my point. Thanks for the clarification.

Dr. Glen Nelson: Okay.

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 2026.05/23. Authorization for Design and Construction Services for STEM Building.

Felmley Science Annex opened for classes in 1963 and is a four-story 80,784 square foot STEM facility housing spaces for geology and geography, health sciences, biology, chemistry, physics, and general classrooms. Over the past 60 years, the building has undergone numerous incremental modifications without a comprehensive plan. As a result, evolving pedogeological needs, aging, and obsolete infrastructure, system failures, and updated building codes have significantly diminished the facility's effectiveness. The Felmley Science Annex currently performs below university standards, and several biology and chemistry laboratories are not fully functional, reducing teaching capacity within the College of Arts and Sciences. Additionally, growing demand for STEM laboratory space, driven by existing programs, projected enrollment increases in the Mennonite College of Nursing and the establishment of the new

College of Engineering necessitate a comprehensive evaluation of the adequacy and quality of STEM research and instructional laboratories on campus. The justification for the revised STEM building project reflects a strategic relocation consistent with the 2018 Campus Master Plan to better support Illinois State University's College of Arts and Sciences programs and long-term academic priorities. The new site improves instructional capacity by expanding to eight teaching laboratories and recitation rooms along with two large instructional spaces, including a 250-seat lecture hall and a large classroom while also enhancing accessibility through a second elevator and an increased restroom capacity. In addition, the relocation reduces construction complexity, schedule, and cost risks by eliminating the need for tunnel modifications, major electrical relocations, and a rooftop greenhouse while improving constructability and reducing exposure to unforeseen site conditions. The project will construct a 49,950 square foot five-story facility to modernize teaching and research infrastructure and align with the university's broader strategic goals. The university requests that the Board of Trustees, in accordance with the university procedures, authorize the university administration to establish the project budget and to appoint architectural, engineering, and other professional consultants to provide all necessary design and construction services for the STEM building at a cost not to exceed \$49,549,751. The source of funds includes \$29,200,000 which was appropriated by the State of Illinois to the Capital Development Board for this project. The remaining \$20,349,751 will be financed by the university through debt issuance with repayments to be made from the Academic Enhancement Fee. A comprehensive debt issuance resolution will be presented at the July 20, 2026 Board of Trustees meeting. 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 Merminga: Second.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Merminga made the second. Is there any discussion? Trustee Navarro.

Trustee Navarro: I see that the new building is going to go where there currently is parking, and could you comment or tell us about how those parking spaces are going to be reallocated on campus or just how parking is being affected by this new construction?

President Tarhule: Glen?

Glen Nelson: As with all new buildings that take the place of parking, we'd have to readjust parking across campus. We don't have a parking plan developed for that yet. There is a limited number of parking spaces in that lot today. We don't have a detailed plan as to how those spaces will be replaced elsewhere.

Trustee Navarro: How many spaces are in that lot, and what type of spaces are they?

Glen Nelson: I do not know how many are in there. John, do you know?

John: I don't have the exact count, but it's approximately 65 stalls, and I can get that information. My assessment of parking is this parking addresses our current uptown facility. As approved, we're going to start our campus comprehensive master plan. We're going to review the future viability of campus uptown, and this parking may or may not be viable to the future of the campus. So I think to answer your question, the master plan is really going to address the parking needs on campus.

Trustee Navarro: And when will we have this master plan?

Trustee Bohn: Glen told us about a year.

Trustee Navarro: Okay.

Trustee Bohn: Any other questions? Trustee Tillis.

Trustee Tillis: Is it safe to say that the STEM building and the greenhouse building are going to be built at the same time? Or how is that timeline? That's my first part.

Glen Nelson: Yes, the timeline is that we will move forward with all three of the projects at the same time in concert with CDB. They are de-coupled from CDB because we believe we can definitely hit the timeline on the annex and the greenhouse. And so if CDB falls behind on their schedule, we will still have some swing space with lab facilities. We're confident the CDB will hit the schedule, but with our past experience sometimes there are unforeseen bureaucratic hurdles they run into that we don't if they're not involved.

Trustee Tillis: Thank you.

President Tarhule: If I may add, Trustee Tillis, I think your question is a really good one. It's a question that we have considered with how the space is tight. And so in construction if we were to need two cranes, it's a question as to whether there would be enough space for all the projects to proceed at the same time. One possibility is to reach an agreement where we share cranes so the same crane is servicing all of the other projects. This has been done before. At this point it's only a concept. We will see how feasible that is when all the contracts are awarded and we see the degree to which we can work on the project. So it's a good question and one that we have considered at some length with the architects.

Trustee Bohn: Any other questions? All those in favor of the resolution, please say aye.

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The resolution is approved.

President Tarhule:

Resolution 2026.05/24. Recognition of Student Trustee Ryan Russell.

Whereas Ryan Russell was elected as Student Trustee for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 academic years by his constituents at Illinois State University to represent their interests as a member of the Board of Trustees of Illinois State University and whereas Ryan Russell ably discharged that responsibility while at the same time keeping in mind the interest of all the people of the state, therefore by it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Illinois State University expresses its sincere appreciation to Ryan Russell for his service on the board and its hope for his success in all future endeavors. 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: Motion by Trustee Tillis. Second by Trustee Navarro. Is there any discussion? I would just like to say, Ryan, thank you very much for your participation, your insights, and your representation of the student body. It's been very important to the board your participation and your comments, and I personally will miss you greatly. Anyone else?

President Tarhule: Can I add something?

Trustee Bohn: Yes.

President Tarhule: So as part of the job, Ryan and I meet as the student trustee and myself, we meet periodically where he brings to my attention the issues that he is hearing from the student side, and he and I get to talk about how we might meet those needs. And I also discuss policy issues on things that the administration may be thinking about with Ryan. I have to say this and with all respect and admiration. I am super impressed by Ryan's maturity. I do not believe that when I was his age, 21, 22, I would have had the ability to conceptualize, to think so critically, and to handle all the issues with so much grace, so much poise, and again, to voice the word, so much maturity. I can't wait to see what Ryan does, because I think he's got the makings to be a truly great Redbird, and I look forward to what you accomplish. Thank you so much for what you have done for Illinois State and for students. It was a pleasure getting to know you and working with you. Thank you.

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

Multiple people: Aye.

Trustee Bohn: Opposed? The resolution is approved. Ryan, can you please come forward?

[applause]

Trustee Bohn: And we noticed last night when we left that this had already been taken down. And my husband said I can't believe they took that down already. Then I remembered we take it down because we give it to you. So I'm sure your future wife will have a nice spot for this at the front door. Thank you very much. And then, Ryan, if you would like to say anything at this time. . .

Trustee Ryan Russell: Well, thank you, everybody. Truly it feels like only yesterday that I sat here for the first time and was eager to help move this great institution forward. But as my term concludes, I look around the room and realize that while we worked hard on numerous different initiatives and have made certainly a lot of progress, the true value of ISU is the people that it brings together and the community that it builds here. Throughout my term on the board I've had the chance to meet a lot of you in the room and get to know many of you very well, and I want to just say thank you so much for welcoming me into this Redbird community. I also need to recognize my fiancée, Rachel. Most people would probably file a missing person's report on me, which is how busy my schedule can be at times, but Rachel has stayed truly by my side through every late-night meeting and every one more e-mail to respond to. She's really supported me pouring everything I've got into all the different organizations I've been lucky enough to play a small role in, and I know that can be hard at times. And so I was talking with Rachel this morning, and she said she is very excited about this meeting and not necessarily because I get to do this thing and what not. I think she's happy to have some more time with me and more focus of mine on her and not different registered student organizations. So thank you for all your help and support through this.

To President Tarhule and my fellow trustees, thank you. Thank you for your mentorship and the grace that you've shown a student leader finding his voice. Serving alongside you all has been one of the greatest honors of my time here at Illinois State University, and we have shared one singular mission, ensuring the Redbird experience remains second to none. And I'm proud of the strides that we have made together. I certainly leave this board full of confidence knowing that ISU is in capable hands. I walked onto this campus in 2022 as a student looking to get involved and meet people and just have some opportunity, but I truly leave this campus as a Redbird for life, forever grateful for the home I found here at Illinois State University. So thank you all.

[applause]

President Tarhule: And that concludes the resolutions for today.

Move into Closed Session

Trustee Bohn: I'll now entertain a motion to move into closed session for discussing minutes of meetings lawfully closed under this act for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes pursuant to 5ILCS120/2C21 discussing collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives, pursuant to 5ILCS120/2C2 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 and discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees pursuant to 5ILCS120/2C1. May I have a motion and a second to move into closed session?

Trustee Russell: So moved.

Trustee Bohn: Trustee Russell made the motion. Trustee Tillis, second. Any discussion? Hearing no discussion, Trustee Navarro, please call a roll call vote.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Bohn.

Trustee Bohn: Yes.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Hoeniges.

Trustee Hoeniges: Yes.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Lutt.

Trustee Lutt: Yes.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Merminga.

Trustee Merminga: Yes.

Trustee Navarro: Trustee Navarro. Yes. Trustee Peterson.

Trustee Peterson: Yes.

Trustee Navarro: 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 reconvene in public session to move on the board action discussed during the closed session specifically and the approval of the closed session meeting minutes from February 20th, 2026 and to adjourn. [Sound of rapping gavel.] We are adjourned.

[End of recording.]

The meeting recessed at 10:41 a.m. to closed session and reconvened at 12:25 p.m. with the same attendance noted in the initial roll call.

Trustee Russell moved to approve the closed session meeting minutes of February 20, 2026 as presented. Trustee Merminga seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

With there being no further business, Trustee Hoeniges moved to adjourn. Trustee Merminga seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 12:26 p.m.

DRAFT