

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

June 9, 2025

This meeting of the Board of Trustees was held in the I Hotel and Conference Center, Illinois Ballroom, 1900 S. First Street, Champaign, Illinois, on Monday, June 9, 2025, beginning at 10:03 a.m. Attendance via videoconference was available the University of Illinois Chicago, 1309 S. Halsted Street, Suite 101, Chicago, Illinois.

Chair Jesse H. Ruiz convened the meeting and asked the secretary to call the roll. The following members of the Board were present: Ms. J. Carolyn Blackwell, Ms. Tami Craig Schilling, Mr. Joseph Gutman, Dr. Suzet M. McKinney,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Wilbur C. Milhouse III, Ms. Sarah C. Phalen, Mr. Jesse H. Ruiz, Dr. Bryan S. Traubert. Mr. Ramón Cepeda and Governor J. B. Pritzker were absent. Mr. Christian Johnson, voting student trustee, Springfield, was in attendance. The following nonvoting student trustees were in attendance: Ms. Ariana A. Mizan,<sup>1</sup> student trustee, Urbana. Mr. Quinn S. Basta, student trustee, Chicago, was absent. President Timothy L. Killeen was present.

Also present were the officers of the Board: Mr. Lester H. McKeever Jr., treasurer; Mr. Scott E. Rice, University counsel; Dr. Paul N. Ellinger, comptroller (and

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. McKinney and Ms. Mizan participated via remote videoconference.

vice president/chief financial officer); and Dr. Jeffrey A. Stein, secretary of the Board of Trustees and of the University.

### OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Ruiz stated that he called this special meeting of the Board of Trustees for the purpose of considering a single agenda item recommending the appointment of a new chancellor of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and vice president of the University of Illinois System. He said the Board last took this action in July 2016, to appoint Dr. Robert J. Jones as the 10<sup>th</sup> chancellor at Urbana, and he noted that the Board recently celebrated with Dr. Jones, who will be leaving the university later this summer. Mr. Ruiz stated that Dr. Jones' departure necessitated a search for a new chancellor, which commenced several months ago and concludes with this meeting today. He asked President Killeen to introduce the item.

President Killeen expressed excitement and said that the nationwide search for the next chancellor and vice president was thorough and thoughtful and produced a stellar field of candidates. He said the strength of the candidate pool is a testament to the dedication of the Committee to Advise the President on the Selection of the Next Chancellor of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and vice president of the University of Illinois System; the magnetic power of the university; its exceptional faculty and student body; and its rich history. President Killeen said the confidential search was conducted with the assistance of Greenwood Asher and Associates, and he stated that the interview process included input from trustees, faculty, students, staff,

deans, directors, and others. President Killeen said Dr. Charles Lee Isbell Jr., presently provost and vice chancellor, University of Wisconsin-Madison, rose to the top. He listed Dr. Isbell's accomplishments in his role at University of Wisconsin-Madison and said he previously served as the John P. Imlay Jr. Dean of the College of Computing at Georgia Institute of Technology, where he played a key role. President Killeen described Dr. Isbell's areas of research and scholarship. He said he has come to know Dr. Isbell as a leader who understands the value of collaboration, deeply believes in shared governance, and knows what is needed to nurture and lead a great university with the student experience at its core.

Mr. Ruiz invited trustees to comment. Ms. Craig Schilling stated that she was impressed with Dr. Isbell's credentials, academic experience, research focus, and life experience, and she referred to his visionary capabilities to take the university to the new places it is poised to go. She said she believes the university will reach great heights under Dr. Isbell's leadership while educating amazing students. Dr. McKinney stated that while she did not have the opportunity to meet Dr. Isbell in person, she was impressed by his research and academic focus; his calm, measured approach that he would take in leading the university; and his vision for strategically guiding the university through challenges facing higher education. She said that strong, strategic, and measured leadership is needed in times of challenge and triumph, and she expressed support for Dr. Isbell's appointment as the 11<sup>th</sup> chancellor of the university. Mr. Milhouse stated that as an alum, he reflects on the greatness of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and its great leadership team. He commented on its future and said its fantastic team of

individuals will bring the university to its highest levels, stating that Dr. Isbell will be integral to moving it forward. Ms. Phalen welcomed Dr. Isbell and expressed appreciation for Dr. Jones' leadership. She said she was impressed by Dr. Isbell during the interview process. Mr. Johnson commented on shared governance and the role of students throughout the search. Mr. Gutman thanked Dr. Jones and remarked on his legacy, and he reiterated the comments made by his fellow trustees regarding Dr. Isbell's appointment as the next chancellor.

Mr. Ruiz echoed the remarks made by members of the Board and thanked Dr. Jones for his stewardship, noting that he was leaving the university better than he found it. He welcomed Dr. Isbell and commented on the Board's responsibility to choose leaders. Mr. Ruiz said a periscope is needed during difficult times, and he said Dr. Isbell has that periscope. He thanked all involved in the search for their participation in the process.

## AGENDA

At 10:18 a.m., Mr. Ruiz stated that there was one agenda item requiring action by the Board. With no additional comments or questions regarding this recommendation, Dr. Stein read the title of the item, "Appoint Chancellor, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and Vice President, University of Illinois System."

Appoint Chancellor, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign,  
and Vice President, University of Illinois System

(1) Following a six-month national search, the president of the University of Illinois System recommends the appointment of Dr. Charles Lee Isbell Jr., presently provost and vice chancellor, University of Wisconsin-Madison, as chancellor, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and vice president, University of Illinois System. This is an academic professional administrative appointment, non-tenured, on a twelve-month service basis, on 100 percent time, at an academic professional appointment annual salary of \$382,000, and an academic professional administrative increment of \$518,000, for a total annual salary of \$900,000, beginning on August 1, 2025. Dr. Isbell will serve as chancellor designate, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and vice president designate, University of Illinois System, under the same conditions and salary arrangements from July 16, 2025, through July 31, 2025. Dr. Isbell's appointment as an administrative officer is subject to terms contained in the University of Illinois *Statutes*, the State of Illinois *Government Severance Pay Act* (5 ILCS 415/), and other applicable regulations or policy, including provisions relating to notice of termination.

Dr. Isbell will succeed Dr. Robert J. Jones, who has served as chancellor, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and vice president, University of Illinois System, since September 26, 2016, and will vacate the position on July 31, 2025.

Dr. Isbell will also be recommended for appointment at the rank of professor, Siebel School of Computing and Data Science, The Grainger College of Engineering, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, on indefinite tenure, on zero percent time, non-salaried, beginning July 16, 2025, which shall be considered pursuant to the college's established processes for appointment and review for tenure.

The principal components of Dr. Isbell's appointment include the following:

- As chancellor, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and vice president, University of Illinois System, Dr. Isbell is appointed by the Board on the recommendation of the president of the University of Illinois System and serves at the direction of the president.
- Dr. Isbell's appointment as chancellor/vice president designate will commence on July 16, 2025.
- Dr. Isbell's title will convert to chancellor/vice president on August 1, 2025.
- Dr. Isbell's total annual salary of \$900,000 is subject to periodic adjustments consistent with and in accordance with the annual merit-based salary program, if any, and will not exceed the authorized percentage applicable to University of Illinois System level administrators. Dr. Isbell will also receive the University's standard benefit package in accordance with University policies and practices.
- Dr. Isbell will be eligible to receive deferred compensation of \$400,000 if he remains employed as chancellor/vice president through July 15, 2030.
- Dr. Isbell will be provided up to \$100,000 to support the transition of his research program, and \$100,000 per year for five years for research purposes.
- Dr. Isbell will be reimbursed for moving and other relocation expenses up to \$25,000.
- Dr. Isbell will be provided with access to a designated property for housing as a full-time residence and an annual housing allowance of \$60,000 for use and maintenance thereof.
- The University of Illinois Foundation will provide funds for a club membership or other similar activity for Dr. Isbell to promote the interests of the University.

The Committee to Advise the President on the Selection of the Next Chancellor of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and vice president of the University of Illinois System<sup>2</sup> is thanked for their time and efforts in this search.

The Board action recommended in this item complies in all material respects with applicable State and federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes*, *The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The president of the University of Illinois System seeks approval.

(A biographical sketch is on file with the secretary).

Ms. Mizan, as the student trustee from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, proudly made the motion to approve this appointment, stating that she believes Dr. Isbell will serve with integrity and vision. Ms. Blackwell seconded, stating

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<sup>2</sup> Jennifer Bernhard, *chair*, The Grainger College of Engineering; Kathy Adams, Illinois Human Resources; Rummana Alam, College of Law; Alex Belanger, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences undergraduate student; Nerissa Brown, Gies College of Business; Antoinette Burton, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Felecia Commodore, College of Education; Charlotte Davidson, Native American House; McKenzy Heavlin, The Grainger College of Engineering graduate student; Megan Mahoney, School of Social Work graduate student; Kristin McMurray, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Operations; Chrystalla Mouza, College of Education; Cynthia Oliver, College of Fine and Applied Arts; Gilberto Rosas, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Taher Saif, The Grainger College of Engineering; Jami M. Painter, *staff*, senior associate vice president and chief human resources officer, University of Illinois System

that she is a proud alum and resident of the community. This appointment was approved, and there were no “nay” votes. This was followed by a round of applause.

Mr. Ruiz welcomed Dr. Isbell to the University, stating that this was truly a great day. President Killeen also welcomed Dr. Isbell and thanked Mr. Ruiz and the Board for their support and deliberation. He said the University System is an asset in Illinois, providing excellence in education, contributing to a thriving and stable economy, and building the foundation for a strong and inclusive society. He commented on the values brought by both Dr. Jones and Dr. Isbell, which he said are consistent with the mission of a land-grant university. He referred to a responsibility to serve the public good and thanked Dr. Isbell for joining the University System. He invited Dr. Isbell to make some remarks.

Dr. Isbell said that he is honored, humbled, and inspired to stand before the Board as the chancellor of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and vice president of the University of Illinois System. He thanked the Board of Trustees, President Killeen, the Committee to Advise the President on the Selection of the Next Chancellor of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and vice president of the University of Illinois System, and the entire Illinois community for placing their trust in him. Dr. Isbell recognized the extraordinary leadership of Dr. Jones and said he honors and hopes to build upon his legacy of inclusion, excellence, and strategic foresight. He said the university has long been a beacon of innovation, discovery, and access. Dr. Isbell said it is a world-class institution that has changed lives, shaped industries, and contributed profoundly to understanding of the world. He said it is also a public



university in the truest sense of the word and is deeply connected to people, places, and the promise of the State. Dr. Isbell said that the university is and must continue to be a force for good in our communities, a collaborator with industry, citizens engaging in civic life, contributors to cultural richness, and producers and creators of knowledge. He said the university is a steward, not only of knowledge, but of opportunity. Dr. Isbell said that while this is a time of challenge for higher education, there is also opportunity, and the university must prepare students to not only succeed in this complex and ever-changing world but to lead in it. He said that trustees, faculty, and staff must do so by leading. Dr. Isbell stated, “I am excited to be part of this next chapter with you, so let us move forward with clarity of purpose, unity of spirit, and an unwavering commitment to our mission and our shared responsibility. The future runs through us, so let us be good ancestors and meet that future and shape it together.” He thanked the Board and said he is humbled and honored. Dr. Isbell’s remarks were followed by a round of applause.

## OLD BUSINESS

There was no business presented under this aegis.

## NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Ruiz asked if there was any new business to discuss, and there was none. Mr. Ruiz announced that the Board is scheduled to meet and hold its annual Board retreat in Chicago on July 16 and 17, 2025, and in Urbana on September 18, 2025.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Mr. Ruiz requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. On motion of Ms. Craig Schilling, seconded by Ms. Phalen, the meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m. There were no “nay” votes.

JEFFREY A. STEIN  
*Secretary*

JESSE H. RUIZ  
*Chair*