

MEETING OF THE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
SEPTEMBER 17, 2025

This meeting of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois was held in the I Hotel and Conference Center, Heritage Hall, 1901 South First Street, Champaign, Illinois, on Wednesday, September 17, 2025, beginning at 3:53 p.m.

Trustee Tami Craig Schilling, chair of the committee, convened the meeting and asked the secretary to call the roll. The following committee members were present: Ms. J. Carolyn Blackwell;¹ Ms. Tami Craig Schilling; Mr. Joseph Gutman; Ms. Ariana A. Mizan, voting student trustee, Urbana; Mr. Quinn S. Basta, student trustee, Chicago; Mr. Joe Humphrey, student trustee, Springfield. Dr. Bryan S. Traubert was absent. Mr. Jesse H. Ruiz attended as a guest.

Also present were Mr. Lester H. McKeever Jr., treasurer; President Timothy L. Killeen; Dr. Nicholas P. Jones, executive vice president and vice president for academic affairs; Dr. Charles L. Isbell Jr., chancellor, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and vice president, University of Illinois System; Dr. Marie Lynn Miranda, chancellor, University of Illinois Chicago, and vice president, University of Illinois System; Dr. Janet L. Gooch, chancellor, University of Illinois Springfield, and vice

¹ Ms. Blackwell attended via remote videoconference.

president, University of Illinois System; Dr. Paul N. Ellinger, comptroller (and vice president/chief financial officer); Dr. Joseph T. Walsh Jr., vice president for economic development and innovation; Ms. Adrienne Nazon, vice president of external relations and communications; Mr. Scott E. Rice, University counsel; and Dr. Jeffrey A. Stein, secretary of the Board of Trustees and of the University.

Ms. Craig Schilling welcomed everyone to the meeting. She referred to the start of the academic year with record-breaking numbers of students enrolled across the universities. She acknowledged the hard work of the facilities and grounds staff and the information technology staff whose efforts help to make the student experience a success.

Ms. Craig Schilling invited Dr. Jones to make opening remarks. Dr. Jones shared highlights of the University System's enrollment and reported a record total enrollment of 101,081 students, an increase of 3.4 percent from the prior year, marking the first time the System surpassed 100,000 students. He said undergraduate enrollment reached 65,169, with increases at all three universities. Dr. Jones stated that the University System broke records for Illinois resident undergraduate enrollment at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and University of Illinois Chicago. He said first-time freshmen numbers rose significantly and noted that the number of first-time freshmen at Chicago increased by 1,000, most of whom are first-generation students. He said first-time transfer enrollment also reached a record 4,552 students, and he reported on online program enrollment, which increased by 5.5 percent, primarily in graduate programs. Dr. Jones reported on a decrease in enrollment of international students, particularly in graduate and professional programs. He then discussed record enrollment

of students from underrepresented groups at all three universities, and he said that all three universities saw increases in the number of Black undergraduate students. Dr. Jones said that the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and University of Illinois Chicago saw increased enrollment of Hispanic undergraduate students. He referred to the increase of more than 20 percent in the number of first-generation, first-time freshmen over the previous year across the University System, stating that these numbers rose significantly at the University of Illinois Chicago

Ms. Craig Schilling praised the results, and President Killeen noted that the University of Illinois System enrolls more than 53 percent of the total student population in public education in the state. Dr. Miranda expressed appreciation for the admissions staff at Chicago and highlighted retention efforts of faculty and staff, emphasizing the role of retention in the total enrollment numbers. Ms. Mizan raised questions about retention rates for first-generation and underrepresented students, as well as resource pressures in advising and counseling. Dr. Miranda referred to lower retention rates for first-generation students and said the gap is narrowing. She stated that improvements are being seen in all groups, along with a narrowing of disparities. Dr. Isbell referenced pressures on advising and counseling and asked Dr. John J. Coleman, executive vice chancellor for academic affairs and provost, Urbana, to comment. Dr. Coleman echoed Dr. Miranda's remarks and referenced two retention initiatives at Urbana: Student Success at Illinois and the First Scholars Network, which is a national program. Dr. Gooch described an ongoing analysis of retention rates, particularly among adults and online students, and said retention is an area of focus.

Ms. Craig Schilling extended congratulations to everyone who made it possible for more than 100,000 students to be part of the University of Illinois System and said that each number represents a life changed.

Ms. Craig Schilling asked if there were questions or corrections regarding the minutes of the committee meeting held July 16, 2025. There were none. On motion of Ms. Mizan, seconded by Mr. Gutman, the minutes were approved. There were no “nay” votes.

REVIEW OF RECOMMENDED BOARD ITEMS
FOR THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS ON SEPTEMBER 18, 2025

Appointments to the Faculty, Administrative/Professional Staff,
and Intercollegiate Athletic Staff

Ms. Craig Schilling asked Dr. Stein to comment on the item recommending appointments to the faculty, administrative/professional staff, and intercollegiate athletic staff (materials on file with the secretary). Dr. Stein explained that the appointments of faculty, administrative and professional staff, and intercollegiate athletic staff recommended in this item have been thoroughly vetted and reviewed at the appropriate levels within the college, department, or unit, and he encouraged committee members to contact him with any questions.

There were no objections to this item being forwarded to the full Board for approval.

PRESENTATION

Leadership in Transfer Across the U of I System

Ms. Craig Schilling asked Dr. Jones to introduce a presentation on transfer leadership across the University System. Dr. Jones referenced the record number of transfer students that enrolled this year and emphasized the University's position as a national leader in transfer pathways. Dr. Jones introduced Dr. Gretchen Lohman, senior director of academic programs and partnerships, University of Illinois System; Ms. Holly Pflum, assistant director for transfer outreach and initiatives, University of Illinois System; and Ms. Gina Modica, project technical coordinator, University of Illinois System.

Dr. Lohman began the presentation (materials on file with the secretary) by giving an overview of University Academic Programs and Services (UAPS) and addressing common misperceptions about transfer students. She explained that contrary to the belief that Illinois is not transfer-friendly, the University System has seen a 10.3 percent increase in transfer enrollment from 2024 to 2025. She highlighted the percentage of first-generation students, students from underrepresented groups, and Illinois residents. Dr. Lohman also countered the notion that transfer students are less prepared, pointing to their strong grade-point averages and higher graduation rates than first-time freshmen. She responded to the misperception that students have challenges transferring credits and said that all three universities are full participants in the Illinois Articulation Initiative, a statewide program that helps ensure courses seamlessly transfer. Dr. Lohman stated that a study conducted in 2020 showed that 87 percent of credits were able to be applied toward degrees, which was well above the national average.

Ms. Pflum described the University System's proactive outreach and gave an overview of the University System Transfer Guarantee program, which she said guarantees admission to all three universities for students attending colleges and universities who meet certain requirements. She said students must be Illinois high school graduates, meet grade-point average and credit thresholds, and satisfy the English language proficiency requirement. Ms. Pflum gave some history on the program and its benefits. She detailed engagement and outreach with community colleges and highlighted community college partnership visits and transfer exploration nights, and she shared examples of outreach and events with the City Colleges of Chicago. Ms. Pflum also highlighted new data-sharing agreements, including a partnership with Parkland College that allows students to identify transfer destinations early, enabling co-advising beginning with their first semester. She described the success of this initiative and expressed appreciation for the transfer admissions staff at the universities. Ms. Pflum told the committee that much of this work began with a State mandate that has been followed by years of community outreach and opportunities for growth, increasing access for Illinois residents through alternative pathways of admission to the University System. She concluded with news of Transfer Drive, a new partnership with One Million Degrees aimed at strengthening transfer student pipelines. Ms. Pflum said this initiative is in the design phase and will promote enrollment and support for first-generation, low-income students with mentorship, stipends, and wraparound services. She shared partnerships currently in development with the three universities.

The final segment was presented by Ms. Modica, who described the MyCreditsTransfer (MCT) program, a State-funded grant project through the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). She said the MCT program facilitates the use of Transferology, a transfer advising tool used across Illinois by both students and advisors. Ms. Modica gave some history of the project and said that IBHE currently funds a statewide license for Transferology, noting that the University System provides additional support. She said that Illinois leads the nation in usage, with nearly 500,000 user sessions in Fiscal Year 2025. Ms. Modica stated that numerous institutions in Illinois participate, including all public universities and community colleges and many private institutions, and she described the ways that MCT is used by a variety of colleges and universities.

Trustees discussed the presentation, and Mr. Gutman inquired about data regarding the number of unique visitors to Transferology and the number of students who ultimately transferred. Ms. Modica discussed the data available and said she would try to follow up with additional information. Dr. Miranda expressed appreciation for these transfer initiatives, and she referred to the work of Dr. Nikos Varelas, senior vice provost for academic programs, student success, and effectiveness, Chicago, who is leading a project on the use of emerging degree planning tools powered by artificial intelligence (AI), which she said could further enhance transfer success. Ms. Craig Schilling inquired about the number of transfer students in Illinois who enroll at the University versus other institutions. Ms. Pflum stated that this data is not currently captured and expressed interest in learning more. She referred to a high level of collaboration among public

universities in the state and said Illinois is a national leader in the number of students who successfully transfer into four-year universities. President Killeen expressed appreciation for the work presented by Dr. Lohman, Ms. Pflum, and Ms. Modica, and he referred to the gap between community college students' aspirations for a four-year degree and actual attainment. Ms. Pflum described barriers to transferring and said more effective identification of the students who want to transfer, improved preparation, and continued focus on wraparound support and intentional advising can address some obstacles. She highlighted the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Parkland College, which she said leads to more accurate identification of students who plan to transfer and helps ensure they are well prepared to do so.

Ms. Craig Schilling thanked the presenters for their comprehensive work, noting that the initiatives described not only improve student outcomes but also strengthen Illinois' reputation as a leader in transfer education nationwide. She stated that Dr. Varelas would be invited to present on AI-driven educational pathways at a future meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no business presented under this aegis.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Craig Schilling asked if there was any new business to discuss, and there was none. She announced that the next meeting of this committee is scheduled for November 12, 2025, at 3:30 p.m., in Chicago.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Ms. Craig Schilling requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. On motion of Ms. Mizan, seconded by Mr. Gutman, the meeting adjourned at 4:41 p.m. There were no “nay” votes.

Respectfully submitted,

JEFFREY A. STEIN
Secretary

TAMI CRAIG SCHILLING
Chair

EILEEN B. CABLE
Special Assistant to the Secretary