

The discussion held in executive session has not been approved for release to the public and has thus been deleted from these minutes.

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

April 29, 2026

This meeting of the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois was held in the Isadore and Sadie Dorin Forum, Rooms E and F, 725 West Roosevelt Road, Chicago, Illinois, on Thursday, February 26, 2026, beginning at 9:34 a.m. Attendance via videoconference was also available at Room 407, Illini Union, 1401 West Green Street, Urbana, Illinois.

Chair Jesse H. Ruiz called the meeting to order and asked the secretary to call the roll. The following members of the Board were present: Ms. J. Carolyn Blackwell, Mr. Ramón Cepeda, Ms. Tami Craig Schilling, Mr. Joseph Gutman,¹ Dr. Suzet M. McKinney, Mr. Wilbur C. Milhouse III,² Ms. Sarah C. Phalen,³ Mr. Jesse H. Ruiz, and Dr. Bryan S. Traubert. Governor J. B. Pritzker was absent. Ms. Ariana A. Mizan, voting student trustee, Urbana, was present. The following nonvoting student

¹Mr. Gutman attended via remote videoconference and arrived at 9:35 a.m.

²Mr. Milhouse arrived at 9:37 a.m.

³Ms. Phalen attended via remote videoconference and arrived at 9:41 a.m.

trustees were in attendance: Mr. Quinn S. Basta, student trustee, Chicago; and Mr. Joe Humphrey, student trustee, Springfield.

Also present were the officers of the Board: Mr. Howard S. Engle, treasurer; Dr. Paul N. Ellinger, comptroller (and vice president/chief financial officer); Mr. Scott E. Rice, University counsel; and Dr. Jeffrey A. Stein, secretary of the Board of Trustees and of the University.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Ruiz announced a public comment session and asked if there were any requests for public comment. Dr. Stein indicated there were no requests for public comment at this meeting.

OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Ruiz thanked all in attendance and said the Board would be considering critical actions in the process of selecting a new president for the University of Illinois System.

MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:35 a.m., Chair Ruiz stated: “A motion is now in order to convene an executive session to consider the following topic as permitted under Section 2(c) of the Illinois Open Meetings Act: University employment or appointment-related matters (subsection 1).” On motion of Dr. McKinney, seconded by Ms. Craig Schilling, this motion was approved. There were no “nay” votes.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Material redacted pursuant to the Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/2.06d)

EXECUTIVE SESSION ADJOURNED

With no further business to discuss, the executive session concluded at 10:04 a.m.

REGULAR MEETING RESUMED

The meeting resumed at 10:05 a.m., with all Board members recorded as being present at the start of the meeting in attendance.

AGENDA

Mr. Ruiz stated that the Board would be considering recommendations to approve the membership of the Search Committee to Assist in the Selection of a President and to approve the charge to the committee. He referred to State statute, which directs this Board to elect a president to serve this University and said the Board would seek the assistance of a committee comprised of individuals from various constituent groups of the System who will advise the Board throughout the search process. Mr. Ruiz noted that the Board approved the composition of the Search Committee to Assist in the Selection of a President at its the February 26, 2026, Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees. He stated that the Board then conducted a consultative process, requesting nominations of individuals to fulfill the approved composition of the committee.

Mr. Ruiz stated that the proposed committee includes representation from each university, the System itself, and external stakeholders. He said the academic disciplines and professional fields represented include business, engineering, healthcare, athletics, transportation, environmental sciences, extension and agribusiness, finance, public health, speech pathology, history, music, library sciences, mathematics, neuroscience, supplier diversity, and more. Mr. Ruiz said that three critical members of the committee are drawn from this Board, and he thanked Dr. McKinney, Mr. Gutman, and Mr. Cepeda for serving in this important capacity. He especially thanked Mr. Cepeda for agreeing to serve as trustee co-chair of the committee. At Mr. Ruiz's request, Dr. Stein read aloud the recommended membership of the Search Committee to Assist in the Selection of a President.

Mr. Ruiz stated that the second recommendation would approve the charge to the committee, noting that the charge provides guidance to the committee and outlines its role. He said that it states that the Board charges the committee with the threshold task of developing a profile of accomplishments and characteristics of ideal candidates to be the next president. Mr. Ruiz said this document will serve as the cornerstone of the search and shall delineate the qualities and criteria crucial to the position. He stated that a description of the specific responsibilities of the president will be developed and that together, the position profile, the description of responsibilities of the president, and a System profile will form a prospectus for use in recruiting applicants.

Mr. Ruiz asked the Board if they had any questions, and there were none.

At 10:12 a.m., Mr. Ruiz stated that there were two agenda items requiring action by the Board. With no additional comments or questions regarding these recommendations, Dr. Stein read the title of the item, “Membership of the Search Committee to Assist in the Selection of a President, 2026,” and “Charge to the Search Committee to Assist in the Selection of a President, 2026.”

Membership of the Search Committee to Assist in the Selection of a President, 2026

(1) In accordance with the direction of the Board of Trustees, the secretary of the Board of Trustees and of the University presents the following report and recommendation.

Search Committee to Assist in the Selection of a President

The various constituent groups asked to nominate members have done so and the following list of members is presented to the Board of Trustees for appointment:

1. Board of Trustees (3)

RAMÓN CEPEDA, member of the Board of Trustees; alumnus, Chicago.
co-chair of the Search Committee,

JOSEPH GUTMAN, member of the Board of Trustees; alumnus, Urbana,
SUZET M. MCKINNEY, member of the Board of Trustees; alumna,
Chicago;

2. Faculty members (8)

Urbana university

JOSEPH IRUDAYARAJ, The Grainger College of Engineering, Founder
Professor of Bioengineering and associate director of shared
resources for the Cancer Center of Illinois; served on the Graduate
College Committee, Dean’s Advisory Committee, and Faculty

Affairs Committee; currently serves on the Named Professorship Committee,

STEPHEN MAREN, director of the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology; College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, professor of psychology; affiliate of the Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology; alumnus, Urbana,

ANN YEUNG, College of Fine and Applied Arts, School of Music; professor and strings area chair; served on the Promotion and Tenure Committees, Budget and Oversight Committee, and Task Force on Evaluating Teaching Effectiveness; served as School of Music string quartet search committee chair; serves on the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation Campus Research Board, and on the American Harp Society's Executive Director search committee; **co-chair of the search committee**,

Chicago university

LIZ AQUINO, College of Nursing, clinical associate professor of biobehavioral nursing science and associate dean for academic affairs.; served on search committees for Title IX and EEO investigator in the Office for Access and Equity; appointed to the federal Health Resources and Services Administration National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice; former chair of the American Nurses Association nominations and Elections Committee; former president of the American Nurses Association of Illinois,

SANDRA DE GROOTE, University Library, professor and head of scholarly communications; served on search committees for vice chancellor for research, vice chancellor for administrative services, vice chancellor for academic affairs/provost, and chancellor/vice president; served on Campus Promotions and Tenure Committee and Library Executive Committee; currently serves in the University of Illinois Chicago Senate, Senate Executive Committee, and chair of the University Senates Conference,

KOUROS MOHAMMADIAN, College of Engineering, Distinguished Professor of Transportation Engineering and head, Department of Civil, Materials, and Environmental Engineering; served on the University of Illinois Chicago Senate, Senate Executive Committee (vice chair), and University Senates Conference; served on search committees for the director of government relations, vice chancellor for academic affairs/provost, and chancellor/vice president; serves on the board of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning,

Springfield university

DEVIN HUNTER, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences; associate professor and chair, Department of History; served on the UIS 50th Anniversary Planning Committee, Sangamon Experience Campus Advisory Committee, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Executive Committee, CLASS Personnel Committee (co-chair), and Senate Committee on Diversity, Equal Rights, Opportunity, and Access (co-chair); served on 10 search committees at UIS, including associate vice chancellor/vice provost for enrollment and retention, and dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences as search committee chair; serves on the University of Illinois Springfield Senate Graduate Council.

MEGAN STYLES, College of Health, Science, and Technology (CHST), associate professor, chair and program lead of environmental studies in the School of Integrated Sciences, Sustainability, and Public Health; served on CHST Personnel Committee, UIS Strategic Compass Steering Committee, and University of Illinois System Strategic Planning Committee; served on nine search committees, including vice chancellor for student affairs, director of the UIS Student Union, and as search committee chair for graduate program coordinator; serves as the UIS faculty lead for Brasillinois, and member of the University of Illinois System delegation to Brazil;

3. Student members (3)

Urbana university

GABI DAL SANTO, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, junior in natural resources and environmental sciences; served as president, Illinois Student Council; serves as vice president and action co-coordinator, Students for Environmental Concerns,

Chicago university

ASHLEY HUANG, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; senior in neuroscience, with minors in nutrition and finance, pre-med track in the Graduate Professional Program Admissions BS/MD Program; served on the Undergraduate Student Government (USG), representative to the Campus Life Committee and Mental Health Commission, public affairs director, and chief of staff,

Springfield university

MITCH OLENICK, College of Business and Management, graduate student, Master of Business Administration; varsity athlete in men's soccer; served on Student Athlete Advisory Committee; involved

with search for men's soccer head coach; serves as graduate assistant in Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and the Office of Marketing; alumnus, Springfield;

4. Academic professional staff member (1)

MATT SPINDLER, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Illinois Extension, evaluation specialist, served on search committees for dean, associate dean, and faculty at previous institutions;

5. Civil service staff member (1)

TENEA HARRIS, University of Illinois System Office of Procurement Services, supplier diversity manager; works with small and diverse businesses as part of the Business Enterprise Program; served on multiple search committees and qualifications-based selection panels; previous roles in government relations and student affairs;

6. Administrative officer members (3)

JANET L. GOOCH, chancellor, University of Illinois Springfield, and vice president, University of Illinois System
 ROBERT A. BARISH, vice chancellor for health affairs, Chicago
 JOSHUA H. WHITMAN, Director, Division of Intercollegiate Athletics, Urbana

7. University of Illinois Alumni Association representative (1)

CEDRIC D. THURMAN, ('87 BUS), finance; executive vice president for the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago; serves as chair of the Board of Directors of the University of Illinois Alumni Association, and member of the Gies College of Business Dean's Council and Board of Directors of Leadership Greater Chicago;

8. University of Illinois Chicago Alumni Association representative (1)

MARY MARYLAND, ('94 PhD nursing); primary care provider, WellBe Senior Medical; serves as president-elect, UIC Alumni Board and founding member, Alumni Loyalty and Benefits Committee, and Alumni Advocacy Committee; served on College of Nursing Alumni Board, Campus Alumni Advisory Board, Alumni Engagement

Advisors, Alumni Alliance Board, and Black Alumni Advisory Board;

9. University of Illinois Springfield Alumni Association representative (1)

DONOVAN PEPPER, ('94 political studies, '96 MA political studies); principal and director of National Strategic Partnerships, Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies; served as chair of the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce Political Action Committee; chair of the Civic Federation, chair of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Business Council, chair of the Oak Park Citizens' Police Oversight Commission;

10. University of Illinois Foundation representative (1)

WILLIAM D. FORSYTH, ('86 BUS), finance; co-founder and partner, Frontier One LLC; served as chair, University of Illinois Alumni Association; serves as governing director and advisory member, Investment Policy Committee, University of Illinois Foundation.

Should any member be unable to serve for the duration of the search, the chair of the Board of Trustees shall appoint a replacement after consultation with the appropriate constituent group.

The chair of the Board recommends that the trustees formally name and appoint to membership those listed above and that the committee be charged in accord with the statement presented to the Board on April 29, 2026.

On motion of Mr. Basta, seconded by Ms. Craig Schilling, this recommendation was approved by the following vote: Aye, Ms. Blackwell, Mr. Cepeda, Ms. Craig Schilling, Mr. Gutman, Dr. McKinney, Mr. Milhouse, Ms. Mizan, Ms. Phalen, Mr. Ruiz, Dr. Traubert; No, none; Absent, Governor Pritzker.

(The student advisory vote was: Aye, Mr. Basta, Mr. Humphrey.)

Charge to the Search Committee to Assist in the Selection of a President, 2026

(2) The Board of Trustees has authorized and composed a search committee to assist in the selection of a president. This resolution specifies the charge of the committee and the general procedures within which it will operate.

Committee Membership

Several broad constituencies of the University are reflected in the committee's composition, but no member should regard themselves as a "representative" or "delegate" of any single interest group. Rather, each member shall exercise their own judgment as to what will be in the best interest of the University of Illinois System as a whole. The committee shall conduct a proactive search and identify and recruit persons best able to fulfill the mandate. Members of the search committee will be asked to adhere to strict expectations of confidentiality and commit to a fair, honest, and confidential treatment of information shared in the search process, compliant with applicable University search and recruitment policies and procedures.

The search committee shall be led by two co-chairs, who shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees. The co-chairs will lead the work of the search committee, preside over committee meetings, and may assign roles and duties to committee members at their discretion. The co-chairs of the search committee and the chair of the Board will confer as often as necessary throughout the duration of the committee's work. Periodic meetings with the co-chairs of the search committee, the chair of the Board, the search

committee staff, and the search firm shall be held to review the status of the prospect pool and available background information about potential candidates. Also, at regular meetings of the Board of Trustees, the co-chairs as representatives of the committee shall report to the Board on its progress.

Development of Characteristics of New President

The committee's first task will be to develop a profile of accomplishments and characteristics of ideal candidates to be the next president. This document will serve as the cornerstone of the search and shall delineate the qualities and criteria crucial to the position. In addition, a description of the specific responsibilities of the president will be developed by the Board of Trustees, and a robust description of the structure and characteristics of the UI System will be developed by the vice president of external relations and communications. Together, the position profile, the description of responsibilities of the President, and the UI System profile will form a prospectus for use in recruiting applicants. While not required, the Board may also request that the search committee and search committee staff seek input from internal and external constituents through other means, such as town halls, surveys, or other methods.

The general qualities and criteria to be used as the basis for evaluating potential candidates shall be organized around several key expectations for the candidates. Among these are:

- **System Leadership, Strategic Alignment, and Resource Stewardship.** Candidates should be evaluated on their record of

effective, strategic leadership in a large, complex organization, embodying a culture of collaboration and resource stewardship.

- **Academic Excellence and Institutional Relevance.** Candidates should be evaluated for their commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and service, with a focus on evolving academic offerings to meet changing student and workforce needs.
- **External Leadership and Strategic Partnerships.** Candidates should have the ability to represent, advocate, and cultivate trusted, high-impact relationships with government, industry, donors, alumni, and external stakeholders to advance the System's mission and expand its influence.
- **Future-Oriented Vision for Higher Education.** Candidates should demonstrate an understanding of, and ability to act on, the structural shifts facing public higher education.
- **Governance, Operational Clarity, and Organizational Effectiveness.** Candidates should be evaluated on their ability to lead within a complex governance structure by bringing clarity, candor, consistency, and effectiveness to system operations.

Additionally, the search committee shall conduct the search using a process and timeline developed by the search firm that has been retained by the Board of Trustees. Information about the search process and timeline will be coordinated by search

committee staff in conjunction with the vice president of external relations and communications, to be made available to the public.

Identification of Candidates

In partnership with the search firm and search committee staff, the search committee should conduct a broad search and use all available resources to evaluate potential candidates for the position of resident of the University of Illinois System. Constituencies of the University, including faculty, students, staff, trustees, alumni, supporters, and friends of the University shall be encouraged to nominate suitable candidates. The committee shall not be constrained from considering candidates from all appropriate sources, including other institutions of higher learning, government, foundations, and elsewhere. The Board of Trustees will maintain a continuing interest in the identification of outstanding potential candidates and will receive periodic reports from the committee on the development of the pool of prospects.

Screening Prospective Candidates

It is the responsibility of the search firm to identify potential candidates and build a robust pool of viable applicants based on the characteristics and qualifications described above and the position profile. The search firm will lead the candidate sourcing process, involving search committee members when appropriate. The committee shall devise a method for conducting preliminary screening of this pool of candidates, designed to identify those who possess the required qualifications to be pursued further. With the assistance of the search firm, the committee shall conduct interviews with the most

promising applicants. Based on these interviews, the committee shall submit an unranked and uncategorized list of between eight and 10 semi-finalists to the Board for their consideration. The list of semi-finalists should be comprised entirely of individuals the search committee has determined capable of serving as the president of the University of Illinois System. Agreement among search committee members in the selection of semi-finalists will be important. However, the Board of Trustees is statutorily charged with the responsibility of making the final selection of the next president. As such, the Board may select any number of semi-finalists to advance to the finalist stage for interviews with the Board of Trustees.

Staff and Procedures for Search

The secretary of the Board of Trustees and of the University (secretary) will serve as staff to the search committee and assist in sustaining strong lines of communication and coordination between the committee and the Board. The secretary shall also be the Board's agent in the procedural and liaison tasks involved in the search process. The University's chief human resources officer shall assist and advise the secretary and the committee on human resources matters. University counsel shall assist and advise the committee on legal matters.

The search process shall adhere to the University's equal employment opportunity policies, and the committee shall affirmatively seek candidates representing diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

The Board of Trustees emphasizes the importance of careful coordination and channeling of all committee communications concerning candidates through the co-chairs of the committee, who are charged with the responsibility of keeping the Board fully informed. The Board also emphasizes that discretion, confidentiality, and the utmost integrity are required of all committee members. Public communications, including those with the media, shall be the responsibility of the co-chairs of the committee and the secretary, who shall consult with the vice president of external relations and communications and the chair of the Board of Trustees.

On motion of Mr. Basta, seconded by Ms. Craig Schilling, this recommendation was approved by the following vote: Aye, Ms. Blackwell, Mr. Cepeda, Ms. Craig Schilling, Mr. Gutman, Dr. McKinney, Mr. Milhouse, Ms. Mizan, Ms. Phalen, Mr. Ruiz, Dr. Traubert; No, none; Absent, Governor Pritzker.

(The student advisory vote was: Aye, Mr. Basta, Mr. Humphrey.)

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 was scheduled to meet on May 21, 2026, at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Mr. Ruiz requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. On motion of Dr. McKinney, seconded by Dr. Traubert, the meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m. There were no “nay” votes.

JEFFREY A. STEIN
Secretary

JESSE H. RUIZ
Chair