

MEETING OF THE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

March 18, 2026

This meeting of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois was held in the Student Union Ballroom, Room 224, 2251 Richard Wright Drive, Springfield, Illinois, on Wednesday, March 18, 2026, beginning at 2:47 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; Ms. Tami Craig Schilling; Mr. Joseph Gutman;¹ Dr. Bryan S. Traubert; Ms. Ariana A. Mizan, voting student trustee, Urbana; Mr. Quinn S. Basta, student trustee, Chicago; Mr. Joe Humphrey, student trustee, Springfield. Mr. Ramón Cepeda, Mr. Wilbur C. Milhouse III, Ms. Sarah C. Phalen, and Mr. Jesse H. Ruiz attended as guests.

Also present were Mr. Howard S. Engle, 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

¹ Mr. Gutman attended via remote videoconference.

L. Gooch, chancellor, University of Illinois Springfield, and vice 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 asked if there were questions or corrections regarding the minutes of the committee meeting held January 14, 2026. There were none. On motion of Ms. Mizan, seconded by Ms. Blackwell, 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 MARCH 19, 2026

Ms. Craig Schilling asked specific individuals in attendance to provide presentations and report on the items that will appear on the Board’s agenda at its meeting on March 19, 2026. All proposed agenda items discussed at the meeting are on file with the secretary.

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.

Approve Sabbatical Leaves of Absence, Academic Year 2026-2027

Ms. Craig Schilling then asked Dr. Jones to report on the recommendation to approval sabbatical leaves of absence for Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield for Academic Year 2026-2027. Dr. Jones explained that sabbatical leaves of absence permit tenured faculty to have highly focused time to conduct research and gain new knowledge in their respective fields. He stated sabbatical leaves of absence are earned through a competitive review process, with between 160 and 200 sabbatical requests approved each year. Dr. Jones stated that there are 219 sabbatical requests for Academic Year 2026-2027, which is consistent with prior years. He noted that of those that are approved, approximately 90 percent of sabbatical leaves are taken. Dr. Jones briefly described the review process and emphasized that sabbaticals are earned opportunities for faculty development and are investments in the faculty. Ms. Craig Schilling encouraged trustees to review the research statements of the faculty being recommended for sabbaticals.

Approve Student Health Insurance Rates, Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield,
Academic Year 2026-2027

Dr. Jones then presented proposed student health insurance rates for the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Chicago, and Springfield for Academic Year 2026-2027. He said that the proposed rate at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign would increase

by approximately 3.5 percent for undergraduate students and 3.4 percent for graduate and professional students and stated that the increases were attributed to utilization trends, particularly related to prescriptions, mental health care, and larger trauma and injury cases. Dr. Jones said the increased cost of medical care and opt-out rates also impact the cost.

Dr. Jones said the proposed rate at Chicago would increase by 8 percent after four academic years of no increase. He said the proposed increase was driven by utilization, rising per-claim costs, mental health services, and prescription drug costs.

Dr. Jones said the proposed rate would decrease by 1.3 percent at Springfield.

Approve Transportation Fees, Chicago, Academic Year 2026-2027

Dr. Jones then reported on proposed transportation fees at the University of Illinois Chicago and said that U-Pass and U-Pass+ fees would remain unchanged for Academic Year 2026-2027. He highlighted strong student participation and acknowledged former Chicago student trustee Mr. Mohammed A. Haq for his leadership in expanding the program.

Appoint Associates to the Center for Advanced Study, Urbana; Appoint Fellows to the Center for Advanced Study, Urbana

Ms. Craig Schilling asked Dr. John Coleman, executive vice chancellor for academic affairs and provost, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, to report on the recommendations to appoint associates and fellows to the Center for Advanced Study at

Urbana. Dr. Coleman said that the Center for Advanced Study conducts a yearly, competitive selection process to award semester-long release time for self-initiated scholarly study for faculty. He reported that untenured faculty are appointed as fellows and tenured faculty are appointed as associates, and the center provides instructional replacement funding to departments during these release periods. Dr. Coleman said that for the Academic Year 2026-2027, 13 faculty members were selected, including six associates representing eight departments across two colleges and six fellows representing six departments across four colleges. He described the proposed projects representing a wide range of areas of study.

Establish the Bachelor of Science in Public Health, College of Applied Health Sciences, Urbana; Eliminate the Bachelor of Science in Community Health, College of Applied Health Sciences, Urbana

Dr. Coleman then presented proposals to establish a new Bachelor of Science in Public Health and to eliminate the existing Bachelor of Science in Community Health, both in the College of Applied Health Sciences in Urbana. He explained that the changes were part of a broader initiative within the Department of Health and Kinesiology to revise the curriculum in community and public health. Dr. Coleman said the current degree title, "Community Health," is not widely recognized by prospective students or employers and reflects only one component of the broader public health discipline. He said the new BS in Public Health aligns the degree title with national norms and better communicates the program's scope, which includes epidemiology, health administration, health education, and health policy. Dr. Coleman told the committee that because the proposed changes

involve a new degree title, new concentrations, and substantial curricular updates, the department proposed establishing a new major rather than revising the existing one. He said that current students would be permitted either to complete the community health degree or transition to the new public health program. Dr. Coleman stated that enrollment is projected to be approximately 80 students in the first year, growing to about 450 students by year five. He said the program will rely entirely on existing faculty and facilities.

Establish the Doctor of Social Work in Social Work,
School of Social Work and the Graduate College, Urbana

Dr. Coleman next introduced the proposal to establish a Doctor of Social Work (DSW) within the School of Social Work at Urbana. He described the DSW as an advanced, practice-oriented pathway designed for experienced social work professionals seeking to deepen their leadership skills, strengthen their use of evidence-based practice, and engage in systemic change. Dr. Coleman said the program would be delivered fully online through a combination of synchronous and asynchronous coursework, culminating with a capstone project. He said enrollment is projected at 30 students in the first year, growing to 90 by year five. Dr. Coleman told the committee that the program would primarily utilize existing faculty expertise, with one faculty member serving as program director with a modest teaching-load reduction and one adjunct instructor hired to cover reassigned courses. He said no additional staff or facilities would be required, and the program would be expected to scale through tuition revenue.

Establish the Master of Science in Law,
College of Law and the Graduate College, Urbana

Next, Dr. Coleman presented the proposal to establish a Master of Science in Law (MSL) in the College of Law. He reported that the program is designed for professionals in business, technology, and compliance roles who do not intend to pursue a full Juris Doctorate (JD) degree. Dr. Coleman said the degree would address a growing need for non-lawyer expertise in regulated industries. He told the committee that this degree would be offered online and would be flexible and asynchronous for working professionals and that students would also have the option to stack graduate certificates toward the degree. Dr. Coleman said enrollment is projected at 20 students in the first year, growing to approximately 150 students by year five. He told the committee that a university grant would support the development of new courses, the hiring of three specialized faculty members, and the addition of a dedicated career support staff member and advisor. Dr. Coleman stated that after the initial three-year grant period, tuition revenue is expected to sustain the program.

Establish the Master of Science in Policy Economics,
College of Liberal Arts Sciences and the Graduate College, Urbana

Dr. Coleman presented three recommendations to establish master's degrees in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Graduate College, beginning with the Master of Science in Policy Economics, which he said would elevate an existing concentration within the Master of Science in Economics to a stand-alone degree. He said this would better reflect the academic structure, professional relevance, and curricular

independence of the program. Dr. Coleman said the program emphasizes rigorous training in microeconomics, macroeconomics, and econometrics and is designed to serve mid-career professionals in government or business, students preparing for doctoral study, and recent graduates pursuing careers in economic analysis. He said enrollment is projected at approximately 80 students, consistent with current enrollment in the concentration, and the program will rely on existing faculty and facilities.

Establish the Master of Science in Economic Modeling, AI, and Data Science,
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Graduate College, Urbana

Dr. Coleman then reported on the recommendation to establish the Master of Science in Economic Modeling, AI, and Data Science in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Graduate College, Urbana. He described this program as a response to the growing employer demand for graduates with advanced technical and analytical skills and said the curriculum integrates economic modeling, data science, and AI (artificial intelligence) to prepare students for roles across business, finance, government, healthcare, and environmental organizations. He said enrollment is projected to be 15 students in the first year, growing to 45 by year five. Dr. Coleman said the program will utilize existing faculty and courses and require no new facilities, adding that one administrator would be hired and one program director appointed.

Establish the Master of Science in Neuroscience,
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Graduate College, Urbana

Dr. Coleman reported on the recommendation to establish the Master of Science in Neuroscience in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Graduate College, Urbana. He said this program is designed to provide advanced preparation for students pursuing professional school or careers in academia, industry, or government. Dr. Coleman said it would offer course-based and research-based tracks, both providing a foundation in neuroscience, along with knowledge, tools, and skills to manage, analyze, and interpret datasets from across various neurobiological systems in preparation for neuroscience careers in healthcare systems, pharmaceutical industry, biologically and environmentally relevant government agencies, and data-intensive biomedical research areas. He said enrollment is projected at 10 students in the first year, growing to 30 by year five. Dr. Coleman said the program would rely on existing faculty and facilities to support the program's implementation.

Dr. Coleman concluded the discussion of academic recommendations for the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and Ms. Craig Schilling asked if trustees had questions. Discussion followed regarding the potential hiring of new faculty for the MS in Law program, and Dr. Coleman explained that the Investment for Growth grant provides new university-level funding for pilot programs and strategic initiatives. Ms. Craig Schilling inquired whether coursework from the MS in Law could be applied toward a JD degree. Dr. Robin B. Kar, professor, College of Law, clarified that the MS in Law courses would not count toward the law degree as the MS in Law curriculum is distinct and not designed to prepare students for the JD.

Ms. Craig Schilling acknowledged the breadth of academic work presented and thanked faculty members from Urbana for being available to answer questions from the committee, noting that the information provided to the committee in advance of the meeting was thorough. She expressed appreciation for the time and effort of the faculty.

Award Honorary Degree, Chicago

Next, Ms. Craig Schilling asked Dr. Miranda to report on the recommendation to award the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters to Mr. Bruno Pasquinelli. Dr. Miranda stated that Mr. Pasquinelli was born in Little Italy, the neighborhood that is the home to the University of Illinois Chicago. She told the committee that Mr. Pasquinelli and his brother co-founded Pasquinelli Construction Company, and she referred to the company's success. Dr. Miranda said Mr. Pasquinelli's philanthropic support has been transformational for the university, noting that he has given more than \$16.0 million to UI Health, the College of Medicine, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the College of Business Administration, and the Honors College. She commented on the impact of his support and said he has sponsored a successful lecture series on constitutional issues and has advanced philanthropy across the city of Chicago. Dr. Miranda said he played an instrumental role in the opening of the Surgical Innovation and Training Laboratory and endowed the Enrico Benedetti Chair in Transplant Surgery. She also referenced his support for the Bruno and Sallie Pasquinelli Outpatient Surgery Center and its impact on the success of UI Health. Dr. Miranda said Mr. Pasquinelli is a man of integrity with a

sense of humor, and she expressed enthusiastic support for the awarding of an honorary degree to Mr. Pasquinelli.

Establish the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Economics,
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Chicago

Ms. Craig Schilling then asked Dr. Karen J. Colley, vice chancellor for academic affairs and provost, University of Illinois Chicago, to discuss academic items for the University of Illinois Chicago, beginning with a recommendation to establish a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Economics. Dr. Colley stated that this “CS + LAS” model would be designed to meet the growing demand for graduates with interdisciplinary expertise in computational methods and economic analysis. She said the program is a response to increasing demand for the combination of analytic and quantitative skills and told the committee that the combination of training in these two disciplines will help equip students with a combined knowledge base that will allow substantial flexibility in the types of careers available to them. Dr. Colley said no new resources or staffing would be required and all required courses are currently offered.

Establish the Master of Arts in Communication, Digital Media, and AI,
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Graduate College, Chicago

Dr. Colley then reported on the recommendation to establish a Master of Arts in Communication, Digital Media, and AI, which she said would be offered as an online-only program for professionals and individuals who want to bolster their undergraduate degrees and/or remain competitive in a career marketplace that values a deep

understanding of digital media technologies. She said the degree would equip graduates to advance media creative industries toward innovative, ethical, sustainable, and inclusive AI practices. Dr. Colley told the committee that no additional funds or other resources will be required and the program could be implemented with current faculty.

Eliminate the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences, Major in Italian,
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Chicago

Next, Dr. Colley discussed the recommendation to eliminate the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences, major in Italian, which she said had had been suspended since 2009 and no longer had active enrollment. She said the department will continue to offer introductory and intermediate Italian language courses, as well as courses taught primarily in English that can be used toward the minor in Italian and Italian-American studies.

Eliminate the Master of Arts in Theatre,
College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts and Graduate College, Chicago

Dr. Colley then reported on the recommendation to eliminate the Master of Arts in Theatre, which she said had been suspended since 2001. She stated that none of the courses affiliated with the degree are being taught, and no students would be impacted by the elimination, as no students are enrolled in the program.

Rename and Revise the Bachelor of Arts in Public Health, School of Public Health,
Chicago; Rename and Revise the Bachelor of Science in Public Health,
School of Public Health, Chicago

Ms. Craig Schilling asked Dr. Robert A. Barish, vice chancellor for health affairs, Chicago, to discuss the recommendations to rename and revise the Bachelor of Arts in Public Health and the Bachelor of Science in Public Health, both in the School of Public Health, Chicago. Dr. Barish explained that the proposed revisions were prompted by student and faculty feedback and were intended to clarify the distinction between the two degrees, address challenges with scheduling and the structure of the cohort model, and eliminate redundancy in coursework. He said that under the proposal, the BA in Public Health would be renamed Public Health Practice, while the BS in Public Health would be renamed Public Health Sciences. Dr. Barish noted that the strict cohort models of degree progression that currently exist would be eliminated. He stated that these recommendations require no new funding.

Ms. Craig Schilling thanked the faculty members from Chicago who were available to answer questions from the committee, stating that the committee appreciates their time and effort.

Appoint Dean, College of Public Affairs and Education, Springfield

Next, Ms. Craig Schilling asked Dr. Brandon E. Schwab, vice chancellor for academic affairs and provost, University of Illinois Springfield, to discuss a recommendation to appoint Dr. Gregg B. Johnson as dean of the College of Public Affairs and Education, effective July 1, 2026. Dr. Schwab described Dr. Johnson's background and experience and said he is a strong academic leader whose experience and vision would support the continued growth of the college.

Establish the Bachelor of Applied Science in Engineering Technology,
College of Health, Science, and Technology, Springfield

Dr. Schwab then introduced a proposal to establish a Bachelor of Applied Science in Engineering Technology in the College of Health, Science, and Technology at the University of Illinois Springfield. He explained that the program was developed as part of the university's enrollment growth strategy that would bridge the gap between foundational engineering theory and hands-on technical application. Dr. Schwab said it is designed to meet growing regional and state demand for skilled engineering technologists who can integrate knowledge across multiple disciplines, solve complex problems, and drive industrial innovation. He said the degree would emphasize applied, project-based, and workforce-based learning and that the initial focus areas will include automation, manufacturing, systems management, and emerging technologies. Dr. Schwab stated that the degree would initially be housed in the College of Health, Science, and Technology and that a director, three new faculty, a coordinator, and an advisor would be hired. He referred to work with the University System on the financial model for the program and said the program is expected to enroll 40 students in the first year and 200 by year four.

Dr. Gooch expressed support for the program and remarked on its potential impact on Springfield and Central Illinois. Dr. Travis Bland, dean of the College of Health, Science, and Technology, and Mr. Joshua Smith, computer science faculty member and director of the Orion Lab, Springfield, joined the discussion and provided additional context, stating that this program would create a pathway for students in the region who are not able to compete for seats at top engineering schools. They highlighted

the need for engineering technologists in the area and noted the program's alignment with both student demand and employer needs.

Ms. Phalen commented on the recommendations and highlighted the online Master of Science in Law at Urbana, stating that it will be attractive to those working in risk-based fields throughout the state. She expressed excitement and support for the Bachelor of Applied Science in Engineering Technology at Springfield, which she said will meet community needs while allowing students to pursue their education and careers in the area. She said she believes it will be a huge success.

There were no objections to these items being forwarded to the full Board for approval.

PRESENTATION

Promotion and Tenure at University of Illinois System

Ms. Craig Schilling asked Dr. Jones; Dr. William T. Bernhard, executive vice provost for academic affairs, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; Dr. Mike Stieff, vice provost for faculty affairs, University of Illinois Chicago; Dr. Layne Morsch, associate provost faculty affairs, University of Illinois Springfield; and Dr. Donald Wink, professor, department of Chemistry, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Illinois Chicago, to give a presentation on promotion and tenure at the University of Illinois System (materials on file with the secretary).

Dr. Jones introduced the presentation. Dr. Wink referred to Article X of the University of Illinois *Statutes* and shared the American Association of University Professor (AAUP) definition of tenure. Dr. Bernhard discussed the ways in which tenure benefits the state, stating that it supports the hiring and retention of the best faculty. He told the committee that tenure provides an opportunity for faculty to flourish, integrating knowledge, producing research, and engaging in collaborative service. Dr. Bernhard said a long-term relationship results in a greater investment from faculty in the local community. Dr. Morsch reported on the evaluation process for tenure, and Dr. Stieff described the types of materials that are reviewed. He discussed the review process, noting that 50 or more individuals are involved in a typical tenure review case.

Ms. Blackwell asked if tenured faculty are periodically reviewed after the awarding of tenure, and if there was a situation in which tenure could be revoked. Dr. Wink referred to the revocation of tenure outlined in Article X, as well as the process of promotion from associate professor to professor. Dr. Wink and Dr. Stieff stated that annual review processes ensure faculty receive ongoing feedback. Mr. Ruiz asked if social media is considered in the tenure review process, and Dr. Bernhard stated that while a review is not conducted, a number of checks are performed to ensure members of the faculty are not engaged in misconduct of any kind. Mr. Ruiz suggested that reviews of social media may proactively identify risks. Discussion followed regarding coaching and guidance and review recusal. Dr. Stieff told the committee that faculty pursuing tenure are usually hired as tenure-track faculty. Dr. Morsch stated that peer reviews are often not truly anonymous because peers would often be familiar with the faculty

member and their work. Trustees then discussed plagiarism, and Dr. Traubert inquired about instances of decreased productivity and the absence of a mandated retirement. Dr. Bernhard referred to some phased retirements at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and noted that for many faculty, their job is their identity. He said a phased retirement can help in some instances. Dr. Miranda emphasized the importance of approaching these situations with dignity and described methods to ensure the most productive researchers are able to access resources.

Mr. Engle asked for clarification on faculty titles. The presenters explained that assistant professors are untenured and are promoted to associate professors when they are granted tenure, noting that those who do not receive tenure are given a terminal year in that role. They indicated that associate professors being evaluated for full professors may not receive promotion but can continue to serve as associate professors. They told the committee that some colleges handle the promotion process differently, with tenure granted with promotion to full professor. The presenters then described several scenarios and variations in the process between universities. Ms. Craig Schilling inquired about the timeline, and Dr. Bernhard stated that assistant professors come up for tenure in their sixth year. He said departments conduct an initial evaluation at the end of the assistant professor's fifth year to determine whether to proceed with tenure review, with the tenure review process beginning in the fall of the sixth year. He said the process itself takes one year.

Dr. Stieff returned to the presentation and highlighted the contributions of some of the faculty across the universities. These included Dr. Charles Gammie,

Ikenberry Endowed Chair, professor of physics and astronomy, Urbana; Dr. Sheryl Reminger, professor of psychology, Springfield; and Dr. Jeni Hebert-Beirne, professor of community health sciences, Chicago.

Ms. Craig Schilling expressed appreciation for the presentation and thanked Dr. Jones for bringing it before the committee.

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 May 20, 2026, in Champaign.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Ms. Craig Schilling requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. On motion of Mr. Ruiz, seconded by Mr. Basta, the meeting adjourned at 4:16 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