

## MINUTES

### UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA BOARD OF TRUSTEES

January 9, 2025

The University of Southern Indiana Board of Trustees met on Thursday, January 9, 2025, in the Griffin Center on campus. Present were Chair Christine H. Keck and Trustees W. Harold Calloway; John M. Dunn; C. Wayne Kinney '77; Jeffrey L. Knight; and Ronald D. Romain '73. Trustees Fouad L. Hamami '25; Timothy M. Hollander; and Christina M. Ryan were absent. Also in attendance were Interim President Steven J. Bridges '89 M'95; Provost Shelly B. Blunt; Vice President for Marketing and Communication Kindra L. Strupp M'22; Vice President for Development Andrea R. Gentry '05; Interim Vice President for Student Affairs Pamela F. Hopson D'23; Vice President for Government Affairs and General Counsel Aaron C. Trump; Vice President and Director of Athletics Jon Mark Hall; Faculty Senate Chair Nicholas D. Rhew M'11 and Student Government Association President Tamia N. Smith '25.

Chair Keck called the meeting to order at 10:26 a.m.

#### SECTION I – GENERAL AND ACADEMIC MATTERS

##### A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 7, 2024, MEETING

On a motion by Mr. Calloway, seconded by Mr. Dunn, the minutes of the meeting on November 7, 2024, of the Board of Trustees were approved.

##### B. ESTABLISHMENT OF NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION

Chair Keck called on Vice President Strupp, who reported the next meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for Thursday, March 6, 2025, on campus in the Griffin Center.

##### C. REPORT OF THE JOINT ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE/AUDIT COMMITTEES

Chair Keck called on Trustee Dunn for the Joint Committee report. The Finance/Audit Committee and the Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee met in Joint Session before the Board of Trustees meeting on January 9, 2025. Trustee Dunn motioned to waive the report since the full Board was present for the joint meeting. Mr. Calloway seconded the motion, and the request to waive the report was approved.

##### D. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Chair Keck called on Interim President Bridges for the President's Report. In recognition of outstanding academic achievement, USI's Dean's List has been released for the 2024 Fall Semester. In last week's press release, Provost Blunt announced that 2,088 undergraduate students were named to the Dean's List. Undergraduate students must achieve a 3.5 or better semester GPA (on a 4.0 scale), earn no incomplete or missing grades for the term, and earn letter grades of computable point value in 12 or more semester hours to make the list.

On Wednesday, January 8, USI welcomed back faculty and staff at its spring University meeting and professional development day in Liberty Arena, Home of the Screaming Eagles. In addition to many other campus updates, President Bridges provided the campus community with an overview of the organizational changes that became effective with the retirement of Mary Hupfer, the parting of Jeff Sickman, and Aaron Trump's upcoming departure on January 15. Additionally, Provost Blunt and President Bridges invited faculty and staff to join them over lunch in a session titled "Food for Thought: A Conversation with the President and Provost." The session was added in response to requests by faculty and staff and was more "casual" in nature than the town hall meetings USI held in the past. Advance submission of questions was not required, providing an open opportunity for transparency and to answer anything that might be on anyone's mind. Questions from the attendees covered a range of topics including the presidential search, enrollment, academics, employee recruitment/retention, and more. President Bridges stated he hopes to provide more opportunities like this moving forward.

The Association of Computing Machinery (ACM), which is the world's largest computing society, recently held its

supercomputing conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Included in the conference is the ACM Student Research Competition where over 100 university teams submitted research abstracts for consideration to present at the conference. Fifty teams were selected to present with USI being one of the chosen in the undergraduate research category. From the 50 poster presentations of students' research projects, USI placed 5th, ahead of presentations by the teams from Purdue, IU, and Notre Dame. Our USI students showcased a unique approach to engender and build interest in computer science among high school students, especially among girls, who have shown a declining interest in computer science over the last few years. Their ability to effectively communicate complex ideas and engage with the judging panel and conference attendees was a key factor in our students achieving the top 5 spot. USI's team members included students Maya Seshan, Alyson Collins, Cathy Sandoval, and faculty mentor Dr. Srishti Srivastava.

On Monday, January 13, President Bridges will attend the inauguration of Indiana's 52nd Governor, Mike Braun, at the Hilbert Circle Theatre in Indianapolis. The following day, USI will present its biennial budget request to the House Ways and Means Committee. This will account for the third time presenting our 2025-2027 ask. The fourth and final presentation to Senate Appropriations is expected to be scheduled in March. From there, President Bridges will travel south to attend the NCAA Convention and Division I business and rules meetings that satisfy the required activities of the president for USI's year three reclassification process.

Each year to honor Martin Luther King, Jr., the University of Southern Indiana welcomes a special speaker for the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Celebration Luncheon. On Monday, January 20, 2025, at 11 a.m. in Carter Hall, USI will host Evansville Mayor Stephanie Terry. Mayor Terry's presentation, "A Blueprint for the Future," will examine how our investment in ourselves and our community can lead to a breakthrough in freedom and justice for all. Luncheon tickets are \$35 for USI employees and students and \$45 for the public.

USI has been invited to attend Lilly Endowment's convening focusing on issues related to declines in post-secondary enrollment of Indiana's high school graduates. Provost Blunt, Assistant Vice President Rashad Smith, and President Bridges will attend the convening on January 22, in Indianapolis. In recent years, the Endowment has been increasingly concerned about these declines. The Endowment launched the Indiana Youth Program on Campus (IYPC) initiative in 2021, which is intended to help address Indiana's low rankings in the percentage of its adult population with a bachelor's degree or a meaningful credential and to help increase post-secondary enrollment and success of traditionally underserved students. In addition, in 2023, the Endowment provided a grant to ICHE to support a research study to better understand the factors contributing to the decline in post-secondary enrollment in our state. Lilly appreciates the important role we play in providing access to higher education and increasing the number of college graduates in Indiana. The convening will include findings from the research study and provide possible strategies that could be developed to address this serious challenge.

USI's Homecoming will be on Saturday, February 8. Homecoming week will begin February 1 with many events and activities for students, staff, and families to attend.

- Homecoming Masquerade Ball – Feb. 1
- Casino Night – Feb. 3
- Student-Athlete Panel – Feb. 4
- Family Reunion Karaoke – Feb. 5
- Screagles Got Talent Competition – Feb. 7
- Homecoming Tie Blankets, Spirit Activities, Women's and Men's Games vs. SEMO, and Homecoming Coronation during Men's game – Feb. 8

President Bridges called on Dr. Nicholas Rhew for a report from Faculty Senate. Since the November Trustees meeting, USI faculty worked hard to successfully complete the fall term. After a much-needed holiday break, faculty is back on campus putting the final touches on plans for instruction and exceptional learning experiences this spring. This semester, Faculty Senate will continue its monthly meetings, with a meeting next Friday, January 17, at 3 p.m. in BEC 3024 (Romain Boardroom) and additional meetings in February, March, and April. Dr. Rhew stated all Senate meetings are open to the public and invited anyone interested to attend. Faculty Senate is collaborating directly with Provost Blunt on a few policy and process changes that may enhance the student experience and looks forward to continued collaboration with her office, Interim President Bridges, and other units to fulfill the academic mission of the institution.

President Bridges called on Tamia Smith, President of SGA for a report. SGA hosted a basketball tailgate for the game against Indiana State University, which was also Hawaiian Shirt Night, and our USI Men pulled a great win by 10 points. SGA celebrated its 55<sup>th</sup> birthday at USI. To commemorate 55 years of shared governance by the student body, SGA distributed free cupcakes to students on campus. The SGA banquet was held in December

before finals week. Superlative and semester awards were issued during the banquet program. SGA members appreciated the attendance of President Bridges and Vice President Hopson at this annual event. Ms. Smith concluded her report by noting there will be several new SGA members starting in January.

President Bridges concluded his report by noting this marked the last Trustee meeting with Vice President for Government Affairs and General Counsel Aaron Trump in attendance. *“Aaron, you’ve been very special to USI. I know your history dates back to your mother working here, what a player you have been for us in the advancement of USI. I want everyone to know a bit about the personal side of Aaron and me – I like him a lot. But when I asked him for a resignation letter, he typed (yes on a typewriter) on a small sheet of paper “MR. PRESIDENT, DEUCES. AARON TRUMP”. That shows the kind of wit and humor between us, and I will miss that. I will be receiving a real official letter, however, one I don’t want to receive. Aaron, Thank YOU! It’s been an honor and pleasure.”* (All in attendance applauded)

#### **E. APPROVAL OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENTS**

Chair Keck called on Vice President Trump to review the Conflict of Interest Disclosures. Indiana Code 35-44.1-1-4 states that a public servant commits conflict of interest, a Level 6 felony, if the public servant knowingly or intentionally has pecuniary [financial] interest in, or derives a profit from, a contract or purchase connected with an action by the governmental entity served by the public servant.

It is not an offense under Indiana Code 35-44.1-1-4 if the public servant makes a full and truthful disclosure, in writing, to the governmental entity of a conflict or potential conflict. A public servant may comply with the disclosure requirement by submitting a statement of pecuniary interest to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis.

To ensure individual compliance with the disclosure requirement, the University requires statements from trustees and senior staff, including those with no potential conflicts of interest to disclose. A list of individuals who have submitted a *Possible Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement* for calendar year 2025 is in Exhibit I-A. The list of disclosed potential conflicts must be approved by the Board of Trustees and then forwarded to the Indiana State Board of Accounts.

Mr. Trump reminded the Trustees that those with conflicts would be noted in the minutes as abstaining from voting on their own individual disclosures but voting on all other submitted statements.

On a motion by Mr. Knight, seconded by Mr. Calloway, Trustees reviewed and approved all conflict of interest statements except their own disclosures in Exhibit I-A. Trustees present abstaining from approval of their individual disclosures were John Dunn, Christine Keck, and Jeffrey Knight.

## **SECTION II – FINANCIAL MATTERS**

### **A. UPDATE ON CURRENT CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS**

Chair Keck called on Vice President Trump, who introduced Director of Facility Operations and Planning Jim Wolfe for a report on the status of current construction projects. He referred the Trustees to Exhibit II-A for a list of projects and a summary of the cost and funding sources for each project. Mr. Wolfe reviewed the recently completed project for exterior signage replacement, as well as projects currently under construction including Health Professions phases 3 & 4, the RFWC storage and bike shop addition, University Creative and Print building, Antheneum HVAC improvements, and Career Services and Internships renovation. Mr. Wolfe concluded his report by discussing the Wright Administration renovation and addition project that is currently in the design phase.

### SECTION III - PERSONNEL MATTERS

#### A. REPORT ON LEAVES OF ABSENCE FOR 2025-2026

Chair Keck called on Provost Blunt to review the following leaves of absence.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Time Period</u>	<u>University Unit</u>
Dr. Jinsuk Yan	Fall 2025	Romain College of Business
Dr. Oana Popescu-Sandu	Fall 2025	College of Liberal Arts
Dr. Sang Woo Heo	Spring 2026	Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education
Dr. Erin Dennis	Spring 2026	College of Liberal Arts

#### B. REPORT ON FACULTY, ADMINISTRATIVE AND STAFF RETIREMENTS

Chair Keck called on Provost Blunt to review the following faculty, administrative and staff retirements.

\*Network/Telecommunications Tech III Steven F. Baker, in accordance with the regular retirement policy, retired on December 20, 2024, after 26.5 years of service.

Professor of Geology Joseph A. DiPietro, in accordance with the revised retirement policy, will retire effective January 1, 2026, after 34 years of service, including leave with pay from August 12, 2025, through December 22, 2025.

Professor of English Julia Galbus Kiesel, in accordance with the revised retirement policy, will retire effective January 1, 2026, after 28.5 years of service, including leave with pay from August 12, 2025, through December 22, 2025.

#### F. APPROVAL OF EMERITUS STATUS

Chair Keck called on Provost Blunt, who recommended approval of emeritus titles. On a motion by Mr. Knight, seconded by Mr. Kinney, the following titles were approved.

Professor Emeritus of Geology Joseph A. DiPietro

Professor Emerita of English Julia Galbus Kiesel

\*President Bridges acknowledged Mr. Steven Baker, noting his death on December 29, 2024, just nine days after his official retirement. President Bridges stated Steven was dedicated to his work often working behind the scenes to mitigate phone and network problems and contributed greatly to USI.

Before concluding the meeting, Chair Keck addressed Vice President Trump. *"I just want to say on behalf of me personally, and on behalf of the Trustees, you have just been a phenomenal part of this team, a great leader, and a great person. I just want you to know how much we think about you both personally and professionally. Thank you so much for your leadership, and all that you have contributed to guide this university and guide us as Trustees. Your counsel is very trusted and sought after. On behalf of the Trustees, we wish you well and are so very grateful for you."*

Vice President Trump replied: *"Thank you, this is a special place to me. Working here meant a lot to me; I grew up practically down the street. It's not completely my choice to leave, but I think it is best for me, my wife, and my two children to be closer to my wife's family. When I got this role at my age and my experience level, it was a big "get" for me to be given this opportunity. I am extremely appreciative of my time here; it means a lot to me."*

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:49 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jeffrey L. Knight  
Secretary

**Possible Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statements  
Filed for 2025**

DATE	NAME/ TITLE	VENDOR/ CONTRACTOR	DESCRIPTION OF FINANCIAL INTEREST
12/03/24	Laurie Berry Dean of Students	None	N/A
12/03/24	Carey Beury Senior Executive Associate to the President	None	N/A
12/03/24	Shelly B. Blunt Provost	None	N/A
12/04/24	Steven J. Bridges Interim President	Evansville Regional Economic Partnership (E-REP) Indiana Chamber of Commerce WNIN Stone Family Center Condominium Board	Director Director Director Director
12/12/24	William Harold Calloway Trustee	None	N/A
12/05/24	Michael Dixon Dean of the School of Graduate Studies Professor of History	None	N/A
12/18/24	Del Doughty Dean, College of Liberal Arts	None	N/A
12/06/24	John M. Dunn Trustee	Dunn Hospitality Group	Majority Stockholder
12/03/24	William Elliott, Jr. Interim Dean, Pott College of Science, Engineering and Education	None	N/A
12/18/24	Andrea R. Gentry Vice President for Development President, USI Foundation	None	N/A
12/03/24	Jon Mark Hall Associate Vice President and Director of Athletics	Hall Communications	Wife owns company
	Fouad Hamami Student Trustee	None	N/A
12/04/24	Jason Hardgrave Interim Associate Provost	None	N/A
12/09/24	Timothy M. Hollander Trustee	None	N/A

DATE	NAME/ TITLE	VENDOR/ CONTRACTOR	DESCRIPTION OF FINANCIAL INTEREST
12/18/24	Pamela F. Hopson Interim Vice President for Student Affairs	None	N/A
12/16/24	Christine H. Keck Trustee	German American Bank	Regional Advisory Board and Shareholder
12/06/24	C. Wayne Kinney Trustee	None	N/A
12/19/24	Jeffrey L. Knight Trustee	Old National Bank	Shareholder & Retired Employee
12/03/24	Julie McCullough Dean, College of Nursing and Health Professions	None	N/A
12/18/24	Sudesh N. Mujumdar Dean, Romain College of Business	None	N/A
12/04/24	Nita Musich Senior Executive Assistant to The President for Board and Executive Relations	None	N/A
12/04/24	Nicholas D. Rhew Associate Professor of Management Faculty Senate Chair	None	N/A
12/07/24	Ronald D. Romain Trustee	None	N/A
12/09/24	Christina M. Ryan Trustee	German American Bank Corp	Director & Shareholder
12/10/24	Austin K. Siders Chief Information Officer	None	N/A
12/18/24	Rashad Smith Assistant Vice President for Undergraduate Admissions	None	N/A
12/06/24	Jeffrey M. Spohn Director of Procurement	None	N/A
12/04/24	Dawn M. Stoneking Executive Director of Outreach and Engagement	None	N/A
12/19/24	Kindra L. Strupp Vice President for Marketing and Communication	None	N/A



DATE	NAME/ TITLE	VENDOR/ CONTRACTOR	DESCRIPTION OF FINANCIAL INTEREST
12/12/24	Patricia A. Tieken Senior Travel Buyer Administrative Senate Chair	None	N/A
	Aaron C. Trump Vice President for Government Affairs and General Counsel	None	N/A
12/03/24	Kenneth E. Walsh Associate Professor of Chemistry Chair of Department Chairs and Program Directors		
12/04/24	Sarah Will Executive Director of Human Resources	None	N/A
12/11/24	Abby E. Yates Senior Administrative Associate Staff Council Chair	None	N/A
12/09/24	Emilija Zlatkovska Director of International Programs and Services; Affiliate Assistant Professor of English, Director of Intensive English Program	None	N/A

**Summary**  
**Construction Projects**

**January 9, 2025**

**Projects Recently Completed**

**Exterior Signage Replacement**

**Project Cost** **\$ 500,000**

Funding Sources:

Parking Reserves \$ 250,000

Landscape Improvement Reserves \$ 250,000

**Projects Under Construction**

**Health Professions Renovation/Addition Phase IV**

**Project Cost** **\$ 50,000,000**

Funding Source: Legislative Appropriation - 2023

**Health Professions Renovation/Addition Phase III**

**Project Cost** **\$ 25,514,606**

Funding Source: Legislative Appropriation - 2019

**Recreation Fitness & Wellness Center Storage and Bike Shop Addition**

**Project Cost** **\$ 2,500,000**

Funding Source: Legislative Appropriation - 2019

**University Creative and Print New Building**

**Project Cost** **\$ 2,500,000**

Funding Source: Legislative Appropriation - 2019

**Atheneum HVAC Improvements**

**Project Cost** **\$ 750,000**

Funding Sources:

FY24 State Repair and Rehabilitation \$ 500,000

Special Projects \$ 250,000

**Career Services and Internships Renovation/Relocation**

**Project Cost** **\$ 420,000**

Funding Source: Special Projects

**Projects In Design**

**Wright Administration Renovation/Addition**

**Project Cost** **\$ 32,000,000**

Funding Source: Legislative Appropriation - 2023