

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2026
Via MS Teams & Morris Library Room 754/752
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order: Khalid Meksem

The September meeting was called to order by President Khalid Meksem.

II. Roll Call: Jenna Jamieson

Present: Erica Blumenstock, Lavern Byfield, Christopher Chiasson, John Farrish, Erin Hascup, Diedra Hopes, Jenny Huang, Timothy Hurley, Sharif Islam, Jenna Jamieson, David M. Johnson, Duda Kvitsiani, Seung-Hee Lee, Vjollca Konjufca, Jia Liu, Khalid Meksem, Irene Miller, Katie Moore, Shelly Page, Kaitlyn Poirier, Jun Qin, Jonathan Remo, Julia Rendleman, Nicole Roberts, Mohtashim Shamsi, Jennifer Sherry, Brittainy Spears, Chris Stantis, Cassie Wagner, Haibo Wang, Geoffrey Young, Andrew Youpa
Absent: Kwangho Choiy, Steven Goetz (Proxy Amy Rutledge), Cinzia Padovani (Proxy Kevin Mercer), Ahmed Torky

Guests: Iraklis Anagnostopoulos, Carly Gist, Darrell Jacobs, Melissa Laake, Austin Lane, Robert Morgan, Marc Morris, Marcia K. Scott, David Shirley, Erin Stumpf, Lichang Wang, Wendell Williams, Nick Wortman

III. Approval of Minutes from July 14, 2026

Motion: J. Remo

Second: J. Sherry

A vote commenced: 28 Yeas, 1 Nays, 0 Abstentions. The minutes from July 14, 2026, were approved as presented.

IV. President's Report: Khalid Meksem

A. Eclipse (Morocco & Spain)

During the summertime, I visited with the SIU team who were preparing for the eclipse, along with several other universities. The eclipse will be in 2027, and it'll affect many countries including Morocco. And to our luck, one of the universities we have had an MOU with for the last five years has three campuses exactly on the full part of the eclipse. So, we visited those campuses, and they were all welcoming the collaboration. This event is very important for the simple reason it's free advertisement for SIU. We have 7 billion people on Earth and at least 2 billion people are going to be watching TV. Imagine looking at SIU; everybody for sure will go and look at Southern Illinois University. It's a good reason for me to start thinking about a better way of presenting SIU, our website, our presence online, Facebook, Instagram, everywhere. We have less than one year to be ready so that the whole world can know what is SIU. Hopefully, we can use that as a recruitment tool.

B. International Student Recruitment

When I was in Spain, I was surprised to see some of the biggest universities, Ivy Leagues in this country recruiting students. So, 2030 is when we're going to be facing that enrollment dip everywhere in the United States, and people are trying to bring more student to try to face that. We have seen the lowest enrollment in our graduate students that's due mainly to international students recruitment. We all know there are issues with visas, with restructuring and everything, but we should not always look at the problems. Problems present opportunities, and that's where we can target future students and bring more students to SIU.

C. Risepoint and SIU Online Teaching

At the Faculty Senate, we decided to give the freedom to the faculty to decide. If they want to work with Risepoint, they're welcome to do that. If they don't want, they have to be respected. So, our way on this is if our faculty want to do it, let them do it, okay? So, that's the position of

the Faculty Senate. And therefore, we have called on a committee that will oversee or work together with our administration on RisePoint and SIU Online teaching. We have one volunteer for the committee, so we will have another call for volunteers. Once the committee is formed, we will let the upper administration know. For the time being, our administrators are consulting the faculty in the programs if they want to move with RisePoint. If they say yes, they are moving with it. If they say no, then there is no pressure to move with RisePoint.

V. Vice President's Report: Jennifer Sherry – No report.

VI. Invited Guests:

A. Chancellor Lane

1. Provost Search

2. Enrollment

3. Retention

Chancellor Lane stated I want to thank all of you on the call. Our faculty this year were on the road. They were in high schools and in community colleges. They were giving out scholarships. They were doing a number of things to help us achieve the enrollment number that we have achieved. That is the only reason why we are up. Illinois State just reported close to a 2% decrease in enrollment. You have a few other institutions that are coming in with decreases in enrollment. Dr. Meksem, you mentioned this enrollment cliff. We've been trying to stay away from it for the last couple of years and do as much as we can to try and attract even more students. I think you're going to be happy with the retention numbers that I give you today as well. We're actually happier about that than we are in enrollment. We're up 7% in that particular category. So, we're really excited about that. I always say you're only as good as your last 10th class day. Even last week, we were recruiting for the fall 2027 students. So, we have a real brief window to celebrate, but honestly, we have to get right back out there again and do it. *(CoS David Shirley shared a PowerPoint slide.)* I just want to share with you sort of the collective efforts and what it means to be working together like this to achieve what we'd like to achieve. The comments that we hear all the time is we used to be 22,000, 24,000. I've been here six years and I've never said anything about trying to be 24,000. I hate to burst anyone's bubble, but we're not trying to get to 24,000. That would be nearly impossible to do in the climate and the market of higher ed with enrollment cliffs and everything else. Our goal has always been 15,000 students by 2030. And there's still work, obviously, that we have to do. But I'm really pleased with the diversity of the numbers. We had a number of different areas increase. As you can see, we're up 2.4% from fall. Last year, we were pretty disappointed that we were five short. We were not happy about that at all. And our meeting when we debriefed after the last 10th class day was, we have some work to do, right? How do we move that number? We know the reason why we're disappointed, because we start thinking about tuition revenue. And if we don't have the tuition revenue with the credit hour production that I'm going to go over in just a second, it makes it very difficult for us to do any raises for any of our contractual and non-contractual staff. The state appropriation alone is not enough. We're happy about it, but it's not enough. And the only way that we can do these increases in pay and fulfill our contractual obligations is through enrollment. Every Chancellor and President in the country will tell you that. It's not just me. We have to try and grow as much as we can. I just want to draw your attention to some of the categories. Obviously, we are up in full-time students. Really excited about that. Our undergraduate students, obviously. A 6% increase in Illinois residents. Very important to keep our students at home. We've been trying to show students why it's beneficial to stay at home. First generation students are up 1%, 14% overall online - that includes everything we do online. 140% Saluki Step Ahead - that's our agreement with the community colleges. That has taken off like crazy. We hope that's going to continue. It puts students on an early pathway to get to us. Demographic categories: 14% African American students, 8% Hispanic, two or more races 7%, our Asian students, our female students - we've seen a real increase. Our decrease Dr. Meksem pointed out, our overall international students

have decreased. If we could add that number up, we'd be in good shape. We have put together a committee; Dr. Meksem is included in that committee. We've identified countries, as he mentioned, for us to really target like other universities are doing. And we're going to get after it this fall and spring to try and turn that around. So, a lot of discussion happening with that particular category. Our undergraduate students is up 16%; it's really impressive to move that class from 1,535 to 1,779. Full-time undergraduates are up. 5% Pell-eligible students are up. Illinois resident undergrads is up. We're just excited about these increases, because we actually targeted these areas when we started. On-campus housing is up 7% in our occupancy. That's a really good number for us, given even some of the conditions of our halls. We still have students that are selecting to stay on campus. Really excited about that. New transfer of student enrollment, thanks to our community colleges, is doing quite well. With that, our college enrollment, this is hats off to the deans all the way around. Last year, the number I brought in had some red in these categories. This year, there's no red. So, each of our colleges are up, COBA being the largest at 17%. Law, COLA, you can see the list there. Really excited about them being up. Regional and out-of-state enrollment, you can kind of glance through. Our goal was to maroon carpet this region. That's still paying off. Students are still selecting to come here. We've turned the ship around with this notion that students are leaving the state. And we know that with some of our folks to the south of us where their enrollments are declining. So, we've done a really good job in getting that enrollment back from 2015 with the budget impasse. It's doing much better. Our growth states, as you can see, Texas leads the way. In our growth state, we are targeting the state of Georgia. We met there with a number of superintendents and folks in that area, had over 220 alumni that came to the Saluki Takeover event in Atlanta. Atlanta has a pretty unique \$5,000 incentive for students to go to school in state or out of state. For us, with no out of state tuition and them having \$5,000, it will close a nice gap for us to recruit more students out of that state. From Southern Illinois to the state line of Georgia is about 5.5 hours. Into Atlanta is about 6 hours total. So, imagine they're even closer than Texas. So, we think we're going to attract more students out of that area. I have a lot of partners down there that are going to help us. I mentioned credit hour production. The head count we give you is a PR number. We don't get paid on that. There's no formula tied to our overall 12,066. The real number that we're tracking, again, it's doesn't get the PR that the headcount gets. The real number we're tracking is at 4% overall credit hours. Our credit hour production is up. That is what allows us to do things financially, right? It's the number of hours that our students are taking. And as you can see, in every college, it's up. Last year, we only had two colleges, maybe three that were up. This year, every college is up in credit hour production. That is critical. Again, it's not as fancy as the overall headcount, but this is the number that matters. It's not the overall headcount; it's the number of hours students have taken. First-time retention rate, our goal university-wide is 80%. We set that goal about three years ago. We're up 7.2% to 73%, or almost 74%. From last year, it was 66.7%. So, we're very happy with the retention efforts that have happened across the university to keep our students here. It's not enough just to recruit students. We've got to retain them. We hope that number continues to climb, but a lot of hats off again to everyone on this call and those that are not on the call with helping us achieve that number. And we're going to just get better and better. You can see the demographic retention for those students that were here. When we were in Atlanta four years ago, we went to the National Institute of Student Success that's housed at Georgia State. They are the leader, sort of think tank when it comes to increasing your retention rate. We got a lot of advice from them four years ago that we employed here at Southern Illinois. We gave them an update last week about our findings, and they were floored. They were so excited to see that our retention rate is moving in the direction we want it to go. The only bad thing, but it's going to be a good thing, is they gave us about four or five other things that we needed to still focus on for that number to go up even higher. And it was good information to have, and we will stay partners with that National Institute of Student Success. So, you can see the percentages of increase in each of those particular areas. Again, I can't thank you enough. You're only as good as your last 10th class day. And as you know, it starts now. We have to focus

on the fall of 2027 class. So, we'll take time to celebrate a little bit, not too much, but a little bit. And we're right back at it again going forward. I will say that the credit hour production piece was key for us to, at least for me to take to the board next week proposed 2% increase across the board for non-represented staff that are here. Obviously, the CBAs those increases are already there. Pretty much our benchmark was that our credit hour production had to be where it needed to be in order to propose a 2% increase. I will talk the next time we meet. I'm going to bring this up at the board; it will be public information. If you remember the payback that we talked about for years was at \$80 million; that's the official number. The payback was at \$80 million in 2015. Before the payback, we had about \$22 million in our reserve. So, when that payback happened, it pretty much wiped out all of that \$22 million and put us in a pretty big debt hole. I'm pleased to report that \$80 million is down to \$921,000, and it will be forecasted at \$0 this fiscal year. That is almost amazing when you think about the deficits that universities are running across the country. That is a concerted effort VC Susan Simmers and her staff, everybody for tightening up their belt. I will present that at the board meeting here in the next couple of days, but that's a big piece for our institution. We can finally start to build a reserve now instead of always trying to put something back to cover a debt hole. So, hats off and congratulations to all of our folks here for that hard work. I know I have VC Wendell Williams on the call. Wendell and his office do a tremendous job. Our admissions recruiters have done a fantastic job to really give us the numbers that you're looking at. And we're just excited. Wendell, I don't know if you want to add anything. **VC Wendell Williams** stated I just wanted to show my appreciation to all of the faculty who have done wonderfully with accepting students, expanding your class sizes. We had the largest freshman class that we've had here in many years, which caused some of you, especially if you're teaching some of the UCC courses, to see little bit larger courses, but that allowed us to get the enrollment that we have. So, we're excited about that. I want to thank your president and vice president and other members of the team for accompanying us on visits during the Saluki Takeover Tours. Your presence makes a difference and you are always welcome.

K. Meksem asked about the Provost search. **CoS David Shirley** stated at this point, the search committee has been established. It is being co-chaired by Dr. Linda Baker from the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute and Dr. Jeff Punske. The anticipated first search committee meeting with the search firm, AGB, will be happening this week. I'll share my screen real quick so you can see this full timeline here. We'll start with listening sessions after this first search committee meeting next week. We'll move on down here to the date for the applications to come in; it will be November 23rd. And then they'll have a series of interviews throughout the months of November and December. And then with the goal to have a position announced in January. AGB will work with the search committee to identify the position profile to make sure that that's approved before anything goes out. The position will be advertised, and then there will be check-in, so on and so forth. **Chancellor Lane** stated it's the first time I've actually seen it. I'm looking at the weeks of December 14th and 21st. We probably just need to make sure folks are here. Our commencement is pretty early in December. D. Shirley stated it's December 12, 2026. **Chancellor Lane** stated let's get them to just take a glance at that. They may have to push that up or wait until January when folks are back. Just a thought. **K. Meksem** stated a concern. The provost works a lot with faculty. Is there a rationale behind naming two co-chairs that are not members of the Senate? K. Meksem confirmed that there is a Senator on the search committee. **Chancellor Lane** stated just co-chairs, no rationale. **K. Meksem** stated but none of them represent the faculty, and Faculty Senate is what represents the faculty at SIU and Grad. Council, too. **D. M. Johnson** stated Dr. Punske is on administrative appointment as Director of University Core Curriculum. Discussion took place about what each co-chair is teaching this year. **K. Meksem** stated we were promised by Chancellor Lane that Faculty Senate is going to be involved in the whole process. **Chancellor Lane** asked D. Shirley about the list of the committee. He stated maybe that's what we were relying on is the widespread participation of faculty there on the committee. Maybe that was the thought, is that we had a good representation of folks on the Faculty Senate. **D. M. Johnson** stated how were

the chairs selected? **Chancellor Lane** stated like every other chair, they are appointed. And that's my job to do that for every group that I'm hiring. I don't know that we have any process for that. That's always been done that way. But again, we're open to making sure that representation is there. I think David is probably working on it. We will get that for you to see how widespread it is. If you would like, Dr. Meksem, I don't have any problem if you want to make a recommendation of someone, I'll definitely entertain it. **K. Meksem** stated I am serving on the committee. The question raised is if there are two of them, then one should be at least either from Faculty Senate or from Graduate Council, because they represent the faculty. It's just a standard. **Chancellor Lane** stated if it's just a standard, I'm open. **A. Youpa** stated can you send us that list or to K. Meksem, and he can send it out to the rest of the faculty? D. Shirley stated no problem at all. **J. Sherry** stated I can appreciate that too, that the committee needs to be very diverse in nature, because that was an issue before. We just want to make sure that all the people and groups are represented on the committee from the outset and that's why it's important for us to see to make sure that that representation has occurred. **Chancellor Lane** stated we'll get the list to you. And Dr. Meksem, if you want to send me a recommendation of a person to fill that role, just let me know.

B. Interim Co-Provosts: Marc Morris & Robert Morgan

1. Global Engagement

2. Risepoint

3. Low Producing Programs (*Priority Program Review*)

4. FY27 Budget Guidance to Deans

5. SIU Online

Interim Co-Provost Morris highlighted the university's progress over the past four to five years, noting that strategic efforts begun several years ago are now producing positive results. From an Academic Affairs perspective, the FY budget has been established and shared with all deans. What we're going to do is stay in line with where we have been that has kept us out of trouble, away from that cliff and navigating it in a fine fashion to get to the point of paying down deficits and being able to afford raises and things of that nature. So, what we're going to do is strategic hiring throughout. We're asking all the deans to provide us with the justification for the hires that they are making, the rationale, how that fits in with our strategic plan for the university and moving forward in that fashion. The Co-Provost also reported on productive discussions regarding a new Priority Program Review process, replacing the previous focus on "low-producing programs." The meeting was with Interim Co-Provosts Morgan and Morris, along with K. Meksem and J. Remo. The review will examine programs with the goal of revitalizing them, increasing enrollment, and responding to market demand. The review process will begin with undergraduate programs through a Faculty Senate ad hoc committee, while graduate programs will be reviewed in collaboration with the Graduate Council. A formal charge for the review committees is expected to be issued within the coming weeks, with broad campus input encouraged throughout the process.

Interim Co-Provost Morgan expressed appreciation on behalf of university leadership, echoing the thanks of Chancellor Lane, Wendell Williams, and Co-Provost Morris for the collective efforts of faculty and staff in student recruitment and retention. He emphasized that recruitment is a shared responsibility, noting that faculty and staff contribute significantly through activities such as open houses and new student orientations, making enrollment successes a university-wide achievement. Looking ahead, SIU is already planning for Fall 2027 enrollment and is placing a strong emphasis on international student recruitment. While many institutions are experiencing challenges related to federal policy changes affecting international graduate student enrollment, SIU views this as an opportunity. The university intends to aggressively market graduate programs that allow students to complete master's degrees in two years and doctoral degrees in four years, aligning with current federal regulations. Information on these programs is being gathered from

the colleges, and SIU plans to actively promote these opportunities to prospective international students as part of an expanded recruitment strategy for the coming year.

K. Meksem asked about SIU Online. **Interim Co-Provost Morgan** stated I can speak to RisePoint. I just saw the data this morning from our 10-day count on RisePoint programs. These are programs with the RisePoint partnership. Those programs increased by 106 students over last fall's enrollment. So, we're continuing to see that increase in student enrollment through RisePoint. As you noted earlier, Dr. Meksem, it really is a faculty-driven decision process. Programs that have opportunities to excel and accelerate online programming - you have a choice. You can partner with RisePoint. We're fine with that. You can partner with SIU Online. Both provide great opportunities. SIU Online has really upped the staffing. We brought AVC Becky Duncan-Ramirez on board several months ago. She hit the ground running and is doing a great job with SIU Online. So, as Chancellor Lane said, we're seeing online programming enrollment increases, and we're pretty excited about what that looks like.

C. Interim Director of Paul Simon Public Policy Institute: Linda Baker - *(No report.)*

D. VCR Tsatsoulis – No report.

E. FAC IBHE rep.: Lichang Wang

L. Wang stated I do not have a report; however, I do want to thank Melissa Laake for handling my travel reimbursements very quickly. All of my travel reimbursements, I have no problem at all to receive them timely. Thank you, Melissa.

K. Meksem stated thanks to the Senate for working hard with upper administration on making that process more friendly.

F. Graduate Council rep.: Iraklis Anagnostopoulos

I. Anagnostopoulos stated the Graduate Council met last week for the first time this academic year.

- Graduate Council approved a resolution recommending elimination of the Materials Technology Center (MTC).
- The Program Review Committee approved external reviewers for the Center for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Sciences, the Center for Wildlife Sustainability Research, and the graduate programs in Economics.
- The Graduate School and Library are finalizing new accessible thesis and dissertation templates. Their use will become necessary for students graduating in the spring semester.

G. Q & A

D. M. Johnson noted that while SIU's enrollment increase of 281 students (2.4%) is encouraging, it is important to analyze the specific factors driving the growth to determine whether it reflects sustainable improvements or temporary policy effects. He identified four contributors to enrollment growth that were not highlighted in official reports. First, the new Saluki Start dual-enrollment program added 81 high school students, although these students do not pay tuition and therefore do not contribute to institutional revenue. Second, enrollment in RisePoint online programs increased by approximately 110 students, but SIU receives only a portion of the tuition and fees generated by those students. Third, the university enrolled 180 more students with high school GPAs between 2.0 and 2.75 after increasing its acceptance rate from about 87% to 97%, reflecting a policy shift toward greater access. Fourth, retention rates improved significantly, but much of that increase may be attributable to the recently adopted academic suspension policy, which allows students to remain enrolled longer before suspension. Our new academic suspension policy, which was duly approved by this body, allows students to underperform for three semesters before being suspended. While overall retention rose by 7.2%, retention among

students in good academic standing increased by only 2.1%, whereas retention among students not on good academic standing is up by 11.1%. D. M. Johnson emphasized that these policy changes may be defensible and beneficial on their own merits but questioned whether they represent genuine, long-term improvements in recruitment, retention, and student success. He asked whether the university is seeing sustainable qualitative gains or simply enrollment increases resulting from policy changes. He also raised concerns about today's D.E. article about a reported 24-hour system issue that prevented students from withdrawing before the tenth-day enrollment deadline. Because withdrawals were blocked, the reported enrollment figures may actually reflect ninth-day rather than tenth-day numbers, potentially inflating official counts. He asked what enrollment figures would be reported to federal and state agencies and questioned how reporting potentially inaccurate numbers aligns with the university's commitment to institutional integrity and accreditation standards. **Chancellor Lane** stated thank you Dr. Johnson. Let me walk you back, because your information is wrong on a number of different levels. He emphasized the university's dramatic turnaround since 2020. He noted that SIU lost approximately 6,000 students between 2015 and 2020, resulting in significant tuition revenue losses, and argued that the critical questions about sustainability should have been asked during that period of decline. Since then, university leadership has focused on rebuilding enrollment through strategic partnerships and student-centered initiatives, producing measurable gains while many peer institutions continue to experience enrollment decreases. Chancellor Lane stated you mentioned Saluki Start; this is the area you were incorrect. Chancellor Lane defended programs such as Saluki Start, explaining that offering – one free class - has successfully attracted and retained students who are now enrolled and paying tuition. He rejected the suggestion that the program represents a financial loss; it serves as an effective recruitment and retention tool. He also highlighted SIU's commitment to serving lower socioeconomic status students through initiatives such as the Dr. Seymour Bryson Future Scholars Program, which enrolled 49 students during the summer and achieved a 100% success rate. He pointed to improved retention rates as evidence that students succeed when provided with appropriate support services. Addressing broader enrollment strategies, Chancellor Lane stated that SIU's continued growth depends on both traditional and online students. He noted that reaching enrollment goals of 15,000 students is not possible through traditional-age students alone and that online programs, including those supported through RisePoint, are an essential component of the university's future. He concluded that initiatives such as Saluki Step Ahead, Saluki Start, and Saluki Commitment have yielded the results that we are excited to have right now.

VC Wendell Williams addressed concerns regarding student withdrawals and the accuracy of enrollment reporting, emphasizing that the university's data are reliable and transparent. He reported that through August of the previous year, SIU recorded 249 student withdrawals out of 417 total withdrawals for the period, while 349 students had withdrawn through August of the current year. Students were able to withdraw on the day they requested. W. Williams stated you mentioned 24 hours before, that is not correct. Student were withdrawn on that Thursday evening before we left work, before the system was shut down for maintenance and calculating the census day reports the next morning. The system was also open that day where the registrar had the ability to adjust student schedules, and that was a request from the advisors. So, I'm a little challenged by the allegations that the numbers that we report are not accurate numbers. Those numbers are extremely accurate. He also described changes to the university's withdrawal procedures aimed at improving student retention rather than manipulating enrollment counts. Previously, students could drop all but their final course online and then withdraw simply by

emailing the registrar. He characterized this as an ineffective practice, because it provided little opportunity to intervene and assist students before they left the university. Under the revised process, withdrawal requests are still processed immediately, but university staff contact students beforehand to explore alternatives, assess potential impacts on financial aid, and discuss options such as online courses or shorter-term classes that could help students remain on track toward degree completion. Williams noted that university personnel contacted all 349 students who requested withdrawals during August to determine whether support or alternative pathways could encourage them to continue their studies. He stressed that no student's withdrawal was delayed or denied in an effort to preserve enrollment numbers, asserting that the university's goal was student success and retention rather than artificially boosting reported enrollment.

Chancellor Lane stated we had students that decided not to withdraw, because we're able to help those students. We have students that decided to get in our eight-week classes. **VC Wendell Williams** stated of the students who were here the spring semester, the 109 or so students who were in the Saluki Start program, at least 12 of those students are continued to enroll, and they're taking more than 144 hours. So, the hours that one student or the total number of students that we gave away, those students are more than paying for themselves in those courses by continuing their enrollment here. **Chancellor Lane** stated even though advisors had the ability to add and drop students, I think we need permission for students to be added that late in the game from faculty. We wouldn't even do that. Faculty have to give us the authority on that. We could have registered probably another 50 to 70 students if we did anything over the weekend, but that would have been beyond the 10th class day. We don't have one student that sent us any complaints. We checked that this morning about them not being able to withdraw.

K. Meksem, professor with 30 years of experience at the university, praised Chancellor Lane and his leadership team for their unprecedented hands-on efforts to recruit students and engage with communities, noting that previous administrations were far less visible and rarely interacted with local schools. While expressing appreciation for these initiatives, he recommended that the administration communicate its recruitment and outreach efforts more directly to faculty, as many may not fully understand the work taking place behind the scenes. An open session was suggested to share details about current initiatives, successes, and long-term sustainability plans so faculty can better recognize and support these efforts. He also emphasized the importance of documenting and communicating these strategies to ensure continuity if leadership changes in the future.

C. Stantis stated Interim Co-Provost Morgan mentioned SIU is an alternative to Risepoint and just like anecdotally, I think SIU online is amazing. I'm relatively new faculty, and I've been able to use it to help turn some of our anthropology courses from being required in person to being online asynchronous. A lot of these students who are in person three years of their college experience were like I don't know about online courses. And they're like, no, this is amazing. And it's because of SIU Online pedagogical expertise, right? This is what they're paid to do. So, I'm excited to hear from Professor Morgan that SIU Online is growing. My only anecdotal experience, which might be incorrect, is that the SIU Online is almost tailored as if you want that improvement as faculty. This is your chance for that sort of personal opportunity, whereas Risepoint is almost like a program decision. And I might be wrong, but I'm just curious if the university has created any easy to digest guidance or starting conversation, just like how the enrollment numbers were on one slide so we're able to digest that. I wonder if anyone has made an SIU Online - Risepoint sort of bulleted comparison or anything like that, just to send this information out to faculty so that we can

understand what tools are available. **Interim Co-Provost Morgan** stated excellent point. I did just receive some information about this very topic from RisePoint. I just need to condense it and find the best mechanism to distribute it. I'll try to circle back to you with what I have and maybe we can have a discussion about how that looks before I work on a larger dissemination. I'd like to get some feedback from you and anybody else on Faculty Senate, but I'll be working on that. I just received it late Friday. **C. Stantis** stated again, I would love to hear what SIU Online is doing as sort of alternative for programs or faculty who aren't using RisePoint.

V. Konjufca stated regarding the Center for Environmental Health and Safety, faculty are concerned about the lack of inspections of the labs. That has not been happening for a long time. We have not had any trainings that we used to have, like annual and mandatory trainings. So, our IBC chair talked to OSPA, it's not OSPA's purview. Apparently that's in a purview of facilities. And so, I was asked to bring it up to the Senate, because we need to keep track of what's happening in a lab so we don't have accidents, we don't have...how things are being stored, chemicals, etc. So, this is one issue I was tasked to bring to your attention and to see where that is and where are we going with all that. Second, I sent an e-mail to our Co-Provosts and to K. Meksem regarding the textbooks. And the question from faculty was, because students register for credit hours and then they pay per credit hour, whether we could have different book program which allows them to pay only for credit hours, which they're using the books online. Because many courses have free access option for which students pay for, but they don't get anything out of it. And this would save students money and may be good help for SIU to use kind of inclusive access programs. I had my faculty give me numbers. So, for one of the courses, for example, Zoology 118, they're paying \$3,034 per semester for materials they don't get anything from, because the course uses open access. Another course, Zoology 115, costs together with, has 360 students, and those two courses can mean \$10,080 per semester saved on students' money if faculty can use open access, and students are not charged per credit hour. And apparently those other inclusive access programs kind of exist, and the faculty were wondering can we shift towards that to make it easier on our students so they can opt out for some classes but not all textbooks? So, this could be quite significant in terms of student encouragement to stay at SIU and to help them financially, etc. **Chancellor Lane** stated Bob and Marc, I ask you guys to handle that. On the first question, we need to dig into that. It's our first question with the Center for Environmental Health. Who's doing what? We can find that out and bring that back. Co-Provost Morris stated we will look into that.

K. Meksem stated shared governance is something very important on campuses. That's how some of them are progressing and some of them are regressing. That's why some of them are hiring and some of them are firing. Interim Co-Provosts Bob Morgan and Marc Morris mentioned to us that the deans were given their budgets, and they are free to decide what to do. So, from previous experience, I've seen Deans come in and making decisions that did impact a lot of colleges, but they're not here today. They don't care. So, in the sake of shared governance, every college should have a budget committee. That budget committee is made of professors in that college and administrators. They can sit together, look at that budget, and then make recommendations. I understand the dean is the one that will have to make the final decision, but at least if he/she is consulted with that budget committee before making those decisions, there will be less damage done down the road. So, is this something you will encourage your deans to do, please? **Chancellor Lane** stated the Deans report to the Co-Provosts. I will tell you my expectation for the co-provost, because again, I don't supervise the deans, is that that is done. I

don't see anything wrong with that at all. The budget is a public document. I'm going to present it here in a couple of weeks to the board and show how we've eliminated that deficit and show where our funds are. I think half the battle, Dr. Meksem, is I think what you'll get from that exercise is a better education of our funds and why we're out here recruiting so hard, even answer some of Dr. Johnson's questions, right? I think you're going to find that out when others get more knowledgeable about the budget in their division. We're also going to put out what it costs to give increases. In that summary budget that you're talking about that's public, it will demonstrate exactly by college what it costs to give an increase through contracts or not, through faculty in that division, in that department, in that college, which I think faculty should know. You should want to know that. So, I'm going to yield to Marc and Bob, but they kind of heard my answer, but the deans report to them. **Interim Co-Provost Morris** stated yep, absolutely. Our expectation is that information that the Chancellor is making public is also relayed in faculty meetings that the Deans have within their college, as well as with their executive committees as they discuss the budget with them. The deans should be telling the faculty within their colleges what's going on. **Chancellor Lane** stated the deans need to be the drivers of their budget, and they need to work indirectly with their faculty and staff in their area. They need to decide where their priority is and make those decisions.

VII. Reports

A. Executive Committee: Chair, Khalid Meksem

K. Meksem stated when you go back to your school/college/unit, please let your colleagues know that the deans are now getting the budget, and they are the ones that make decisions about the hiring, about how to spend the money and everything. And ask if you don't have a budget committee in your college that you can have one so that the budget committee can work with the dean at least to oversee what the deans are going, in terms of hiring or in terms of spending that money, etc. As I mentioned before, all you know that we have deans that come and go. They make decisions, and you're the one who's going to be stuck with them. So, that's why there will be less damage if more faculty are involved in those budget committees in making decisions with their dean. I do understand that most of the time we make recommendations and the deans are the ones that will have to make decisions. However, it's always very hard for the dean to make a decision that goes against the will of their faculty. So, that's why I'm asking you when you go back and check within your college first if you have a budget committee and do encourage that budget committee get in touch with the dean about the budget.

B. Election Committee: Chair, Jennifer Sherry

J. Sherry stated I actually have no report for the Elections Committee. I'm looking forward to establishing the committee after a vote today. (**See note under the Committee on Committees' report regarding the JRB.*)

C. Undergraduate Education Policy Committee: Co-Chairs, Jonathan Remo & Brittainy Spears

1. Approval of Reviewers for the Physiology Program Review

J. Remo stated the Undergraduate Education and Policy Committee received a request from Associate Provost for Academic Programs Julie Dunston to review and approve the reviewers for the Physiology Program Review. The proposed reviewers were Dr. Michael Eichholz, Director of the Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory and Professor in the School of Biological Sciences at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, and Dr. Justin Pol, Associate Professor of Practice in the School of Electrical, Computing, and Biomedical Engineering at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. A majority of the committee, nine of the eleven members, voted to approve the proposed reviewers. Members voting in favor included Senators Chiasson, Choiy, Hopes, Jamieson, Remo, Rendleman, Spears, and Youpa, along with the USG Vice President for Student Affairs, Tiara Murray. The remaining two committee members did not submit a vote.

2. General Updates

a. UEPC meeting the week of September 14, 2026

J. Remo stated the UEPC will meet during the week of September 14 to discuss a Resolution to Modify or Eliminate (RME) the B.S., Minor, Certificate, and Dual Degree Programs in Paralegal Studies. The School of Justice and Public Safety has proposed eliminating the Paralegal Studies bachelor's degree program, including both the general and pre-law specializations, as well as the Paralegal Studies minor, certificate, and dual degree program offered in partnership with the Simmons Law School. The program will enter a teach-out phase to ensure that the 32 currently enrolled students can complete their degrees. The recommendation to eliminate the programs is based primarily on enrollment trends, student demand, and workforce considerations. The proposal was also informed by educational market analysis data provided through the university's contract with Gray Associates.

A. Youpa stated this RME is coming from the administrators and not the faculty. The faculty do not have any say on this RME. The RME is a pure product of the administration. We're going to meet next week to hear the program's side of the story with what's happening with the elimination of the program.

b. UEPC Co-Chair attended UCCEC meeting on August 20, 2026

J. Remo stated UEPC Co-Chair Brittainy Spears attended the Undergraduate Core Curriculum Executive Committee (UCCEC) meeting on August 20. During the meeting, UCC Director Jeff Punske and committee members discussed the UCCEC Charter and the committee's role in reviewing and evaluating existing University Core Curriculum (UCC) courses during the upcoming academic year. The discussion focused on developing a process for periodic review of established UCC courses to ensure they continue to meet program objectives, maintain academic quality, and align with the goals of the University's Core Curriculum.

D. Budget Committee: Co-Chairs, Vjollca Konjufca & Sharif Islam

V. Konjufca stated we are waiting to start discussion with the Office of Vice Chancellor. I heard from them; they're trying to schedule a meeting with us. We want to start looking into the budgets for research support, allocations, and salaries and whether there's room for improving support of research through the budget allocations and what the university can do in that respect. I guess that's the ultimate goal.

K. Meksem stated VCR can only give you certain information related to research. In the budget itself, VC Susan Simmers and her crew are the one that can give you information related to the negatives that we have in certain line in the budget and how they are working to bring those negatives to a positive. So, over the years, wherever we have a budget that was presented, some units are carrying negatives from one year to another year. Why are some units allowed to carry that negative and some others are not allowed to carry that negative? And what is done within the university for those units that they can be more sustainable?

E. Committee on Committees: Co-Chairs, Seung-Hee Lee & Mohtashim Shamsi

1. Call for Volunteers was completed 8/27/26.

Vote on the following:

a. Elections Committee (3 openings; 1-year term):

Amber Burtis, Jennifer Walker, & Alvi Khalil

- b. **Two faculty-at-large seats need to be filled (1-yr term) for FSWC & UEPC:**
 - i. **Student rep. for UEPC (Undergraduate Student Gov. VP of Student Affairs) is:**
Tiara Murray
 - ii. **UEPC:** Sayed Chhattan Shah & Alvi Khalil
 - iii. **FSWC:** *Kristin Wolek (*Note: Kristin stepped down from this committee to serve on another committee. There are now two seats to fill.)
- c. **Intercollegiate Athletics Advisory Committee (2 openings; 3-year term):**
Kristin Wolek (Note: There is still one vacant seat to fill.)
- d. **SIU Press Editorial Board (2 openings; 3-year term):**
Sayed Chhattan Shah & Shanika Wilson
- e. ***Risepoint Ad Hoc Committee (6-8 openings; 2-year term):** Jenna Jamieson
(*Note: Committee name changed to **Risepoint & Online Teaching Ad Hoc Committee**, per K. Meksem. There are still 5-7 vacant seats to fill.)
- f. **Priority Program Review Ad Hoc Committee (3 openings; 1-year term)**
*Kristin Wolek, Seung-Hee Lee, & Matt Brown
(*Note: Kristin stepped down from this committee to serve on another committee. There is now one seat to fill.)

J. Remo stated has someone reached out to Kristin Wolek to make sure she is ready to serve on three committees? M. Shamsi stated we will reach out. A vote was taken as shown above.

J. Sherry stated we sent out another email for a representative for the Judicial Review Board. Did any names come forward for the Judicial Review Board? No names came forward. A representative is needed specifically from the College of Health and Human Sciences. J. Sherry sent a call on the college's listserv.

Motion: M. Shamsi

Second: D. M. Johnson

A vote commenced: 29 Yeas, 1 Nay, 0 Abstentions. All faculty listed above (a. - f.) were approved as presented to serve on the various committees.

F. Faculty Status and Welfare Committee: Co-Chairs, Shelly Page & Mohtashim Shamsi

M. Shamsi stated there is nothing to report at this point.

G. Governance Committee: Co-Chairs, Jun Qin & Katilyn Poirier

K. Poirier stated the committee met on August 19, 2026. The first issue discussed was the summer contract problem put forward by Senator Jamieson. The committee would like guidance from the Faculty Senate on whether it should conduct a long-term project to review summer contracting policies and determine if they are clear and equitable. We brought this up at the Faculty Senate Executive Council's meeting, and it seems that is a project that there's interest in and moving forward with. The second issue discussed was the Americans with Disabilities Act regulation on web accessibility compliance and the compliance deadline this spring. The committee requests that the Center for Teaching Excellence and/or the general counsel's office explain the regulation, how to comply, and the penalties for noncompliance.

D. M. Johnson stated summer contracts are in the union contract. We'll have to negotiate the matter of where the Faculty Senate can be helpful and where it has to kind of leave things to the union to figure things out. So, at least some conversations with the union would be in order before you to spend too much time on it. **K. Poirier** stated yeah, correct. I think the first sort of thing we would have to do is figure out what all the summer contracting policies are, because clearly some are under a contracting agreement and some are not. And so, just collating those altogether would be sort of our first order of business and seeing what they say. **K. Meksem** stated yes, contacting the Faculty Association would be the first step to do. And then, if there is

something that they have not negotiated, maybe this is the time to let them be aware of it, that it's going to be negotiated in the next contract. Because I know some of us are facing when the upper administration are looking at some of the summer contracts, they will tell you this is not covered under the CBA. So, that's why Faculty Association has to be aware of it, that they can negotiate those exceptions under the next CBA. Also, please have your committee encourage faculty to be more engaged within their colleges/schools in shared governance, such as a budget committee, especially now that the budgets have been given to the deans.

J. Sherry stated another thing, too, that we want to keep kind of short term on our radar is a potential issue with trying to ask programs to cover lab courses with a larger student/faculty ratio. And we have to be very cognizant and aware to tell our school directors and/or deans that we have to follow very strict accreditation guidelines for that. We're talking some discussion of being asked to double the labs, and we don't even have space for conducting that increase. And accreditation standards say that that is not possible. So, we have to make sure that that stays on the short term radar as well.

K. Meksem stated yes, similar to that, when your school directors are putting a request for assistantships - you have labs that have only six, seven, maybe eight students, they do require maybe one teaching assistant, but you have labs where you have maybe 60, 80 students. So, there is no way for one teaching assistant to handle that lab. So please, if you can, consult with the people in your unit, see the size of the labs that they are teaching, and then raise the voice; that standard has to be followed. Assistantship should be given to satisfy the number of students that you have in the labs. Labs with more students will require more teaching assistants. **V. Konjufca** stated is there a standard number that we are aiming for, kind of an average per teaching assistant? **K. Meksem** stated well, look at the accreditation of your program. It must say what numbers, etc. I can tell you one thing, even your lab must have an exit, it must have this and this and this. This is all in the accreditation. So, this is a chance to get your lab maybe certified.

VIII. Old Business

- **K. Meksem** stated we inherited from the last Faculty Senate several things, and I'm hoping that this semester we can actually remove them from the agenda. Risepoint and online teaching is one of the things that we inherited, and we really need that committee to be established, that we can say this is done. We inherited the issue of international student recruitment and also global engagement. And I'm hoping that this semester we can say that the Global Engagement Committee is starting to work toward resolving those issues. We inherited something very important, which is...whenever we ask questions, some of the time the question is dodged in different ways. So, you don't have a direct answer. *(A discussion took place about the structure of Senate meetings and having follow-up questions. Senators were encouraged to attend meetings in person.)*

IX. New Business

A. Priority Program Review Committee (J. Remo)

J. Remo stated President Meksem and I met with Interim Co-Provosts Morris and Morgan on September 4 to discuss restarting the Priority Program Review process. During the meeting, Provost Morris provided a draft charge for the Faculty Senate Priority Program Review Committee (PPRC). He stated that the purpose of the Priority Program Review is to support responsible academic planning and resource allocation. It is not intended to be an across-the-board budget reduction exercise, an evaluation of individual faculty members, or a process in which conclusions have been predetermined.

The draft charge outlines the following responsibilities for the PPRC:

1. Finalize the program review framework.
2. Review the undergraduate academic portfolio.

3. Identify programs for review.
4. Review program submissions and proposals for program enhancement.
5. Consult with program directors, school directors, deans, and other appropriate representatives regarding each program's academic role, performance, challenges, and future direction.
6. Develop recommendations for reviewed programs.
7. Identify portfolio-level opportunities for strategic investment, interdisciplinary collaboration, shared curricula, improved course scheduling, instructional modality changes, and resource alignment.
8. Submit reports to the Faculty Senate and Provost, including an initial portfolio report and a final program review report by the end of the 2026-2027 academic year.

In addition to discussing the draft charge, President Meksem requested that graduate program reviews be conducted concurrently with undergraduate program reviews. President Meksem and I anticipate meeting again with the Interim Co-Provosts during the week of September 14 to discuss the next steps necessary for the PPRC to begin its work. With the conclusion of Faculty Senate terms this past May, three former senators rotated off the Ad Hoc Priority Program Review Committee. The Committee on Committees (CoC) issued a call for volunteers at the start of the fall semester to fill these vacancies. The CoC has identified three volunteers for appointment:

- **Dr. Kristin Wolek, Assistant Professor, School of Law*
(**Note: Kristin stepped down from this committee to serve on another committee.*)
- Dr. Matthew Brown, Professor, School of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Dr. Seung-Hee Lee, Professor, School of Art and Design

Returning committee members include Senators Farrish, Page, Qin, Remo, and Walker.

B. Global Engagement Committee (K. Meksem)

K. Meksem stated the Chancellor does have a task force now which will tackle the issue of international student recruitment. I'm serving on it, and I'm actually going to be consulting with the Global Engagement Committee. One of the questions that came during the discussion of the task force is, where do we need to put our focus on for international recruitment? I am of big support of moving toward different countries than the traditional countries that we have. From the data that were collected, there were three countries that were mentioned. One of them is Nepal, the other one I believe is India, and another one is somewhere in Asia too. I am actually a fan of diversity, and I would like to see more diversity than just targeting the same countries. For me, the best would be to go somewhere else where we are doing poorly, where we're not attracting students, and then providing those assistantships and those supports so we can start having more students coming from those countries. So, through the Global Engage Committee, we're going to have some discussions on how to proceed before that we can have our first meeting of the task force that the Chancellor has made to tackle this issue. The other thing that we need to think about is since we are an R1 institution with over 2,000 international students, is our international office at the level of the responsibility that is given to them? We've been talking now for almost a year about that office and how deficient it is. So, we did not see anything coming out that says these are the improvements that are being made or this is how we're going to handle this and this. So, this is something that I will be bringing to the next task force meeting. If you have any suggestion, any concern, or if you face any issues with international office here at SIU, please bring it to me.

X. Adjournment

Motion: J. Remo

Second: C. Stantis