

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

July 14, 2026

Via MS Teams only!

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

I. **Call to Order: Khalid Meksem** (J. Sherry)

The July meeting was called to order by Vice President Jennifer Sherry.

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, Katie Moore, Kaitlyn Poirier, Jonathan Remo, Julia Rendleman, Nicole Roberts, Jennifer Sherry, Brittainy Spears, Chris Stantis, Cassie Wagner, Haibo Wang, Andrew Youpa

Absent: Kwangho Choiy, Steven Goetz (Proxy Amy Rutledge), Vjollca Konjufca (Proxy Scott Hamilton-Brehm), Jia Liu, Khalid Meksem, Irene Miller, Cinzia Padovani (Proxy Kevin Mercer), Shelly Page, Mohtashim Shamsi, Jun Qin (Proxy Hui Li), Ahmed Torky, Geoffrey Young

Guests: Jebaraj Asirvatham, Braydon Buy, James Carter, Melissa Laake, Austin Lane, Genevieve Lindner, Kymberli Morgan, Robert Morgan, David Shirley, Susan Simmers, Constantinos Tsatsoulis, Lichang Wang

III. **Approval of Minutes from May 12, 2026**

Motion: J. Remo

Second: J. Jamieson

A vote commenced: 23 Yeas, 0 Nays, 1 Abstention. The minutes from May 12, 2026, were approved as presented.

IV. **President's Report: Khalid Meksem** (J. Sherry)

On behalf of K. Meksem, J. Sherry stated we had a charge to look into the Low Producing Programs by the former Provost (Provost Tucker). And actually, Chancellor Lane and (interim) Co-Provosts may update us on this just so that way everybody's aware. We wanted to know when that was going to be restarted. And then there's also an Ad Hoc Global Engagement Committee - there was a meeting with the Chancellor's Cabinet to discuss how to move that forward as far as looking at possibly ten flagship programs throughout the university that could be earmarked as excellent programs to promote internationally. So, that was discussed as well, and to look to see what types of students that we could engage in those programs. And so, that might happen in the near future, as far as some discussion that goes on there. It was kind of brought up also that maybe the Deans or the school directors could actually help in that process to ensure that we have a good starting point.

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

VI. **Invited Guests:**

A. **Chancellor Lane**

Chancellor Lane stated he was in transit. I hope you're having a great summer. Last year, you probably remember the Governor approved about \$2.6 million in state appropriations for our campus. And unfortunately, we only received about \$877,000. So, if you can imagine having contractual obligations with faculty and staff to have to meet and only receive \$877,000. That makes it pretty tough out of the gate to be able to do what you need to do. But unlike most places, we were able to still make some headway and make sure we honored those contracts and did what we needed to do. This year, you probably heard a couple of weeks ago, we got an

announcement from the Governor on those funds that we were to receive. And thankfully, we received the other \$1.7 million. I know VC Susan Simmers will have the exact amount, about \$1.7 million is what we were able to receive, which we have been waiting for all year long with fingers crossed. That money is already obviously spent, because it goes to our payroll, which is what we needed it to do at the beginning of the fiscal year. So, that's the good news. It'll help us end the year in a way that we want to end the year. As you know, when the session ended this year, another \$2.6 or \$2.7 million is allocated for our campus for this year. Those funds, as Susan will tell you, are already spent on increases in salaries for our faculty and staff, the represented groups. And we're looking at some potential increases for non-represented groups. We can't forget about our non-represented folks. We're thinking about a 1% for our across the board for our folks there, and possibly another 1% if we can increase our credit hour production. But myself, Susan and others are still working through that second scenario. So, that would be 2% for our non-represented folks, which be pretty historic because, and in line, by the way, with a lot of the contractual groups that are at 2%. I think the faculty are getting 2% this year. A lot of our staff groups are at 2% as well. So, we want to try to keep up the pace in doing that. So, another point for enrollment for the fall, I'm always cautiously optimistic. We are looking pretty good right now, but I will tell you, we cannot be relaxed. Many institutions around us are seeing declines already. We don't want to be one of those institutions. So, in the next couple of weeks, we're going to have to work really hard to close the deal on those students, particularly in Southern Illinois. For those students who are continuing students, we're really focused on the progression rates of our seniors and juniors to make sure that they are still on track to graduate. Our retention numbers are up. CoS David Shirley will tell you we're looking really good in retention. So, that's a good sign. We're looking really good in our housing contracts. That's another good sign. New student orientation was phenomenal for those faculty that helped out there. Thank you so much, because our numbers there were up this year in terms of how many students not only attended, but were registered. So, that's always a really good indicator in terms of what we're going to look like. Our hope is that we move the needle in the tuition revenue category for credit hour production from our students who are registering. The 10th class day is the official day that we turn our numbers into the state. We won't know anything really until the 10th class day. So, it's really important, again, between now and not only the first day of classes, but all the way through to the 10th class day to get students registered and ready to go. The final piece we're meeting about later today is, and we'll need your help - you obviously don't have to participate. It's voluntary; it's just if you want to join in. We're going to at least start the tradition of a freshman convocation for our students as we kick off the academic year. And it will be a celebration, obviously, faculty or staff, and obviously the students who will be there to really commemorate their beginning of their Saluki experience and do that on a Sunday. Typically, I have some kind of a BBQ or something for students that happens on that Sunday right before classes. So, we're thinking of having a ceremony earlier in the day at our auditorium. And the event that I usually have will just happen in the evening and be kind of a launch party or social gathering for students after we go through some Saluki traditions and things to really commemorate their beginning of their class. So, it's always good that for faculty, if you could be there and we're determining whether we want to be in the regalia or not. You'll have more details on that. Again, it's not mandatory, but it's just a fun start to the semester that really gives them a sense of where they are and a good kickoff for their semester so they can do well in their classes.

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

Co-Provost Morgan stated it's good to see everybody. I know oftentimes people think summer's a downtime. But as you all know, not for us. It's gear up time and when we can really get stuff done. So, I appreciate all the work that you're doing on Faculty Senate and serving through the summer and helping keep things rolling. Marc and I are fully immersed in our roles as Co-Provosts now. As we like to say, the Chancellor charged us with doing more than keeping the lights on or keeping

the seat warm. So, we're moving forward on several fronts, a couple of which I want to share with you here. First, referring back to a comment Jennifer made regarding low enrolling programs - we are going to re-initiate that effort where we're looking at low enrolling programs and make some decisions. What we're particularly interested in is looking at where we can provide support for growth and growth opportunities. We've asked all the Deans for a hiring plan to look at in particular what growth opportunities exist across the different disciplines and the academic colleges. As Chancellor said, we're pushing hard to the finish line here, but we're already gearing up for our fiscal 2027 push. It's time to begin recruiting in earnest for fall of 2027. Applications are already starting to come in. So, we need to be mindful about what we're going to be doing in the next year. And with that, we really want to be looking at opportunities where we can grow academic programs and create new opportunities for students. So, we will be picking that back up and that'll be kicking off very early in the fall. And again, if you have questions about your college, you can speak to your school directors and Deans as we're all working on hiring plans for that. Another point I want to make is we're working with VCR Tsatsoulis and his team to find ways to enhance research productivity while also decreasing some burdens on faculty. So, I think Costas will make an announcement about some committee work and things that we discussed by way of faculty changes.

- C. VC Susan Simmers (update on travel voucher process & visiting speakers and scholars) –**
(PowerPoint slides were shared on the screen.) VC Simmers stated I think Chancellor Lane has updated general highlights of the budget and we're preparing the fiscal 2027 budget now for submission to the Board of Trustees for the September meeting. And we're still working on that. But I wanted to update you today on how we're doing on our process redevelopment efforts on campus. So, with the travel, we met with the Faculty Senate ad hoc committee a couple of times, and they've been giving us great feedback. Our last meeting with them was June 30, 2026. We've been showing them demonstrations of the new travel app, and they have been helping us test it too. And then we're completing the testing phase of the app now, and we're beginning the pilot phase. That's when people start using it for real. We have 30 participants in the testing phase, and I think we're going to add some people to the pilot phase too. We're still having weekly development meetings on the app. The second person doing travel and accounting services has helped us a great deal getting caught up. Our last report on travel shows that out of 56 total outstanding travel vouchers, 41 are from June. And then there's three from May, three from April, and one from March. And we have eight extremely old ones dating back farther. I think we're not getting responses from people that we need. So, these are generally ones that have issues that we reach back out to the traveler or the person who remitted the report for them and are trying to get information that we need. So, this is a great deal of progress since we first started this. And now if they come in correctly, we do travel vouchers on Fridays. That's when we cut the ACH reimbursement checks - every Friday is travel. So, if we get it in that week, it goes on the Friday. If it doesn't make the Friday run, it has to wait for the next Friday, but we're getting them in a lot quicker if people get them in accurately. Then once we get the app launched, we have rooms reserved in September over in the library to do in-person training courses for the fall, for the travel app. When we get people back for the semester, we'll send out the sign-up notices for that. We have the date set and the rooms reserved. So, I think things are going really well. The other project I wanted to update you on is our visiting speakers and scholars project. And again, on June 30th, we met with the Faculty Senate ad hoc committee. We gave them the most recent update. We've been working on a packet to be able to help people walk through this process. Right now, we're having administrative review of the documents and packets, because there are a lot of departments involved in this - Human Resources, procurement, accounts payable. We hope to complete those reviews by the end of July. And then our next steps are to finalize our documents. Our faculty ad hoc committee is reviewing and helping us with these as well. And then we have to review and test the documents, update the procurement website, and then produce some

training videos and some follow-up surveys. So, that is where we're at on the visiting speakers and scholars.

D. VCR Constantinos Tsatsoulis

VCR Tsatsoulis stated our faculty have received \$45 million from the Illinois Department of Transportation, the largest grants ever in the history of SIU Carbondale. One is \$5 million for our Department of Anthropology, Dr. Campbell. The other one is \$40 million to Forestry through Dr. Brent Pease. These are 10-year contracts. They're actually intergovernmental agreements. And the \$40 million is, we believe, the largest one in our history as a competitive research grant. So, congratulations to the faculty who are doing amazing job in making sure they keep pushing us higher and higher in R1. The second thing I wanted to mention is a change that we will be communicating with you today or tomorrow. So, I worked together with Dr. Karen Jones, the Associate Dean and Director of the Graduate School, as well with the two Co-Provosts. We looked at the graduate school operating paper, which indicates that doctoral committees require four members with regular and/or direct dissertation graduate faculty status. The graduate catalog indicates five graduate faculty members, at least one of them shall be from a graduate program outside the student's academic program. So, in order to align currently with the graduate school operating paper, immediately committees for doctoral students need to have four members only - graduate faculty members with regular or direct dissertation status, and none of them has to be from outside the discipline. Current committees that have five members may change, but we ask them that they did not request to amend the approved committee, unless absolutely necessary. We hope that by aligning the committees with the graduate school operating paper that will help our faculty be able to advise more graduate students and not be on as many committees and be burdened by that. The other thing that I mentioned is that this rule is going to go to the Graduate Council, because if we are to change the graduate catalog, it needs to receive approval from the Graduate Council. But based on the operating paper, this is effective immediately and the message will be sent out today or tomorrow to all the faculty. In terms of enrollments - our enrollments of international graduate students are down, substantially down. But we only are down 4% in terms of the new students who have registered, and almost all of them are international students. Our yield right now, in other words, the number of students who have been newly admitted and have already registered, is more than 35%, which is very good. There are 97 applications that are still pending for fall, and I communicated with the Deans and asked them to talk to school directors and directors of graduate studies to see if we can get these 97 students handled, admitted, or reject it, because they do deserve an answer. A large number of them are recent applicants, domestic applicants, which means they don't require a visa. And because of that, since they're recent applicants, it is my belief that if we admit them now, they will show up in the fall.

E. FAC IBHE rep.: Lichang Wang

Two FAC to IBHE meetings were held following my previous report at the Faculty Senate meeting on May 12, 2026. The first took place on May 14-15, 2026, at the Capitol Building and the Illinois Association of School Boards in Springfield. The second was held on June 17, 2026, with the morning session at the Illinois Community College Board and the afternoon session at the CMS Regional Complex, both in Springfield. On May 14, FAC IBHE members visited the Capital to meet with legislators and discuss issues facing higher education in Illinois, with particular emphasis on the higher education funding bill and the proposal to offer bachelor's degree at community colleges. On May 15, the IBHE Executive Director, Ms. Ginger Ostro, gave a guest presentation on several topics. Ms. Ostro discussed the status of the One-Click College Admit Program and expressed hope that it will evolve into a stronger matching process between students and institutions. She noted that the program would also work for transfer students. Thus far, thousands of students have successfully used the program. The primary focus now is for

participating campuses to engage with admitted students and help them enroll for the fall semester. The June meeting served as the end-of-the-year meeting. During the morning session, FAC IBHE members discussed priorities and tasks for the upcoming year within the three caucuses (4-year public universities; independent institutions; and 2-year institutions) and the five working groups (Equity; Early College Credit; Faculty and Student Mental Health; Student Needs; and Technology). In the afternoon, the FAC- IBHE members joined IBHE members for lunch and business presentations. The IBHE Executive Director, Ms. Ginger Ostro, discussed the Fiscal Year 2027 Higher Education Budget and the statement that she released on June 16 (see the attached document). The FAC IBHE chair, Dr. Dan Hrozencik, delivered the annual report of the FAC IBHE. Further details on these FAC IBHE meetings can be found in the meeting minutes at <http://www.facibhe.org/meetings/minutes.php>. The next FAC to IBHE meeting will be held on September 18, 2026. Also, we are creating a survey, particularly looking at faculty awareness of students' needs, because we think that will be a part of the equation to help students to succeed.

F. Q & A

J. Sherry stated to VCR Tsatsoulis there was a question about graduate committees and people who are working on doctoral degrees in their committees. Has there been a change or is there some discussion that has occurred about people that have EDD degrees not being able to sit on doctoral committees for a PhD? **VCR Tsatsoulis** stated that's the first time I heard that. Allow me to get back to you. I've never heard that before.

D. M. Johnson stated I poked around at some of the enrollment data, and it looks like there's really good news probably for the fall. It looks like we've registered a good deal more students, over 400 more students at this point than we had the year before. But over 300 of those students are students in the under 2.75 GPA. What measures were taken to up our game with retention for these students who are at risk because of a low GPA? **CoS David Shirley** stated at this point, we have had kind of a record retention rate for our students with a high school GPA less than 2.75 compared to prior years. Right now, we're at 47%. Last year, we were in the 36% range. That trend can very much be attributed to the work that Dr. Frazier's group has been really focused on with his staff in terms of providing wraparound services, in terms of connecting students with tutoring services, so on and so forth. There are many other initiatives happening on campus that are also contributing to that. We've also hired two case managers last year to help support those students. So, as we look towards the future, we think that will continue to pay dividends as we look to retain students in that group. **Co-Provost Morgan** stated I will follow up on that and just add that Marc and I are looking at this as well. We have some great student support services available - programs that if access will have proven effective, but there's a difference between access and utilization. And so, there's a small group working with Marc and I to look at how can we improve utilization of the excellent services we provide. Simply having the service available doesn't mean that students are going to use it. So, we're trying to look at how we can strengthen the connection for students that need services to access and benefit from those services. So that's the work that just started in the last 30-45 days. And in fact, we have a follow-up meeting in two weeks to continue that discussion. And hopefully we'll have something to report back to Faculty Senate very soon. **Chancellor Lane** stated I think the faculty are to be commended. I know David Shirley has data on the DFW rates. That's been a big discussion over the last few months as we look at where our students are registering and where they're having some difficulties and then what those rates look like overall to look at the pathways of what students are in and out of. The retention retreat that we started about three years ago now - I think we're all finding holes that we can close up from those meetings. I know we're going to have another one this fall. So, three years ago, we were just talking about enrollment, then we finally started shifting to retention. So, I think that work there is paying off.

J. Sherry asked Chancellor Lane if he wanted to update everyone on the Provost search. **Chancellor Lane** stated yes, thanks for reminding me. The interim Co-Provosts have been tremendous over the last couple of weeks. Talk about hitting the ground running. They've done that and more. So, I do want to publicly thank them for their work in addition to the work they're doing in their own colleges. We have AGB search who is working with us on that search. As you know, because our faculty are not here, that won't begin until the faculty return. So, you'll be engaged with the search firm and others as we start to build those committees out. And all of that will be in accordance with how we set up those committees, the rules involved with setting up, who gets to serve and where they serve and how they serve. So, nothing is happening right now. As Bob mentioned, there is just a lot of work on their part to get us ready for the fall.

VII. Reports

A. Executive Committee: Chair, Khalid Meksem (J. Sherry)

On behalf of K. Meksem, J. Sherry stated as a reminder, please email Melissa Laake your committee reports prior to the Faculty Senate and Executive Council meetings. Those reports are what you will report on in the live meetings. And then at the end of the year, you'll need to make sure that she has your Final Report. We post all of those on the website. So, as much information that you can provide is very helpful. And we actually wanted to state also that when you have to obtain a proxy for meetings, whether it be for EC or regular Faculty Senate meetings, they need to come from your college or school. And so, it cannot be a current Faculty Senate member. You want to confirm with the person prior to sending the name to Melissa. She would like you to send in the first and last name of the professor who is doing the proxying for you. That way she can send an invite to them. This needs to be kind of discovered as soon as you know you're going to be absent from a meeting. If you can let her know, then that way she can provide any information to the person. We had talked back in May when we were discussing the situation with making sure that we had resolutions that were outstanding. UEPC and Governance Committee had brought several of those ahead to us. And so those will need to be followed through or followed up on at the beginning of our year, which our first meeting is in September.

B. Election Committee: Chair, Jennifer Sherry

J. Sherry stated Melissa and I will be working very diligently to get this program off the ground earlier (than last year). Obtaining faculty lists was very problematic, so we want to make sure that we go through the cycles very early in the process. I will be forming an Elections Committee membership to help us with that. I appreciate notes that Melissa has made along the time frame to make that a little bit more seamless. And so, we have one under our belt - so we can move forward. And when you get emails from us asking questions, we appreciate it when you provide the information we need to move forward.

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

J. Remo stated we have no report.

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

1. As of 5/20/26, Md Shariful (Sharif) Islam is the new Co-Chair of the Budget Committee.

- Note: Erin Hascup stepped down from the Co-Chair role on 5/12/26.

S. Islam stated we have no report. J. Sherry thanked S. Islam for stepping in as the new Co-Chair.

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

1. Form a committee to oversee the Risepoint process (Call for Volunteers)

S. H. Lee stated the previous Senate approved the formation of a Risepoint committee. So, our committee will make a general call for volunteers when faculty return to campus.

J. Remo asked are we going to give a charge before we ask for volunteers for the RisePoint Committee? They should probably have some sense of what they're getting into. I think this would come under the Executive Committee or K. Meksem. **J. Sherry** stated she agreed. They need to know what they're going to be in for. I will definitely discuss that with K. Meksem, then he can talk with the committee moving forward on that.

F. Faculty Status and Welfare Committee: Co-Chairs, Shelly Page & Mohtashim Shamsi
(no report)

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

K. Poirier stated we have set a standing meeting for our committee starting in August, and we will start with the summer contract issue that Senator Jamieson brought to us over the summer.

VIII. Old Business - (none)

IX. New Business

- **J. Remo** stated interim Co-Provost Morris has requested that the program review initiated by Dr. Tucker be restarted. I have asked Co-Provost Morris to review the original charge that was provided to the Priority Review Committee. If the review is to be restarted, I have requested an updated or revised charge be issued to the committee. President Meksem has requested a meeting with Co-Provost Morris and me to discuss the plan for restarting the program review process. We anticipate this meeting will take place the week of July 27th.

X. Adjournment

Motion: J. Remo

Second: J. Jamieson