University of Southern Indiana Administrative Senate Minutes
Wednesday, July 1, 2026, I 3 p.m. UC 2205

I. **Welcome and Call to Order**
   a. Meeting started at 3:04 p.m.

II. **Roll Call –** Conducted an Icebreaker/Introductions vs. formal roll call.
   a. Members introduced themselves with roles, tenure at USI, and personal anecdotes to foster connection.
   b. **Present:**
      Executive Committee Members: J. Dumond, J. Garrison, and B. Orth;
      Senators: J. Benson, J. Beshears, M. Biever, S. Farmer, L. Groves, M. Kirk, T. Lutgring, and J. Roberts
      Liaison: S. Will
      Absent: A. Pryor, M. Makoday, H. Perigo
   c. Guest(s): TBD

III. **Review and Approval of Minutes: June 2026**
   a. J. Roberts motioned
   b. M. Biever seconded
   c. Motion passed- Approved- 10; Declined- 0; Abstained- 1

IV. **Reports of Officers & Standing Committees**
   a. Officers
      - Chair (A. Pryor/J. Garrison):
         - Pryor was unexpectedly absent; the meeting proceeded with J. Garrison running the meeting. Delivered by the past chair J. Garrison on behalf of the current chair, A. Pryor.
         - Garrison read the highlights from A. Pryor's report. B. Orth emailed A. Pryor's full Chair report to the entire Administrative Senate after the meeting. (Highlights are below; Full chair report is attached in separate document or at the very end of the minutes).
         - During the President's Council Meeting, A. Pryor attended and was announced as the new Administrative Senate chair. Zach Ward was announced as the new Faculty Senate chair, and Sarah Helenberg was announced as the new Staff Council chair.
         - IT and Device Procurement – Considering centralized device procurement with a single annual charge per device. Extending device replacement cycles from three to five years. Matt Brown was hired as Director of Technical Services
         - Academic and Enrollment Updates – HLC approved program combinations for lower-enrollment programs. Summer enrollment up

over 3% year-over-year. Fall graduate enrollment down under 10%. Orientation at capacity with a 92% show rate.
    - Community Engagement – USI vs. UE “River City Classic” basketball game on November 7 at the Ford Center.
    - Firefly Festival held in New Harmony.
    - Administrative Senate Budget – Budget was reduced by $15.12 due to the University-wide 2.75% cut.

- Vice-Chair (J. Dumond)
    - Vice Chair J. Dumond shared that they have recently transitioned into the role and are beginning to assume responsibilities previously handled by Chair A. Pryor.
    - The Vice Chair expressed appreciation to Past Chair J. Garrison for assisting with meeting facilitation during the transition period.
    - The Vice Chair reminded committee members that Executive Committee representatives are available to support committee discussions and activities. Committees were encouraged to reach out if they would like an Executive Committee member to attend meetings, provide feedback, or participate in discussions.
    - No additional report was provided.

- Past Chair (J. Garrison)
    - J. Garrison sent a thank you letter to President Bridges on behalf of Administrative Senate regarding employee benefit changes while still serving as chair.
    - Employee Benefit Changes – No raises for employees. Removal of employee athletic fees for those who are also students. Increase of tuition benefits for spouses and children from 75% of tuition to 100% of tuition. These changes were approved by the University Leadership and the Board of Trustees. J. Garrison and past chairs have worked with President Bridges throughout the years, especially in the area of having the athletic fee removed for employees who are also students.
    - There was a discussion about Administrative Senate preparing a unified, positive message to administrators about not receiving raises, emphasizing existing benefits and addressing feedback from those who do not use certain benefits. Aimed to seek consistent messaging and reassurance. There was support for a unified message with specifics to be defined at a later date to include A. Pryor, the chair.

- Secretary/Treasurer (B. Orth)
    - Budget is $1,117.54 with no expenditures at this time.
    - Submit reports to B. Orth within 1-2 weeks of this meeting so that she can include them in the minutes.

        - May look at purchasing a Plaud to help with minutes; Waiting on IT for information, instructions, and cost.
        - Orth will present to Administrative Senate once she has more information. If purchases occur, Senate will need to vote on that purchase.

    - Liaison (S. Will)
        - Positive outcome on the athletic fee being removed as a fee for employees.
        - Human Resources (HR) Business Partner Model and Initiatives –- Everyone in Human Resources has a central contact. Introduction of an HR business partner structure assigning a primary HR contact per division and more information will be shared at a later date. HR Manager Morgan Collins hired to support this reorganization.
        - Administrator Performance Evaluation – Administrators evaluations are coming. Trainings will be coming out for supervisors in early Fall. A committee that also consisted of Administrative Senate representation worked on this initiative.
        - Trainings – Supervisor training module in development (general supervision, financial management); additional trainings for non-supervisors planned. Employees have asked for supervisor and employee trainings and HR is working on developing these programs with Outreach and Engagement. Campus committee work resumed; spring rollout with feedback, followed by supervisor training and fall implementation.
        - Recognition and Retention – HR is planning to send out an employee survey to identify preferred recognition methods; focus on cost-neutral ideas; annual recognition luncheon in December continues.
        - HR Office Move – Potential HR move to Printing Services Annex to occur by July 20, 2026.
        - Conclusion – HR partner model established; training and evaluation rollout planned; recognition survey forthcoming.

b. Standing Committees
    - Employee Events and Outreach – Hannah Perigo, Chair; Lesley Groves, Vice Chair
        - Employee Events Survey Results
            - Discussion about Employee Events Survey results took place.
            - New form sent yesterday June 30, 2026 to collect interest in employee groups; 40 responses by July 1, 2026 lunch.
            - Top interest in movement and wellness groups.
            - Four respondents will to facilitate/co-facilitate; ten unsure.
            - Majority prefer lunchtime sessions; most provided contact information.

- Conclusion: Clear interest in wellness groups; next step is outreach to facilitators and scheduling.

- Employee Relations and Benefits – Michelle Kirk, Chair; Trista Lutgring, Vice Chair
  - Governance Communication Improvements
    - Discussion about a possible initiative generated from the survey to improve communication amongst governance groups to administrators took place.
    - Preference to use existing Administrative Senate, Faculty Senate, and Staff Council pages as a central space for all governance groups over new widgets/MyUSI due to maintenance concerns.
    - Proposed content: top three current items, recent accomplishments, feedback/tidbits; Lutgring to manage inclusion in USI Today.
    - Need buy-in from Faculty Senate and Staff Council; monthly updates from chairs would feed USI Today.
    - Exploring MyUSI dashboards to curate role-specific content via tagging.
  - Conclusion: Use Senate and Council pages plus USI Today; coordination with governance group chairs and T. Lutgring/A. Pryor pending.
- Professional Development – Spence Farmer, Chair; Jennifer Roberts, Vice Chair
  - Committee to meet in July 2026; focus on accessibility training for administrators and deliverables tailored to administrators.
  - Interest in continuing leadership programming similar to spring 2025.
  - Conclusion: Planning underway; specific programs to be defined after the committee meeting.
- Nominations and Elections – Jenny Garrison, Chair
  - Minimal activity expected in the near since elections has recently concluded; no report.

V. Unfinished Business

a. J. Garrison brought up two previous Items from Consideration that are still in the pipeline:
   - Extend parental leave from 2 to 6 weeks (with Faculty Senate buy-in); still under consideration.
   - Remove the 20-day cap for family sick leave to allow available sick time for self or family; recommendation made, outcome pending.
   - Conclusion: Both items remain under consideration; transferred to current Administrative Senate for follow-up.

b. **Ongoing Projects**:
   - Administrator Award Planning (J. Garrison)
     - The “Best of the Nest” traveling eagle award remains successful.
     - Exploring a more formal award with a stipend at the fall meeting to better recognize administrators; options include using Best of the Nest nominees as finalists or a separate process.

- Ongoing discussion with Jeff Sickman regarding budget use and tax implications.
- Conclusion: No decision yet; discussions continue; funds usage not definitively ruled out.

VI. New/Updates Business

a. Onboarding Training
   - Onboarding training for senators planned for the next meeting, led by A. Pryor.
   - Conclusion: Training deferred to next meeting.

b. Annual Reports
   - Annual reports have been submitted to former past chair/secretary T. Tieken, compiled by the chair, posted to the website and SharePoint, and distributed to the group.
   - Conclusion: Report distribution process confirmed.

c. Committee Appointments and Participation
   - Identification of members without committee assignments; plan to communicate and have members select committees.
   - Clarified progression: vice chair in year one may become chair in year two.
   - Consideration outreach via USI Today or email to invite non-senator administrators to serve on committees.
   - Committee information available on the website and in the bylaws; chairs to receive interest and schedule meetings as needed.
   - J. Dumond, vice chair offered to attend committee meetings on behalf of the Executive Committee; chairs/vice chairs can invite her.
   - Conclusion: Communication to assign committees will be sent; broader administrator participation encouraged.

d. Transcription Device Discussion
   - Proposal to purchase a Plaud device for meeting minutes; features include voice recognition, AI summaries, and feedback.
   - Free plan offers up to 300 minutes/month; device costs approximately $150-$250
   - M. Kirk may have an unused Plaud device; offered to speak with IT about reallocating it to the senate.
   - Conclusion: Explore obtaining the existing device from IT before purchasing; a vote will be required if a purchase is necessary. B. Orth will update Administrative Senate once she knows more.

VII. Announcements

a. Many jobs are open and posted on the HR website. Please share these opportunities with friends and family.

VIII. Adjournment

Meeting ended at 3:58 p.m.

M. Kirk motioned; S. Farmer seconded.

The next Administrative Senate Meeting is scheduled for August 5, 2026, in LA 1001.

Chair Report – A. Pryor

President's Council
Date: 2026-06-16
Location: USI

Meeting Notes

President's Council and Administrative Senate Updates

- **Council Member Changes:** Several members are departing. New members were introduced: Aaron Pryor (incoming Admin Senate Chair), Zach Ward (replacing Kyle Mara), and Sarah Hellenberg (replacing Abby Yates).

Financial Performance and Budgeting

- **FY End Financial Update (through August 31):**
    - **Revenue:** Actual appropriations were $2.57 million below budget due to state cuts. However, student fee revenue exceeded budget by $2.6 million (driven by D1 athletics fee and summer session timing), and gift/other revenue was also above budget. Overall, year-to-date revenue is $4.7 million over budget but down $1.1 million year-over-year.
    - **Expenses:** Expenses for services and supplies were $3.5 million over budget, largely due to foundation scholarship expenses not historically budgeted. Year-over-year expenses increased by approximately $11.4 million, driven by higher salaries/wages, benefits, services/supplies (including a $3.6 million non-cash investment market change), and financing costs.
    - **Conclusion:** The financial picture is mixed. While there are improvements, structural pressures persist as expenses are growing faster than revenues.

Overall, revenue is ahead of budget by $4.7 million, primarily because higher-than-expected student fee and gift revenue more than offset reductions in state appropriations. However, revenue is still slightly lower than the same point last year by $1.1 million. On the expense side, spending is above budget, with services and supplies $3.5 million over budget largely due to foundation scholarship expenses that were not historically included in the budget. Compared to last year, total expenses have increased by about $11.4 million, driven by higher salaries and wages, increased benefits, higher services and supplies costs (including a $3.6 million non-cash investment market adjustment), and increased financing costs. Overall, while revenue is outperforming budget expectations, expenses are also running higher than planned and significantly higher than last year.

Next Fiscal Year Budget Outlook:

- An initial deficit of ~$8.8–$9 million is projected. Efforts are underway to close this gap. Especially of note is USI's letter to retain their 5% holdback. Only USI has made such a request at this time.
- A 2% tuition increase would generate ~$1 million in revenue, but no decision on tuition policy was made.

IT and Device Procurement

- **Centralization Strategy:** IT is shifting from per-device maintenance charges to a single per-FTE charge to fund IT services and control costs. The goal is to centralize computer procurement to manage a 5-year replacement cycle for standard devices and a 7-year cycle for labs. This will help control the device count (currently over 3 devices per FTE) and manage significant hardware cost increases.
- **Procurement Process:** A new form will be used to justify purchases. This aims to avoid buying new machines when a redeployable one exists. Centralization allows for advance purchasing to mitigate price volatility. The university-wide maintenance chargeback will be maintained at ~$600,000 annually through these tighter controls.
- **Standards and Exceptions:** The standard machine cost is ~$1,600. Exceptions for higher-spec machines (e.g., ~$4,500) will require justification and financial manager approval. Peripherals like mice and keyboards will not be tightly controlled, but ergonomic guidance will be provided by Gina.
- **Implementation:** Communications about the new process and forms will be sent to financial managers this week. The long-term vision is to simplify chargebacks with a single annual charge, though this is still in development. Matt Brown, the new Director of Technical Services, will help implement the new processes.

Academic and Enrollment Updates

- **Academic Programs:**
  - The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accepted program combinations in LA.
  - Tenure review paperwork is being finalized, and reaccreditation applications for Social Work were submitted.
  - The English Department launched the New Harmony Book Award for debut fiction, won by C. Malan for "The Dog." A public reading is scheduled.
- **Enrollment and Orientation:**
  - Orientation sessions are at capacity with a 92% show rate. An August session was opened for later students.
  - Deposits are at 95% of the freshman goal and 75% of the transfer goal.
  - The Oakland City cohort shows progress, with 32 admitted and 14 deposited, though financial aid is a key factor.
  - Summer enrollment is up over 3% from last summer. However, fall enrollment is down just under 10% year-over-year, though there is potential to recover. Financial concerns are causing students to decide later.
  - International undergraduate enrollment is challenged by high cost-of-attendance requirements.

Community Engagement and University Initiatives

- **New Ford Fellow:** Justice White was introduced as the first Ford Fellow. A recent Taylor University graduate with a degree in History, she has experience in archives and is assisting with the strategic planning process.
- **Outreach to Schools:** The university is engaging with local elementary schools and met with Superintendent Bob Lawson to discuss building a student pipeline from Henderson. The accessibility of university centers and labs for freshmen is a key selling point.

- **USI vs. UE Basketball:** The "River City Classic" men's basketball game is set for November 7, 2026, at the Ford Center, marking the first regular-season D1 matchup between the universities.
- **Community Events in New Harmony:** The Firefly Festival is scheduled for June 26-27. The July 4th celebration's drone show has been moved to July 11 at Splash of Color to avoid scheduling conflicts.

Ongoing Focus of President's Council

- Create women's basketball series with the University of Evansville.
- Continue working on building a student pipeline from Henderson.
- Finalize details and the new computer procurement process.

Admin Senate Takeaways

- Jeff Sponn noted someone had reduced the Admin Senate budget by 2.75%, which amounted to an insignificant $15.12.
    - To comply with new requirements for itemizing hospitality expenses on the front end of the budget, Sponn and Pryor agreed to initially budget for four events per year, designating them as 'quarterly events'.
- To comply with new budget requirements, it was agreed that the Admin Senate budget would provisionally include four quarterly social events for the upcoming year—requiring a focused effort to create an event draft early in the admin senate term.

Committee Goals

Employee Events and Outreach:

1. Develop a new administrator onboarding experience - cards, check-in emails, potential buddy system
2. Connect more with current administrators by hosting more events - i.e., BYOLs, employee walks, etc.
3. Monthly administrator emails

Employee Relations & Benefits

1. Standardize flexible work arrangements: Define eligibility criteria by role, set a default baseline (e.g., 1–2 remote days/week where duties allow), and allow ad hoc flexibility for short term needs for those not utilizing consistent remote days. FREE in terms of actual costs.
2. Create a sick leave donation bank: Re-draft policy and pilot within one area. We need to consider the HR Administrative burden and come up with solutions there. Also, this could be considered a "FREE" endeavor.
3. On campus childcare: Conduct a feasibility study and partnership scan - If anything admin senate can "post" our efforts in USI today to show if this is possible.
4. Compensation and livable wages – always a concern and main reason we can't keep Administrative Assistants here….constant turnover in some departments due to wages; Athletics Department and Marketing/Communications Department all got wage increases when the University went to D1. No other areas were upgraded like that.
5. Vacation Time Policies – need to extend the cap and adjust the earning of vacation days based on tenure (reach 10 years = more vacation).
6. Dress Code Flexibility – helps with costs of business attire, retention, etc.
7. Expanded Flexible Work arrangements – helps with recruiting and retention.

Professional Development

1. Provide at least one professional development opportunity for administrators per semester
2. Provide the online new administrator welcome session to all new administrators on a regular basis
3. Continue to add content and resources to the Admin Senate PD web page to share professional development opportunities, links to FAQs, and serve as a resource for administrators.

Nominations & Elections

1. Increase election participation (# of votes) by 5%
2. Utilize Past Chairs to promote elections
3. Review the election process to ensure user-friendliness
4. Engage constituents throughout the year to increase top-of-mind awareness