

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE
URBANA SENATE OBSERVER
(Final; Information)

SC.26.26 Report on the May 21, 2026, Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois System in Urbana

University of Illinois Board of Trustees – Meeting Highlights

<https://www.trustees.uillinois.edu/trustees/minutes/2026/May-21-2026-BOT.pdf>

1. Opening Remarks: Chairman Jesse H. Ruiz

2. Introduction of Ariann Mizan (Student Trustee and new UIUC alumna) to perform State Song: Illinois

3. Introduction of Senate Observers and Academic Professional Staff

Urbana: Angela Lyons

Springfield: Lynn Fisher

Chicago: Sandra De Groote

USC: William Maher

Academic Professional Staff: Eric Kurt

4. President Killeen's Remarks

- <https://www.trustees.uillinois.edu/trustees/agenda/May-21-2026/p-May-26-president-report.pptx>
- Beyond Commencement – 28,000 graduating students
- Outcomes: By the numbers – value of the college education and ROI of a degree at Illinois.
- Outcomes: Impacting lives – Impact on our communities within Illinois. Workforce and long-run economic outcomes.
- President Killeen presented a video showcasing three students (Sara Poletti ACE, UIUC; Ignat Striletskyi, Poli Sci, UIS; Jakara Hubbard, Doctor of Medicine, UIC)
- Purpose and responsibility – potential and purpose of our new graduates, helping our graduates feel a strong sense of optimism and hope
- Outcomes – impacting lives; impacts within local economies
- Education: The job of a lifetime

5. Chancellor Isbell's Welcome and Remarks

- <https://www.trustees.uillinois.edu/trustees/agenda/May-21-2026/p-May-26-chancellor-welcome.pptx>

- The Chancellor presented a review of his first year
- Largest freshman class ever (total enrollment: 60,848; 6,587 students from Illinois; 27,978 undergraduates are from Illinois)
- Celebration of diversity (50th Anniversary of Morrill Engineering Program; 40th Anniversary of the Diversity Breakfast; the naming of several new laboratories and centers)
- “We must actually listen, as opposed to simply waiting our turn to speak.”
- Graduate success (93% of our students found a job or enrolled in a grad or volunteer program within six months of graduation; 80% of Illinois residents secured their first destination within the state of Illinois; 91% of graduates report participating in experiential learning opportunities while at Illinois)
- Institutional awards/designations (Illinois received the 2026 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification; Illinois named one of its five national recipients of the 2026 Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization; Illinois receives NCI designation for Basic Cancer Center)
- An update on the Chancellor’s Strategic Planning Process and goals for the Fall

6. University Senates Conference (USC) Presentation

- <https://www.trustees.uillinois.edu/trustees/agenda/May-21-2026/p-May-26-USC-presentation.pptx>
- Kate Clancy, Urbana USC Member, presented to the BOT, title “Public Education for the Public Good”

7. BOT Committee Reports

- 4 committee reports were briefly presented:
 - Governance, Personnel, and Ethics Committee (Trustee Gutman)
 - University Healthcare System Committee: Litigation (Trustee Ruiz)
 - Audit, Budget, Finance, and Facilities (Trustee Cepeda)
 - Academic and Student Affairs Committee (Trustee Craig Schilling)
- Recognition of retirees and student trustees from UIUC, UIC, and UIS

8. Public Comment Session

- Stadium naming: A member of the public spoke against the renaming of the stadium after Gies.
- Open Meetings Act (OMA): A member of the public alleged the Board violated OMA.
- International student protections: A UIUC student raised concerns and referenced a petition with 1,000+ signatures proposing policies to protect international students' rights, tied to ongoing collective bargaining issues.
- Animal research practices: A few UIUC students and alumni raised ethical concerns about animal research on campus, including allegations of cruelty toward dogs at a research facility called "Ridgeland Farms." Speakers called for UIUC to cut ties with the facility and to phase out animal testing more broadly.

- New mascot adoption: A few UIUC students expressed continued concern that the new mascot (the Kingfisher) has not yet been formally adopted.
- Climate and divestment: A few students raised ongoing concerns about environmental issues and the climate crisis, calling for divestment.
- Canvas learning management system: Two specialized faculty members raised concerns about the decision to hold final exams on Sunday — which fell on Mother's Day — as a result of the Canvas system disruption, and the various impacts this decision had on faculty.

9. Consideration of Agenda Items and Voting

- Regular Agenda: By unanimous vote, agenda items 1-24 were approved.
- Roll Call Agenda: In a roll call vote, items 25-32 were approved, with one abstention each on items 27 and 29.

10. Other Reports and Comments

- Closing Remarks: Chairman Ruiz
- Closing Remarks: President Killeen
- There was no “Old Business” from Board Members
- There was no “New Business” from Board Members
- Announcements from Chair of the Board regarding upcoming meetings.
- Board meeting adjourned at 1:11pm.

11. Executive Session

Submitted by
 Angela Lyons, Chair
 2025-2026 Senate Executive Committee