MINUTES

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

September 3, 2026

The Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee of the University of Southern Indiana Board of Trustees met on Thursday, September 3, 2026, in the Griffin Center on campus. Present were Committee Chair Ronald D. Romain ’73 and Trustees Christine H. Keck; Glen J. Kissel; Christina M. Ryan; and Michael J. Solliday ’27. Also in attendance were President Steven J. Bridges ’89 M’95; Provost Shelly B. Blunt; and Vice President for Government Affairs and General Counsel Zachary A. LaGrange.

Committee Chair Romain called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

1. BUILDING THE USI-ASTRAZENECA PARTNERSHIP FOR WORKFORCE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Committee Chair Romain called on Provost Blunt to introduce Dr. Teri Beam, Dean of the Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education. Dr. Beam, supported by Steven Stump from the Center for Applied Research, reported on the College’s two-week, full-time summer faculty externship established with AstraZeneca. Dr. Susan Ely, Associate Professor of Engineering, and Dr. Bill Bangel, Assistant Professor of Engineering, completed projects focused on packaging processes, Lean Six Sigma, and manufacturing efficiency through the externship.

Dr. Ely explained she and Dr. Bangel worked in AstraZeneca’s Mount Vernon packaging department during separate summer periods on projects aligned with their Lean Six Sigma and manufacturing expertise. Dr. Bangel brought experience in heavy manufacturing, while Dr. Ely contributed pharmaceutical manufacturing experience.

The engagement included operational qualification and launch support for Baxfendy/Baxfendi, AstraZeneca’s first new product in approximately 10 years. The Mount Vernon facility was selected for global packaging because of its high-speed bottling line. Dr. Ely also participated in Human Performance Event Learning to identify and prevent potential errors during the product dry run; the resulting recommendations were implemented successfully.

Dr. Ely identified potential opportunities for continued collaboration, including artificial intelligence applications to improve equipment efficiency through collaborative robots and advanced robotics, AstraZeneca-sponsored senior design projects, and continued faculty externships. She noted externships generate case studies that can be incorporated into the curriculum and enhance student learning.

2. FALL 2026 ENROLLMENT UPDATE AND INTERNATIONAL ADMISSIONS

Trustee Romain called on Provost Blunt to introduce Dr. Michael Dixon, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, for a Fall 2026 pre-census enrollment update.

Graduate Studies offers 15 programs with six annual start dates, making the August census a partial measure. As of August 24, 2026, USI received 1,350 applications, admitted 1,049 students, and enrolled 689 new students. Total graduate enrollment was 1,804, with additional enrollment expected for the October start date. Although enrollment was slightly below the prior year, credit-hour production totaled 11,235, which is an increase over this date for Fall 2025. Dr. Dixon noted economic conditions appear to be influencing students to accelerate degree completion or delay enrollment decisions.

Dr. Dixon reviewed the consolidation of international admissions processing for graduate and undergraduate applicants within Graduate Studies. Improvements included a unified applicant workflow covering admission, I-20, visa, and arrival processes; separation of immigration requirements for online students; a sequenced email campaign that assigns one action per message; and migration from manual spreadsheets to USI’s customer

relations management (CRM) system. Real-time reporting now shows applicants' progress through the enrollment process. These changes have improved efficiency and applicant experience while allowing staff to focus on higher-value activities.

3. UNDERGRADUATE RECRUITING IN REAL TIME: ENROLLMENT INSIGHTS AND STRATEGIC RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES

Trustee Romain called on Provost Blunt to introduce Koryn Parsons '11 M'14, Director of Undergraduate Admissions, for a Fall 2026 pre-census enrollment update.

Ms. Parsons reported, as of August 24, 2026, Fall 2026 new undergraduate enrollment consisted of 5,935 applications, 4,806 admitted applicants, and 1,334 net deposits. New undergraduate student enrollment stood at 1,318, which was slightly below the prior year. Transfer applications and admissions increased, while net deposits were nearly flat. Regional enrollment patterns remained consistent from 2024 through 2026. The decline in western Kentucky enrollment reflects current economic pressures and students choosing lower-cost community colleges.

Undergraduate Admissions continues to refine strategies that bring prospective students to campus, which is a key factor in enrollment decisions. In response to stagnant campus visit numbers and rising travel costs, USI piloted an initiative for transportation and visit support using University vans, chartered transportation, school bus and meal assistance, and travel stipends for admitted students from more distant counties. Ten families received $40 stipends, with nine of those students subsequently making deposits.

Undergraduate Admissions also launched two data-informed pilots for students who had withdrawn from USI: one for students eligible for direct admission to the Coudret Nursing Program and the other for students whose combined aid covered full tuition.

After the Coudret Nursing Program revised its test-score criteria for direct admission, USI identified 31 withdrawn students in the tri-state area and notified them of their eligibility by email and text. Undergraduate Admissions then automated notifications through the University's CRM to streamline applications, communicate decisions earlier, and encourage deposits.

For the financial aid outreach pilot, Undergraduate Admissions identified 41 local students whose combined aid covered full tuition. Staff contacted the students by email, text, and telephone, sometimes making up to four contacts. Seven of those contacted students expressed interest and were referred to Student Financial Assistance for follow-up.

Ms. Parsons concluded by noting Undergraduate Admissions uses high school class-size data to align recruitment with changing conditions. As many high schools reduce or eliminate college fairs, campus visits remain the most effective conversion strategy.

4. STUDENT SUCCESS AND CONTINUING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ENROLLMENT UPDATE

Trustee Romain called on Provost Blunt to provide an update on student success and continuing undergraduate enrollment.

Provost Blunt referred to a handout summarizing the pre-census data presented by Dr. Dixon and Ms. Parsons, along with continuing-student enrollment. She noted the pre-census counts were expected to increase slightly by the September 14 census date. Continuing student enrollment was at 3,520 with a target of 3,525 and exceeded the prior year's 3,513. Retention remains steady at 71.4%. The College Achievement Program (dual credit) had 1,724 students enrolled, with several hundred applications pending. A full enrollment breakdown will be presented at the November meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:07 a.m.