SIU

Southern Illinois University System

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November 20, 2026

Members of the Board Academic Matters Committee

Ed Hightower, Chair
Zuzanna Gaik
Sara Salger
Toni Williams

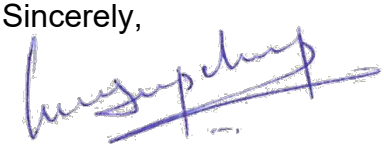
Dear Committee Members:

The Academic Matters Committee will meet on Thursday, December 3, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. at the Tedrick Welcome Center on the Southern Illinois University Carbondale campus with YouTube option.

The agenda and minutes from the September 17, 2026, meeting are enclosed.

I look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Sincerely,



Gireesh V. Gupchup
Vice President for Academic Innovation, Planning, and Partnerships

GVG/jl

Attachments

c: Mo Abuzaneh
Deborah Barnett
Ed Curtis
J. Phil Gilbert
John Simmons
Dan Mahony
Austin Lane
Ian Martin
James Minor
Other Interested Parties

Office of the President
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AGENDA

MEETING OF THE
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ACADEMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE

Thursday, December 3, 2026
9:00 a.m.

Tedrick Welcome Center
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Carbondale, Illinois
Also available via live stream video at
siusystem.edu via YouTube

1. Announcements

2. Approval of Minutes of the Meeting September 17, 2026

3. Information Report: *Performance Report*

4. Information Report: *Paul Simon Public Policy Institute Advisory Board Composition, Carbondale Campus, SIUC*

5. SIU System Strategic Plan 2026-2031 Approval (Board Agenda Item J)

6. Recommendation for Honorary Degree, SIUC
   [Colvin] (Board Agenda Item K)

7. Recommendation for Honorary Degree, SIUC
   [Blaudow] (Board Agenda Item L)

8. Recommendation for Honorary Degree, SIUC
   [Chiu] (Board Agenda Item M)

9. Recommendation for Distinguished Service Award, SIUC
   [Behrmann] (Board Agenda Item N)

10. Recommendation for Distinguished Service Award, SIUC
    [Aylward] (Board Agenda Item O)

11. Recommendation for Distinguished Service Award, SIUC
    [Lo] (Board Agenda Item P)

12. Recommendation for Honorary Degree, SIUE [Durbin] (Board Agenda Item Q)

13. Recommendation for Honorary Degree, SIUE [McMillan] (Board Agenda Item R)

14. Recommendation for Honorary Degree, SIUE [Smith] (Board Agenda Item S)

15. Recommendation for Honorary Degree, SIUE [Cole] (Board Agenda Item T)

16. Recommendation for Honorary Degree, SIUE [Whitehead] (Board Agenda Item U)

17. Recommendation for Distinguished Service Award, SIUE [Keene] (Board Agenda Item V)

18. Recommendation for Distinguished Service Award, SIUE [Sappington] (Board Agenda Item W)

19. Other Business

20. Adjournment

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Minutes of the Academic Matters Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 17, 2026

SIU Edwardsville – School of Dental Medicine
2800 College Avenue
Roller Hall, Room 1511
Main Clinic Building, Building 263
Alton, Illinois

Immediately following the Executive Committee
live stream video at siusystem.edu via YouTube

The Academic Matters Committee met at 9:04 a.m. on Thursday, September 17, 2026, in person. Present were: Ed Hightower (chair), Zuzanna Gaik, Sara Salger, and Toni Williams. Other Board members present were: Deborah Barnett, Mo Abuzaneh, Ed Curtis, J. Phil Gilbert, and John Simmons. Executive Officers present were: President Dan Mahony; Vice President Justin Oates; Vice President Sheila Caldwell; Vice President Gireesh Gupchup; Chancellor Austin Lane, SIUC; Chancellor James Minor, SIUE; and Dean and Provost Ian Martin, SIU School of Medicine.

Announcements

Dr. Gupchup mentioned the hire of Dr. Abigail Eilerman as the Director for the System Institute for Rural Health. The position was offered at The Wedge in Alton.

Dr. Gupchup also mentioned there was a NASH Grow with Google learn-a-thon that took place at The Wedge. He highlighted a student that was having trouble authenticating with their phone. An individual walked them through the process. Four weeks later, the student had created an App and a promotional video using AI. This is an example of what we do. It is a reminder that innovation does not begin with technical expertise. Sometimes it is just someone taking the time to help them get started.

Approval of Minutes of the Meeting July 9, 2026

Motion was made by Trustee Williams to approve the minutes of the July 9, 2026, meeting. The motion was duly seconded by Trustee Gaik. Madam Secretary called roll call with Hightower, Gaik, Salger, and Williams passing the motion.

Inventor of the Year Award Presentation to Andrew Wilber

Rob Patino, Director of the Office of Technology Management and Industry Relations for the SIU System introduced 2026 Inventor of the Year Andrew Wilber (SOM) and provided background on the research and achievements that led to his being named this year's recipient. Dr. Wilber accepted the award in person and had his photo taken with Board Chair Gilbert and President Mahony.

Faculty Collaboration Award Presentation to Deja Finley (SIUE), M. Rebecca Hoffman (SOM), and Safia McNeese (formerly SOM)

Faculty Advisory Committee members and Faculty Senate Presidents, Susan Weidenger (SIUE) and Khalid Meksem (SIUC), introduced this year's winners and provided background information about the collaborative work they are doing. This year the award went to Drs. Deja Finley (SIUE), M. Rebecca Hoffman (SOM), and Safia McNeese (formerly SOM) on their collaborative work with advancing health equity, interprofessional education and innovative models of team-based healthcare delivery. They accepted their awards in person and had their photo taken with Board Chair Gilbert and President Mahony.

Informational Report: *Program Quality Assurance FY2026*

Dr. Gupchup gave a brief overview of the report.

Informational Report: *Grant Awards and Contracts FY2026*

Dr. Gupchup introduced chief research officers from each campus, Dr. Chris Slaten (SIUE), Dr. Costas Tsatsoulis (SIUC), and Dr. Don Torry (SoM) who presented executive summaries of their research grants and shared short videos on the Mellon Foundation Project (SIUE), Center for Archeological Investigations (SIUC), and the Multidisciplinary Biomedical and Biological Sciences Graduate Program (SoM).

Other Business

Having no further business before it, the Academic Matters Committee adjourned at 9:51 a.m.

Adjournment

GVG/jl

Southern Illinois University
Board of Trustees
December 3, 2026

INFORMATIONAL ITEM: PAUL SIMON PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE ADVISORY BOARD COMPOSITION, CARBONDALE CAMPUS, SIUC

Background

Since 1997, the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute has focused on promoting ethical conduct in government; opportunity and fair treatment for people in America and throughout the world; and responsible citizenship for all Americans, particularly young Americans. The Institute's advisory board was believed to have been established by the Board of Trustees by 2001. In 2026, however, it was determined that, like other institutional advisory boards, it had not been established by the Board of Trustees. This informational item clarifies the advisory board's status and outlines how the University will structure the board.

Advisory Board Composition

The Advisory Board is an active group of 12 standing and appointed members who serve as consultants to the Director. The Advisory Board supports the Director by bringing external perspectives and acting as a resource on public policy issues, programming opportunities, and development efforts.

The Advisory Board consists of six standing members and six appointed members. The standing members are the Chancellor, the chief executive officer of the SIU Foundation, two representatives of the Simon family, and two political appointees, one from each major state political party appointed by each party's chairperson.

Appointments and Terms

The six standing members will agree on the appointment of the six appointed members. Should the standing members be unable to reach unanimous agreement, the Chancellor will make the final decision. Each appointed member will serve a four-year term effective on the date established in the member's appointment records. Paul Simon Public Policy Institute staff will maintain and monitor those records.

Meetings

The Advisory Board will meet at least once per year. The Director of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute is responsible for convening and coordinating the meeting.

This update is provided for the Board's information. No action is requested as part of this item.