

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS**

January 22, 2026

A meeting of the Board of Trustees was convened on January 22, 2026, at 11:25 am in the Grand Ballroom of MLK Jr. University Union, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois. Mr. Chris Hicks, Chair, presided.

Roll Call

Roll was called:

Ms. Baurer	Present
Ms. Everett	Present
Ms. Madigan	Absent
Mr. Ngoboh	Absent
Dr. Rancho	Absent
Ms. Veatch	Present
Mr. Hicks	Present

Also present were the following:

Dr. Jay Gatrell, President
Dr. Holly Farley, Acting Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dr. Anne Flaherty, Vice President for Student Affairs
Mr. Matt Bierman, Vice President for Business Affairs
Mr. Mike Hutchinson, Director of Business Services/Treasurer
Ms. Mindy Spencer, Vice President for University Advancement
Mr. Josh Norman, Vice President for Enrollment Management
Mr. Austin Hill, General Counsel
Ms. Cindy Hutchison, Assistant Secretary, Board of Trustees

Executive Session

Ms. Veatch moved that the Board of Trustees convene in Executive Session to consider employment of employees, collective negotiating matters and executive session minutes as permitted by Section 2.C.1, 2 and 21 of the Open Meetings Act. Ms. Everett seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, motion carried.

Ms. Veatch moved to return to the Open Session. Ms. Baurer seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, motion carried.

The Board of Trustees reconvened after lunch at 1:00 pm in the Grand Ballroom of MLK Jr. University Union for the remainder of the Board of Trustees meeting.

Report from Board Chair

Chair Hicks opened the meeting with a welcome to all in attendance and thanked the group for their commitment to Eastern Illinois University.

Committee Reports

Executive/Planning Committee

Chair Hicks shared President Gatrell's Springfield update emphasizing we are expecting a flat budget to be announced in mid-February from the governor's office. Senator Rose recently advanced a bill that will reduce auditing compliance issues, specifically concerning faculty time reporting which has been a recurring finding at universities.

Reorganization efforts were discussed and the plan will be presented next week during President Gatrell's Spring Update. With the departure of General Counsel, Austin Hill at the end of January, a new model for his position will be used going forward. Laura McLaughlin is returning to EIU January 26, 2026, in a part time capacity as General Counsel; Carson Klein will begin January 26, 2026, also in a part time capacity as the Special Assistant & Chief FOIA officer; and Shawn Peoples, Office of Civil Rights, will take on ethics duties. A review will be done in a year before making this model permanent. Chair Hicks thanked Mr. Hill for his dedication and service to Eastern Illinois University.

Finance/Audit Committee

Chair Hicks reported on Mike Hutchinson's line-item status report and VP Bierman's budget update, purchase approvals and bond discussion. The two purchase approvals being brought to the board for vote are: (1) Cooling Tower of Lawson – Modification and (2) Thomas Hall Renovation Construction Document Design. The University is reviewing our debt options with Chapman and Cutler and Blue Rose, the option to borrow between \$12 - \$14 M for the renovation of Thomas Hall. Updates were given on the utility tunnel project, Frost Field lights and the Science Building.

Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Ms. Everett shared VP Farley's reorganization update and the process to date. The deadline for reorganization proposals was November 21, 2025, and 21 were received. Stakeholders met on December 9, 2025, that included faculty senate executive members, faculty, chairs and administrators from all four colleges. On January 13, 2026, President Gatrell shared a draft of the

reorganization plan and asked for feedback. The reorganization will generate cost savings of over \$500,000 with no program reductions.

VP Farley also presented the Associate of Arts in General Studies that is to be voted on at today's meeting. This degree will serve a growing population of students who have some college and no degree. Former EIU students would qualify if they have successfully earned at least 60 credit hours with a minimum of 2.0 GPA. VP Farley thanked Dr. Suzie Park and the CLAS Deans Office and Curriculum Committee for their work on this project.

Ms. Everett shared VP Flaherty's update on the Thomas Hall renovations. The initial estimate came in over budget at \$29 M; cuts were made to focus on need over want. The final plan will be brought to the board in April with a goal to begin construction early Summer 2026 and open to students Fall 2027. VP Flaherty acknowledged Mark Hudson and his team for all the work and research done on this project and thanked him for his over 25 years of dedication to EIU. Mr. Hudson accepted the VSIP and will be leaving EIU at the end of January. Jeremy Alexander will serve as interim director until a search next fall.

Five proposals were received and presentations were made on campus for RFI textbook rental. It was decided to focus on a bookstore popper also known as a spirit shop. We are currently waiting for a final offer from one of the vendors.

The EIU alert system has been changed from an opt-in to an opt-out model. Students, faculty and employees are automatically enrolled and up to four additional numbers can be added per individual. The speaker system around campus that announces weather emergencies can now be used for an active shooter alert. VP Flaherty thanked Ryan Gibson and his team for all their work to improve communication.

University Advancement and Alumni Relations Committee

Ms. Everett shared VP Spencer's update for University Advancement and Alumni Relations. Raiser's Edge is live and fully functional. VP Spencer shared that Mike Murray retired at the end of the year and Jon McKenzie will retire in January. She thanked them both for their years of service to EIU. The Foundation Executive Officer responsibilities will move to VP Spencer and Nancy Murray will take on supervisor duties and high-level projects. Mallorie Fonseca has joined the Foundation team as Associate Director of Gift Administration and Clint Harper joined the Advancement team as Associate Director of Alumni Engagement.

FY26 fundraising updates included gifts received totaling \$3,177,294 with individual gifts averaging \$810; annual fund is \$2,369,887. Giving Day will be on April 22, 2026, and the Undergraduate Research Fund will launch on this day. Ms. Everett announced she will be offering a challenge again this year.

Dr. Don Holly will be speaking at the February 12 alumni event in Scottsdale, AZ. Visit the Alumni Relations website to view all upcoming events. [Alumni Events | EIU Alumni Relations | Eastern Illinois University](#)

Enrollment Management Update

Mr. Hicks shared VP Norman’s Strategic Enrollment Planning update. Most of the 100 action items are completed or in motion. A re-entry program will offer incremental scholarships to help former students with outstanding debt and support REUP to re-engage students who left EIU before July 2023.

Spring enrollment is expected to decline by 2%. International student enrollment continues to decline with 240 students in comparison to nearly 900 in Fall 2024. Undergraduate enrollment is stable and seeing an increase in new domestic first year students and incoming spring transfers. Retention among first years is up 2.3% with nearly a 7% gain among students in the new PACK program.

FASFA submissions are 16% higher than last year and campus visits are up 10%. Financial Aid packets are expected to be completed by the end of this week.

Action Items

- A. Ms. Baurer moved to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2025 board meeting. Ms. Everett seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, motion carried.

- B. 1. Ms. Baurer moved to approve the purchase approval of Cooling Tower at Lawson Modification. The lowest bidder, including alternates and contingencies, is higher than estimated. Alternates #1 and #4 can be deferred to a later project date; Alternates #1 and 2 is \$728,712. A 10% contingency is included, bringing the total amount to \$801,583. Ms. Everett seconded the motion.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Ms. Baurer	Yes
Ms. Everett	Yes
Ms. Madigan	Absent
Ms. Veatch	Yes
Mr. Ngoboh	Absent
Dr. Ranchoero	Absent
Mr. Hicks	Yes

Motion carried.

2. Ms. Everett moved to approve the purchase approval Thomas Hall Renovation Construction Document Design. Cost not to exceed \$1,100,000. Ms. Baurer seconded the motion.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Ms. Baurer	Yes
Ms. Everett	Yes
Ms. Madigan	Absent
Ms. Veatch	Yes
Mr. Ngoboh	Absent
Dr. Ranchoero	Absent
Mr. Hicks	Yes

Motion carried.

- C. Ms. Everett moved to approve the Master Contract between EIU and EIUF Board. Ms. Veatch seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, motion carried.
- D. Ms. Baurer moved to approve the Transfer Lease of Baber Woods to Grand Prairie Friends. Ms. Veatch seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, motion carried.
- E. Ms. Everett moved to approve the New Program – General Studies, A.A. Ms. Veatch seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, motion carried.

Information Items

President's Report

President Gatrell introduced Dr. Robert Strausbaugh who gave a presentation on the EIU Observatory.

The EIU Observatory is located south of Lantz Stadium and houses the largest telescope at a public Illinois university measuring 16" in diameter. The initial funding for the Observatory came from Brenda and Randy Wright and P. Scott Smith. Construction began in 2002 pioneered by Jim Conwell and was completed in 2004. A second dome and telescope were added in 2018 for solar astronomy, and a new dome and weather station were installed in 2024. A new camera was acquired in 2025 and first light with the new camera is scheduled for Summer 2026.

Research projects include international collaborations with Skynet and GRANDMA; time-domain astronomy; student research in dome automation and detector characterization.

The Observatory hosts monthly open houses typically on the last Friday of the month during the Fall and Spring semesters. EIU Astronomy Club, local school class visits, Scout events and other special astronomical events are also held at the Observatory.

Reports from Constituencies

Faculty Senate – Mr. Todd Bruns shared updates from Faculty Senates January 13 meeting. He thanked President Gatrell for his transparency and emphasis on shared governance throughout the reorganization process. Three new senators have been appointed to faculty senate: Gabe Grant, Steve Scher, and Kiran Padmaraju with Amy Davis alternating as a replacement for Jeanne Okrasinski. EIU Think Tank was created in 2022 and in recent years has lost several of its members. Todd Burns and Teshome Abebe are developing a set of format and skills criteria. When the work is complete, they will discuss it to President Gatrell and appoint individuals to serve.

Student Senate – Ms. Claire Weber shared updates from Student Senate. Senate currently has 11 sitting senators, and they will begin preparing them for budget season. Monday, January 26 begins SGA week and Pantherpalooza is on January 31.

Summary of Purchases \$100,000 - \$249,999 and Exempt Purchases

Vendor	Type of Purchase	Bids	Amount
Dynamic Controls Inc.	Building Automation Upgrade	(A)	\$245,274.00
Spears Aquatics LLC	Swimming Pool Filter Upgrade	(B)	\$124,929.00
Getz Fire Equipment Company	Buzzard Hall Fire Alarm Upgrade	(C)	\$115,924.00

- (A) Sole Source # EIUDLS2602
- (B) Emergency Purchase # EIUMRW2602
- (C) Sole Source # EIUMEM2602

Deposit & Investment Report for the Quarter ended 9-30-2025

For the quarter ending December 31, 2025, the University had an average daily invested cash balance of \$102,703,266.78 and a net average daily balance of \$101,793,461.98. The annualized average yield was 4.14%.

Financial Aid Summary, FY25

More than 50% of Eastern’s total student population and over 80% of the eligible students received some type of financial assistance in FY 2025 in the form of scholarships, grants, loans, tuition waivers and/or employment from various federal, state, university, and other programs. Financial aid in FY 2025 totaled \$89,415,293, with the average aid amount students received increasing by over 4%. The percentage breakdown of financial aid sources was: 41% federal, 16% state, 32% institutional, and 11% other.

University Highlights

University Highlights were provided as well as spotlight events around campus, student/faculty/staff/alumni honors and achievements, athletic events and honors.

Other Matters – None

Public Comment

The following individual provided public comment:

- Michele McDaniel

To learn more about the procedures for public comment, please visit:

<https://www.eiu.edu/trustees/regulation01.php#:~:text=At%20the%20end,to%20the%20Board>

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 1:54 p.m.