

MINUTES

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA BOARD OF TRUSTEES

February 7, 2022

The University of Southern Indiana Board of Trustees met in special session on Monday, February 7, 2022, in the University Center on campus. Present were Chair Ronald D. Romain '73; and Trustees W. Harold Calloway; Liam H. Collins '23; John M. Dunn; Daniel M. Fuquay; Christine H. Keck; Jeffrey L. Knight; Christina M. Ryan and Kenneth L. Sendelweck '76. Also, in attendance was President Ronald S. Rochon.

Chair Romain called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

SECTION I – GENERAL AND ACADEMIC MATTERS

A. DISCUSS THE POTENTIAL NCAA APPLICATION FOR RECLASSIFICATION TO DIVISION I

Chair Romain began by announcing the Board of Trustees will discuss the potential application to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) for reclassification from Division II to Division I athletics at the University of Southern Indiana. He thanked the members of the Division I Exploratory Committee, led by Jon Mark Hall and Nick LaRowe, for their extensive and thorough work in conducting the readiness study and for providing their findings wholistically to assist the Board of Trustees with their deliberations. Mr. Romain expressed appreciation to the Pictor Group consultants for their expertise in providing information on the overall landscape of national intercollegiate athletics, the NCAA constitutional conference projections and current conference movements, amongst other things. Mr. Romain also thanked faculty, staff, students, alumni, retirees, and community members for their input and direct outreach to him regarding this prospect.

Chair Romain recognized USI's past presidents Dr. David L. Rice, Dr. H. Ray Hoops and Dr. Linda L. M. Bennett, for the "big thinking" they did over the years that led USI down this path of bold and daring ideology, like a move to Division I athletics. Each one, in their own right, had points in time where they led this University in very strategic and important ways. Beginning with the early on experiences of Dr. Rice who was asked to serve as President of a university that was a start-up operation, in which many considered "not-needed" in the region or state. Dr. Hoops worked tirelessly and met with unsurmountable resistance to bring Engineering programs to this institution and region. Dr. Bennett expanded our MBA program, brought our first doctoral program to USI with the Doctor of Nursing Practice, and developed our first five-year strategic plan. USI would not be where it is today, if not for the bold thinking of previous leaders.

Chair Romain continued his comments by thanking each of the Trustees for their individual work and careful due diligence in exploring this potential move. Trustees have been thoughtful throughout the process, examined every facet of information they received, and considered all voices in their deliberations.

Following the chair's comments, he called for a motion. Trustee Liam Collins motioned the University submit an application to the NCAA for reclassification from Division II to Division I athletics at the University of Southern Indiana. Trustee John Dunn seconded the motion.

Chair Romain called for points of discussion. Trustee Keck thanked Chair Romain and President Rochon for their leadership through this process. She stated in her role as past board chair for the Southwest Indiana Chamber (now a part of the Evansville Regional Economic Partnership), a significant priority was to continue the momentum experienced over the past few years in all aspects of elevating the Evansville region including educational experiences. In going through the process of exploring the potential move, Trustee Keck explained there are many analogies between what has been identified by the business community as aspirational for our region, to what we are discussing for this University.

Chair Romain restated the question and called for a roll call vote. He instructed the Trustees to state "yea" for affirmative vote, "nay" for negative vote, and "present" if abstaining.

Trustee Calloway – Yea. Mr. Calloway stated he has been associated with the University since 1973 when he served as Director of Financial Aid. At that time, USI consisted of two buildings and the basketball team was

playing in borrowed gymnasiums. He recalled the first ever ISUE basketball game held in the old Central High School downtown, the first game held on campus in the Physical Activity Center (PAC), and the first game held in the Screaming Eagles Arena. During the 1995 championship game, the men's team was down 27 points in the first half, then came back in the 2nd half and won the title. USI continues to persevere. He has served this institution in his role as Trustee for over 12 years and has witnessed this University moving in an upward trajectory for nearly 50 years. To continue movement in this direction, Mr. Calloway's vote was yea.

Trustee Collins – Yea. As the student representative on the Board, Mr. Collins explained what a move to Division I brings to the student body and the campus community in the form of engagement opportunities and enrichment of the student experience. USI is a Division I institution in the quality of their staff, faculty, and programs and for this and many other reasons, Mr. Collins voted yea.

Trustee Dunn – Yea.

Trustee Fuquay – Yea. Mr. Fuquay stated this is a natural progression for the University, and after 50 plus years it is time USI continues to progress as it has in the past.

Trustee Keck – Yea.

Trustee Knight – Yea. In five years, Mr. Knight believes the University community will look back on this milestone moment and will find it has propelled this institution into a higher level of achievement and success academically and athletically for its students and the Evansville community.

Trustee Ryan – Yea.

Trustee Sendelweck – Yea. As a proud alumnus, Mr. Sendelweck reminisced about the two buildings on campus and playing basketball himself in the gym at the old Central High School in intramural sports. He reinforced the statement that this is a natural progression and one that has been in question for many years. Mr. Sendelweck believes a move to Division I has the potential to be an incredible catalyst taking this University to the next level.

Trustee Romain – Yea.

Chair Romain noted the unanimous affirmative vote, the motion was approved. Chair Romain directed President Rochon to proceed with the required next steps of the application process for reclassification to NCAA Division I athletics.

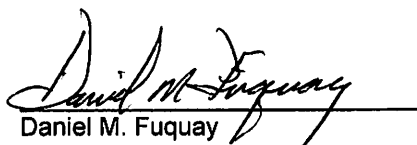
Chair Romain stated as an alumnus of USI and Evansville native, both have influenced his life and business immensely. We all have a duty to be forward-looking, to embrace change and to make our community a better place to learn, live, and work. Mr. Romain challenged all those who support this community to make a choice to invest in this effort to enhance the reputation and visibility of this outstanding University and our home.

Chair Romain called on President Rochon for comment. Dr. Rochon spoke on behalf of the entire campus community thanking the Trustees and greater community for their support of the University. Many have stepped up and provided insight, direction, and counsel to guide us in making the best decisions to propel the University. It is now time for us to come together as a unit and to work as a community to not only support this institution but continue to make it thrive. With the same vision and determination of those who came before us, we in stewardship now need to do the work that ensures the value of the inheritance we leave for those to come.

Chair Romain directed credentialed media to a press conference in the Couch/Renner rooms 226-227.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Daniel M. Fuquay
Secretary