

## **MINUTES**

### **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA BOARD OF TRUSTEES SPECIAL MEETING**

**April 2, 2025**

The University of Southern Indiana Board of Trustees met in a special meeting on Tuesday, April 2, 2025, in the Griffin Center on campus. Present were Chair Christine H. Keck by electronic means (Zoom) and Trustees W. Harold Calloway, John M. Dunn, Fouad L. Hamami '24 M'25, Timothy M. Hollander, C. Wayne Kinney '77, Jeffrey L. Knight, Ronald D. Romain '73, and Christina M. Ryan.

Chair Keck called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

#### **SECTION III - PERSONNEL MATTERS**

##### **A. DISCUSS THE SELECTION OF THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY**

Chair Keck stated this special meeting was called to discuss the selection of the next President for the University of Southern Indiana. Chair Keck called on Trustee Chris Ryan, Chair of the Presidential Search Committee, for a report.

In May 2024, USI's fourth president, Dr. Ronald S. Rochon, announced his acceptance of the President position at California State University – Fullerton. The Trustees met in special session on May 31, 2024, and appointed Vice President for Finance and Administration Mr. Steven Bridges '89 M'95 to serve as Interim President effective July 20, 2024.

In September 2024, with the assistance of the firm Academic Search, Inc., a 20-member Presidential Search Committee that included Trustee, alumni, community, faculty, staff, and student representation was appointed and began working on a national search to find USI's fifth president. Later in September, the search firm and Trustee Ryan, as search chair, conducted open sessions and group meetings with various campus constituencies to receive the feedback needed to discover USI's perceived and desired qualities for our next leader.

The committee met from October 2024 through March 2025 to review applicants, narrow the candidate pool, and recommend finalists. The credentials of almost 100 individuals were received and reviewed. The Trustees received additional feedback from small groups of campus constituents on the final candidates.

Trustee Ryan spoke on behalf of the entire committee in sharing that they were extremely impressed with the caliber and expertise of the candidates who expressed interest in USI. She thanked her fellow committee members for their time, but also for their commitment to maintaining confidentiality, civility, and integrity in the process and for the thorough and thoughtful review and vetting of the candidates. While this was not easy work, it was clear that the Search Committee was committed to the success of this process.

She also thanked the University community for the valuable input they shared regarding the qualities to seek in the next president and the follow-up feedback. This information was most valuable to the Trustees as they reflected on the attributes of each finalist. On a personal note, Trustee Ryan stated this process allowed her as a Trustee to see the heart and soul of this University, through its staff, faculty, and administration. It was one of the most well-organized and informative exercises she has experienced in her service work and career.

The Board of Trustees met in Executive Session on March 25, 2025, to review the amassed data and information on the final candidates.

Since the Board of Trustees concluded its review of the final candidates, Trustee Ryan, as Chair of the Presidential Search Committee, presented a motion to select Mr. Steven J. Bridges as the University of Southern Indiana's fifth president.

Trustee Keck accepted the motion as Chair of the Board of Trustees. She thanked Trustee Ryan for her

leadership on this very important work. In conjunction with fellow Trustees and the Search Committee, Chair Keck noted the process was handled with respect, dignity, and thoroughness. She thanked everyone who was under Trustee Ryan's leadership during this process.

Chair Keck called for discussion on the motion.

Trustee Romain expressed his strong endorsement of Steve Bridges. He stated, *"I've worked with Steve for a number of years on the Board. The work Steve has done as a member of the University team has been of such high quality, and his commitment and love for USI are clearly evident with each interaction I have with him. I am very happy with the selection of Steve Bridges as USI's leader, and I fully endorse him".*

Trustee Calloway echoed Trustee Romain in his endorsement of Mr. Bridges. He stated, *"This is the third Presidential Search I've had the opportunity to be involved in at USI, and each time all of the candidates have been outstanding. Steve Bridges rose far above and beyond all those we vetted in this search. I like his love for this community and the commitment he has demonstrated over the years to USI, from a student to an administrative leader. He exemplifies American opportunity through education, as a first-generation college student to the University President. I know he has the great support of his team, and I am looking forward to how the institution progresses under his leadership. I am also thankful for the opportunity to be part of this process."*

Trustee Knight added, *"Madam Chair, I think Steve Bridges has the potential and ability to be the best president that we've hired during my tenure as Board member. I am thankful to be here today."*

Chair Keck restated the motion, then conducted a roll call vote, instructing the Trustees to signal "Yea" for an affirmative vote, "Nay" for a negative vote, and "Present" if abstaining.

First Vice Chair Ryan – Yea  
Second Vice Chair Dunn – Yea  
Secretary Knight – Yea  
Trustee Calloway – Yea  
Trustee Hamami – Yea  
Trustee Hollander – Yea  
Trustee Kinney – Yea  
Trustee Romain – Yea  
Chair Keck – Yea

Chair Keck declared the motion passed unanimously. Effective immediately, with the full support of the entire nine-member Board of Trustees, we appoint Mr. Steven J. Bridges, President of the University of Southern Indiana.

President Bridges and his family (wife Rosemary, daughter Emma '14, son Corey, daughter-in-law Emily, grandchildren Ella, Hayden, Jack, and Maggie, daughter Abby '17, son-in-law Jake) entered the Great Hall of the Griffin Center to a standing ovation.

President Bridges declared, "It's a great day to be at USI." He thanked the Trustees for their confidence in his ability and plan to advance this institution. The immediate appointment will allow us to continue our work without interruption, as we progress through our advancement strategies. President Bridges thanked the campus community for their unwavering support and words of encouragement throughout the process. These accolades provided him with the desire to serve our institution in this expanded leadership role. President Bridges introduced his family members and noted that both his daughters hold degrees from USI. He asked his daughter, Emma Bridges '14, Principal at Holy Name School, to provide a few words on behalf of the Bridges family.

Ms. Bridges spoke fondly about her family's history with USI. *"In the 1990s, when our dad was spending long hours working on a Saturday, you would find us three children in the basement of the Orr Center spending all of Dad's money in the vending machines. People like Michael Whipple entertained us by hitting golf balls into coffee mugs, and Debbie Streuh was always up for a good prank. Some of our most precious childhood memories happened at this University. As adults, we continue to spend a lot of time here. My Dad attends every USI basketball game for the most part. Sitting right beside him, you will see my mom and many of us*

*(family members). We are raising the next generation of USI Eagles to love this University like we do. Today, we are all beyond proud to have our dad (and our Pap) representing the University of Southern Indiana in the greatest way. Thank you and GO EAGLES!"*

President Bridges concluded his remarks by thanking Carey Beury '93 and Nita Musich '10 for the extraordinary work and support they provided in seeing him through the interim period. President Bridges expressed a humble thank you and appreciation to the Trustees and campus community for the opportunity to build on the momentum and move the University forward.

Chair Keck concluded the meeting by providing closing remarks and directing those with media credentials to a press conference following the meeting.

There being no further business, Chair Keck adjourned the meeting at 2:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jeffery L. Knight  
Secretary