

MEETING AGENDA

Attendees: Oana Armeanu, Andrew Buck, Amy Chan Hilton, Charlotte Connerton, Brian Crose, Cindy Deloney-Marino, Jay Dickerson, Wes Durham, Trent Engbers, Renee Frimming, Emily Holt, Marna Hostetler, Rick Hudson, Paul Kuban, Denise Lynn, Kyle Mara, Tony Maria, Amie McKibban, Chad Milewicz, Simone Nance, Oana Popescu-Sandu, Kenny Purcell, Bailey Rankin, Erin Reynolds, Jack Smothers, Morgan Stewart, Ken Walsh, Paul Weimer, Elizabeth Wilkins, Stephanie Young, Emilija Zlatkovska, Shelly Blunt, Tori Colson, Jennifer Evans, Jason Hardgrave, Peter Whiting, Steven Stump, and Darren Sorrells.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING

The meeting minutes from December 10, 2025 were approved.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

III. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a) *HLC Accreditation Updates and Exercise*, Dr. Bill Elliott, Dr. Amy Chan Hilton, Dr. Darren Sorrells, Steven Stump, and Peter Whiting
 - i. USI's last comprehensive review occurred in 2016, followed by a remote review in 2021. Our next comprehensive review is scheduled for February 22-23, 2027. The timeline leading up to this visit has already been established. A mock campus visit will take place August 31-September 1.
 - ii. Steven Stump conducted an activity with department chairs using HLC accreditation discussion scenarios. This included questions and answers to help prepare chairs for the types of conversations that may occur during the review process.
 - iii. During the official visit, the HLC review team will host a series of forums. Prior to arriving on campus, the reviewers will have already examined USI's written materials, compliance documents, and website. The purpose of the forums is to clarify and expand upon that information.
 - iv. These forums will be open to faculty and staff, and there will typically be separate sessions organized around each HLC criterion. While it is important for faculty to attend these forums, it is equally important that faculty actively participate and respond to questions (2026 forums were very quiet).
 - v. This process is not only about accreditation; it is also an opportunity to demonstrate that USI's processes support continuous quality improvement. Faculty serve as ambassadors for the institution during this process, so please share this information with your departments and help colleagues prepare for both the mock visit and the official HLC review.

b) Updates from Provost Office, Dr. Shelly Blunt

- i. Dr. Blunt thanked faculty for their work on the under-threshold program review process and noted the university appears to be nearing the end of this phase. USI is not losing faculty and is largely avoiding program eliminations. The university was able to identify programs already under consideration for elimination along with one additional program. Most changes will occur through program mergers and consolidations.

A meeting regarding mergers and consolidations is scheduled for April 1. Consolidations will restart the 10 year ramp-up period, while mergers will not. These changes are expected to take effect Fall 2027. Unless legislation changes, under-threshold programs will be reviewed annually moving forward. Program name changes must be finalized by August 1 to appear in the Fall 2027 application cycle. A new Curriculog form is being developed for mergers and consolidations, and program deletions will also need to be submitted (possibly combined with the new form).

Each university will appoint one representative to a committee that will establish the future review process. There has been no discussion of changing the enrollment threshold, although concerns have been raised at multiple meetings.

- ii. Additional updates:
 - a. CTLS Symposium (Feb. 24) was well attended.
 - b. Barry Cox was announced as a new trustee; his first Board of Trustees meeting is March 5.
 - c. HR hiring process update: Deans will approve interview requests (no longer the Provost). The paper *Intent to Hire/Recommendation to Hire* form will move to PageUp, which will also replace payroll notifications to streamline hiring.
 - d. Rock'N Registration: March 31, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
 - e. Appreciation expressed for the Walls That Heal Committee.
 - f. Strategic planning has begun now that the Board of Trustees is fully appointed. The new plan is expected for 2027.
 - g. Lilly Grant for AI in Higher Education: planning group formed, led by Dr. Rhew. Up to \$8.5M available, with additional collaboration grants up to \$200M.
 - h. Career Success Center has moved to its new location; open house held Feb. 26.

iii. Summary from Dr. Hardgrave

- a. HLC Quality Initiative: Goal 3: Career and Professional Development - Current resources and opportunities supporting the development of career skills will be introduced to students in their first semester at USI. Subsequent and more targeted initiatives will be made available through the Career Success Center but also embedded within academic programs in students' subsequent years.

A Qualtrics survey will be sent to all department Chairs asking for a description of current curriculum and practices for student career development. A second question will ask for ideas for ways in which the Career Success Center can support or supplement these efforts.

- b. CORE Assessment - All data submitted for CORE assessment in Spring and Fall semesters of 2025 are now available. CCAF's for each college should be delivering this data. All instructors and chairs of assessed courses should receive the data. Subsequent data from previous assessment cycles will be made available soon, with a closing the loop survey. The new Watermark Student Learning and Licensure system eliminates the need for data processing. As such CORE assessment data should be readily available in upcoming cycles. Although concerns about single section assessment data being shared have been raised in the past, there exists no policy prohibiting it. As the data represents only measurements of CORE outcomes and is the only tool for this, it is valuable to share all possible data as widely as possible.

Spring 2026 CORE assessment is underway. Teachers of courses being assessed should have been contacted by their college CCAF and reviewed the key assignment. Instructions on completing the rubric in Watermark will follow soon.

- c. TITLE II - It requires, with new 2024 regulations, that all digital content, websites, and mobile apps be accessible.

Compliance data is 4/24/2026. Expectations are materials created following this date be accessible. Compliance will be judged on a "best faith effort". Features exist in Blackboard and related tools to assist with creating accessible content.

Removing all materials from Blackboard is not the best response. Blackboard must have the course syllabus with current policies and a course calendar. Best practices also include up-to-date gradebook and course materials in accessible formats.

A webpage will be made available with guidance and suggestions to assist in making your course and other materials accessible.

Note that for a student with documented accommodation in your course, the Office of Disability Resources will outline what reasonable accommodations should be made and will work with you to do this.

IV. OPEN ITEMS

V. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Walsh adjourned the meeting at 9:50 am.