University of Southern Indiana Administrative Senate Agenda
Wednesday, October 7, 2026 I 3:00 p.m. UC 227

Welcome and Call to Order

- Meeting started at 3:05pm

Roll Call

Present:

Executive Committee Members: J. Dumond, B. Hess, and B. Orth
Senators: Michelle Kirk, Mary Biever, Trista Lutgring, Joel Benson, Spence Farmer, Jennifer Roberts

Absent: *Executive Committee Members:* Jenny Garrison
Senators: Hilary Bemis, Meghana Makoday, Lesley Groves
Liaison: S. Will

Guest(s): N/A

Discuss and Vote on Appointment of Vice Chair – Brandi Hess

- Motion was made by M. Biever and seconded by J. Benson. Approved by 8-0.

Discuss and Vote on Appointment of District 2 Senator

- The Senate still has an open District 2 Senator seat. Jenny Garrison, the past chair, has leads. Members were invited to send Jenny Garrison names of interested candidates from that district.

Review and Approval of Minutes: September 2026

- Motion made by J. Roberts and seconded by S. Farmer. Minutes passed by 8-0.

Reports of Officers & Standing Committees

Officers

Chair (Dumond)

- *Administrative Senate Appendix B and Bylaws Updates*
  - The Chair mentioned that Appendix B and the Bylaws need clarification because they did not clearly address the current succession situation. The chair flagged that work for this year.

- *President's Council Updates*
    - The chair reported on September 15, 2026, President's Council meeting in New Harmoney held around Engaged Learning Day. The University President did not report because he was tied up elsewhere at the Engaged Learning Day.
    - *Academic-program Clean-up* – The provost reported that internal systems are being updated after academic program mergers. This includes The Bulletin and web pages that still point to prior majors.
    - *Student Concerns* – Forms two and three are offline for the rest of the semester. Employees should use the CARE Team Report if a student raises concerns.
    - *Enrollment Outreach* – The Fall Census closed on Friday, September 11, 2026, with growth in key areas. Administrative Senate members were encouraged to refer interested students to USI because not every prospective student appears in USI's system or purchases lists.
    - *Data Governance* – Information Technology expects to develop a data-governance strategy. Early work may include surveys to shape it.
    - *Student Survey* – Institutional Analytics' student survey has closed on October 2, 2026. Results expected later.
    - *Academic Initiatives* – The Kinney College of Nursing and Health Professions Dean Search is underway. A master's degree in nutrition is moving through committee review. Dean McCullough described a rural health initiative grant covering mental health training, oral health, and outreach to local food pantries.
    - *College Planning* – Pott College for Science, Engineering, and Education completed its strategic plan. It will focus on credentials and micro credentials tied to local needs.
    - *Retention Work* – The Council of Chairs plans retention initiatives and dashboards with Institutional Analytics.
- *Fall Employee Survey Results and Plans*
    - The Chair plans to use Copilot to identify recurring themes before presenting them in November. Many administrators responded. One survey response said a building was not cleaned during the summer, and employees had to buy toilet paper. The chair said such issues may be resolvable even when respondents do not submit a formal IFC.
- *Fall Festival*
    - Members were encouraged to support the USI booths at the Fall Festival that week, attend the upcoming town all with the president and provost, and volunteer at the Wall that Heals later in the month. The three-quarter-scale Vietnam Veterans Memorial replica needs volunteers for four-hour shifts throughout the day and night.
- *IFC Submissions*
    - Two IFCs submissions are under initial review by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee first checks whether an issue

is already being addressed or has a straightforward remedy before assigning it to a committee.

- One submission concerned onboarding components. Identifying information was removed before the matter was shared with Human Resources Executive Director/Liaison, Sarah Will. The Executive Committee needs clarification on whether HR's current onboarding process already covers the concerns before responding to the submitter.
- Another submission concerned food options, especially variety. Members said it may reflect broader concerns, including allergies, affordability, convenience, operating hours, or lack of awareness about available food choices.
- The group emphasized that dining feedback can go directly to Sodexo Food Services. Becky Diamond, General Manager, was described as open to feedback and as having adjusted locations' hours after earlier feedback. Staff can respond to dining surveys, although they are more geared toward students. Sodexo also uses tables and other feedback channels.
- Members noted that the request for a hamburger option may reflect limited awareness of existing choices. Burgers are available through The Loft when it is open and at Eagle Eats, operates as a "ghost kitchen." Orders are placed through an app or kiosk, then picked up. It was suggested that the issue could be an educational opportunity rather than only a menu issue.
- A shorter newsletter or other targeted communication was raised as a viable way to share practical information without adding to broader campus information overload. No communication product was approved during this discussion.

Vice-Chair (Hess)

- The new vice chair thanked the Administrative Senate for the opportunity to return/serve on the Executive Committee in this role.

Past Chair (Garrison)

- No report.

Secretary/Treasurer (Orth)

- Budget remains at $1,117.54 with no expenditures.

Liaison

Sarah Will, Executive Director of Human Resources

- No report.

Standing Committees

Employee Events and Outreach – Lesley Groves, Chair; Mary Biever, Vice Chair

- The committee vice chair, Mary Biever, reported that Employee Events and Outreach has held three walking group dates, with two to six attendees each. The group will pause during the Fall Festival and school break, then resume afterward.
- The first administrator book club is being announced. The selected book is *How to Know a Person: The Art of Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen*. It will offer both a lunch session and a coffee or morning session. The committee chair, Lesley Groves, has reserved rooms, and the library systems have copies available. Interest-survey results were described as strong. Another administrator expressed interest in hosting a book club event in early 2027.
- Members discussed using onboarding to help new employees connect with campus and Evansville. Ideas included a schedule of events, local recommendations, and material previously used to welcome administrators who were new to the area.

Employee Relations and Benefits – Michelle Kirk, Chair; Trista Lutgring, Vice Chair

- The Employee Relations and Outreach Committee has no active IFCs under consultation. Its main unfinished work is a communication plan for updates from the Administrative Senate, Staff Council, and Faculty Senate.
- The committee vice chair, Trista Lutgring, gave a draft template for governance group updates. The governance group chairs would complete a short submission, and committee vice chair, Trista Lutgring, would edit it as needed. She proposed a limit of about 300 words and publication on the USI Today web page behind a university password wall, with promotion through USI Today.
- The Administrative Senate supported moving forward without a vote, but the publication schedule remains to be worked out with the other governance group chairs. Faculty Senate meets only eight times during the regular academic year, from September through December and January through April, so a strict every-two-month schedule could require content in months when it has not met.
- The Administrative Senate suggested a rotating calendar among the Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and Administrative Senate. Summer coverage could rely on non-faculty groups. Published reports could also include the planned schedule, so constituents know when to expect updates.
- The plan will remain flexible if the template or reader feedback shows a need for change. The Committee vice chair, Trista Lutgring, said all three groups need to participate regularly, so no group is excluded.

Professional Development – Spence Farmer, Chair; Jennifer Roberts, Vice Chair

- The Professional Development Committee is dividing work among smaller initiative groups rather than having the whole committee work on every project. Its goals include content for new administrators, relevant

professional-development topics, and structures that can outlast the current committee.

- The committee vice chair, Jennifer Roberts, has taken responsibility for improving the professional development website subpage. The intended site would curate useful resources, including free training, micro-trainings, leadership content, and material from other universities' administrative-resource libraries. It could also serve as a destination linked to a newsletter.
- Members highlighted several potential sources:
    - **EVPL Access:** USI employees can obtain an EVPL card even if they do not live in Vanderburgh County. Cardholders can access free Ed2Go training.
    - **Free Webinars:** Vendors and professional organizations often offer free webinars, even when their emails also promote software or services.
    - **Peer Institutions:** The committee plans to examine how other universities organize professional development resources.
    - **Live Sessions:** The committee also has an interest in live programming, though formats remain to be determined.
- The committee chair, Spench Farmer, described a broader approach that would gather input from USI and peer institutions, identify high-interest topics, and publicize major free opportunities together. Some members will research peer-university data; others may create or curate digital content, and the group will consider live sessions.
- A spring listening session is still planned. Committee vice chair, Spence Farmer, said he will co-lead it, and another member of the committee has expressed interest. The group sees it as a chance for administrators to identify professional development needs and other concerns. Members also noted that Human Resources is offering training topics, but employees have had trouble finding announcements, locations, and instructions for participation.

Nominations and Elections – Jenny Garrison, Chair

- No report.

Unfinished Business

- Ongoing Projects:
    - Staff Council Collaboration and Recognition
        - The chair, Jaclyn Dumond, said some Senate members will meet with Staff Council leadership that week. Staff Council is struggling to fill seats and maintain a quorum. The Senate may be able to help with service projects, including the annual Giving Tree initiative, and may collaborate on professional-development programming that requires paid presenters.

New/Updates Business

- Best of the Nest

- The Best of the Nest will shift from monthly to quarterly recognition for the rest of the 2026-2027 academic year. The change is intended to reduce pressure on members who already carry multiple responsibilities. One final award remains this quarter.
- Senator Spence Farmer received a Best of the Nest recognition. His nomination credited his responsive and personalized support during the Blackboard Ultra transition, his advocacy for instructors with Blackboard Ultra staff, and his work to improve the learning experience for undergraduate and graduate students. Christy Hape submitted the nomination.

- Budget Request from Events & Outreach Committee
  - The Events and Outreach Committee requested an expenditure of $45 for 100 welcome administrator note cards with an interior welcome message. The cards will support onboarding and outreach to administrators. It was motioned by J. Roberts and seconded by T. Lutgring for the Administrative Senate to approve the expenditure of $45 for the 100 welcome note cards by 8-0.

Announcements

- Many jobs are open and posted on the HR website. Please share these opportunities with friends and family.
- Make sure to vote in the upcoming U.S. Elections on or before November 3, 2026.
  - The Dean of Students office can help students register to vote, apply for absentee ballots, or mail absentee ballots. It also has related resources and stamps.

Adjournment

The next Administrative Senate Meeting is scheduled for November 4, 2026, in UC 2205.
Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.