

University of Southern Indiana Administrative Senate Agenda
Wednesday, August 5, 2026 | 3 p.m. LA 1001

I. Welcome and Call to Order

- a. Meeting started at 3:05pm

II. Roll Call

- a. **Present:**
Executive Committee Members: J. Dumond, J. Garrison, and B. Orth;
Senators: J. Benson, J. Beshears, M. Biever, S. Farmer, L. Groves, M. Kirk, T. Lutgring, and J. Roberts, M. Makoday
Liaison: S. Will
Absent: A. Pryor (prior notice via email)
- b. Guest(s): N/A

III. Review and Approval of Minutes: July 2026

- a. A name misspelling was located and sent to B. Orth. Pending the misspelling, the minutes were approved. J. Roberts motioned. M. Biever seconded. Motion passed- Approved- 9; Declined- 0; Abstained- 0.

IV. Discuss and Vote on Appointment for District 2 Senator

- a. Jenny Beshears submitted her resignation as Senator for District 2. As per the Administrative Senate Bylaws, the Executive Committee nominated another administrator from District 2. Hilary Bemis from Risk Management was nominated. M. Kirk motioned and H. Perigo seconded to approve H. Bemis as Senator for District 2. Motion passed- Approved- 9; Declined- 0; Abstained- 0.
- b. Executive Committee and Senators congratulated H. Bemis and introduced themselves.

V. Reports of Officers & Standing Committees

- a. **Officers**
- i. **Chair (Pryor)**
- Pryor has an approved absence for today's meeting. J. Dumond and J. Garrison are jointly taking over the Chair responsibilities until Pryor returns.
- ii. **Vice-Chair (Dumond)**
- Update Dumond's name in the Vice Chair report of July's meeting minutes and re-add to the Admin Senate meeting. The Executive Committee met and training was provided on the information storage in the Administrative Senate Teams and SharePoint.

- “Best of the Nest” award is reactivated for this academic year. Cory Like from Student Financial Assistance was the latest recipient. There will be an announcement in USI Today on Friday, August 7, 2026 about Administrative Senate accepting nominations for the award this academic year. The Vice Chair, J. Dumond, will now formally manage the “Best of the Nest” program.
- At the Fall 2026 meeting on August 11, 2026, Administrative Senate members will be asked to stand for recognition. During the Fall meeting, there will also be a call-out for non-Senate volunteers to join standing committees along with an email that has already been sent.

iii. **Past Chair (Garrison)**

- Attended President’s Council and shared her report.
 - President Bridges moved into the University Home and plans to host events there.
 - University recognized by INVets, a nonprofit for veterans.
 - VP Jeff Sickman outlined fund usage order: restricted, designated, unrestricted, then reserves. Reserves belong to the university.
 - Next President’s Council meeting is in New Harmony.
 - VP Kindra Strupp discussed branded merchandise licensing.
 - Operation Move-In is scheduled for Thursday, August 13, 2026; Dr. Lori Etheridge started as Director of Housing and Residence Life
 - Graduate enrollment is down 1%, with expectations to break even or increase enrollment.
 - Assistant Provost Jason Hardgrave discussed campus bees and visit from Osnabrück, Germany.
 - HR implemented a new business partner model, including student workers, and information has been shared about that via email.
 - International Student Orientation and Study Abroad Fair is planned for September 3, 2026.
 - University Meeting will offer drinks only in the morning (no pastries).
 - Fall student survey planned; departments may submit questions to Provost Shelly Blunt’s office by August 31, 2026.
 - The Board of Trustees next meeting is on September 30, 2026.

iv. **Secretary/Treasurer (Orth)**

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

- Submit reports to B. Orth within 1-2 weeks of this meeting so that she can include them in the minutes.
- Utilizing Plaud to help with minutes; IT had purchased a few devices, and M. Kirk had one and graciously handed over ownership to B. Orth. No cost for Administrative Senate or B. Orth's office.

b. Liaison

i. Sarah Will, Executive Director of Human Resources

- Mainly spoke about the health insurance information that was also emailed to employees recently. United Healthcare negotiating with Ascension regarding network charges; agreement set to expire July 31, 2026, verbally extended. If negotiations fail, Ascension services become out-of-network, increasing employee costs (not impacting Evansville; affects e.g., Indianapolis). Employees can contact UHC at 800-826-8797 or visit UHC.com/ascension for updates. "Continuity of care" period can be arranged if a provider becomes out-of-network. Outcome will be considered during open enrollment.

c. Standing Committees

- **Employee Events and Outreach** – Hannah Perigo, Chair; Lesley Groves, Vice Chair
 - Gave report on committee membership updates and updates on sub-employee groups. At least two administrators signed up to be on their committee, likely from the email invitation that Administrative Senate sent out. The committee leadership has gone through the interest survey and organized hosting and co-hosting and types of groups. Will share with committee and then report out to the whole Administrative Senate.
- **Employee Relations and Benefits** – Michelle Kirk, Chair; Trista Lutgring, Vice Chair
 - Passed out a handout about a governance groups communications plan. Add information to report section. Update on committee membership.
 - A prior discussion with Jason Provence and Brandi Hess from Web Services about the consideration of a new webpage on the Administrative Senate landing page; a consensus to avoid adding more webpages to prevent overwhelming users. Plan to add a section in USI Today linking to information from groups (e.g., Evans, Faculty Senate, Staff Council) as a starting point for improved communication. Discussions on more intentional use of Pathify (myUSI); recent call revealed underutilized features due to lack of awareness. Unused features include customized "decks" for user groups (e.g., administrators) to display content like Administrative Senate posts; potential future step.

- Proposal to create a communication template and gather feedback. Members encouraged to provide feedback from Administrative Senate and general administrator perspectives on essential information.
- **Professional Development** – Spence Farmer, Chair; Jennifer Roberts, Vice Chair
 - Updates on training and other initiatives. Updates on committee membership.
 - Objectives similar to last year with rotated topics. Plan at least one more in-person session; monitor administrator session. Continue adding content to Administrative Senate Professional Development webpage.
 - New members interested; formal meeting after university meeting to finalize membership. Recognition of non-senate committee members at meetings suggested.
- **Nominations and Elections** – Jenny Garrison, Chair
 - No updates.

VI. **Unfinished Business**

- a. **Ongoing Projects:** None

VII. **New/Updates Business**

a. **Admin Senate onboarding training/questions**

- J. Garrison gave a training/onboarding session for all Administrative Senate membership.
 - Orientation presented on Administrative Senate history, structure, and procedures.
 - Three standing committees: Employee Events and Outreach, Employee Relations and Benefits, and Professional Development; all senators must join one.
 - Roles of Chair and Vice Chair were explained; typical Vice Chair-to-Chair transition after first year; three-year commitment (Vice Chair, Chair, Past Chair).
 - Meetings generally the first Wednesday monthly; follow Robert's Rules (loosely).
 - Quorum is essential to ensure feedback from the administrators in all districts and being able to vote on decisions; unexcused absences may lead to removal.
 - Senate website, Teams, and SharePoint are key resources; ongoing effort to organize content across platforms. Links were shared with all of Administrative Senate after the meeting.

b. **Discuss committee appointments**

- Senators were encouraged to identify which committee they would like to be on and let Executive Committee or committee chairs know of their interest.

- c. **Review committee goals**
 - Committees' leadership encouraged to discuss their goals and to share with Administrative Senate; goals listed at the end of the agendas/minutes can be updated based on the committees' needs.
- d. **Best of the Nest**
 - "Best of the Nest" nominations encouraged.
- e. **New IFC:** Create an organized new employee onboarding process AND assign an IT person to assist in person until all is set up
 - Next steps to be determined by the Executive Committee.

VIII. **Announcements**

- a. River City Classic Basketball Game (UE vs USI): wear red; tickets ~\$39 for two via Ticketmaster, Ford Center, or Bobby's office; alumni pre-party planned on Ford Center rooftop (family-friendly with prizes/games).
- b. In USI Today – Call for Operation Move-In Volunteers Needed – Employees are encouraged to sign up to help students and families carry belongings into the residence hall suites during Operation Move-In Day, Thursday, August 13. **Volunteers are needed for the early morning shift between 6:30 and 9:30 a.m. and the afternoon shift between 12:30 and 3:30 p.m.** This is a wonderful opportunity for the University and Evansville communities to make a strong first impression on our newest Screagles!
<https://www.usi.edu/usitoday/announcements/2026/07/volunteers-needed-for-operation-move-in-day>; [Welcome Tent volunteers needed - University of Southern Indiana](#)
- c. In USI Today – Welcome Tent Volunteers needed – The first two days of classes—August 17 and 18—are almost here, and that means it's time for **Welcome Tents**. New Student and Transitional Programs is looking for volunteers to staff the tents and bring that warm USI welcome to all our Screaming Eagles. Sign up to help students start the year strong!
<https://www.usi.edu/usitoday/announcements/2026/08/welcome-tent-volunteers-needed>; [Volunteers needed for Operation Move-In Day - University of Southern Indiana](#)
- d. Many jobs are open and posted on the HR website. Please share these opportunities with friends and family.

IX. **Adjournment**

Meeting ended at 4:01pm

J. Benson motioned; T. Lutgring seconded.

The next Administrative Senate Meeting is scheduled for September 2, 2026, in UC 2205.

Committee Goals

Employee Events and Outreach:

1. Develop a new administrator onboarding experience - cards, check-in emails, potential buddy system
2. Connect more with current administrators by hosting more events - i.e., BYOLs, employee walks, etc.
3. Monthly administrator emails

Employee Relations & Benefits

1. Standardize flexible work arrangements: Define eligibility criteria by role, set a default baseline (e.g., 1–2 remote days/week where duties allow), and allow ad hoc flexibility for short term needs for those not utilizing consistent remote days. FREE in terms of actual costs.
2. Create a sick leave donation bank: Re-draft policy and pilot within one area. We need to consider the HR Administrative burden and come up with solutions there. Also, this could be considered a "FREE" endeavor.
3. On campus childcare: Conduct a feasibility study and partnership scan - If anything admin senate can "post" our efforts in USI today to show if this is possible.
4. Compensation and livable wages – always a concern and main reason we can't keep Administrative Assistants here....constant turnover in some departments due to wages; Athletics Department and Marketing/Communications Department all got wage increases when the University went to D1. No other areas were upgraded like that.
5. Vacation Time Policies – need to extend the cap and adjust the earning of vacation days based on tenure (reach 10 years = more vacation).
6. Dress Code Flexibility – helps with costs of business attire, retention, etc.
7. Expanded Flexible Work arrangements – helps with recruiting and retention.

Professional Development

1. Provide at least one professional development opportunity for administrators per semester
2. Provide the online new administrator welcome session to all new administrators on a regular basis
3. Continue to add content and resources to the Admin Senate PD web page to share professional development opportunities, links to FAQs, and serve as a resource for administrators.

Nominations & Elections

1. Increase election participation (# of votes) by 5%
2. Utilize Past Chairs to promote elections
3. Review the election process to ensure user-friendliness
4. Engage constituents throughout the year to increase top-of-mind awareness