

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY REGULAR QUARTERLY MEETING

A regularly scheduled quarterly meeting of the Board of Trustees of Governors State University (the “Board” and “GovState,” respectively), an Illinois body politic and corporate, was held in person and via audio-videoconference at GovState’s University Park Campus in Engbretson Hall on February 23, 2026, beginning at approximately 1:03 pm. The purpose of the meeting was to conduct the business described in the Agenda posted for public notice before 9:00 am on February 18, 2026 in accordance with Section 120/2.02 of the Illinois Open Meetings Act. 5 ILCS 120/ *et seq.* Before the meeting, each Trustee received materials corresponding to the action items in the Agenda, copies of which are maintained with the Board records.

I. MEETING DETAILS

Meeting Chair: James Kvedaras

Minutes Recorded By: Therese King Nohos, General Counsel

II. ATTENDEES

Chair Kvedaras confirmed a quorum was present given the presence of the following Trustees in attendance in person at the start of the meeting unless otherwise noted:

- James Kvedaras, Trustee and Chair
- Stacy Crook, Trustee and Vice-Chair
- Karen Nunn, Trustee and Secretary
- Judith L. Mitchell, Trustee
- Brett Porter, Student Trustee
- Frances Pao-Han Kao, Trustee
- Anibal Taboas, Trustee (via teleconference)
- Angelica Zuniga, Trustee

President Joyce Ester Ph.D., *ex-officio* Board member and chief executive officer of GovState, was present, as were the following members of the President’s Cabinet who appeared in person:

- Joshua R. Allen, MPS, SHRM-SCP, Vice President of Human Resources;

- Villalyn Baluga, Associate VP for Finance and Interim Chief Financial Officer;
- Janelle A. Crowley, PhD, Chief of Staff, President's Office;
- William Davis, Vice President, External Affairs;
- Maureen Kelly, Executive Director, Government Relations;
- Therese King Nohos, JD, Vice President, General Counsel;
- Patricia O'Neal, Executive Assistant to the President; and
- Joi F. Patterson, PhD, Chief of Institutional Engagement and Excellence.

Mr. Joshua Sopiartz (Faculty Senate President), Ms. Susie Morris (Civil Service President), and Mr. Sean O' Brien (Student Senate President) were present as well.

III. ABSENCES

None

IV. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kvedaras at approximately 1:03 pm.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Tracy M. Sullivan gave public comment.

VI. CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Chair Kvedaras noted he had nothing more to add to his comments from earlier.

VII. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Ester gave the President's Report, including congratulating the men's basketball team as division champions. Dr. Ester thanked the building service workers, maintenance laborers, engineers, police and public safety, who worked during campus closures to keep the campus operational.

Regarding Enrollment Management, President Ester noted that, for Spring 2026, Census Day was February 6, 2026 and GovState experienced a slight negative enrollment decline of 0.26% year-over-year. Graduate student enrollment was down 11.6% year-over-year, reflecting the challenges in enrolling international students. For Fall 2026, freshman applications are up 42% compared to the same time last year, and transfer applications are up 12% compared to last year. Also, domestic graduate applications for Fall 2026 are up by 7.4% compared to last year.

Regarding Government Relations, President Ester reported that the Capital Development Board released \$11 million of previously appropriated funds under the 2019 Build Rebuild Illinois

Act for renovation of Sherman Hall and the Art Studio. President Ester is also in the process of meeting with our legislators as often as possible. She attended a presentation by the Latino Policy Forum on the adequate equitable funding legislation. Last week, Governor Pritzker gave his State of the State and budget address, which proposed a 1% increase for higher education for fiscal year 2027. President Ester is scheduled to give Senate testimony on April 14, 2026 and House testimony on April 16, 2026. Students, members of the faculty union, and other employees will attend an advocacy day on April 16, 2026.

Regarding human resources, President Ester reported that the University conducted a successful search to fill Vice President Paul McGuinness' role, which was chaired by Dr. Patterson. President Ester thanked all who participated in the search process and reported that the University is finalizing steps to make an offer this week.

Regarding the Office of Institutional Engagement, President Ester reported that GovState was awarded an Illinois Healing Grant from the Field Foundation to support initiatives that create, sustain, and expand spaces for dialogues and connection across diverse communities. President Ester also thanked Dr. Major-Ford and her team who will be helping GSU conduct healing circles to address current events that are negatively impacting many in our community.

Regarding Academic Affairs, President Ester reported on a variety of activities, including that the Rome student trip is happening again, as well as the Ghana Public Health Brigade trip. The School of Extended Learning is actively recruiting individuals and employers to participate in a community health worker apprentice grant from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. GovState is also partnering with Joliet Junior College to hold a clean energy job act training, and has a grant to conduct English as a second language training.

Regarding the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research (OSPR), President Ester reported several significant funding awards, including an \$80,000 contingent award by the National Endowment for the Arts relating to the Center for Performing Arts, and a \$60,000 grant from the Lawyers Trust Fund to expand legal services for underserved population.

President Ester reported that, during the Fall of 2025, GSU provided professional development on pluralism and pedagogy.

The College of Business will be hosting its annual signature business week from April 13th through 17th. For the Honors College in graduate research, the Honors College is celebrating 20 national and international presentations and acceptances of undergraduate research at events like the National Collegiate Honors Council.

For Black History month, President Ester received an award from the South Suburban College and will be receiving an award on Saturday from Rich Township. Also, the American Council on Education is reconstituting its Illinois network and has invited Dr. Ester to be its inaugural luncheon keynote speaker in March.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

The Board then was presented with the following action items to consider consistent with the agenda, except that Resolution 26-25, 26-26 and 26-27 were removed from the Consent Agenda to be dealt with in the new business part of the meeting, and Resolution 26-30 was tabled for a future meeting:

- Resolution 26-28 regarding approval of proposed Amendment to the Board of Trustee Regulation II;
- Resolution 26-29 regarding approval of proposed Amendment to the Board of Trustee Regulation III; and
- Resolution 26-31 regarding approval of resolution honoring the service of Vice President Paul McGuinness.

Trustee Crook so moved to approve the Consent Agenda, and Trustee Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Chair Kvedaras asked if there was any old business or new business that needed to be brought to the Board. There was none.

Chair Kvedaras then asked the Board to consider the remaining items, which were Resolution 26-25 regarding approval of proposed tuition rates for Academic Year 2026-2027, as amended to reflect a firm increase of two percent (2%); Resolution 26-26 regarding approval of proposed student fees for Academic Year 2026-2027, as amended to reflect a firm increase of two percent (2%); and Resolution 26-27 regarding student housing fees for Academic Year 2026-2027. Chair Kvedaras noted that Trustee Taboas expressed certain concerns regarding the proposed student increases. Trustee Taboas was not in favor of the idea of raising tuition.

Chair Kvedaras then made a motion to approve Resolution 26-25, as amended. Trustee Mitchell seconded the motion, and the motion passed with Trustee Porter abstaining. Chair Kvedaras moved to approve Resolution 26-26, as amended, and Trustee Kao seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Trustee Porter abstaining. Chair Kvedaras moved to approve Resolution 26-27, and Trustee Crook seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously;

Trustee Porter did not abstain from voting on Resolution 26-27 because he does not live on campus.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kvedaras then asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Kao so moved and Trustee Zuniga seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:28 pm.

Approved this 22nd day of June 2026


James Kvedaras, Chair


Karen Nunn, Secretary