

**Trustees Present:** Darin Bird, Beverly Burgess, Marilee Eyre, Justin Harding, Landon Lee, Sydney Nakken, Eric Schmutz, Jamie Shaw and Caytee Wankier

**Trustees Excused:** Derral Eves

**Others Present:** Mindy Benson, Shauna Mendini, Mary Pearson, Stuart Jones, Jared Tippets, Tiger Funk, Tom Higbee, Shane Flanigan, Dialea Adams, Michael Humes, Kevin Price, Lucia Maloy, Heather Garcia Blake, Michael Schmidt, Chirs Monson, James Sage, Camille Thomas, Mary Jo Anderson, Tessa Anderson, Ken Hall, Mike Mower, Ashleigh Zimmerman, Michael Bahr and Phil Roche

**Online Attendees:** Camaree Staheli, Aimee Uchman, Matt Mckenzie, Caitlin Leyden, Zachary Bittmenn, John Fonseca, Michel Rogers, Logan Reid, Luke Carlson, Isaac Torres, Toni Sage, Andrew Blanco, Amanda DeBlauw, Blair Bentley, Bruce Barclay, Linda Font, Zachary Murray, Matt Zufelt, Ann Oberhelman, Jessica Hagun, Nate Esplin, Jon Oglesby, Jack Eves, Keaton Brinkerhoff, Julie Ellis, Laura McAneney, Brad Kinross, Dan Camp, Katie Englert, Kris Bahr, Wyatt Robison, Brandon Street, Jeremiah Smith, Magnum Morgan, Sarah Carpenter, Carmen Alldredge, Jeffrey Hunt, Brandon Ragan, Scott Carlile, David McGuire, Kylee Lundberg, Tyler Watson, Whitney Jacobsen, Emily Woodland, Chris YOUNKIN and Andrea Callaway

#### **Welcome and Call to Order by Chair Eric Schmutz**

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 PM.

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### **ACTION ITEMS**

#### **Approval of Minutes - August 25, 2025 [Tab A](#)**

A motion to approve the minutes of August 25, 2025, was made by Trustee Marilee Eyre , seconded by Trustee Beverly Burgess. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Policy 5.69 Employee Pregnancy or Pregnancy-Related Conditions [Tab B](#)**

Vice President Mary Pearson presented Policy 5.69 [New] *Employee Pregnancy or Pregnancy-Related Conditions* to the Board. The policy outlines procedures to ensure the fair treatment of employees, the provision of supportive measures, and reasonable accommodations for individuals affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, in compliance with state statute.

Key provisions of the policy include:

- Employees' right to request accommodations, including access to lactation spaces
- Grievance procedures for addressing policy violations
- Mandatory training requirements as stipulated by law

A motion to approve the new Policy 5.69 *Employee Pregnancy or Pregnancy-Related Conditions* as presented was made by Trustee Sydney Nakken and seconded by Trustee Jamie Shaw. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### **Grant South Hangar Purchase [Tab C](#)**

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Vice President Mary Pearson reported that approximately one year ago, Southern Utah University purchased the Grant North Hangar, located adjacent to the university's existing hangars. She shared that the university now has an exciting opportunity to acquire the Grant South Hangar, which would provide significant benefits to the School of Aviation.

Vice President Pearson explained that the aviation program is currently in need of additional space to accommodate equipment, aircraft, and office operations. The Grant South Hangar's location is directly adjacent to SUU's current facilities making it a strategic and practical expansion option.

She also noted that the property appraisal had been thoroughly reviewed and confirmed that the proposed purchase price aligns with the fair market value of the hangar.

A motion to approve the purchase of the Grant South Hangar as presented was made by Trustee Darin Bird and seconded by Trustee Beverly Burgess. The motion passed unanimously.

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#### **CONSENT ITEMS**

##### **Investment Report - August 2025 [Tab D](#)**

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Vice President Mary Pearson presented the Investment Report for August 2025 to the Board. She highlighted page 4 of the report, which provides a concise summary of investment performance. The university earned \$439,000 in investment income for August, bringing the year-to-date total to \$1.4 million.

Vice President Pearson noted that a portion of these funds supports scholarships and presidential discretionary projects. She expressed appreciation for the Investment Committee's strong performance and valuable guidance, and remarked that she is pleased with the university's continued success through its investment strategies.

##### **Personnel Report - Early Retirement [Tab E](#)**

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Kristina Bronsema has been working for SUU in the Chemical Safety Management and then was promoted to the Laboratory Specialist position. She began working here in 1997 and will retire after 28 years of service. Hard one to replace, transitioning at the beginning of the spring semester.

A motion to approve the consent items as presented—including the Investment Reports for August 2025, as well Personnel Report- Early Retirement approval for Kristina Bronsema—was made by Trustee Caytee Wankier and seconded by Trustee Darin Bird.

The motion passed unanimously.

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## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **Policy 12.3 Abusive Coaching** [Tab E](#)

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President Mindy Benson reported that Policy 12.3 was approved during the most recent Board of Trustees meeting in response to an urgent need for its adoption. This action ensured the policy was formally established and on record following the passage of HB 479 by the Utah Legislature.

President Benson noted that the policy has been shared with athletic coaches and student-athletes. It was reviewed and vetted through the President's Leadership Council, as well as by faculty and staff, to gather feedback. The policy provides student-athletes with a formal process to be heard should an issue arise and is designed to be streamlined with existing campus policies, including Policy 11.4 – Student Compliance.

Implementation of the policy requires sign-off from both the Dean of Students and the Athletic Director, with the process to be handled as promptly as possible.

A final motion was officially made by Trustee Sydney Nakken to adopt the Policy *Abusive Coaching* as presented and seconded by Trustee Landon Lee. Vote unanimous.

### **Financial Reports** [Tab G](#) [Tab H](#)

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Vice President Mary Pearson reviewed the proposed FY2026 CEO Discretionary Budget with the Board of Trustees, noting that the university is obligated to share this budget with the Board. She explained how investment funds are being allocated, including transfers to support projects and to address potential shortfalls in ongoing initiatives. The anticipated remaining balance is approximately \$3.5 million.

Vice President Pearson emphasized that the use of discretionary funds is highly restricted, closely audited by the Internal Audit Office, and submitted to USHE for external review.

She also presented the FY2025 Auxiliary Annual Report, covering the university's four auxiliaries. The report outlined revenues generated by each auxiliary and how their budgets were utilized, including rent paid by Chartwells and the Bookstore, which supports operations and maintenance (O&M) and SUU bond payments. Overall, auxiliary revenue increased by approximately 10% compared to the prior

year. It was also noted that the university conducts ongoing reviews to identify efficiencies, and that future auxiliary reports will include year-over-year comparisons.

Motion to acknowledge the financial reports presented to the board was made by Trustee Caytee Wankier, seconded by Trustee Marilee Eyre. Vote Unanimous.

### **Trustee Assignment** [Handout](#)

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Chair Schmutz reviewed the updated list of Trustees College Liaison and Committee Assignments with the Board.

A motion to officially accept the assignments as outlined was made by Trustee Darin Bird and seconded by Trustee Jamie Shaw. Vote unanimous.

## **REPORTS**

### **Trustee Report**

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**Trustee Sydney Nakken** reported on the College of Performing and Visual Arts (CPVA) and commended Dean Schmidt for his strong leadership and engagement since assuming the role one year ago. She noted that the college currently has 914 enrolled students and recently celebrated the first cohort of Film Studies graduates.

CPVA students received recognition at the Zion Indie Film Festival, with Carson Blickenstaff and Madeline Keeler highlighted for their work. Faculty achievements were also recognized, including Professor Kathryn Hadar, who performed as *Cleopatra* in a Utah Shakespeare Festival production, and Keith Bradshaw, who was acknowledged for his artistic contributions.

Trustee Nakken also shared updates on fundraising efforts for the new Music Building, noting that the “Take a Seat” naming opportunity campaign will launch this weekend. Additionally, she mentioned that Kevin Costner plans to build a theatre in St. George, which will further strengthen the region’s performing arts community.

In her Library Report, Trustee Nakken introduced Phil Roche as the new Executive Director of the Library. She noted that his leadership has brought renewed energy to the department. The library remains a vital campus resource, open 105 hours per week—more than any other university library in the state. Trustee Nakken emphasized that Director Roche is committed to supporting faculty and students, with several library faculty members now on the tenure track.

**Trustee Landon Lee** reported that SUUSA has been focusing on a campaign titled “The Big Six,” which emphasizes the first six weeks of the semester to encourage student involvement and engagement.

He shared that SUUSA members supported Utah Valley University (UVU) by attending the Friday vigil held in Orem and by wearing green on Wear Red Friday. A photo was sent to UVU leadership to show solidarity and support.

Trustee Lee also noted that Homecoming Week events have been highly engaging for students. The Battle of the Bands was particularly successful, and the Pep Rally and Volleyball events saw outstanding student turnout through the Thunder Crew, which, according to Athletic Director Tom Higbee, may have reached record attendance levels.

**Trustee Jamie Shaw** reported that the SUU Alumni Association now includes over 84,000 members, with alumni represented in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. The top five states with the largest alumni presence are Utah, Idaho, California, Nevada, and Arizona. [Alumni Engagement Review](#)

Trustee Shaw also noted that there are currently 10,900 active alumni traditions and distributed an Alumni Engagement Review report to the Board, highlighting ongoing efforts to strengthen alumni connections and engagement.

### **Faculty Senate Report**

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Chris Monson, Faculty Senate President, provided an engaging presentation to the Board and cabinet members. As part of his remarks, he distributed pieces of copper wire and small bottles containing a clear solution, inviting participants to place the copper into the bottles. When the copper reacted and appeared to transform into silver, Monson remarked, *"Awesomeness ensued!"*

He used this demonstration as a metaphor for the transformative power of education; illustrating how students enter the university one way and, through learning and experience, are transformed and "upgraded," moving from copper to silver or gold.

President Monson emphasized that the purpose of higher education is to equip students with real-world skills and that, even as higher education faces growing challenges, the faculty remains committed to upholding its effectiveness and value, standing in strong support of both faculty and the mission of higher education.

### **Staff Association Report**

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Ashleigh Zimmerman reported that staff morale is strong and that the year began with an excellent Opening Social event. During the celebration, 106 staff members were recognized with milestone service awards marking 5, 10, 15, 20, and 40 years of service to the university.

She noted that the university currently employs 857 staff members, with approximately 30% serving in supervisory roles for the 1,400 student employees working on campus. She expressed that supporting and mentoring students is one of the most rewarding aspects of staff members' roles.

## President's Report

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President Mindy Benson welcomed attendees and celebrated Homecoming, expressing appreciation for alumni, students, faculty, and staff returning to campus.

Michael Bahr provided an update on the Utah Shakespeare Festival, highlighting strong morale, solid ticket sales (10–12% above projection), and encouraging attendance for *Dear Jack*, *Dear Louise*, with only two weeks remaining in the season.

### Executive Updates:

- HB265 funding has been secured and will be reinvested on campus.
- VP Stuart Jones reported fall third-week enrollment at 15,825 (up 2.47%): first-time students up 4.43%, international students down 7, transfers up 43, online enrollment 3,615 (7.3%), with total semester enrollment expected to exceed 16,500.
- VP Jared Tippets reported on retention and persistence: SUU's persistence rate is 84.5%, while new student retention is slightly down by 70+ students compared to prior year.

President Benson highlighted enhanced campus safety, noting the addition of over 260 new cameras in the past three years (from 140 to 400+) and praised campus police for their extra efforts.

### Upcoming events:

- One Utah Summit: all trustees are registered and encouraged to attend.
- Trustees Summit on October 22 at the University of Utah, with dinner on October 21, followed by discussion and training opportunities.

Each trustee received an SUU jacket as a combined birthday and Homecoming gift, since President Benson cannot visit each member individually. She thanked them for their service and commitment to the university.

President Benson closed by expressing gratitude to faculty, staff, students, and cabinet members for their incredible and unwavering service and contributions to SUU.

## MOTION TO ADJOURN

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A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Trustee Justin Harding, seconded by Trustee Landon Lee. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:03 p.m.

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Trustees Minutes approved: December 5, 2025

Signed: Dialea S. Adams