

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

Trustees Excused: Derral Eves and Justin Harding

Others Present: Mindy Benson, Shauna Mendini, Mary Pearson, Stuart Jones, Jared Tippets, Tiger Funk, Dialea Adams, Camille Thomas, Lucia Maloy, William Heyborne, Jen Heyborne, Michael Schmidt, Mary Jo Anderson, Ashleigh Zimmerman, Pam Powell, Chris Monson, Sarah Allen, J. Tony Oliver, Tessa Anderson, Brandon Wiggins, Chris Cox, Ken Hall, Mike Mower and Kenzie Porter

Online Attendees: Vic Hockett, Jamie Campbell, Jack Eves, Jared Gowen, Andrea Callaway, Ann Oberhelman, Faith Christensen, Chad Gasser, John Fonseca, Shelly Merrill, David McGuire, Mitch Clarke, Aimee Uchman and Nate Esplin

Welcome and Call to Order by Chair Eric Schmutz

The meeting was called to order at 1:32 PM

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes - March 27, 2026 [Tab A](#)

A motion to approve the minutes of March 27, 2026, was made by Trustee Marilee Eyre, seconded by Trustee Jamie Shaw. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy 0.0 Policy Development Authority—Policy on Policies [Tab B](#)

President Mindy Benson introduced Lucia Maloy, and she shared the proposed updates to Policy 0.0, Policy Development Authority. She explained that the revisions align Southern Utah University policy with state law, strengthen the University's ability to update policies in a more timely manner, and address known issues in the current policy process.

The draft reflects several months of collaboration among the Provost's Office, the Office of Legal Affairs, faculty senate, and other members of the campus community. The updated policy is intended to serve as the foundation for all University policies.

Key revisions include alignment with SB 192 Higher Education Amendments, which defines "Academic Policy" and clarifies that the University President holds statutory authority to implement policies with approval from, or in consultation with, the Board of Trustees. Additional updates include the creation of a standing policy committee with representation from each college and department to provide input during the drafting phase, allowing for greater involvement earlier in the process.

The revisions also reduce the standard review period from 21 days to 14 days, introduce clearer guidance for non-substantive (technical or minor) policy amendments, and extend the duration of emergency policies from 150 days to 365 days. These changes are intended to provide greater flexibility and efficiency in policy development and implementation.

A motion to approve Policy 0.0, Policy Development Authority (Policy on Policies), was made by Trustee Darin Bird and seconded by Trustee Landon Lee. The motion passed unanimously.

R401 New Academic Certificate - Post Bachelor's Certificate in Professional Accounting [Tab C](#)

Provost Shauna Mendini introduced the proposal for a new Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Professional Accounting and invited Dean Ken Hall of the School of Business to share the certificate details.

Dean Hall explained that the certificate is designed for individuals who already hold a bachelor's degree and offers a faster, more affordable pathway to complete graduate-level accounting coursework.

The fully online program requires 12 to 18 credit hours and is structured for flexibility, allowing students to complete it as a standalone credential or in conjunction with a degree program. Coursework includes advanced accounting topics such as taxation, auditing, and professional practice, with elective options in areas such as business law and accounting analytics.

The proposal responds to strong workforce demand driven by a national shortage of accountants, a high-priority occupation in Utah. It aligns with the University's mission to prepare students for professional careers and to support regional workforce needs through targeted, career-focused accounting education.

This item is presented for approval under R401: New Academic Certificate – Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Taxation.

R401 New Academic Certificate - Post-Bachelor's Certificate in Taxation [Tab D](#)

Dean Ken Hall presented the proposal for a new Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Taxation for students who already hold a bachelor's degree and are seeking specialized training in tax law and practice. He invited further context and supported the presentation of the certificate details.

Dean Hall explained that the program offers a flexible, fully online pathway intended to help students progress through advanced accounting and taxation coursework more efficiently than a traditional master's degree.

The certificate requires 12 to 18 credit hours and may be completed as a standalone credential or as part of a degree program. Coursework focuses on advanced taxation topics such as corporate taxation, tax procedures, and pass-through entities, with elective options in related areas.

The program responds to strong workforce demand for accounting and tax professionals and supports students in meeting CPA educational requirements. It aligns with the University's mission to prepare students for high-demand careers and will be launched using existing courses and resources, requiring no additional staffing or funding.

A motion to approve R401 New Academic Certificate – Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Professional Accounting and R401 New Academic Certificate – Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Taxation as presented was made by Trustee Sydney Nakken, seconded by Trustee Jamie Shaw. The motion passed unanimously.

R401 New Academic Certificate - Undergraduate Certificate in Equine Management [Tab E](#)

Provost Mendini invited Dean Tony Oliver of the College of Health Sciences to present the proposed Undergraduate Certificate in Equine Management. Dean Oliver shared that the certificate is focused on horse training, breeding, management, and agribusiness.

The program is designed for students seeking hands-on, practical experience and may be completed as a standalone credential or as part of a degree program. It is a fully in-person, 19-credit-hour program. Dean Oliver also noted that there are currently 148 students enrolled in agriculture-related degree programs.

The proposal responds to strong regional demand for animal care and agricultural professionals, as well as existing student interest in equine studies. It leverages current university farm and equestrian facilities, requires no additional resources, and aligns with the University's mission to provide applied, experiential learning that prepares students for careers in the agriculture industry.

A motion to approve R401 New Academic Certificate – Undergraduate Certificate in Equine Management was made by Trustee Landon Lee and seconded by Trustee Caytee Wankier. The motion passed unanimously.

R401 New Degree - Bachelor of Science in Professional Sales (BS) [Tab F](#)

Provost Mendini turned the time over to Dean Ken Hall. Dean Hall noted that the Professional Sales program represents the fastest-growing minor in the department and is now being proposed as a bachelor's degree option. He explained that the Department of Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Sales, and Analytics is proposing a Bachelor of Science in Professional Sales to prepare students for high-demand careers in modern sales.

The program focuses on consultative selling, negotiation, and other technology-driven sales skills. The 120-credit, in-person degree emphasizes experiential learning through internships, role-play, and sales competitions. It addresses strong regional demand for sales professionals and fills a gap in sales education in southern Utah while building on growing student interest in the existing minor. The department is also exploring options for future online delivery to expand access.

The program aligns with workforce needs and economic development priorities, operates within existing accreditation, and is supported by industry partners and internal funding sources.

A motion to approve R401 New Degree – Bachelor of Science in Professional Sales (BS) as presented was made by Trustee Beverly Burgess and seconded by Trustee Darin Bird. The motion passed unanimously.

R401 New Degree – Bachelor of Applied Studies in Early Childhood with two emphases: Family Life Education and Family Studies [Tab G](#)

Provost Mendini introduced Dean Pam Powell, who presented on behalf of the College of Education and Human Development. Dean Powell shared the proposal for a Bachelor of Applied Science in Early Childhood, designed to prepare students for careers working with children from birth through age eight in non-licensure roles.

The program is fully online and structured as a flexible, stackable pathway that allows students to progress from a Child Development Associate credential to an associate degree and then to a bachelor's degree. This design supports both workforce entry and continued educational advancement, including opportunities for concurrent high school students.

The proposal responds to a significant shortage of early childhood professionals in Utah and strong regional demand, particularly in rural and high-need areas where access to early learning services is limited. Workforce demand in this field remains highly favorable. The program aligns with institutional goals by expanding accessible educational pathways and supporting regional workforce development.

The program will initially be supported by existing faculty, with additional staffing anticipated as enrollment grows. It aligns with national early childhood education standards and does not pursue specialized program accreditation at this time.

A motion to approve R401 New Degree – Bachelor of Applied Studies in Early Childhood with two emphases: Family Life Education and Family Studies as presented was made by Trustee Marilee Eyre and seconded by Trustee Sydney Nakken. The motion passed unanimously.

R401 New Program – Bachelor of Applied Studies in Aerospace/Aviation Sciences with two emphases: Fixed-Wing and Rotor Wing (BAP) [Tab H](#)

Provost Mendini turned the time over to Dean Ken Hall, who presented the proposal for a Bachelor of Applied Studies in Aerospace and Aviation Sciences. The program is designed to create a faster, streamlined pathway to commercial pilot careers in both fixed-wing and rotor-wing aviation.

The program reduces total credit requirements while maintaining FAA-aligned training standards. It combines in-person flight instruction with flexible academic coursework to support earlier entry into the workforce. The revised curriculum requires 94 credit hours, a reduction from the traditional 120-credit-hour program, with the goal of accelerating graduate completion and workforce placement.

The proposal responds to strong national and regional demand for pilots driven by ongoing industry shortages and high job growth. It builds on Southern Utah University's established strengths in aviation training. The program will utilize existing resources, has strong industry support, and is pursuing professional accreditation.

See the approval below in the R401 New Program – Bachelor of Applied Studies in Aviation Management (BAP)

R401 New Program – Bachelor of Applied Studies in Aviation Management (BAP) [Tab I](#)

Dean Ken Hall, who serves as the Interim Dean for the School of Aviation, outlined the Department of Aviation Sciences proposal for a Bachelor of Applied Studies in Aviation Management. The program is designed to prepare students for leadership roles in airlines, airports, and corporate aviation through a streamlined 90-credit degree that replaces the existing program.

The program is fully online and includes an integrated business management minor to strengthen core business competencies while enhancing flexibility and accessibility for students.

The proposal responds to strong regional and statewide demand for aviation management professionals, including anticipated growth in advanced air mobility, and is supported by regional aviation partners. The program aligns with the University's mission to deliver career-focused education that supports workforce needs and regional economic development.

A motion to approve both the R401 New Program – Bachelor of Applied Studies in Aerospace/Aviation Sciences with two emphases: Fixed-Wing and Rotor-Wing (BAP) and the R401 New Program – Bachelor of Applied Studies in Aviation Management (BAP) as presented was made by Trustee Beverly Burgess and seconded by Trustee Darin Bird. The motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT ITEMS

Investment Report - March 2026 [Tab J](#)

Vice President Mary Pearson presented the Investment Reports for March 2026. She noted that interest revenue remains strong, with no significant losses reported.

A motion to approve the investment reports was made by Trustee Darin Bird and seconded by Trustee Landon Lee. The motion passed unanimously.

Personnel & Academic Reports - Early Retirement [Tab K](#)

Provost Shauna Mendini reported one early retirement request for Loren Paul Husselbee, who has served 26 years at SUU, with an effective retirement date of July 1, 2026.

A motion to approve the early retirement as requested was made by Trustee Marilee Eyre and seconded by Trustee Jamie Shaw. The motion passed unanimously.

SUU Strategic Plan Metrics and KPIs [Tab L](#)

Provost Shauna Mendini reported that in December 2023, the Southern Utah University Board of Trustees approved the 2024–2030 Strategic Plan. Implementation efforts have since been led by the President’s Cabinet, with defined metrics established for five key priorities: student success, academic experience, culture of caring, access and affordability, and alumni and community engagement.

Progress on these priorities is monitored through data dashboards that serve as a scorecard for key performance indicators. Provost Mendini noted that updates occur at varying intervals depending on data availability, which can make a single consolidated reporting snapshot challenging. Some measures are updated regularly, while others are reported annually.

The dashboard details were reviewed as a snapshot of current progress across the strategic priorities.

R401 - College of Education & Human Development [Tab M](#)

- Program Discontinuation - Special Education Mild/Moderate Dual Licensure Concentration: K-12
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Dean Pam Powell introduced a proposed reconfiguration within the Department of Teacher Education. The department is requesting Board approval to discontinue the Special Education Mild/Moderate Dual Licensure Concentration (K–12), effective Fall 2026.

Concurrently, the Special Education Minor will be revised and strengthened to serve as the sole undergraduate pathway to special education licensure. The proposal has been reviewed and approved by both the Dean's Council and the President's Cabinet.

R401 - College of Health Sciences [Tab N](#)

- **Program Discontinuation - Physical Education Minor**

Dean Tony Oliver shared that the Physical Education (PE) Minor has been identified as potentially misleading in its title and perceived alignment with teacher licensure pathways. He noted concerns related to clarity of program purpose and professional outcomes.

The Department of Kinesiology and Outdoor Recreation (KOR) requests approval to discontinue the Physical Education (PE) Minor effective Fall 2026, following prior approvals from key university governance groups.

The minor is being discontinued due to concerns regarding misleading licensure implications, excessive credit requirements, and limited professional value. Alternative revisions were considered but ultimately determined to be ineffective.

R401 - College of Humanities & Social Sciences [Tab O](#)

- **Program Restructure - History Education (BA/BS)**

Southern Utah University proposes restructuring the History Education (BA/BS) program into a History - History Education Emphasis (BA/BS). The change responds to new federal financial transparency rules that evaluate programs based on earnings data tied to Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) codes.

Currently, History Education graduates—who typically earn competitive salaries as licensed K-12 teachers—are reported separately from the primary History degree, which limits how their outcomes are represented in federal reporting. By incorporating History Education as an emphasis within the History CIP code, SUU will combine graduate counts and include teacher earnings in the overall program data, thereby strengthening the program's performance against federal earnings benchmarks.

It was noted that this adjustment reflects a difference of approximately \$577 when comparing degree-level earnings to high school earnings benchmarks.

A motion was made by Trustee Caytee Wankier to approve the consent items, including the SUU Strategic Plan metrics and KPIs, two program discontinuances, and the program restructuring as presented. The motion was seconded by Trustee Darin Bird and passed unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**Annual Program Plan [Tab P](#)**

Southern Utah University's 2026 Program Plan submitted to the Utah System of Higher Education (OCHE) includes proposed associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees, as well as new academic centers, certificates, and planned program discontinuations to be brought forward over the next three years. The plan provides a comprehensive overview of the University's academic program pipeline.

In addition, departmental plans for new emphases within existing programs and new minors have been compiled. While these items are not required for OCHE submission, they are included for informational purposes to provide the Board of Trustees with a complete view of the University's academic program planning.

REPORTS**Trustee Report- Marilee Eyre on College of Education and Head Start**

Trustee Marilee Eyre reported on the College of Education and Human Development and the Head Start Program, highlighting the following:

- Reviewed the [Head Start annual report 2024-2025](#) that was handed out
- Head Start continues to demonstrate strong program performance, providing approximately 10,000 healthy meals for children each month.
- Teacher performance was reported at 3.67, placing the program in the top 10 percent nationally and reflecting strong instructional quality and engagement. Recognition was also given to Virginia Higbee, who founded the program in 1984 through an initial grant, and the program now employs nearly 100 individuals, demonstrating continued growth and impact.
- Financial and program updates reviewed on pages 5 and 6 indicated continued positive progress, with the program operating through a \$6.5 million grant and benefiting from collaborative support with Southwest Technical College.
- Parent engagement materials were reviewed, with page 8 highlighted as a particular favorite by Trustee Eyre.

Within the College of Education and Human Development, Trustee Eyre also highlighted:

- Several faculty recognitions across the college
- The development of a new early childhood pathway program
- Strong graduate outcomes, including a 90% job placement rate

Trustee Report- Eric Schmutz on Department of Athletics

Trustee Chair Eric Schmutz reported on the Athletics Department and highlighted the following:

- A strong culture of compliance is emphasized, with coaches serving as mentors and reinforcing appropriate behavior; approximately 375 student-athletes have demonstrated positive conduct.
- Leadership updates include the hiring of new head coaches, Danielle Jensen (volleyball) and Steven Lindquist (soccer), with a transition planned to replace Eric Houle.
- The gymnastics team was recognized for exemplary performance both academically and athletically, contributing to an overall team GPA average above 3.0, with gymnastics achieving a 3.81 GPA.
- The department is preparing to join the Big Sky Conference, with a target date of July 1, and is actively working on ensuring facilities are ready.
- Facilities updates include the completion of a new softball field, improvements planned for the soccer field, and ongoing planning for a football operations building as part of conference reentry requirements.
- Budget challenges remain an ongoing concern for the department.

Faculty Senate Report

Chris Monson, Faculty Senate President, shared the following:

- Introduced Brandon Wiggins as the incoming Faculty Senate President and welcomed him to the Trustees meeting.
- Handed out a [faculty survey summary results](#) and reviewed briefly.
- Chair Schmutz and President Benson expressed appreciation for Dr. Monson's service as Faculty Senate President over the past year, including his contributions to the Provost search committee.
- Dr. Monson was presented with a gift basket in recognition of his service.
- End with a bang—two balloons and a fire experiment for the board.

Staff Association Report

Ashleigh Zimmerman shared the following updates regarding the Staff Association:

- The next Staff Association meeting will be held on May 7.
- A roundtable discussion with President Benson is planned.
- Summer "Wednesday Lunches" will be held in the rotunda beginning on May 13.
- Staff Association elections are currently underway, with 50 candidates running for 9 positions.
- The closing social will be held on May 26 from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. on the Library Quad.

Student Association Report

Trustee Landon Lee shared that this was his final meeting with the Board of Trustees, as he is graduating today from the College of Health Sciences. He expressed appreciation for his time serving and formally passed responsibilities to Kenzie Porter, the newly elected SUUSA Student Body President. He also shared gratitude for the lessons learned and emphasized the value of being an international student and leading with authenticity and genuineness.

- The new SUUSA officers were sworn in at the induction ceremony on April 16, 2026
- Kenzie reported for students, and the event that happens at the end of the semester called Most Fun Friday (last final event), where an activity is held every hour of the day with free food...total 400 students participated

Chair Schmutz and President Benson recognized and thanked Landon for his service on behalf of SUU students over the past year and presented him with a commemorative gift, including a framed diploma and tassel, in appreciation of his service and contributions.

President's Report

- Thank you to Landon Lee and Chris Monson for their service this past year.
- This is the best time of year when we celebrate our students' accomplishments.
- Stat for commencement include 3,466 graduates, 1,184 masters, 1,983 bachelor, 338 associates, and 140 certificates. We have 43 countries represented, 49 states (all but Vermont), and 28 countries (all by Daggett). Our graduates' average age is 28; ages range from 16 to 72 years old
- Shauna Mendini will be receiving an honorary degree; walked through a demonstration with hooding with our trustees.
- The Eccles Music Building is nearing completion, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony planned for September during Homecoming Week.
- The Business Building dedication was held today and was noted as a success, with appreciation extended again to the Burgess family.
- The Provost search, co-chaired by Eric Schmutz and Kelly Goonan, was completed after an extensive process. Mary Pearson was selected as the new Provost and will begin July 1.
- The Athletic Director search received 101 applicants and has been narrowed to six finalists, with final interviews scheduled in Las Vegas in early May. Appreciation was expressed to Camaree Staheli and Nate Esplin for their support as part of the search process as shared by VP Stuart Jones.
- A national search is underway for a new Vice President of Administration and Finance, utilizing a search committee rather than a search firm.

Vic Hockett reported on several state and workforce funding initiatives and noted SUU's strong and effective partnership throughout these efforts. He provided an update on Target Workforce

Accelerator funding and discussed the Occupations of Strategic Importance program, highlighting continued high demand for related workforce pathways across multiple regions in Utah.

Kenzie Porter was officially welcomed as the new Student Body President. She was sworn in as a Trustee by Board Secretary Dialea Adams.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Trustee Darin Bird, seconded by Trustee Beverly Burgess. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:32 p.m.

Trustees Minutes approved: June 5, 2026

Signed: Dialea S. Adams