



## **USU Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Minutes**

USU Board of Trustees

May 3, 2023 at 1:00 PM MST

University Inn – Sonne Board Room

### **Attendance**

#### **Present:**

#### **Board of Trustees:**

Kent K. Alder, Chair  
John Y. Ferry, Vice Chair  
Clara Alder  
Gina Gagon  
David H. Huntsman  
Wayne L. Niederhauser

Steve Palmer  
David A. Petersen  
Jacey Skinner  
Abraham Rodriguez  
Tessa White

#### **Absent:**

Kacie Malouf

#### **Utah State University Representatives:**

Scot Allgood  
Jodi Bailey  
Lisa Berreau  
Janalyn Brown  
Noelle Cockett  
Dave Cowley  
Krystin Deschamps  
Parker Fawson  
David Forbush  
John Ferguson  
Nancy Hanks  
Jane Irungu  
Mike Kuehn  
Mica McKinney  
Whit Milligan  
Mark Nafziger

Eric Olsen  
Bill Plate  
David Pruden  
Matt Pinner  
Julie Richens  
Chelsey Ritner  
Levi Sim  
Al Smith  
Larry Smith  
Laurie Smith  
Brian Steed  
Robert Wagner  
Ken White  
Matt White  
Devin Wiser

**Guests:**

Jessellie Anderson  
Geoff Landward

1. Welcome and Introductory Items - Chair Kent Alder

Chair Alder welcomed everyone to the first all in-person meeting held since the pandemic and congratulated Trustee Skinner and Trustee Gagon on being voted as the 2023-2025 Chair and Vice Chair respectively.

1.1. Resolution of Appreciation and Commendation for Trustee Clara Alder - President Noelle Cockett

President Cockett invited Trustee Clara Alder to stand while she read her resolution. Clara was then presented with a gift from the Board of Trustees and photos were taken.

1.2. Introduction of new USUSA President and Trustee Abraham Rodriguez and Oath of Office - Chair Kent Alder

Chair Alder administered the Oath of Office to Abraham Rodriguez, USUSA 2023-2024 President. Trustee Rodriguez introduced himself.

**Motion** was read to move into a closed session.

Motion made by John Y. Ferry and seconded by David H. Huntsman. Roll call vote was initiated by Secretary Brown. Voting was unanimous in the affirmative and the meeting moved into closed session.

**Attendance****Present:****Board of Trustees:**

Kent K. Alder, Chair  
John Y. Ferry, Vice Chair  
Gina Gagon  
David H. Huntsman  
Wayne L. Niederhauser

Steve Palmer  
David A. Petersen  
Abraham Rodriguez  
Jacey Skinner  
Tessa White

**Absent:**

Members: Kacie Malouf

## Utah State University Representatives:

Janalyn Brown  
Noelle Cockett  
Mica McKinney

Larry Smith  
Robert Wagner

## Guests:

Geoff Landward

### 2. Chair's Report - Kent Alder

#### 2.1. Presidential Search update

Chair Alder mentioned as Co-chair of the Presidential Search Committee the finalists had been announced and the schedule for the search process would be forthcoming. The finalists are Rodney D. Bennett, Elizabeth "Betsy" R. Cantwell and Kenneth "Ken" L. White.

#### 2.2. No regular meetings in June or July - next meeting August

Updated Board of Trustee 2023-2024 meeting calendar

More changes may be needed to the Board of Trustees calendar schedule but right now the plan is to meet six times a year (instead of eight) with the November 2023 meeting being held in Salt Lake City.

### 3. Committee Reports

In the near future, trustee committees may be adjusted to better align with USU's strategic plan.

#### 3.1. Executive Committee - Committee Chair Kent Alder

Chair Alder shared the main topic at the Executive Committee meeting was charter school discussions. They met with many and have done much to vet the approval process. Many healthy discussions were had. The Executive Committee unanimously approved a one-year extension of the two charter schools listed on today's agenda. Dean Al Smith will share more later in the meeting as well as be available to answer any questions. Trustee Gagon inquired if going forward, the approval process needs to change. Chair Alder provided list of items executive committee may move from department to college level and requiring what the value back may be to the college and university as well as ensuring the board gets better information and not just a data dump of information. Chair Alder reminded

the trustees to speak up during Dean Smith's presentation to tell him the things that are important to you moving forward. President Cockett said there are no new applications in the pipeline as of right now. Chair Alder stated the right thing to do is extend the two charter schools for one year but clarify the process in the future with Dean Smith doing more reviews of each charter school bringing reports back to the board.

3.2. Recruitment, Retention and Completion Committee - Committee Chair Gina Gagon

Trustee Gagon applauded Executive Vice President Wagner and team for their hard work which has yielded positive results for Utah State. Fall 2022 semester enjoyed the largest incoming class in institutional history.

Retention numbers are at 74.5% which are the highest in the last ten years. These trends are very encouraging to see, and numbers are up system wide. Looking specifically at numbers by campus and college, retention percentage ranged from 74.5% on the Logan campus, to just under 50% at Uintah Basin. The Jon M. Huntsman School of Business has the highest college retention rate at 84.5% with undeclared students being the lowest. As part of Fall 2023 recruiting efforts, USU has asked students to pay a deposit and are ahead of schedule. This way of asking students to commit has been helpful. The previous year, USU had \$1,200 stipends which was helpful but they are no longer available.

Chair Alder inquired about the current housing situation. Executive Vice President Wagner stated his team is working with Vice President Cowley. Current students have priority. There are 800 currently on the waiting list but they expect it to drop to 400 students or less. The 800 Block property is frantically trying to fill their beds. President Cockett said overall the waitlist was much higher last year.

3.3. Marketing and Communications Committee - Committee Chair Jacey Skinner

Trustee Skinner applauded Vice President Bill Plate and his team for the great job they do. Currently, they are focusing on commencement. As a note, the most watched video is President Cockett's thank you walk which was hosted by the USU Student Association in April.

3.4. Student Health, Safety and Well-being Committee - Committee Chair David Huntsman

Trustee Huntsman recognized Interim Vice President Eric Olsen's hard work and great leadership. Student of concern reports are up over 900+ this year. Last year they were at 843 and 595 the year prior. Olsen's team does a good job connecting those who need it to resources that fit their

needs. A challenge, the group noted, is helping students who don't show up on the radar. The JED Foundation is on over 300 campuses and has been contracted by the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) and USU is following their recommendations and guidelines. Interim Vice President Olsen mentioned they continue to struggle with hiring, and they may need more resources on regional campuses. One reason the numbers have gone up is because more students are becoming aware of how to report and the total number of students has risen as well. USU has received an ongoing \$500,000 from USHE to offer therapy and crisis management for after-hours work. There is a mixed bag of needs including relationships, mental, physical, and educational.

- 3.5. Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee - Committee Chair Dave Petersen  
No report.
- 3.6. Academic Approval Committee - Committee Chair Wayne L. Niederhauser  
Trustee Niederhauser met with the Academic Approval Committee the week prior, He reported they have eight R401 proposals which are dominating the consent agenda which they have reviewed in detail. This committee is also involved in "putting meat on the bone" for the new College of Veterinary Medicine.
4. Trustee Recognition - Interim Vice President Eric Olsen  
Interim Vice President Olsen read a Resolution of Commendation for the USU Connect, Assist, Refer, Empower (CARE) and Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) teams and Chair Alder presented the group with a small gift.
5. BREAK
6. Resolution of Appreciation and Commendation for Trustee Steve Palmer - Vice Chair John Ferry  
Vice Chair Ferry read a Commendation of Appreciation for Trustee Steve Palmer's service on the USU Board of Trustees and Chair Alder presented him with a gift.
7. President's Report - President Noelle Cockett  
President Cockett attended many statewide commencement ceremonies this year and all were fantastic. One thing she noticed was the number of Master of Social Work degrees awarded was huge. These degrees are powerful because they can be utilized in the students' own areas and communities. Two years ago, USU received funding to add to statewide faculty which has helped these numbers grow. President Cockett shared a packet concerning a technical educational

news report from a program which Brian Warnick is an extreme proponent of. This College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences (CAAS) document explains a stackable pathway from certificates to associate degrees to bachelor's degrees. The number of Native American students has risen and USU is continuing to consider how best to serve this demographic. Vice President Jane Irungu is looking into a Native American cultural center and has been speaking with tribes all across Utah. Scholarships to Native American tribes in and around Utah are being set up to offset any gap between federal and Native American aid to cover tuition and fees. This benefit will go to students wherever they are and will be available to all Native American students.

8. Resolution of Appreciation and Commendation for President Noelle Cockett - Chair Kent Alder

Chair Alder read a Resolution of Commendation and Appreciation to President Cockett.

9. Consent Agenda

**Motion** to approve the Consent Agenda

Moved by John Y. Ferry and seconded by Wayne L. Niederhauser. All voted in the affirmative and the Consent Agenda was approved.

- 9.1. Minutes from Board of Trustees Regular Meeting held on March 3, 2023
- 9.2. Minutes from Board of Trustees Regular Meeting held on April 7, 2023
- 9.3. Approve: Revised 300 Level Policy 369 (Other Leave)
- 9.4. Approve proposal: Associate of Science in Digital Modeling and Visualization - USU Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning in the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences
- 9.5. Approve discontinuation: Dietetics Coordinated Emphasis-BS - USU Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Sciences in the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences
- 9.6. Approve proposal: Cosmetology Certificate of Completion - USU Department of Technology, Design and Technical Education in the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences
- 9.7. Approve proposal: Graduate Certificate in Museum Administration and Collections Management  
USU Department of Applied Sciences, Technology and Education, Management and Sociology and Anthropology in the College of Agriculture and Applied Science, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business

- 9.8. Approve proposal: Move the Doctorate of Education from the College of Education and Human Services (CEHS) Dean's Office to the School of Teacher Education and Leadership
  - 9.9. Approve proposal: Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in Technical Communication and Rhetoric - USU Department of English in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences
  - 9.10. Approve proposal: Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences - USU Department of Veterinary Medicine in the College of Veterinary Medicine
  - 9.11. Approve proposal: Communication Studies Minor - USU Department of Communication Studies and Philosophy in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences
  - 9.12. Approve proposal: PhD in Biomedical Sciences - USU Department of Veterinary Medicine in the College of Veterinary Medicine
  - 9.13. Approve proposal: Archaeological Data Analytics Graduate Certificate - USU Department of Data Analytics and Information Systems and Sociology and Anthropology in the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences
10. Action Agenda
    - 10.1. Ratification of USU Board of Trustees Chair and Vice Chair for 2023-2025 - Trustee Steve Palmer

**Motion:** Trustee Palmer stated all members of the Board of Trustees had cast their votes via secret ballot and electronic ballots are now closed. Based on the results of the secret ballot, the motion was made that the Board ratify the election of Trustee Jacey Skinner as Chair and Trustee Gina Gagon as Vice Chair as of July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2025.

Motion moved by John Y. Ferry and seconded by David H. Huntsman. All voted in the affirmative and the Chair and Vice Chair election was ratified.
    - 10.2. Updated USU Board of Trustees Bylaws - Vice President Mica McKinney

Vice President McKinney provided homework for board members. She will circulate the latest updated bylaws for the Trustees to read through and review. She has been working on them for several months as they have not been updated since the 1990s. She plans to send the draft via email and will contact each board member for feedback. No vote was taken as they are still in draft form. McKinney also noted charters are helpful when, and if, new committees are formed and help give good direction.

**Motion:**

No vote was taken.

- 10.3. Proposed Auxiliary System Revenue Bonds, Series 2023 - Vice President Dave Cowley

Vice President Cowley shared they are ready to move on building a new housing unit and parking garage which they had received Trustee approval on previously. The total cost is expected to be \$72 million. They are planning \$10 million up front from auxiliary funds and will cover the remainder of \$62 million with a revenue bond issued in June 2023. Cowley is comfortable with how the university looks financially. No private monies were needed for this project.

**Motion** was made to approve the proposed Auxiliary System Revenue Bonds, Series 2023.

Motion made by Tessa White and seconded by Gina Gagon. All voted in the affirmative and the Auxiliary System Revenue Bonds, Series 2023 was approved.

- 10.4. Approve and accept: Center for the School of the Future - Cambridge Prep Academy (Salt Lake County) changing open date from Fall 2023 to Fall 2024 - Dean Al Smith
- 10.5. Approve and accept: Center for the School of the Future - Cambridge Prep Academy (Washington County) changing open date from Fall 2023 to Fall 2024 - Dean Al Smith

Chair Alder said they have continued to vet the Center for the School of the Future (CSF) delay opening date requests for Cambridge Prep Academy in both Salt Lake and Washington Counties. President Cockett had asked Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services (EEJCEHS) Dean Al Smith to help clarify any questions the Trustees may have as well as be the intermediary between the CSF and the Board of Trustees. Dean Smith vetted how charter schools are of value to the EEJCEHS and to USU as an institution. Dean Smith is prepared to work with a trustee subcommittee to flush out any primary questions before a charter school proposal comes to the full board. Each item concerning charter schools will be listed on the action agenda (not consent agenda). Concerning this specific proposal, the delay was requested due to variability in the construction market. The process was halted after the last USU Board of Trustees meeting due to further questions and concerns. Dean Smith is confident in this group. Charter schools are broadly engaged in in all parts of education and are planning to embed 10-20



students in charter schools. This is more than student teaching and is a more intensive form of embedding. Reporting from charter schools will go to a Board of Trustees subcommittee.

Trustee Petersen had been unimpressed at earlier meetings. He still expressed lingering uncertainty about both Cambridge Prep Academy charter schools, but especially about why the Trustees are approving any charter schools at all. He expressed appreciation to Dean Smith for his presentation and the clarifying information he shared. Trustee Niederhauser shared the history of charter schools and what the legislative process was initially indicating the vision for having the university's involvement included partnering with students and utilizing higher education institutions as a resource and innovation. Their goal is to build fast track novel ideas and assess those ideas, while out of the mainstream. Trustee Skinner inquired about USU's role and risks. Dean Smith assured the institution is not held responsible financially but would lose an annual fee which comes with being an overseer. If a charter school were to "fail," they would liquidate assets and pay off debts, so they are not a strong risk financially. Reputational risk is lessened because a charter school is not a lab school, therefore their name is not on the charter school. Smith feels the biggest reputational risk would be if USU led them to failure. Dean Smith stated USU's College of Education is very strong and regarded as the top rated in Utah "by a mile." Many entities want to come to USU for stamp of approval.

President Cockett urged the Trustees to make a decision on the delayed opening as Cambridge Prep Academy needs to know now or they will fail. She assured Dean Smith would be watching to make sure benchmarks have been met. Trustee Niederhauser applauded the Trustees scrutiny. She also mentioned having charter schools gives more labs for USU students to be involved in and is indeed a service to the state.

**Motion** was made to grant an extension of Cambridge Prep Academy (Salt Lake County) and Cambridge Prep Academy (Washington County) from opening in Fall 2023 to Fall 2024.

Motion made by Steven Palmer and seconded by John Y. Ferry. Voting was unanimous in the affirmative and the extension was granted.

## 11. Information Agenda

### 11.1. Report of Investments for December 2022

- 11.2. Report of Investments for January 2023
- 11.3. Revised 500 Level Policy 515 (Travel)
- 11.4. Revised 500 Level Policy 590 (Export Control)

12. ADJOURN

**Motion** was made to adjourn the meeting.

Motion made by John Y. Ferry and seconded by Gina Gagon. Voting was unanimous in the affirmative and the meeting was adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

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Kent K. Alder, Chair

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Janalyn Brown, Secretary  
(minutes taken by Janalyn Brown)

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Date Approved