

SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2025
232 ENGLISH BUILDING AND ZOOM
MINUTES

Present: Chair Angela Lyons, Vice-Chair Shawn Gilmore, David Dalpiaz, Hunter Farnham, David Forsyth (Zoom), Patrick Holt, Yvette Johnson-Walker (Zoom), Joanne Kaczmarek, Anjali Kumar, Eric Kurt, Ralph Mathisen, Gay Miller, Nolan Miller, James Quisenberry, Charles Roseman, Chaya Sandler (Zoom), Peter Silhan, John Weible
Ex officio: Charles Isbell (Chancellor), Rurik Tywoniw (Presiding Officer of the Senate)

Absent: Jessica Williams

Guests: John Coleman (Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs), Gio Guerra-Peréz (Interim Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion), Aimee Heeter (Vice Chancellor for Finance), William Maher (Parliamentarian) (Zoom), Macy Medendorp (The Daily Illini), Ryan Pearlman (Senior News Reporter, Daily Illini), Patrick Wade (Director of Executive Communications and Issues Management, Strategic Communications and Marketing)

1. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) was called to order at 3:10 pm with Chair Lyons presiding.

2. APPROVAL OF REMOTE PARTICIPATION

Remote participation was approved without objection.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

No requests received.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the August 25, 2025 meeting were reconsidered and approved as amended.

The minutes of the September 8, 2025 meeting were approved as distributed.

5. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Lyons provided a brief recap of the agenda and shared reflections on Senate culture. She noted that while it is easy to focus on what is not working, leaders should help one another and their colleagues focus on what *is* working. She encouraged members to “change your focus” and recognize what is going right.

Chair Lyons emphasized the importance of strengthening shared governance and working collaboratively with the administration, noting that Senate discussions provide space for

more voices to be heard, not just the loudest or most familiar. She added that strong committee leadership supports more productive conversations, and reminded members to be respectful, kind, and avoid adversarial approaches.

6. CHANCELLOR'S REMARKS

Chancellor Isbell, now about two months into his role, said he continues to listen and learn about the institution and is impressed by the remarkable work happening across campus. His visits to colleges and institutes have left him optimistic about the many positive developments underway.

He reported that the federal government shutdown continues with no clear timeline for resolution and may temporarily affect researchers and federal funding. The University is monitoring the situation and sharing updates through the weekly Federal Policy Updates newsletter.

Chancellor Isbell noted a recent federal announcement that may impose a \$100,000 fee on H-1B visas for specialty positions, including faculty roles. International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) is reviewing the policy and will work with hiring departments as details become clearer.

He added that the White House has launched a compact on academic excellence with nine universities. Illinois has not been asked to join, but any such initiative would be reviewed carefully with the Office of University Counsel and through shared governance. He emphasized the need to protect the University's core mission.

He announced that the Discovery Partners Institute (DPI) will be moving from the University of Illinois System to the Urbana campus. Rashid Bashir, Dean of the Grainger College of Engineering, will serve as Vice Chancellor for Corporate and Strategic Partnerships, and new advisory committees have been created. Changes related to DPI will proceed through the normal shared governance processes.

The goals of the Mutual Academic Defense Compact (MADC) and Illinois are the same. The administration is working to make meaningful progress, even when some efforts cannot be shared publicly.

In response to questions, Isbell and his leadership team provided the following information.

H-1B Visas: Chancellor Isbell said it is too early to know whether the University will cover the proposed \$100,000 H-1B visa fee. He noted that University and college funds come from the same pool and expressed hope for a better solution. Guerra-Peréz added that there are 104 H-1B visa holders on campus, with about 400 total visa holders.

In regard to students, Chancellor Isbell noted that the University will continue supporting affected students and provide resources to help them understand their rights. Provost Coleman added that outreach efforts are ongoing to share accurate information and reduce anxiety amid misinformation.

Discovery Partners Institute (DPI): Chancellor Isbell noted that it is not unusual for a dean to also serve as a vice chancellor, sometimes on a temporary basis.

Provost Coleman explained that an implementation committee helped plan DPI's move to Urbana under Chancellor Jones, with Grainger College of Engineering serving as the primary home, but certainly not the only college involved. Heeter confirmed that System funding will continue through FY2030. Chair Lyons noted that Dean Bashir will attend the October 27, 2025 SEC meeting and invited members to submit questions in advance.

7. OLD BUSINESS

a) SC.26.03, Establish the Ninth Senate Review Commission (SR9)

- SR9 Charge Letter

Chair Lyons reviewed the draft charge letter for SR9, noting that she hoped an ad hoc committee had been created to separately address the honorary degree awards process.

Dalpiaz asked where the directive to review the honorary degree awards process originated. Chair Lyons noted that all three universities were asked to review their honorary degree awards processes to ensure that transparency is balanced with candidate privacy under the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

After a robust discussion, Dalpiaz made a motion to delete "SEC suggests SR9:" and the bullet points following. The motion was seconded and approved without objection.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a) SC.26.05, Election of a Graduate Student Senator to the 2025-2026 Committee on Committees

Roether will send an email, on behalf of the student SEC members, to all graduate student senators requesting nominations for the vacancy on Committee on Committees.

b) EP.25.082, Revision to the Language Other Than English (LOTE) Requirement for Online Degree Completion Programs

N. Miller reported that the Educational Policy Committee (EP) has been developing a proposal to reduce the LOTE requirement for online degree completion programs from

three levels to two. EP has spent significant time on the issue and plans to present the item for first reading at the October 13, 2025 Senate meeting.

SEC members discussed maintaining equality between online and in-person programs to prevent lowering standards for online programs. N. Miller shared that EP worked carefully to define the change narrowly and preserve safeguards, noting that this exception applies only to degree completion programs designed to serve a specific population.

In response to concern about potential erosion of language requirements for residential programs, N. Miller clarified that the proposed change would apply only to the online Bachelor of Liberal Studies (BLS) program, which has no in-person equivalent, and that other programs will continue to follow existing campus standards. He noted the program requires students to have been away from campus for at least one year before admission. The College of Liberal Arts and Studies (LAS) and the College of Education support the proposal and that similar interest has been expressed by the College of Media. The general education requirements approved in 1989 include a process to request an exception.

N. Miller also mentioned a lack of a centralized repository for policies and Forsyth suggested SR9 review the issue.

c) Set the Agenda for the October 13, 2025 Senate Meeting

The October 13, 2025 Senate agenda was approved as amended.

9. UPDATES

a) Chairs of Standing Committees of the Senate

- Budget

SEC Chair Lyons shared that Resolution [RS.24.01](#) (Resolution on the Allocation of Resources to Address Impacts of Collective Bargaining Agreements), introduced by Gilmore at the April 22, 2024 Senate meeting, had been referred by the Senate to the Senate Committee on the Budget (BG) for review. Gilmore noted that BG is required to provide a response to the Senate.

BG Chair Silhan summarized BG's deliberations on RS.24.01, stating that BG reviewed the resolution extensively and determined that the issues raised primarily concerned staffing and funding matters that are under administrative authority, not within the Senate's or BG's purview. BG voted 4–1 that further involvement was outside its scope.

BG should prepare a written report summarizing its analysis and vote for submission to the Senate. There was general agreement that it was up to BG if they wanted to consult with the Senate Committee on General University Policy (GP).

- **Library**

Mathisen provided a review of LB's activities, noting that LB is not an arm of the University Library. Mathisen shared that Dean Claire Stewart attends every LB meeting and is very responsive to questions providing follow-up if she cannot answer immediately at the meeting.

- **Remember to sign up!**

Chair Lyons encouraged anyone that had not signed up to do so.

b) Administrative Leadership

- **General Education Board**

On behalf of the General Education Board (GEB), Roether shared that the GEB Chair is now compensated following a similar practice to what is outlined in Part B.4 of the Senate *Bylaws* that provides Compensation for Chairs of Senate Standing Committees.

c) Other

- **The Annual Meeting of the Faculty has been rescheduled for December 8, 2025.**

- **Discovery Partners Institute (DPI)**

Lyons noted that Vice Chancellor Bashir will present information about DPI at the October 27, 2025 SEC meeting.

- **[RS.25.01](#), Resolution to Join a Mutual Academic Defense Compact (MADC) for the Universities of the Big Ten Academic Alliance**

Gilmore noted that the Senate passed a version of the MADDC this past spring and provided an update that there was significant activity over the summer. Gilmore suggested a joint advisory committee that is not subject to OMA.

- **University Library & Professional Librarian Access & Transparency Task Force ([SJR13](#))**

G. Miller shared that the State of Illinois Senate passed a joint resolution, SJR13, and encouraged individuals to put their name forward to serve.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:24 pm.

Jenny Roether
Clerk of the Senate

UPDATES FROM CHAIRS OF STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE

<u>Mtg. Date</u>	<u>Chair</u>	<u>Committee</u>
Nov 3, 2025	John Weible	Faculty and Academic Staff Benefits (FB)
Dec 1, 2025		
Jan 26, 2026		
Feb 2, 2026	Chris Schmitz	Student Conduct Expectations and Accountability (SA)
	Darin Eastburn	Student Discipline (SD)
Mar 2, 2026		
Mar 30, 2026		
Apr 20, 2026	Chaya Sandler	Committee on Committees (CC)
	Matthew Hutchens	Elections and Credentials (EC)

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING OBSERVERS

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Observer</u>
Thurs	Nov 13, 2025	Chicago	Chaya Sandler
Thurs	Jan 16, 2026	Chicago	Joanne Kaczmarek
Thurs	Mar 19, 2026	Springfield	Eric Kurt
Thurs	May 21, 2026	Urbana	Angie Lyons