

**KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF REGENTS
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING**

***** Meeting Was Conducted in Person and by Teleconference *****

**Thursday, October 9, 2025
2:08 p.m. EDT**

**Board of Regents Room
Julian M. Carroll Academic Services Building, 2nd Floor
400 East Main Street
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
(Primary Physical Location)**

MINUTES

CONVENING OF THE MEETING

The Board of Regents of Kentucky State University (the “Board”) held a **special called meeting** on Thursday, October 9, 2025, in the Julian Carroll Academic Services Building, Second Floor Board Room, on the campus of Kentucky State University in Frankfort, Kentucky. Some Regents participated via videoconference consistent with the Kentucky Open Meetings Act.

Chair **Regent Tammi Dukes** called the meeting to order at **2:08 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time**. She noted that the meeting date had originally been scheduled for October 10, 2025, but was moved up one day to accommodate Homecoming activities and President Akakpo’s commitments. Chair Dukes thanked the Regents for their flexibility.

Because this was a special called meeting, Chair Dukes emphasized that the Board would act only on items listed on the published agenda. Any additional topics would be tabled until the next regular meeting.

ROLL CALL

Acting Secretary **Michael DeCourcy** called the roll.

Regents Present

- **Regent Tammi Dukes, Chair**
- **Regent Edward Hatchett, Jr.**
- **Regent Dr. Charles Moyer**

- **Regent Dontrell Childs**
- **Regent Edward Fields**
- **Regent Dr. James Obielodan**
- **Regent Jason Moseley**
- **Regent Jonathan Rabinowitz**
- **Regent Robert Ramsey, Sr.**
- **Regent Joan “Toni” Stringer**
- **Regent Matthew Grimshaw** (via videoconference)

A quorum was declared present. Acting Secretary DeCourcy noted that **all eleven Regents** were in attendance, which had not occurred in many years due to vacancy.

Also present were **President Dr. Koffi C. Akakpo**, members of the President’s Cabinet (including **Provost & Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs Dr. Michael Dailey**; **Vice President for Information Technology/Special Assistant to the President Dr. Wendy Dixie**; **Vice President for Institutional Advancement and External Relations Michael DeCourcy**; **Vice President for Finance and Administration/Chief Financial Officer Dr. Heather Bigard**; and **General Counsel Attorney Nicole Sergeant**), along with additional administrators, faculty, staff, students, and guests.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Action Item

Chair Dukes requested a motion to approve the agenda for the special called meeting.

- **Motion:** Regent Joan “Toni” Stringer
- **Second:** Regent Robert Ramsey

The motion to approve the agenda **carried unanimously** by voice vote.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE – NEW REGENTS

Chair Dukes introduced newly appointed Regents **Joan “Toni” Stringer** and **Dr. James Obielodan**, who joined the meeting in person and on camera.

Acting Secretary **Michael DeCourcy** administered the **oath of office** to Regents Stringer and Obielodan. Both Regents solemnly swore to support the Constitutions of the United States and the Commonwealth of Kentucky, to faithfully execute the duties of a Kentucky State University Regent according to law, and to affirm they had not participated in dueling activity as described in the Kentucky Constitution.

Chair Dukes congratulated the new Regents on their official swearing-in.

BOARD COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair Dukes led a discussion regarding **committee assignments** for the Board's standing committees: Finance and Advancement; Academic Affairs; Athletics; and Student Affairs. She noted her goal of ensuring that each Regent serves on at least two committees, while also being mindful of members' schedules, responsibilities, and the fact that committee meetings are typically grouped on the same day.

Committee assignments confirmed or proposed during the meeting included:

- **Finance and Advancement Committee**
 - Chair: **Regent Dr. Charles Moyer**
 - Vice Chair: **Regent Edward Hatchett**
 - Additional membership to be finalized following further consultation and expressions of interest.
- **Academic Affairs Committee**
 - Chair: **Regent Dr. James Obielodan** (as recommended by Chair Dukes and accepted by Regent Obielodan)
 - Vice Chair: **Regent Dr. Charles Moyer** (who volunteered to serve)
 - Additional members invited to express interest.
- **Athletics Committee**
 - Chair: **Regent Jason Moseley** (continuing)
 - Vice Chair: **Regent Jonathan Rabinowitz** (continuing)
 - **Regent Matthew Grimshaw** volunteered to join the committee.
 - Other Regents may also continue or join, as appropriate.
- **Student Affairs Committee**
 - Chair: **Regent Edward Fields** (at Chair Dukes's request)
 - Vice Chair: **Regent Robert Ramsey** (who agreed to serve)
 - Additional members, including Regent Stringer, expressed interest.

Chair Dukes stated that a **follow-up summary** of assignments would be distributed, and Regents would have an opportunity to volunteer for additional committees.

Per the Board's governing documents (the "Gold Book"), the **Executive Committee** is composed of the Board Chair and Vice Chair, along with the chairs of the standing committees. Accordingly, the Executive Committee will consist of:

- **Chair:** Regent **Tammi Dukes**
- **Vice Chair:** Regent **Edward Hatchett**
- **Finance and Advancement Chair:** Regent **Dr. Charles Moyer**
- **Academic Affairs Chair:** Regent **Dr. James Obielodan**
- **Athletics Chair:** Regent **Jason Moseley**
- **Student Affairs Chair:** Regent **Edward Fields**

Chair Dukes confirmed that these assignments will guide Executive Committee membership.

SHARED GOVERNANCE REPORTS

Faculty Senate Report – Dr. Patrice Nesbitt, President of Faculty Senate

Dr. **Patrice Nesbitt** provided an update on Faculty Senate activities and priorities:

- Recognized members of the Senate Executive Committee (including Dr. Obielodan) and emphasized that "a leader is only as strong as their team."
- Thanked **Dr. Freeman** for her critical support in the **CPE/SACSCOC** process, particularly in coordinating dates, documentation, and compliance measures.
- Reported on committee structure and challenges in appointing committee chairs due to policy requirements that chairs must be Senators who have completed at least one year of service.
- Emphasized the importance of **Curriculum** and **Professional Concerns** Committees and noted that Curriculum Committee membership is currently full.
- Reiterated that **committee participation is essential to shared governance** and is an expectation in faculty contracts.
- Reminded faculty that new courses and course revisions must follow the established approval process, including Chair and Dean signatures, or they will be returned.
- Updated the Board on the status of the **Faculty Handbook**, which has been shared with Senators for distribution to their departments.
- Discussed ongoing and planned **professional development** topics (including Canvas training and classroom management/safety) and acknowledged student and faculty concerns regarding campus climate and safety.
- Indicated plans to move Senate meeting times to **Tuesdays or Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.** to improve attendance and participation.

Regents thanked Dr. Nesbitt for her leadership and for strengthening shared governance.

Staff Senate Report – Mr. Conwell, Staff Senate President

Staff Senate President **Mr. Conwell** welcomed Regents, faculty, staff, students, and friends to campus and Homecoming. Highlights of his report included:

- Launch of “**BanTrack**”, a student work-study initiative in partnership with Information Technology, in which students visit offices across campus to document and standardize Banner-related business processes, ultimately creating a **comprehensive staff operations manual** (both print and electronic).
- Preparation of a **Staff Senate newsletter**, targeted for release in October, and continued promotion of the **campus/community cookbook** project.
- Development of a **mentor program for new employees**, pairing new staff with experienced employees for approximately six months, with anonymous student-led surveys to provide feedback on the onboarding experience.
- Promotion of an anonymous **online channel for encouragement and feedback** about staff, faculty, and campus operations, with summarized input shared with senior leadership.
- Exploration of **surplus technology sales**, allowing faculty and staff to purchase older surplus laptops and other equipment for personal or campus use, in compliance with state surplus property policies. Discussions are underway with **Dr. Dixie** and University Counsel to ensure full adherence to applicable regulations.
- Interest in leveraging internal expertise for **professional development**, drawing upon university faculty and staff who already teach or train in relevant areas, to support employee growth and wellness.
- Plans for a **monthly staff luncheon** to build community and morale.
- A concept for bringing **small farmers and the university’s own agricultural producers** to campus a few times a year for on-campus sales to faculty and staff, thereby expanding the economic impact of Kentucky State’s agricultural and extension programs.
- A proposed “**history walk**” that would place interpretive posters and displays throughout campus, inviting faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members to learn about Kentucky State’s history and potentially encourage prospective students to apply and enroll.

Regents commended the Staff Senate for its creativity and alignment with the university’s mission and HBCU identity. Questions were raised about surplus sales and compliance with state policy; Mr. Conwell confirmed that those issues are being carefully vetted with IT leadership and legal counsel.

Student Government Association (SGA) Report – Regent Dontrell Childs, SGA President

Student Regent and SGA President **Dontrell Childs** delivered a detailed report on SGA priorities, committees, and new initiatives:

- **Academic Committee** – Aims to raise the overall campus GPA to **2.8–3.0** by:
 - Partnering with organizations and academic departments to expand tutoring and mentoring.
 - Hosting study workshops and pre-class planning sessions with advisors.
 - Helping students connect with additional scholarship opportunities.
- **Social Media Committee** – Focused on:
 - Increasing visibility of SGA efforts.
 - Creating engaging student-driven content that reflects campus life.
 - Branding the campus through student voice and storytelling.
- **Community Service Committee** – Working to:
 - Develop new student service projects and partnerships with local schools and non-profits.
 - Encourage student-led service ideas and ongoing service commitments.
 - Launch a mentorship initiative with local schools, including a developing program with **Crawford Middle School in Lexington**, where Kentucky State students mentor youth who may have never traveled outside their city.
- **Food Committee** – In light of a new food service provider, **Southern Foods**, this committee:
 - Serves as a student voice on dining quality and menu variety.
 - Plans a campus-wide survey on dining preferences and dietary needs (e.g., vegetarian, non-pork, allergy-sensitive options).
 - Is working to schedule a meeting with dining management to present feedback.
- **Culture Committee** – Dedicated to:
 - Highlighting campus heritage, culture, and the HBCU family atmosphere.
 - Bridging connections among international, nontraditional, and domestic students.
 - Emphasizing that **all students are part of one Kentucky State family** regardless of background or identity.
- **Housing Committee** – Collaborating with Residence Life staff and RAs to:
 - Identify and track needed residence hall improvements.

- Provide timely information to the President and administration about facilities issues.
- Gather student feedback on amenities and community spaces, including the desire for recreational spaces and game rooms in more residence halls.
- **Food Truck Fridays** – A popular new initiative:
 - Brings rotating food trucks to campus every other Friday from 12–2 p.m.
 - Raises funds for SGA through a 10% vendor revenue contribution in lieu of a vendor fee.
 - Will resume in the spring semester after Spring Break. SGA is actively seeking additional truck partners.
- **Fundraising** – SGA is pursuing:
 - Bake sales, popcorn sales, and other small ventures to diversify funding sources and reduce reliance on university funds.
- **Town Hall Redesign & Communication** –
 - SGA is piloting a **survey-based Town Hall model**: students submit concerns in advance; SGA and the President work on solutions; and Town Halls focus on reporting back with actions and progress.
 - If a concern does not yet have a solution, SGA will be transparent about ongoing efforts.
- **Student Government Elections & Transparency** –
 - This year SGA shifted from fully online voting to **in-person balloting**, which was well received.
 - After voting closed, SGA live-streamed the **ballot counting** on social media to demonstrate fairness and transparency.

Regents praised SGA’s robust agenda and thoughtful approach. In discussion, Regent Childs and Regents explored avenues to:

- Connect the **community service committee** with development and alumni initiatives.
- Coordinate **trunk-or-treat** and other community events (e.g., October 28 in the Alumni Stadium parking lot).
- Align **tutoring and mentoring** with early alerts and academic support strategies, while respecting student privacy and avoiding stigmatization.

- Create a “**scholarship fair**” where students complete multiple scholarship applications on the spot with staff support—a concept Regent Childs is actively pursuing with university staff.

DIVISION OF INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT & EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Planned Giving Presentation – Ben Smith

Vice President **Michael DeCourcy** introduced **Mr. Ben Smith**, a planned giving consultant and Georgetown resident with extensive experience in financial services and charitable planning (including work with national nonprofits and universities). Mr. Smith, a Kentucky native, noted his long familiarity with Kentucky State and expressed appreciation for the Board’s work on behalf of the university and the city of Frankfort.

Mr. Smith’s “**Legacy Planning**” overview included:

- The distinction between **knowing** about charitable planning tools and **actually implementing** them.
- The concept of **legacy** as leaving “footprints” that endure beyond one’s lifetime.
- The idea that many people regret what they **did not do** more than what they did, especially regarding philanthropy and planning for their families.

He outlined several planned giving strategies that can benefit both donors and Kentucky State, including:

- **Bequests in wills and trusts** – Encouraging individuals to include the university in their estate plans, sometimes in small percentages that can still yield meaningful support.
- **Gifts of non-cash assets** – Such as stocks, real estate, business interests, jewelry, antiques, vehicles, life insurance policies, IRAs, and farms, which may offer tax advantages and avoid capital gains.
- **Charitable Lead Trusts** – Where income goes to the university for a set term, after which the asset passes to heirs.
- **Charitable Remainder Trusts and Gift Annuities** – Where donors receive income for life (or a term of years) and the remainder goes to the university upon their death.
- **Qualified Charitable Distributions from IRAs** – Direct gifts from IRAs to the university that may avoid income tax.

Mr. Smith emphasized that:

- There is a **significant intergenerational transfer of wealth** underway nationally, and Kentucky State should position itself to participate by fostering conversations about

legacy.

- Many estate planning attorneys do not automatically raise charitable options unless the client does, so the university can play a constructive role in encouraging supporters to consider planned gifts.
- Focusing on both **current giving and planned giving** tends to increase overall philanthropy, as donors feel more invested in the institution’s long-term success.

Mr. Smith encouraged Regents to consider their own **planned gifts**—however modest—as a way to “lead from the front” and serve as examples for faculty, staff, alumni, and community supporters. He offered to consult with interested Regents, faculty, staff, and friends **at no charge**, while noting that he does not draft legal documents and would defer to the university’s and donors’ legal counsel.

The Board thanked Mr. Smith for his presentation and for volunteering his expertise to support Kentucky State’s fundraising and legacy planning efforts.

“WHAT’S GREAT AT KENTUCKY STATE” SERIES

College of Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources – Apiculture Program

Presenters: Dr. Marcus Bernard, Dr. Thomas Webster, and Joni Nelson

Dean **Dr. Marcus Bernard** introduced the College of Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources (CAHNR) segment of the “What’s Great at Kentucky State” series, focusing on the university’s rapidly expanding **apiculture (honey bee) and pollinator program**. He noted that:

- The college is home to a **strong and growing bee research and extension program** that complements Kentucky State’s nationally recognized aquaculture and pawpaw programs.
- The program is supported by a dedicated team whose combined service to Kentucky State exceeds **50 years**, including **Dr. Thomas Webster** (research), **Joni Nelson** (extension), and **Dr. Kristin Conrad** (native pollinators).

Dr. Thomas Webster provided an overview of the **honey bee research program**, highlighting:

- The **critical role of honey bees** in pollinating fruits, vegetables, and forage crops (such as pumpkins, berries, cucumbers, apples, pears, and alfalfa). He underscored that many foods and animal products (including dairy and Kentucky’s equine sector) depend indirectly on honey bee pollination.
- The serious challenges facing bees, particularly **viruses transmitted by the Varroa mite**, a parasitic pest that has contributed to significant winter hive losses among commercial beekeepers nationwide.

- Collaborative research with **Dr. Huang**, a new faculty member, who has submitted a USDA NIFA grant to explore innovative approaches for controlling bee viruses.
- Partnerships with **computer science graduate students** using an **electronic nose** and other technologies to monitor hive health.
- The presence of **four apiary locations near Frankfort**, with approximately **54 hives** managed by Kentucky State, along with additional research and demonstration sites.

Joni Nelson, Extension Specialist, described extensive **statewide outreach** and grant-funded support:

- Kentucky State administers **Beginning Beekeeper Grants** through a small farm grant program funded by the **Kentucky Agricultural Development Board (KADF)** and tobacco settlement funds.
- The university has provided approximately **\$61,000** in beginning beekeeper grants and, through the broader **Small-Scale Farm Grant** program, has distributed about **\$5.1 million** to small farmers in **115 counties** across Kentucky.
- Kentucky State's **Bee School** is held annually in March in Bradford Hall and is open to students and beekeepers at all levels, offering workshops on hive management, diseases, and pollinator habitat.
- The university operates a **mobile autoclave unit**—likely one of a kind in the United States—that sterilizes beekeeping equipment free of charge for Kentucky beekeepers. The unit is clearly marked with Kentucky State branding and travels statewide to help producers eradicate pathogens and parasites from equipment.

Dr. Kristin Conrad (acknowledged in the presentation) leads efforts focused on **native pollinators**, including:

- Habitat restoration and native plantings on rights-of-way and other lands in partnership with **Columbia Gas, NYSORCS, and Roundstone Native Seed**.
- Educational workshops on the diversity and importance of native bees to agricultural and natural ecosystems.

During discussion, Regents:

- Praised the apiculture program's impact on **farmers, the agricultural economy, and environmental sustainability**.
- Encouraged Kentucky State to continue exploring **applied doctoral programs**—particularly at the intersection of agriculture, health, and engineering—with potential focus areas such as **bee products with medicinal properties** (e.g., anti-inflammatory, anti-diabetic, or anti-cancer applications).

- Discussed anecdotal reports of bee venom therapy and local honey for allergies and noted the need for **rigorous medical research** and collaboration with the **School of Nursing and health sciences** to study such claims responsibly.

Dr. Webster noted that Kentucky State likely has **more bee-related activity than all other Kentucky institutions combined** and that the university is often the only institution represented at beekeeper meetings. He welcomed the Board’s support for expansion of research and graduate programs in this area.

To conclude the presentation, Dr. Bernard and the team shared **jars of honey produced from Kentucky State hives** as a “parting gift,” noting that the honey is typically reserved for collaborators, landowners who host hives, and others who support the program.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Presenters: Provost Dr. Michael Dailey; Dr. Stephanie Mayberry, Vice Provost of Student Affairs; and Ms. Jameelah Means, Director of Admissions

Provost **Dr. Michael Dailey** framed the update by emphasizing that **enrollment, retention, and graduation** are intertwined and **shared responsibilities** across the university. He noted that President Akakpo has set a clear goal of reaching **3,000 students**, with a longer-term target of **3,500 students by Fall 2026**, and that student success must be driven by collaboration among Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, Financial Aid, the Bursar’s Office, and campus life.

Enrollment Funnel and First-Time Freshmen/Transfers

Dr. Dailey and Dr. Mayberry, presented a snapshot of Fall 2025 enrollment:

- The university admitted a robust pool of **first-time freshmen and transfer students**, of whom more than **600 enrolled**, contributing significantly to overall headcount.
- An updated **enrollment funnel** now tracks prospective students from **name purchases** through application, completed application, intent to enroll, orientation, and final registration.
- A weekly **Enrollment Management Team** meeting—co-led by Dr. Dailey and Dr. Mayberry and including Deans, Department Chairs, Student Success, Student Affairs, Admissions, Career Services, Adult Education, Transfer and International staff, and Dual Credit—coordinates recruitment and retention strategies and works to eliminate duplication of effort.

Ms. Jameelah Means, Director of Admissions, described aggressive recruitment tactics at the top of the funnel:

- Increased participation in **college fairs, high school visits, and community events** within Kentucky and in key out-of-state markets.
- A recent **Detroit initiative** during the Classic, where staff conducted on-the-spot admissions at area high schools, resulting in **148 students being admitted immediately**.
- Use of **iPads and QR codes** at recruitment events, enabling students to complete the application in about five minutes and receive rapid admissions decisions when credentials are available.
- Implementation of **direct admission criteria**, allowing staff to admit qualified students immediately upon reviewing transcripts and test scores.

Dr. Dailey noted that:

- As of the fall census, Kentucky State’s total enrollment is just under **2,900 students**, with **continued growth expected** through the late-start online “C term.”
- The university’s **online programs** operate in three terms (A, B, and C) each semester, with C-term students scheduled to begin October 20. Enrollment additions from the C term are expected to help the university **cross the 3,000-student threshold** later in the fall.

Ten-Year Enrollment Trends and Program Highlights

Dr. Mayberry shared a **10-year enrollment trend**:

- Total headcount has fluctuated historically, with periods of growth followed by decline.
- Over the past **three years**, under President Akakpo’s intentional enrollment strategy, the university has experienced **steady year-over-year growth** instead of the previous “roller coaster” pattern.

She identified Kentucky State’s **top undergraduate programs** by enrollment:

- Nursing
- Business Administration
- Agriculture, Food, and Environment
- Psychology
- Computer Science

She also highlighted **strong graduate programs**, including:

- Environmental Studies
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
- Master of Business Administration (MBA)

Many of these programs benefit from **targeted scholarships**, such as the 1890 Scholarship (for agriculture and STEM), HBCU Masters awards, and the CHI Saint Joseph Hospital nursing scholarship.

Retention, Predictive Analytics, and Student Success

Addressing **retention**, Dr. Mayberry reported:

- Kentucky State’s retention rate, while improving, is not yet at the **aspirational target of 90%**.
- The university is participating in projects with the **Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard** and **Complete College America**, in partnership with DataKind, to analyze patterns and identify drivers of student persistence.
- Preliminary analysis shows that students who earn **25 or more credit hours in their first year** are significantly more likely to be retained. This finding informs early interventions, course loads, and advising strategies.
- President Akakpo has personally met with the **entire freshman class** to discuss expectations, supports, and the importance of fully engaging in their studies.

Additional retention strategies include:

- Development of academic pathways to support “**15 to Finish**”, encouraging students to enroll in at least 15 credit hours per semester where feasible.
- Expanded **professional advising**, particularly for students with 70+ credit hours who are nearing graduation, to ensure a clear route to completion.
- A reimagined **early alert system** to identify students struggling academically or facing personal challenges, with coordinated outreach from Student Success, Residence Life, TRIO, and other offices.
- A **homegrown early alert solution** being used while the university evaluates a new enterprise platform.

Regents asked detailed questions about:

- Tracking **attrition** by month and semester.
- The percentage of students departing due to **financial versus academic reasons**.
- Strategies for re-engaging former students with low GPAs, including **academic bankruptcy** options and partnerships with community colleges for temporary enrollment until they are ready to return.

Dr. Mayberry responded that:

- A substantial portion of non-returning freshmen cite **financial hardship**, especially among out-of-state students.

- Many returning students who stop out in spring cannot register because of unpaid balances.
- The university is exploring **unmet-need scholarships** and external scholarship support to keep more students enrolled.
- For students with very low GPAs, Kentucky State sometimes coordinates with partner institutions (e.g., community colleges) where they can improve academic standing before returning.

Regent Childs reiterated students' interest in a "**scholarship fair**" where staff help them identify and apply for multiple scholarships in one sitting. Dr. Mayberry confirmed that collaboration with scholarship coordinators (including Thurgood Marshall and 1890-related programs) is underway to support this concept.

Graduate Education and Online Programs

Dr. Dailey reported strong growth in **graduate enrollment**, particularly in online programs:

- As of late September, Kentucky State enrolled approximately **400 graduate students**, including about **100 in the university's online programs**.
- Approximately **51% of the online graduate students are in the MBA program**.
- The university has launched or revitalized multiple graduate programs in the past year, including **MBA, Environmental Studies, Criminal Justice, Social Work (BSW and MSW), and upcoming public health/allied health programs**.

He summarized Kentucky State's **online growth**:

- Prior to the launch of the new online initiative, the university had **74 online students**.
- After launching in Fall 2024, online enrollment rose to **147 students**.
- As of this fall, online enrollment stands at **493 students**, representing roughly a **500% increase** in one year.

Dr. Dailey explained that:

- Kentucky State **does not use a revenue-sharing model** with its online services partner. Instead, the university pays for services up front, and all tuition revenue flows back to Kentucky State.
- Most online instruction is currently delivered by **adjunct faculty**, including some Kentucky State faculty who teach online for additional compensation.
- The university anticipates reaching its **break-even point in year three** of the online initiative, after which it will gradually shift from a 90/10 reinvestment model to 80/20 (and potentially 70/30) between program reinvestment and general university support, based on sustained growth.

Regents inquired about **net revenue** from online versus on-campus programs. Dr. Dailey and Dr. Bigard indicated that detailed net revenue comparisons will be developed as part of the enhanced financial reporting framework and shared with the Board at a future meeting.

In-State vs. Out-of-State Recruitment and International Students

Dr. Mayberry presented data showing:

- A **significant shift toward in-state enrollment** for first-time freshmen: approximately **52% in-state and 48% out-of-state**, compared to a previous mix of roughly 35% in-state and 65% out-of-state.
- Kentucky's **border states and Michigan** remain important out-of-state markets, supported by targeted recruitment travel and relationships with school districts.

Regarding **international students**, Dr. Mayberry noted:

- The university currently enrolls **199 international students**.
- Additional students—particularly from **China**—have received admissions offers and I-20s but have deferred or been delayed due to visa processes and federal factors, including the potential impact of a federal government shutdown.
- Historically strong source countries include **Nepal, Nigeria, Ghana, and The Bahamas**, with new efforts underway to deepen partnerships with **The Bahamas** and **Puerto Rico**.

Regent Childs emphasized the importance of expanding recruitment from **The Bahamas**, noting that Kentucky State's HBCU culture is attractive to Bahamian students and that other institutions (e.g., Central State) have successfully recruited large cohorts. Dr. Dailey and President Akakpo indicated that:

- The university has existing relationships with Bahamian education officials, and recruitment efforts are ongoing.
- Further collaboration among Enrollment Management, International Affairs, and Student Affairs will continue to build this pipeline and ensure strong support for Bahamian and other international students on campus.

STUDENT ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL AID – FALL 2025 BALANCES

Dr. Mayberry provided a detailed update on **student account balances** for the Fall 2025 term:

- As of the most recent report, the university had **collected approximately \$10,961,256.26** in student payments.
- Outstanding student balances totaled approximately **\$5,650,488.79**, prior to the application of certain aid and pending transactions.

She noted that this figure will decline as:

- Remaining **scholarships and grants** from multiple sources are applied, including:
 - 1890 and National 1890 scholarships
 - Thoroughbred Foundation endowments
 - HBCU Masters and Rosen scholarships
 - CHI nursing scholarships
 - Dual credit scholarships
 - Graduate assistantships
- Approximately **\$1 million** in balances are already covered by **payment plans** in which students are actively making installments.
- Approximately **\$372,000** in **anticipated aid** (including federal work-study and Parent PLUS/alternative loans) will be disbursed as eligibility is confirmed.

After these adjustments, the university anticipates an ultimate outstanding balance of about **\$2.7 million** for the term. By comparison, at the end of the prior year the university recorded approximately **\$1.9 million** in uncollected student receivables, but with significantly **fewer students enrolled**. The average per-student balance has decreased from roughly \$3,500 in the prior year to approximately \$2,500 this year.

Dr. Mayberry explained:

- For **residential students**, the university implemented a policy requiring payment or an approved plan prior to **move-in**, which has proven effective in reducing unpaid balances.
- For **commuter students**, similar steps will be implemented prior to spring registration, including possible **“lockout” holds after midterm** for students who have not engaged in payment or aid processes but remain actively enrolled.
- The university will continue to **drop students** who have not attended class, have made no payments, and have no aid in process, to avoid carrying balances for individuals who did not truly matriculate.

President Akakpo noted that an anonymous alumnus recently donated **\$21,000** to pay off selected student balances, and the recipients have been notified. He expressed gratitude for the gift and framed it as an example of how external support can directly impact student retention.

Regents encouraged continued efforts to:

- Proactively **guide students through scholarship applications**, rather than waiting for them to seek help.
- Use **data and communication** strategically to prevent students from being surprised by balances that later interrupt their enrollment.

DIVISION OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Financial Update and FY 2024 Audit – Dr. Heather Bigard, Vice President for Finance and Administration/CFO

Vice President and Chief Financial Officer **Dr. Heather Bigard** presented an early **financial update** and an overview of the **FY 2024 audit status**, noting that she is in her **fifth week** in the role.

FY 2024 Audit

- Dr. Bigard has met with the external auditors, **CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA)**, and with **Protiviti**, which has been assisting the university in preparing workpapers and documentation.
- The audit team has expressed confidence that, assuming continued progress at the current pace, they can deliver the **FY 2024 financial statements and audit** in advance of **Thanksgiving 2025**.
- This timeline would allow the Board to hold a **special meeting** to receive and act on the audit prior to submission to SACSCOC and other oversight bodies.
- The primary external risk to the timeline is a potential **federal government shutdown**, which could temporarily limit access to certain confirmation data used in audit testing.

Following completion of the 2024 audit, the university will move directly into the **FY 2025 audit** cycle, with Finance staff assuming a greater share of the work previously performed by outside consultants.

FY 2025–26 Budget and Reporting Enhancements

Dr. Bigard described efforts to strengthen **financial reporting and transparency**:

- The current monthly budget report format is aligned with **CPE requirements**, but it aggregates certain items (such as the full student receivables balance) in ways that are not standard in internal budget presentations.
- The Finance team is working to produce **comprehensive quarterly financial statements**, including:
 - Budget-to-actual operating statements
 - Balance sheet
 - Statement of cash flows
 - Consolidated reporting of **Education and General, grants, and auxiliary** operations.

Highlights from early FY 2025–26 trends (as of the August report) included:

- **Revenue** trending slightly **ahead** of the prior year (approximately **\$9.8 million** at that early point).
- **Expenditures** trending **below** the prior year (approximately **\$7.0 million** vs. \$8.6 million), reflecting tighter internal controls and the paced release of budget authority.
- **Auxiliary net revenue** temporarily behind prior-year levels due to timing differences and reclassification of certain expenses (including online program costs and audit fees).

Dr. Bigard indicated that by the next regular Board meeting the university expects to present **clearer year-end projections** and more robust comparative data.

BOOKSTORE CONTRACT – FOLLETT

Action Item

Dr. Bigard presented a proposed **contract with Follett** to continue operating the university bookstore. She explained that:

- Follett manages textbook distribution and campus merchandise.
- The university has implemented an **ACCESS program** for course materials, under which students are charged **\$37 per credit hour** for digital textbooks and courseware, and the university pays Follett **\$26 per credit hour** for those materials.
- In FY 2024, the ACCESS program generated approximately **\$1.4 million** in student charges, with roughly **\$1.3 million** paid to Follett. Because this exceeds the Board's **\$1 million contract threshold**, Board approval is required even though the underlying relationship is longstanding.

In discussion, Regents and **Regent Childs** raised several student-centered issues:

- **Affordability of merchandise**, including the high cost of items such as letterman jackets (e.g., around \$300) at a time when many students are struggling with tuition and balances.
- The timing and frequency of **bookstore sales**, noting that Follett's major 50% off sale occurs during the December holiday break when most students are off campus, resulting in minimal benefit to the student body.

President Akakpo asked Regent Childs to send a written summary of student concerns, noting that he would raise these issues directly with Follett leadership during upcoming meetings. The administration will explore:

- Greater **price flexibility** for apparel and merchandise.
- A more student-friendly **sales calendar**, including promotions during Homecoming and other high-traffic campus events.

After discussion:

- **On motion duly made and seconded**, the Board **approved the Follett bookstore contract** and the continued implementation of the ACCESS program with the described pricing structure. The motion was carried **unanimously** by voice vote.

CAPITAL PROJECT AMENDMENT – SHAUNTE HALL

Action Item

Presenter: H. Wayne Cowan, Director of Capital Planning and Facilities Management

Director **H. Wayne Cowan** requested Board approval to **increase** the budget for the **Shaunte Hall renovation project** by **\$1 million**, funded from the university's **asset preservation allocation**.

Key points:

- The Board previously approved a Shaunte Hall project budget of **\$6,680,000**.
- After further evaluation—and in consultation with the Dean and faculty of the **School of Engineering**—Shaunte Hall was identified as the more suitable and strategic long-term home for engineering than the originally considered Carver building.
- The additional \$1 million will support **technology upgrades, specialized laboratories, and other enhancements** needed to fully support current and projected engineering enrollment over the next five years, rather than implementing partial upgrades and returning later for additional funding.
- A consultant has been selected and is prepared to begin work promptly upon approval. The project will be phased, with significant portions of Shaunte Hall expected to be ready for use by **Fall 2026**, including an initial CDC lab and core engineering spaces.

Mr. Cowan also noted that:

- The university is pursuing **Phase 2 and Phase 3 site improvements** that will increase parking capacity and improve traffic flow.
- During construction, the project footprint around Shaunte Hall will be managed carefully to preserve as much **parking** as possible.
- Broader parking and site improvement efforts—funded from the same **\$60 million state asset preservation allocation** (part of a larger \$65 million state package that also included \$5 million in design funds for a new facility)—are being scheduled to minimize disruption to campus life.

Regents posed questions related to:

- Construction timelines and coordination with parking and campus circulation.
- Ensuring that the basketball court and student recreational spaces behind Young Hall are considered within the broader site planning effort.

President Akakpo reiterated that establishing a **high-quality, permanent home for the School of Engineering** is one of his top capital priorities.

Following discussion:

- **Motion:** Regent Dontrell Childs
- The motion to **increase the Shaunte Hall project budget by \$1,000,000** from asset preservation funds (for a revised total project budget of **\$7,680,000**) was **seconded** and **carried unanimously** by voice vote.

Mr. Cowan expressed appreciation and indicated that he would proceed immediately with project planning and implementation consistent with the Board's action.

COMPLIANCE / ANONYMOUS REPORTING HOTLINE UPDATE

Chair Dukes reported that during the most recent quarter, **two new hotline reports** were received through the university's anonymous reporting system. Both were investigated in accordance with policy and were determined to be **unsubstantiated**. The cases have been **closed**.

UNIVERSITY POLICY COMMITTEE UPDATE

As **co-chair of the University Policy Committee**, Vice President **Michael DeCourcy** provided a brief update:

- The committee has been active over the past several years in reviewing and updating university policies.
- At the Board's June 2025 meeting, a new **policy development and approval process** was adopted.
- Several policies are currently in the pipeline and will be ready for **Board consideration and approval** at an upcoming meeting (either a special meeting in November or the next regular meeting).

This item was **informational only**; no Board action was requested at this time.

ELECTION OF BOARD SECRETARY AND BOARD TREASURER

Action Item

Chair Dukes opened the floor for nominations for **Board Secretary** and **Board Treasurer**, in accordance with Board bylaws:

- The **Secretary** may be a Regent or a member of the faculty or staff, if nominated by a Regent.
- The **Treasurer** must be a member of the faculty or staff and may not be a Regent.

Secretary

Regent **Edward Hatchett** nominated **Attorney Nicole Sergent**, General Counsel, to serve as **Board Secretary**. Attorney Sergent accepted the nomination and summarized her background:

- Kentucky native and attorney with over **20 years of legal experience**.
- Prior service as **Acting General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, and Compliance Officer** at Central State University in Ohio, including service as Board Secretary.
- Previous experience as an **Assistant Attorney General** in Kentucky, including financial litigation work for the Revenue Cabinet, and representation of boards and commissions.

No further nominations were offered.

Treasurer

Recognizing that the university now has a permanent CFO, Chair Dukes invited a nomination for Treasurer. A Regent nominated **Dr. Heather Bigard**, Vice President for Finance and Administration/CFO, to serve as **Board Treasurer**. Dr. Bigard accepted the nomination.

No further nominations were offered.

A motion was made and seconded to **close nominations** and to elect Attorney Sergent and Dr. Bigard by **acclamation**.

By unanimous voice vote, the Board elected:

- **Attorney Nicole Sergent – Secretary of the Board of Regents**
- **Dr. Heather Bigard – Treasurer of the Board of Regents**

Chair Dukes congratulated both and thanked them for their willingness to serve.

CLOSED SESSION

Chair Dukes announced the Board's intent to enter **closed session** to discuss **pending litigation** pursuant to **KRS 61.810(1)(c)** of the Kentucky Open Meetings Act.

- **Motion:** A Regent moved that the Board enter closed session to discuss pending litigation as authorized by KRS 61.810(1)(c).
- **Second:** The motion was seconded and **carried unanimously** by voice vote.

The Board entered closed session. Regent Grimshaw joined the closed session via separate secure videoconference link.

Upon conclusion of the discussion, the Board returned to open session:

- **Motion:** A Regent moved that the Board return to open session.
- **Second:** The motion was seconded and **carried unanimously** by voice vote.

Chair Dukes stated for the record that **no final action was taken** during closed session.

CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

In her closing remarks, Chair **Tammi Dukes** reflected on the **significance of Homecoming** at Kentucky State University:

- She described Homecoming as a time when the **past and present come together**, and when Kentucky State honors its history as a **public HBCU** while celebrating the ongoing achievements of its students, alumni, faculty, and staff.
- She noted that for **139 years**, Kentucky State has opened its doors to students seeking opportunity—to learn, to lead, and to serve. The impact of Kentucky State graduates can be seen across the Commonwealth and the nation, in **classrooms, boardrooms, farms, laboratories, and communities**.
- Chair Dukes emphasized that the university's greatest strength lies not only in its past but in its **hope and vision for the future**. Under President Akakpo's leadership, Kentucky State is renewing its commitment to **student success, innovation, and service**, and working to build a future in which every Thorobred has the opportunity to **lead with impact**.

She thanked the Regents, President Akakpo, the President's Cabinet, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends for their **dedication, faith, and love** for Kentucky State University, and wished everyone a **safe and joyful Homecoming weekend**.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business:

- **Motion:** A Regent moved to adjourn the meeting.
- **Second:** The motion was seconded and **carried unanimously** by voice vote.

Chair Dukes adjourned the special called meeting of the Board of Regents at **5:11 p.m.** on October 9, 2025.

Submitted by:

Nicole Sergent, Secretary
Board of Regents
Kentucky State University

Regent Tammi Dukes, Chair
Board of Regents Athletics Committee
Kentucky State University

_____ Approved with no corrections

_____ Approved with corrections