

CSU Board of Trustees
Full Board Meeting and Board Retreat
Open Session Minutes
September 15, 2025
9:02 a.m.-1:45 p.m.

Board Members Present

Trustee Andrea Zopp, Chair
Trustee Cheryl Watkins, Secretary
Trustee Dixie Adams
Trustee Zariah Franklin
Trustee Michelle Gooze-Miller
Trustee Jason Quiara
Trustee John Robak

Members Absent

Trustee Angelique David, Vice-Chair

Others Present

President Zalwaynaka (Z) Scott, JD
Teresa L. Bates, Executive Director of Board Relations
Jason Carter, Vice President, Legal Affairs, General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer
Dr. Sonja Feist-Price, Provost & Senior Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs
Nicole Latimer-Williams, Vice President of Financial Operations and Chief Financial Officer
Oscar Rodriguez, Vice President, Enrollment Management
Erin Steva, Vice President, External Affairs and Strategic Initiatives
Melanie Sillas, Executive Director, Chicago State Foundation

1. Call to Order

Chair Andrea Zopp called the meeting to order.

2. Roll Call

A quorum was verified, and roll call was taken.

3. Verification of Meeting Notice

The meeting notice was posted as mandated by the Illinois Open Meetings Act in the following physical locations: the Student Union Building, Library, Cook Administration Building, and online.

4. Approval of Agenda

Chair Andrea Zopp moved to approve the agenda. Trustee Cheryl Watkins seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

5. Public Comment

There were two public comments.

Pastor Doyle provided remarks in recognition of Black Business Month in August and expressed a desire to highlight a woman-owned business that serves Chicago State University families and other civic organizations. He then introduced Ms. Chephtsybah Yisrael.

Ms. Yisrael shared an overview of her business, The Flower Bar, a florist company located in the Beverly community. She expressed her interest in the opportunity to work with Chicago State University in the future.

6. Approval of Minutes

Chair Andrea Zopp moved to approve the meeting minutes from June 23, 2025. Trustee Zariah Franklin seconded the motion.

Trustee Adams -Yes
Trustee Franklin-Yes
Trustee Gooze-Miller-Yes
Trustee Quiara-Yes
Trustee Robak-Yes
Trustee Watkins -Yes
Trustee Zopp-Yes

The motion passed unanimously: Ayes, 7, Nays, 0

7. President's Remarks

President Zalldwaynaka Scott welcomed the Board to campus for the first meeting of the 2025–2026 academic year.

President Scott provided an update on CSU's annual Back-to-School Parade. She noted that this year's Grand Marshal was Mr. Vincent Hale, owner of the Hale Family McDonald's group. The Hale family has been long-standing supporters of Chicago State University through contributions of food, refreshments, and monetary donations. President Scott also acknowledged United Airlines for donating book bags in support of CSU's student-athletes and announced an upcoming Day of Service benefiting the University.

President Scott then updated the Board on the University's student housing expansion initiative. She referenced the increasing challenges related to student housing availability and affordability. In response, CSU launched a new off-campus housing program, securing 72 beds in downtown Chicago at an affordable rate. Additionally, the University opened 25 new on-campus residence hall spaces. These efforts aim to make student housing more accessible and affordable.

President Scott recognized recent achievements by members of the University's leadership team, offering congratulations to the following individuals:

- Provost Dr. Sonja Feist-Price, for completing the Leadership Greater Chicago Daniel Burnham Fellowship;
- Dr. Monique Carroll, for completing the IMPACT Leadership Development Program;
- Erin Steva, for completing the Crain's Chicago Leadership Circle program;
- Nicole Williams, for being named a Notable Leader in Finance by *Crain's Chicago Business*.

She also congratulated Oscar Rodriguez, Vice President of Enrollment Management, for the division's impressive progress and accomplishments in admissions and enrollment.

8. Board Reports

Academic Affairs

Chair Andrea Zopp called on Dr. Sonja Feist-Price, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, to present the Academic Affairs report. Dr. Feist-Price provided an update on fall-to-fall retention, noting significant increases among first-time freshmen, Rise students, and new transfer students. She also recognized the individuals contributing to Student Success initiatives. Rise Scholars experienced a 20% increase, and the new C.U.B.S. program (Cultivating Unity, Building Success) will offer comprehensive wraparound services, including progress monitoring and individualized support. Dr. Feist-Price further reported that Dual Enrollment achieved a 39% increase in student participation and has expanded to 12 school partnerships. She highlighted the success of this year's summer camps, which included 12 programs serving approximately 300 participants, and provided an update on CSU's efforts to support students' basic needs. She concluded her report by announcing a new collaborative partnership with Easterseals.

Jason Carter presented the resolution to amend the contract for the Advocate Wellness Center. He noted that CSU previously approved a two-year agreement with Advocate Health and Hospitals for an amount not to exceed \$342,800, rather than the correct total of \$685,600 for the contract period of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2026. The resolution reflects the correction to the full contract amount of \$685,600.

Chair Andrea Zopp called for a motion to approve the Amendment to the Advocate Wellness Center Resolution. Trustee John Robak moved to approve resolution. Trustee Michelle Gooze-Miller 2nd the motion.

Trustee Adams -Yes

Trustee Franklin-Yes

Trustee Gooze-Miller-Yes

Trustee Quiara-Yes

Trustee Robak-Yes

Trustee Watkins -Yes

Trustee Zopp-Yes

The motion passed unanimously: Ayes, 7, Nays, 0

Student Trustee Report

Trustee Zariah Franklin gave the student trustee report. She introduced herself and provided updates on recent campus activities, including Welcome Week, the Back-to-School Parade, and the Yard Show. She noted that NPHC organizations participated in several community service events and highlighted the events and organization fair. Trustee Franklin reported that students are enthusiastic about returning to campus.

Finance and Audit Committee

Chair Andrea Zopp turned the meeting over to Trustee Gooze-Miller who presided over the report in Trustee David's absence. Trustee Gooze-Miller called on Nicole Latimer Williams, Vice President of Financial Operations and Chief Financial Officer to present her report and resolutions. Ms. Latimer-Williams presented the final FY2026 Operating Budget.

The total FY 2026 state appropriation is \$44,642,007, broken down as follows:

- \$40,532,007 from the Education Assistance Fund
- \$ 803,000 contingency funding from the Education Assistance Fund
- \$ 3,000,000 from the CSU Education Improvement Fund, and
- \$ 307,000 from the General Professions Dedicated Fund for the pharmacy program.

The FY 2026 state appropriation is increased by \$401,007 or 1% over the FY 2025 appropriation level with an additional 2% estimated contingency of \$803,000 from the Education Assistance Fund.

FY 2026 estimated spending from the Local Income Fund (LI) in the sum of \$21,527,000 is built on projected net tuition, fees and scholarships of \$20.7M based on enrollment projection of 53,127 credit hours, an estimated 5% increase over FY 2025, primarily due to recruitment and marketing university initiatives. The spending plan for LI includes \$825K in expenses that will be covered with salary savings from vacant positions as well as one-time prior year carryover funds.

Revenue projections in the Non-Appropriated Funds total \$13,955,100 coming from student mandatory fee income and revenues from auxiliary operations. Total operating budget from non-appropriated funds is \$13,977,100. The spending plan for non-appropriated funds shows a projected budget gap of \$22K which will be covered with one-time prior-year carryover funds. The projected gaps are primarily due to the Athletics and Childcare center implementation expenses. The programs are seeking alternative budget partnerships.

CSU estimates that it will receive \$10,643,000 in non-financial aid, non-capital funds from federal, state, and city grants in FY 2026.

The FY 2026 operating budget (spending plan) is \$90.8M from all sources of funds.

Trustee Gooze-Miller called for a motion to approve the FY26 Final Operating Budget. Trustee Andrea Zopp moved to approve the resolution. Trustee Jason Quiara seconded the motion.

Trustee Adams -Yes
Trustee Franklin-Yes
Trustee Gooze-Miller-Yes
Trustee Quiara-Yes
Trustee Robak-Yes
Trustee Watkins -Yes
Trustee Zopp-Yes

The motion passed unanimously: Ayes, 7 Nays, 0

Enrollment Management

Chair Andrea Zopp called on Oscar Rodriguez, Vice President of Enrollment Management to present an update on Enrollment Management. Mr. Rodriguez reported a 12% overall increase in enrollment, highlighted by an 83% increase in new first-year, first-time freshmen. He noted that although overall applications decreased, the number of admitted students and confirmed enrollments increased. He also emphasized significant growth among traditional-aged undergraduate students.

Mr. Rodriguez reviewed the recruitment and outreach activities for fall 2025, including the schools visited by the Enrollment Management team.

He then outlined upcoming enhancements for the 2026–2027 academic year, including the implementation of graduate admissions in Slate, expanded personalized and student-generated content, and the introduction of undergraduate AI-supported recruitment strategies.

Finally, Mr. Rodriguez shared key goals for fall 2025, which include strengthening engagement efforts and addressing vacancies within the Office of the Registrar, including leadership roles for both the Registrar’s Office and Graduate Admissions.

External Affairs

Chair Andrea Zopp invited Erin Steva, Vice President of External Affairs and Strategic Initiatives, to provide the Legislative Update. Ms. Steva reported that CSU is pursuing a public–private partnership to develop one or two new buildings that would create between 300 and 500 additional housing units and up to 25,000 square feet of commercial space. The RFP opened in July, with proposals due October 16. Following the submission period, an evaluation process will begin, and a member of the Board of Trustees will be asked to serve on the evaluation

committee. A recommendation is expected to be presented to the Board at its December meeting, with the goal of bringing a proposed contract forward for approval in March.

Ms. Steva also discussed progress on the state's equitable funding formula. Recent legislation established a commission to examine stable, adequate, and equitable funding for Illinois public universities. The commission determined that an additional \$1.4 billion statewide is needed to fully support the work required to meet student needs. If enacted, CSU's appropriation is projected to increase by approximately \$43 million annually over a 10-year phase-in. The target for passing the new funding formula is Spring 2026. President Scott has provided testimony at two legislative hearings on this issue.

Chicago State Foundation Report

Chair Andrea Zopp invited Melanie Sillas to provide an update on the Chicago State Foundation. Ms. Sillas provided an overview of the FY26 Q1 Statement of Development Activities, highlighting progress aligned with the University's Strategic Plan. She reported strong donor engagement efforts, including the successful launch of the 1stGEN Scholarship Gala, which has raised \$498,000 toward its \$750,000 goal, with a \$1 million stretch target. She noted \$1.04 million in secured corporate and foundation support during Q1, including major awards for Dual Enrollment, the Cougar Commitment initiative, the Transfer Innovation Model, and Rise Academy. Ms. Sillas also recognized the continued strength of the Board of Directors, which maintains a 95% giving rate and has contributed to increased gala support.

Chair Andrea Zopp moved that the Board convene into Executive Session to discuss Real Estate Matters, Litigation Updates, and the President's FY26 Goals. Trustee Michelle Gooze-Miller seconded the motion.

Trustee Adams -Yes

Trustee Franklin-Yes

Trustee Gooze-Miller-Yes

Trustee Quiara-Yes

Trustee Robak-Yes

Trustee Watkins -Yes

Trustee Zopp-Yes

The motion passed unanimously: Ayes, 7 Nays, 0

Return to Open Session

Chair Andrea Zopp moved to reconvene into Open session. Trustee Jason Quiara seconded the motion.

Trustee Adams -Yes

Trustee Franklin-Yes

Trustee Gooze-Miller-Yes

Trustee Quiara-Yes

Trustee Robak-Yes
Trustee Watkins -Yes
Trustee Zopp-Yes

The motion passed unanimously: Ayes, 7 Nays, 0

The board did take action in executive session, which required action in the open session.

Chair Andrea Zopp called for a motion to approve President Scott's FY26 Goals. Trustee Cheryl Watkins moved to approve President Scott's Goals. Trustee Jason Quiara seconded the motion.

Trustee Adams -Yes
Trustee Franklin-Yes
Trustee Gooze-Miller-Yes
Trustee Quiara-Yes
Trustee Robak-Yes
Trustee Watkins -Yes
Trustee Zopp-Yes

The motion passed unanimously: Ayes, 7 Nays, 0

Adjournment

Chair Andrea Zopp moved to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Jason Quiara seconded the motion.

Trustee Adams -Yes
Trustee Franklin-Yes
Trustee Gooze-Miller-Yes
Trustee Quiara-Yes
Trustee Robak-Yes
Trustee Watkins -Yes
Trustee Zopp-Yes

The motion passed unanimously: Ayes, 7 Nays, 0

The September 15, 2025, Board of Trustees meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Chicago State University Full Board of Trustees Retreat

The Board Retreat opened at 12:38 p.m.

The following departments presented:

- Enrollment Management with a special emphasis on Enrollment Strategy
- Academic Affairs with a special emphasis on Innovation in Curriculum, Quantum and Pharmacy Recruitment.

There was also a special presentation by Lisa Parker of Husch Blackwell, who provided an overview of current legal issues affecting higher education. Her remarks addressed recent lawsuits involving universities, emerging trends in the national legal landscape, and the implications of the U.S. Department of Justice memo on diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Ms. Parker outlined how these developments may impact institutional policies and practices across the sector, offering guidance on risk mitigation and compliance considerations moving forward.

The Board Retreat Closed at 1:45 p.m.