



PURDUE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

APRIL 10, 2026 | MINUTES

A meeting of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees convened at 8:35 a.m. on Friday, April 10, 2026, in the Walb Student Union, International Ballroom, North Side on the campus of Purdue Fort Wayne in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Committee members present included: Malcolm DeKryger, chair; JoAnn Brouillette; Vanessa Castagna; Reagan Koester; and David Ricks. Other trustees present: Sonny Beck; Theresa Carter; Michael Klipsch; Gary Lehman; and Shawn Taylor.

Officers and administrators in attendance: Mung Chiang, president; Patrick Wolfe, provost; Chris Ruhl, chief financial officer and treasurer; and Cindy Ream, corporate secretary and senior executive assistant to the Board.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon proper motion duly made and seconded, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes for Executive Session convened on March 10, 2026; and Public Session convened on February 6, 2026.

II. (WL) APPROVAL OF POSTHUMOUS DEGREES

Provost Wolfe recommended approval to honor two students whose academic journeys were cut short by awarding posthumous degrees. The first request was for Cade Gochenour, a graduate student in Agricultural and Biological Engineering. After earning a degree in Forestry and Environmental Science from Iowa State University, Cade joined Purdue in Fall 2024 to pursue a Master's of Science. His research focused on ecology and the use of algae in water treatment and nutrient recovery—an important and growing area within sustainability science. Provost Wolfe confirmed that Cade had completed more than 85% of the required credit hours and was on track to successfully earn his degree, meeting Purdue's requirements for a posthumous degree award.

The second request focused on Grace Haraway, an undergraduate student pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences. Throughout her time at Purdue, Grace demonstrated outstanding engagement and leadership. She participated in numerous campus organizations, including the Audubon Nature Center, and played a significant role in Boiler Gold Rush, Purdue's new student orientation program. As a team supervisor, she helped welcome and mentor new students, serving as a proud ambassador for the University. Her leadership, kindness, and commitment to others left a lasting impression on the Purdue community. Grace had also completed at least 85% of the credit hours required for her degree and was on track to complete all remaining requirements.

In concluding remarks, Provost Wolfe mentioned that posthumous degrees provide a meaningful way to recognize the commitment, hard work, and lasting contributions of students whose studies were interrupted by tragedy.

Upon proper motion duly made and seconded, the Academic and Student Affairs Committee voted unanimously to recommend full Board approval of Posthumous Degrees for Cade Gochehenour and Grace Haraway. Supporting materials were filed with the minutes.

III. (SW) APPROVAL OF 2026 FACULTY PROMOTIONS

Provost Wolfe requested approval for faculty promotion and tenure cases across the Purdue system. He noted that Purdue's success is rooted in its faculty, who advance through academic ranks based on demonstrated excellence in teaching, research, and engagement. He shared the candidates for promotion and tenure undergo multiple levels of evaluation, beginning with reviews by subject-matter experts and confidential external reviewers. Successful cases are then considered by college-level committees and a university-wide review panel, composed of deans and senior faculty representatives from across disciplines. After further review by the Provost and President, the 189 total faculty promotion recommendations were presented to the Board. The Board was asked to approve the full promotion and tenure docket.

Upon proper motion duly made and seconded, the Academic and Student Affairs Committee voted unanimously to recommend full Board approval of 2026 Faculty Promotions. Supporting materials were filed with the minutes.

IV. (PFW) REQUESTING APPROVAL OF RESTRUCTURING THE DEPARTMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Purdue Fort Wayne Chancellor, Ron Elsenbaumer requested the Board's approval to restructure the Department of Organizational Leadership. He proposed transferring the current program from the College of Engineering, Technology, and Computer Science to the Richard T. Doermer School of Business, effective July 2026. As part of the transition, the department would be renamed the Department of Leadership and Talent Development, and the undergraduate major would adopt the same name. He explained that the move is intended to better align the program with faculty expertise, student demand, and employer needs while improving student access, academic collaboration, and the program's long-term visibility and sustainability.

The restructuring is expected to create stronger connections with related business disciplines and expand opportunities for interdisciplinary research and curriculum partnerships, while better preparing graduates for careers in talent development, human resources, operations leadership, and project management. At this time, no curriculum changes are proposed. The Academic Organization Committee of the Purdue University West Lafayette Senate reviewed the proposal and determined that it was complete and then unanimously recommended approval. Chancellor Elsenbaumer noted that it will remain outside the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation process, consistent with the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management. The Board was asked to approve the proposal as a strategic step to strengthen the program and enhance student outcomes.

Upon proper motion duly made and seconded, the Academic and Student Affairs Committee voted unanimously to recommend full Board approval for the Restructuring of the Department of Organizational Leadership at Purdue Fort Wayne. Supporting materials were filed with the minutes.

V. PURDUE FORT WAYNE UPDATE

Purdue Fort Wayne Chancellor, Ron Elsenbaumer highlighted the ongoing efforts to strengthen its identity as a Purdue campus while addressing enrollment challenges driven by declining college attendance among local students and increasing workforce demands in Northeast Indiana. Despite a shrinking pipeline of college-bound students, the region currently has more than 8,000 unfilled positions requiring a bachelor's degree or higher, reinforcing the University's critical role in workforce development. The Chancellor also reflected on the transformational 2018 transition from IPFW to Purdue Fort Wayne, noting the successful rebranding efforts led by the University's communications and marketing team.

The presentation emphasized significant changes in the student population and campus environment over the past decade. Purdue Fort Wayne has become a more residential institution, with full-time enrollment increasing from 30% in 2012 to 82% and on-campus housing more than doubling. Student quality and engagement have also improved, as evidenced by higher incoming GPAs, improved retention rates, growing honors program participation, and relatively low student debt levels. These trends were attributed in part to the strength of the Purdue brand and investments in student success initiatives.

The Chancellor also showcased major investments in campus facilities and academic programs, many made possible through strong community and donor support. Recent projects include the expansion of the Sweetwater Music Industry Studies program, the Doermer School of Business building, the new Trace Student Housing Complex, the Shaffer Art Gallery, enhanced engineering laboratories, the Environmental Resources Research Center, and new partnerships supporting workforce development. Additional investments in new academic programs, club sports, student mental health services, and housing are designed to attract and retain students while meeting regional workforce needs.

In closing, University leaders reaffirmed Purdue Fort Wayne's commitment to growing enrollment, preparing graduates for high-demand careers, and contributing to the economic vitality of Fort Wayne and Northeast Indiana. The campus was positioned as an affordable, career-focused destination where students can pursue a Purdue degree while benefiting from strong community support, expanded opportunities, and a growing residential campus experience. A copy of the presentation was filed with the minutes.

VI. UNIVERSITY SENATE

In his final presentation to the Board, Mark Zimpfer, University Senate Chair reported several accomplishments during the year. This included increased Senate staffing support, the successful implementation of the University Core Curriculum artificial intelligence requirement, and expanded representation through the addition of voting members from MAPSAC and CSAC. The Senate also participated in important discussions regarding Purdue's prescription plan transition, academic progress reporting, and other university initiatives.

He highlighted the improved effectiveness of the Inter-Campus Faculty Council, which includes representatives from Purdue West Lafayette, Purdue Fort Wayne and Purdue Northwest, which addressed system-wide issues such as post-tenure review, West Lafayette redirects, and growth strategies. He stressed the importance of maintaining open communication and constructive dialogue between the Senate and University administration, noting that effective shared governance depends on collaboration and informed engagement. He shared that Diane Little is the new vice chair and Julio Ramirez will be chair.

He concluded with expressions of gratitude to President Chiang, Provost Wolf, Senate staff, past Senate leaders, and the Board of Trustees for their support, engagement, and partnership throughout the year. He also personally thanked the Board for its recognition of the Bowen School of Construction and expressed his commitment to honoring that trust through continued service.

Board Chairman Gary Lehman thanked Chair Zimpfer for his outstanding leadership, noting that the trust, good faith, and spirit of collaboration he demonstrated throughout his tenure had been greatly appreciated and could not be overstated. Committee Chair DeKryger echoed those sentiments and expressed his gratitude for Chair Zimpfer's service and leadership.

By consent, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.