



STAFF SENATE MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, March 12, 2026 - 10:00 AM ITS Conference Room

- I. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Anna Crawford.
- II. **Roll Call:** Grant Stone, Buck Billings, Kenneth Roach II, Corey Anthony, Austin Gregory, Anna Crawford, Pleshette Elmore, Talia Samard.
- Excused absences:** Tony Lepore, Wyatt McInerney, Karen Petit, and Kendra Rodgers.
- III. **Administrative Report:**
- Joe Greenthal, Vice President for Finance & Administration, provided an administrative update on the university's budget process, resource management, and major initiatives supporting institutional priorities. Budget and Revenue Overview: The university's primary revenue sources include tuition, housing and dining, student fees, and state and federal funding. Student billing includes tuition, room and board, meal plans, and various fees. Additional funding comes from state appropriations and federal financial aid, such as Pell Grants, along with state scholarships. The university foundation, a separate 501(c)(3) organization, also supports the institution with over \$30 million in endowment and property assets, largely funding scholarships and special initiatives. Budget Development Process: The university uses a modified zero-based budgeting process, currently in its third year. Departments complete budget templates outlining how funds are used, staffing needs, operational costs, and any requests for additional funding. Requests move from departments to division vice presidents, who prioritize needs within their areas. Vice presidents then meet collectively to align requests with available institutional revenue and finalize the budget. State Funding and Tuition Policy: The university has maintained a tuition freeze for ten years and is entering its eleventh year. The state has supported this through tuition mitigation funding, which provides additional appropriations to offset lost tuition revenue. However, mandated salary increases are often funded within those same allocations. For example, a 2% salary increase can cost the university approximately \$1 million annually, reducing the amount available for new initiatives. State budget decisions are still evolving, making long-term financial planning challenging. Final allocations from the state will determine how much flexibility the institution has in the upcoming budget year. Financial Planning and Cash Reserves: Institutional leadership has intentionally increased cash reserves to support major capital projects. Reserves have grown from under \$5 million to a projected \$13 million.
- These reserves help complete projects such as:
- The new Nursing Building
 - The Information Commons
 - Renovations to the Bank of America Building
 - The Larry Jackson Library transformation into the College of Business
- Auxiliary reserves are also being built to support construction of a new 300-bed residence hall. The institution aims to maintain reserves equal to 10–25% of annual expenditures to ensure financial stability. Data and Technology Improvements: The university is working to modernize reporting systems and improve institutional data access. A centralized reporting platform is being implemented to integrate information from systems such as Banner and other campus platforms. The goal is to improve

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accuracy, consistency, and data-driven decision-making. Operational Improvements: Several initiatives are underway to improve campus operations, including:

Transitioning to electronic requisition processing for purchasing

Development of a Space Utilization Committee to better manage campus facilities

Ongoing process reviews within administrative units to increase efficiency

Professional Development: The university is developing new professional development opportunities for employees. Future initiatives may include optional training modules on topics such as leadership, communication, and customer service. Some courses may include small stipends upon completion to encourage participation. Campus Improvements: Significant investments have been made in campus infrastructure and student facilities over the past several years. Projects include:

Renovation of the Dining Hall and new campus dining options

Construction of the campus pool

Opening of the Greenwood Marketplace

Renovations to residence halls and athletic facilities

Improvements to campus Wi-Fi and network systems

Library and gallery updates

Tennis court and recreation upgrades

Nearly every residence hall has received upgrades in the past three years, including flooring, paint, and furnishings. Cost-Saving Measures: The administration has implemented cost-saving measures that do not directly impact departmental budgets. Examples include: Eliminating residential cable service, saving approximately \$112,000 annually and Centralizing postage operations, reducing costs from about \$390,000 to approximately \$150,000 annually

These and similar changes helped reduce institutional expenses by roughly \$450,000 in one budget cycle.

Future Planning: Several projects are currently being planned or explored, including: Construction of a new 300-bed residence hall, Additional pedestrian pathways and campus landscaping, Parking expansion, Continued academic building renovations, and Potential campus expansion opportunities.

- IV. **Approval of Minutes:** A motion to approve the minutes was made by Corey Anthony and seconded by Pleshette Elmore.
- V. **Chair Report:** Anna reported that Enrollment and Access Management has one vacancy and Finance and Administration has two vacancies and are currently unable to provide nominations. As a result, those positions will remain vacant until July.
- VI. **Division Announcements:** 1. Academic Affairs: A new exhibit is opening today. 2. Athletics: Men's Basketball is headed to the NCAA Division II Men's Basketball Tournament at Anderson University. The Wrestling team is currently in South Dakota competing in the NCAA Division II Wrestling Championships. 3. Enrollment & Access Management: The Graduate Fair will be held on March 17, and fall registration begins March 23. 4. Dean of Students: The office is actively searching for a new Area Coordinator. Housing sign-up time slots for students were released on March 10. Students will select their rooms March 17–19, provided their housing fee was paid by February 25 for returning students. Full room selection will open March 25 for remaining returning students who did not pay by the February 25 deadline. Student Engagement is also preparing for orientation, which begins in June. Additionally, a new Conduct Coordinator, Amari Islam Green, has been hired. 5. Student Experience: Fall registration opens March 23, and advisors will be available beginning at 7:30 a.m. to assist students.

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- VII. Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn the business session and begin executive session was made by Grant Stone and seconded by Austin Gregory.

Executive Session

- I. Chair-Elect Further Updates:** Anna provided updates on recent activities and upcoming initiatives. Brittany Brissey is expected to return on March 17, and additional updates will be shared with her upon her return. Anna presented to the Board of Trustees regarding Staff Senate activities, including current vacancies, leadership development efforts, and the planned launch of a Staff Senate newsletter later this month.
- II. Committee Updates: Employee Appreciation:** Anna reported that the Office Spotlight did not occur this month due to scheduling conflicts, and approval is pending to purchase frames for future spotlight recognitions. Professional Development Committee: Kenneth Roach reported progress in securing presenters, with sessions tentatively planned for early April. Topics may include practical Excel training, workplace communication, and career advancement in partnership with Human Resources and campus leadership. Communication Committee: No report.
- III. Open Discussion and Planning:** Discussion also included the proposed structure and content for the Staff Senate newsletter, which will feature staff initiatives, employee recognition, professional development opportunities, and updates from campus leadership. A recurring workflow for committees was proposed to streamline article development and newsletter production. Additional discussion focused on improving meeting structure, utilizing email communication for guest contributors, and increasing Staff Senate involvement in planning Staff Appreciation Day in coordination with Human Resources. Members were encouraged to share ideas and feedback through an upcoming survey, and notice was given that an upcoming chair position will be opening.
- IV. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:19 a.m.

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