

**Minutes of a Regularly Scheduled Meeting  
Eastern Kentucky University  
Board of Regents**

**February 25, 2026  
9:00 a.m.**

**Powell 219  
Eastern Kentucky University**

**I. Call to Order**

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Eastern Kentucky University Board of Regents convened on February 25, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. Chair Mike Eaves called the meeting to order. The roll was called, and a quorum was established.

**Present**

Regent Mike Eaves  
Regent Caelin Scott  
Regent Aaron Barker  
Regent Alan Long  
Regent Lynnette Noblitt  
Regent Edwin Orange  
Regent Garth Bustle  
Regent Lori Cooksey  
Regent Teresa Hail  
Regent Laura Babbage

**Absent**

Mr. Ashley Ward

**II. Election of Treasurer**

A motion was made by Regent Bustle to nominate Ms. Jackie Dudley, Interim Vice President of Finance and Chief Financial Officer, as Board Treasurer. The motion was seconded by Regent Babbage. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**III. Information Items**

**A. Audit Presentation for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025**

Mr. Kevin Keswick, Partner, Audit & Assurance, Crowe, LLP gave a brief presentation for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. The presentation is incorporated herein and will be included with the official copy of the minutes.

A motion was made by Regent Bustle to accept the audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. The motion was seconded by Regent Hail. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

## **B. University Reports**

### **1. Jackie Dudley, Financial Update**

Ms. Dudley offered a financial update as of December 31, 2025. The presentation is incorporated herein and will be included with the official copy of the minutes.

### **2. Dr. Sara Zeigler, Academic Affairs Update**

Dr. Sara Zeigler, Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, offered a presentation that included, among other topics, competency-based education, credit for prior learning, essential education, sponsored programs and research administration, and education abroad. The presentation is incorporated herein and will be included with the official copy of the minutes.

### **3. Dr. Bryan Makinen and Ms. Colleen Chaney, Construction Update**

Dr. Bryan Makinen, Chief Campus Operations Officer, offered a presentation that included, among other topics, construction project updates on Alumni Coliseum, Model Laboratory School, the aviation terminal building, and the ECU School of Aviation Flight School. The presentation is incorporated herein and will be included with the official copy of the minutes.

Ms. Colleen Chaney, Chief of Staff and Chief Communications Officer, provided a presentation on options for Board consideration regarding the Hummel Planetarium. The presentation is incorporated herein and will be included with the official copy of the minutes.

The Board engaged in discussion regarding the construction options, the condition of the facility, potential impacts on the Perkins Building, long-term financial considerations, and the importance of timely decision-making to mitigate risk.

A motion was made by Regent Babbage to declare the Hummel Planetarium surplus; to schedule demolition of the facility; and to examine the feasibility of an alternative immersive experience in the Black Box Theater at the Center for the Arts in the next fiscal year's budget. The motion was seconded by Regent Orange. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

### **4. Ms. Colleen Chaney, Master Plan Update**

Ms. Chaney offered an update on the University Master Plan. The presentation is incorporated herein and will be included with the official copy of the minutes.

*[The Chair adjourned for a break at 10:33 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 10:52 a.m.]*

## **5. Ms. Mary Beth Neiser, Development Update**

Ms. Mary Beth Neiser, Vice President of University Development & Alumni Engagement, offered a presentation that included, among other topics, fundraising updates as of December 31, 2025, and ECU Giving Day on April 22, 2026. The presentation is incorporated herein and will be included with the official copy of the minutes.

## **6. Dr. Brad Hall, Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine Program Initiative Update**

Dr. Brad Hall, Chief Medical and Strategic Partnerships Officer, offered an update on the Proposed ECU College of Osteopathic Medicine accreditation pathway. The presentation is incorporated herein and will be included with the official copy of the minutes.

## **7. Committee Reports**

Chair Eaves provided a summary of the general activities of the December 17, 2025, Executive Committee meeting. Topics of note included approval of the President's annual bonus, approval of a one-year extension of the President's contract, and a request that the Chair meet with the President over the coming months to assist in negotiating the President's future contract. The Committee also discussed the Board bylaws and the presidential evaluation process.

### **C. Additional Reports to the Board**

#### **1. Written Reports**

##### **i. Dr. Tanlee Wasson, Senior Vice President of Student Success, Engagement & Opportunity**

Dr. Wasson submitted a written report to the board, which was included in the agenda.

##### **ii. Dr. John Brent, Chair of Faculty Senate**

Dr. Brent submitted a written report to the board, which was included in the agenda.

##### **iii. Ms. Micah Hunsucker, Chair of Staff Council**

Ms. Hunsucker submitted a written report to the board, which was included in the agenda.

##### **iv. Mr. Aaron Barker, Student Government Association President**

Mr. Barker submitted a written report to the board, which was included in the agenda.

## **2. Dr. David T. McFaddin, President**

President David McFaddin delivered the following report:

### **Winter Weather Appreciation**

I want to express my deep appreciation for all of the wonderful ECU employees and contractors who made our recovery from the series of winter weather that hit Kentucky over the past few weeks such a success. Unlike many institutions that were forced to close due to treacherous road conditions, we were able to seamlessly transition our students and employees to Plan A. In addition, our teams from facilities, dining, and athletics ensured our residential students stayed safe during the storm and until we returned to campus.

### **ECU College of Medicine (ECU-COM) Update**

This legislative session, we are focused on moving the ECU-COM through the next stages of the process. ECU is prepared to present to the Council for Postsecondary Education (CPE) at a special-called meeting, and we fully anticipate approval to advance the ECU-COM proposal to the General Assembly in compliance with SB 77 (2025).

### **Block Scheduling**

Beginning Fall 2026, ECU is moving to a M/W and T/Th block scheduling approach, with fewer class meetings that are longer in duration. Based on discussions with faculty, feedback from faculty and student surveys, and analysis of current course schedules, it is clear that most students already follow this schedule and that faculty support adopting this approach where the curriculum allows.

Implementing block scheduling will provide greater consistency across course offerings while aligning with existing practices. It also offers students increased flexibility and more time for in-depth learning and collaborative work. Longer class blocks may also create expanded opportunities for labs, studying, and other instructional needs.

The university will continue to operate on a five-day business schedule, and all student services will remain available during their usual hours.

### **Legislative Update**

Today is the 23rd day (out of 60) of the 2026 General Assembly. Lawmakers have filed almost 1,000 bills and resolutions, and ECU is tracking 125+ bills that could impact

the University. Committees are beginning to move more bills through the process, although fewer than 100 bills have passed their originating chamber. The pace in both Chambers will accelerate in the next two weeks.

Chair the foundation board has challenges the Board to make a \$1000 contribution on or before April 22, 2026.

**Schedule:**

- Last day for new Senate Bills: March 2
- Last day for new House Bills: March 4
- Veto Recess: April 2 -13
- Veto Overrides: April 14-15
- Adjournment/Sine Die: April 15

**Notable Bills:**

**HB 500** – Executive Branch Operating budget bill was released on January 27 and reduced most state agency budgets by approximately 3% in FY26-27 and 4% in FY27-28. Public universities received similar reductions. In addition, Asset Preservation and the Model Lab mandate received reductions. *We expect changes in the bill before it's sent to the Senate for consideration.*

**HB 96** - Performance Funding Work Group - adds 8 legislators (Tipton) Passed H on 1/22

**HB 94** - Transfer pathways (Grossl)

**HB 266** -Adds Speech/Audiology to Healthcare Workforce Investment Fund (Griffie)

**HB 310** - Removes weights from Performance Funding Model (White)

**HB 376** - Tuition Freeze (Banta)

**HB 457** - Increases CPE oversight - financial and presidential searches (Tipton)

**HB 490** - Financial criteria added for removal of faculty beyond cause (Thompson)

**HB 497** - Tuition Waivers - adds FAFSA requirement, last dollar in (Tipton)

**HB 517** - Concealed firearms on postsecondary campuses, + gov't buildings (Rabourn)

**SB 22** - Teacher Apprenticeship Program included in Dual Credit Scholarships (Higdon)

(Denotes passage in originating Chamber)

EKU is also tracking multiple bills that could impact K-12 bills, health insurance, professional licensure, student financial aid and veterans. We will keep our campus community informed regarding additional legislative action that could impact higher education.

**Commencement**

While it may seem hard to believe, we are already preparing for the Spring 2026 Commencement ceremonies scheduled for Thursday, May 7, and Friday, May 8, 2026. Please mark your calendars for the following dates:

Thursday, May 7, 2026

- 6:00 p.m.: Master's and Doctoral Graduates from all Colleges

Friday, May 8, 2026

- 9:00 a.m.: College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences and the College of Education and Applied Human Sciences
- 1:00 p.m.: College of Health Sciences and the College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- 5:00 p.m.: College of Business and the College of Justice, Safety, and Military Science

### **President's Excellence Awards**

The President's Excellence Awards nominations are open for employees to nominate colleagues in the areas of leadership, engagement and hospitality, community and belonging, innovation, student support, and research, as well as for the emerging leader award. Each winner will receive an award and \$3,000; the finalists will each receive \$1,000. Nominations can be submitted through the [President's Excellence Awards website](#) no later than Friday, February 27, 2026.

### **Budget Planning**

As we approach the budget planning process and the closeout of the 2025–2026 fiscal year, we are keeping in mind the feedback from our campus community. We have responded thoughtfully to the call for fiscal prudence while remaining mindful of the importance of maintaining appropriate reserves and continuing to invest in our employees.

Looking ahead to the development of the 2027–2028 fiscal year budgets, we face additional challenges on the horizon. HB 500, the proposed biennium budget presented last week, includes a 7% reduction across all state agencies, including higher education. For our institution, this proposal would represent an estimated reduction of \$6,223,100 by the 2028 fiscal year.

Over the coming months, we will need to work diligently to conclude the current fiscal year in a strong financial position while also planning responsibly for the potential reductions being proposed at the state level. We will be working through department leaders and our budget office to ensure maximum efficiency and financial performance.

### **December and January EKU in the News**

#### In the News:

- EKU Researcher Leads Global Bee Conservation Efforts
- Hired: 5 of the Top Marketable Degrees for Career Success
- Three-Time Colonel Graduate Found Purpose and a Home at EKU
- Turn Experience Into a Degree With Credit for Prior Learning at EKU
- Stories of Strength and Triumph Shine at EKU's Fall 2025 Commencement
- Chief Justice Debra Lambert Breaks Barriers as First-Generation College Graduate
- Protecting the Skies Through Drone Detection Research at EKU
- EKU Receives KEMI Destiny Award for 7th Consecutive Year
- Eastern Kentucky University and Lockheed Martin: More Than a Decade of Partnership
- Graduate Job Ready With EKU's Sales Minor
- AI expert - Dr. Lisa Blue
- Dementia Care Expert - Adria Thompson
- Innovative Athlete Injury Prevention at EKU

#### **Upcoming Events**

March 9-13: EKU Spring Break

April 16: President's Excellence Awards

April 22: Giving Day

May 7-8: Commencement at Alumni Coliseum

### **3. Mr. Mike Eaves, Chair of the Board**

Chair Eaves commended Amy Scarborough, Vice President for Public Affairs, and her staff for the successful Colonels at the Capitol event held in Frankfort on February 5, 2026. He also recognized the recent success of the EKU Mock Trial Team, coached by Regent Noblitt, and commended Courtney Reichley, Executive Director of Student & Community Engagement at the EKU Center for the Arts, for her work. Chair Eaves reminded Board members that they are encouraged to participate in EKU Giving Day on April 22, 2026.

### **III. Action Items**

#### **A. Consent Agenda**

Chair Eaves requested that item iv., Report from the Council on Academic Affairs be removed from the Consent Agenda for further discussion on the essential education proposal included within the report.

Chair Eaves called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, excluding item iv. A motion was made by Vice Chair Long. The motion was seconded by Regent Bustle. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

#### **B. Discussion and/or Action on Graduate Tuition Rate Changes**

President McFaddin provided an overview of the proposed graduate tuition rate changes. A motion was made by Regent Long to approve the graduate tuition rate changes. The motion was seconded by Regent Babbage. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

#### **C. Discussion and/or Action on Board Bylaws Update to Self-Evaluation Standards**

Ms. Dana Fohl, Vice President of Compliance and University Counsel, provided an overview of the proposed revisions to the Board bylaws, including updates to the standards on the Board's self-evaluation.

A motion was made by Regent Babbage to approve the proposed Board bylaw revisions. The motion was seconded by Regent Scott. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

#### **D. Discussion and/or Action on Essential Education and the Report from the Council on Academic Affairs**

Chair Eaves opened the floor for discussion regarding the essential education proposal. During discussion, Board members expressed appreciation for the increased flexibility provided by the proposed changes and noted that the revisions would position the University as a model for other institutions.

A motion was made by Regent Cooksey to approve the proposed changes to essential education. The motion was seconded by Regent Bustle. The motion carried, with Regent Noblitt voting no.

A motion was made by Regent Bustle to approve Report from the Council on Academic Affairs. The motion was seconded by Regent Barker. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

#### **IV. New Business**

There was no new business.

#### **V. Executive Session**

There was no need for an Executive Session.

**VI. Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Eaves called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Regent Bustle. The motion was seconded by Regent Scott. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 10: 52 a.m.

Ashley W. Ward  
Ashley Ward, Board Secretary

5/13/26  
Date