

Contact: Brock Ascher

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 25-26, 2026 BOARD MEETING

LEVITT CENTER  
UNIVERSITY OF IOWA  
IOWA CITY, IOWA

**Board Members**

	<b>February 25</b>	<b>February 26</b>
Robert Cramer, President	Present	Present
Kurt Tjaden, President Pro Tem	Present	Present
Peter Cownie	Present	Present
Nancy Dunkel	Present	Present
Lucy Gipple	Present	Present
Christine Hensley	Present	Present
Steve Lacy	Present	Present
JC Risewick	Present	Present
Greta Rouse	Present	Present

**Board Office**

Andrea Anania, Brock Ascher, Mark Braun, Brad Berg, Rachel Boon, Aimee Claeys, Kent Farver, Stephanie Griffin, Carolann Jensen, Josh Lehman, John Nash, Jason Pontius, Keith Saunders, Chad Sharp, Brynn Stroup.

**SUI**

Barbara Wilson  
Rod Lehnertz  
Kevin Kregel  
Denise Jamieson  
Bradley Haws  
Mark Henrichs

**ISU**

David Spalding  
Sean Reeder  
Jason Keith

**UNI**

Mark Nook  
Michael Hager  
José Herrera

The corresponding memorandum for each agenda item, an integral component of the minutes, is available on the Board of Regents website: <http://www.iowaregents.edu>. Copies of these memoranda can also be obtained from the Board Office by calling 515-281-3934. Video of the meeting is also available on the website.

**Call to Order for February 25, 2026**

President Cramer called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

**Roll Call:**

	Cramer	Cownie	Dunkel	Gipple	Hensley	Lacy	Risewick	Rouse	Tjaden
Present	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Absent									

President Cramer took a moment to recognize the tragic passing of UNI football player Parker Sutherland earlier in the week.

**Closed Session**

- ✓ MOVED by HENSLEY, SECONDED by ROUSE, to enter into closed session in accordance with Iowa Code section 21.5.1.i, to conduct performance evaluations of the Institutional Heads and Executive Director as necessary to prevent the needless and irreparable injury to each individual’s reputation. Each individual has requested that their evaluation be conducted in closed session; and in accordance with Iowa Code section 21.5.1.c, to discuss strategy with counsel in matters that are presently in litigation or where litigation is imminent, and premature disclosure would likely prejudice or disadvantage the position of the Board.

	Cramer	Cownie	Dunkel	Gipple	Hensley	Lacy	Risewick	Rouse	Tjaden
Aye	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Nay									

MOTION APPROVED by ROLL CALL.

- The Board convened in closed session at 9:02 a.m.*
- The Board reconvened in open session at 1:25 p.m.*
- The Property and Facilities Committee met at 1:25 p.m.*
- The Academic Affairs Committee met at 1:52 p.m.*
- The Governance, Evaluation and Human Resources Committee met at 3:15 p.m.*
- The Investment and Finance Committee met at 3:25 p.m.*
- The Audit and Compliance Committee met at 3:40 p.m.*
- The UI Health Care Committee met at 3:52 p.m.*

**Center for Intellectual Freedom Update**

President Cramer recognized Regent Hensley, who provided an update on the Center for Intellectual Freedom’s activities over the past months.

**Public Comment**

Seven presenters spoke to the Board on a variety of topics:

- Christopher Martin, UNI faculty
- Hannah Bott, citizen
- Cathy Coover, UIHC staff
- Olivia Jones, UI student
- Clara Reynen, UI student
- Hope Metcalf, UI faculty
- Rajorshi Das, UI alum

**Adjourn**

President Cramer adjourned the meeting at 5:18 p.m.

**Call to Order for February 26, 2026**

President Cramer called the meeting to order at 9:18 a.m.

**Consent Agenda**

- ✓ MOVED by HENSLEY, SECONDED by ROUSE to approve the remaining CONSENT AGENDA items:
  - a) Minutes of November 11-13, 2025 Board Meeting
  - b) Minutes of December 3, 2025 Board Meeting
  - c) Meeting of February 25, 2026 Academic Affairs Committee
  - d) Meeting of February 25, 2026 Property and Facilities Committee
  - e) Meeting of February 25, 2026 Governance, Evaluation and Human Resources Committee
  - f) Meeting of February 25, 2026 Investment and Finance Committee
  - g) Proposed University Parking Rates & Violations / Sanctions for FY 2027

	Cramer	Cownie	Dunkel	Gipple	Hensley	Lacy	Risewick	Rouse	Tjaden
Aye	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Nay									

MOTION APPROVED by ROLL CALL.

**Board President Report**

President Cramer read a statement:

*We're off to a great start! The Iowa Board of Regents believes our three public universities are among the nation's leaders in implementing positive reforms. Iowa's public universities are institutions where fairness in admissions, free speech, civic education, and a balance of opinion are practiced and valued.*

*As a Board, we believe strongly in the institutions and the leadership each university has. We are very satisfied with the jobs that our current presidents are doing, and we are excited to have President Cook begin his tenure at ISU beginning next week. We look forward to working with him.*

*We have several major initiatives going on right now:*

1. *We're close to finalizing our strategy for addressing deferred maintenance. Together with the universities, the team is putting together policy changes that could have a tremendous impact on the future of our facilities and our finances.*
2. *We heard yesterday a good update during the Investment and Finance Committee from President Pro Tem Tjaden on the progress of the REAPS study, and we look forward to further updates as we move forward. We're learning about all the things the universities are doing to improve efficiency and continuing to find new ways. There is a lot of synergy between the team and the three enterprises to keep improving.*

3. *When our legislative friends suggest a Tuition Freeze, I say, "Yes...if we can." But, we won't know if we can until after we see what we can REAP out of this study. Instead of Freeze first and see what happens, I believe it is more responsible to Save first and then reduce or freeze tuition, while ensuring we have the resources necessary to maintain the value of a degree from Iowa's public universities.*
4. *We also heard an update during the Academic Affairs Committee on the efforts on low-enrollment program and workforce alignment of academic programs from the report that was given to the Board in November. This will help with our goals of providing a high-quality education with a good return on investment for both the students and the state.*
5. *I am also asking the Academic Affairs Committee to take a look at the Faculty Review Process at the three universities. We're looking for consistency and to ensure student feedback is valued. Our professors and instructors want to present topics in a fair, professional manner. I believe it is much better to hold them to that standard rather than try to dictate what can and can't be taught.*
6. *Lastly, there was a piece of legislation requiring the universities to explore a different accreditation body other than the HLC. I am asking the Academic Affairs committee to do a review about the option of adding a second accrediting body of the universities and report back to the Board later this year.*

*That is a lot! This Board takes our role very seriously. We are proud of the things our universities do, but we can always improve. We look forward to working with our universities to make them the gold standard the rest of the country chases.*

### **Reports from University Presidents**

Presidents Barbara Wilson and Mark Nook and Interim President David Spalding presented updates on their respective campuses.

### **Residence System Governance Report**

President Cramer recognized Board Chief Business Officer Kent Farver, who presented the annual residence system governance report. Farver presented five-year plans, preliminary budgets and proposed rate adjustments for the three residence systems. He stated that action is scheduled for the April 2026 meeting.

### **Graduation and Retention Report**

President Cramer recognized Board Associate Chief Academic Officer Jason Pontius, who presented the annual graduation and retention report. Pontius stated that one-year retention rates and graduation rates are at historic highs.

### **2026-27 Tuition and Fees**

President Cramer recognized Board of Regents Chief Business Officer Brad Berg, who presented a first reading on 2026-27 tuition and fee rates. The proposals increase resident undergraduate tuition by 3% at all three universities. Final action on tuition and fees is scheduled for the April 2026 meeting.

### **2026-27 Common and University/Program Specific Fees**

President Cramer recognized Board of Regents Associate Chief Business Officer Andrea Anania, who presented a first reading of 2026-27 common and university/program specific fees. Anania explained these fees are assessed only to students that use these services based on

their programs, interests or needs and that final action on common and university/program specific fees is scheduled for the April 2026 meeting.

**Faculty Presentation**

President Cramer recognized Dr. Kara Whitaker, Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the UI Department of Health and Human Physiology. Whitaker presented 24-Hour Activity Patterns and Maternal Health: Evidence from the Pregnancy 24/7 Study.

**Strategic Plan Updates**

President Cramer recognized Board Chief Academic Officer Rachel Boon, who introduced Sophia Magill, ISU Senior Advisor to the President and Director of Federal Relations; Kristin Moser, UNI Advisor to the President and Director of Institutional Effectiveness & Planning; and UI Provost and Senior Vice President Kevin Kregel to present on university strategic plan updates.

**Economic Impact Study**

President Cramer recognized Board Senior Communications Director Josh Lehman, who introduced Hannah Ruffridge, Senior Director of Education Professional Services at Lightcast, to present the Board’s economic impact study. Ruffridge reported that Iowa’s public universities added \$18 billion in increased income to the state of Iowa during FY 2023-24.

Board of Regents Executive Director Mark Braun noted that this was the third time the Board had contracted with Lightcast for economic development studies and each study has shown greater impact numbers than the previous study.

**Closed Session**

✓ MOVED by HENSLEY, SECONDED by LACY, to enter into closed session in accordance with Iowa Code section 21.5.1.c, to discuss strategy with counsel in matters that are presently in litigation or where litigation is imminent, and premature disclosure would likely prejudice or disadvantage the position of the Board; and in accordance with Iowa Code section 21.5.1.a, to review or discuss employee records which are required or authorized to be maintained as confidential in accordance with Iowa Code section 22.7.11.

	Cramer	Cownie	Dunkel	Gipple	Hensley	Lacy	Risewick	Rouse	Tjaden
Aye	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Nay									

MOTION APPROVED by ROLL CALL.

*The Board convened in closed session at 12:07 p.m.*

*The Board reconvened in open session at 1:45 p.m.*

**Employee Appeal**

President Cramer read a statement:

*Before proceeding forward with action on what was discussed in closed session, I want to say a few words.*

*The Phase 1 review by Consovoy McCarthy involved confidential personnel matters at the University of Iowa, regarding videos of alleged violations of law, university or Board of Regents policies.*

*We have heard their report, and shortly, we will direct UI on actions to take. I want to be clear – this review was not about personal viewpoints or differing opinions. This is about compliance with the law. The Board of Regents and its institutions will comply with the law. Period. As these are personnel matters, we cannot and will not share specifics beyond what we say here today.*

*The next step after this is a broader Phase 2 compliance audit by Consovoy McCarthy of all three universities, to ensure compliance on Iowa Code 261J, and other applicable state and federal laws. That work has already begun and we look forward to hearing about the progress of that review as it moves forward.*

- ✓ MOVED by RISEWICK, SECONDED by HENSLEY, to accept the findings and recommendations of Consovoy McCarthy and dismiss the complaint in the matter of Employee A; and accept the findings and recommendations of Consovoy McCarthy and direct the university of Iowa to initiate disciplinary proceedings in accordance with applicable policies and procedures in the matter of Employee B.

	Cramer	Cownie	Dunkel	Gipple	Hensley	Lacy	Risewick	Rouse	Tjaden
Aye	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Nay									

MOTION APPROVED by ROLL CALL.

**Adjourn**

President Cramer adjourned the meeting at 1:50 p.m.