



March Board Meeting

03/20/2026 8:30 AM CDT to 12:30 PM CDT

Southern University System

2nd Floor, J.S. Clark Administration Building

SPECIAL RECOGNITION COMMITTEE

A. Call to Order

Southern University's special recognition committee was formally called to order by Chairman Clayton.

B. Invocation

The meeting began with an invocation given by the Honorable Reverend Levi Wright, emphasizing divine guidance for the leaders and decisions impacting the university community.

C. Pledge of Allegiance

Honorable Dr. Rani Whitfield introduced the Southern University Laboratory School girls' basketball team, celebrating their third consecutive LHSAA Division IV state championship win on March 7, 2026. Asia Patan along with the other teammates led the pledge.

D. Above and Beyond Award

Presented By Atty Tracie Woods

The session featured a presentation of the Above and Beyond Award, highlighting significant contributions to student success and institutional excellence. Atty Woods introduced Dr. Melanie Ray, who was honored for her exceptional leadership in transforming the Career Services Office into a vital hub for student success and professional development.

- Under Dr. Ray's leadership, Southern University Law Center Office of Career Services achieved full compliance with the American Bar Association.
- Dr. Ray extended her influence by engaging alumni, employers, and professional networks, showcasing her dedication to student success.

- Dr. Ray expressed gratitude to colleagues, Office of Career Services, and her husband for their support in her achievements.

E. Southern University Royalty: 10k Women, One Mission

Presented By Linda Johnson

Former BESE board member Linda Johnson was recognized for her contributions, including leading a civil rights march in Plaquemine that garnered national attention. A video presentation highlighted achievements of Southern University women and their role in education, direction, and opportunities for future generations during the Southern University Royalty initiative aimed at increasing enrollment and providing scholarships through collective giving.

- The initiative seeks 10,000 Southern University women committed to funding women's scholarships and perpetuating the legacy of Southern women.
- The goal is to raise 1 million dollars by October with a celebration at the Valdry Center, supporting scholarships and promoting higher education.
- Efforts focus on recruiting high school students to become educators, addressing the national need for teachers.
- Community and board members are encouraged to support and promote the initiative across America, emphasizing strategic committee involvement.
- Fundraising strategy clarified for reaching a 10 million target, with feedback highlighting the initiative's trend-setting potential.

F. Recognition of the Southern University Laboratory School Girls Basketball Team for Winning the Championship

Presented By Dr. Rani Whitfield, SULS Chairman, SULS Coach and Administrators

Honorable Dr. Rani Whitfield introduced the Southern University Laboratory School girls' basketball team, celebrating their third consecutive LHSAA Division IV state championship win on March 7, 2026. Asia Patan was specifically recognized for achieving her second championship game MVP award and scoring over 2,500 career points.

- The basketball team is recognized for their athletic achievements and academic accomplishments, with plans for further honors at an upcoming board meeting.

Support and pride were expressed by the board and Interim President McMeans regarding the basketball team's achievements, with national broadcasts noting the significance.

G. Presentation of UNCF - Target Scholars (SUBR)

Presented By Chancellor John Pierre and Dr. Brian Adams

- Southern University has partnered with UNCF and Target to provide scholarships and professional development opportunities, leading to 69 students applying and 23 awarded \$10,000 scholarships.

- 41 students are part of the UNCF Target Scholars program, with 11 selected for a summer program in Washington, D.C. showcasing alleviation of financial stress and increased networking opportunities.
- Multiple students shared their experiences with the scholarship, highlighting reduced financial stress and increased networking opportunities.
- Participants emphasized the program's focus on retention, matriculation, graduation, and workforce development.

Dr. Franklin Source emphasized the collaboration's focus on student retention, matriculation, graduation, and workforce development.

Board Member Massingill mentioned he has two paid summer student internships at his company and they will be dedicated to SU Students.

OTHER BUSINESS

Medical Association Conference Recognition

Dr. Rani Whitfield introduced Dexter Lewis, who gave information on the Medical Association Conference. For the first time, Southern University's campus will host the National Medical Association Region 5 Conference, marking a significant gathering of 200 healthcare professionals focusing on health equity, leadership, and community care. Strategic collaboration with Southern University's leadership aims to bolster pre-med programs through scholarships and internships.

- The conference emphasizes mentorship and collaboration activities, enhancing pre-medical advising.
- Scholarship funds are provided, alongside intern opportunities to enhance educational resources.

Thurgood Marshall Search Firm Recognition

Vice Chairman Abraham introduced representatives from TM². Thurgood Marshall (TM²) Executive Search Firm was secured to facilitate the presidential search process, engaging over 300 community members across campuses to assist with searches for critical positions. The firm's commitment to Southern University's future is underscored.

- HBCU leadership and sustainability are emphasized as part of the search firm's focus.
- The search process involved direct communication with board members and strategic selections.

H. Adjournment

Motion was raised for adjournment of the special recognition committee, and the motion was properly moved and seconded, leading to the adjournment of the committee.

III. ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

A. Call to Order

The Academic Affairs Committee meeting is called to order by Mrs. Ann Smith and roll call is conducted by President Orlando McMeans, confirming the presence of members and achieving a quorum.

B. Roll Call

Roll call by President Orlando McMeans.

Present: Mrs. Ann Smith – Chair, Ms. Maple Gaines - Vice Chair
Ms. Zazell Dudley, Mr. Myron K. Lawson. Mr. Aaron Manzy, Mr. Christopher Masingill, Rev. Dr. Samuel Tolbert, Mr. Henry Whitehorn and Atty Tony Clayton – Ex Officio

Absent: None

C. Adoption of the Agenda

A motion was made by Mr. Myron K. Lawson to adopt the agenda for the meeting. It is moved and seconded by Mr. Henry Whitehorn without opposition, and the motion carries.

D. Public Comments

There was a public comment, but it wasn't acknowledged – item wasn't on agenda.

E. Action Item(s)

1. Conferral of Professor Emeritus Status - Dr. Leroy Davis (SUBR)

Presented By Chancellor John Pierre

Motion to confer Professor Emeritus status to Dr. Leroy Davis highlighted his contributions since 1972 by Mr. Myron K. Lawson and was carried after seconding by Ms. Zazell Dudley.

2. Request for Approval of the Faculty Handbook (SUSLA)

A request for approval of the faculty handbook for Southern University of Shreveport was made Whitehorn and seconded by Ms. Zazell Dudley carrying unanimously.

F. Informational Item(s)

None

G. Other Business

None

H. Adjournment

Motion - With no informational items or further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting is made by Mr. Henry Whitehorn.

IV. FACILITIES AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

A. Call to Order

The Facilities and Property Committee was called to order by Mr. Donald Ray Henry and roll call is conducted by President Orlando McMeans, confirming the presence of members and achieving a quorum.

B. Roll Call

Roll call by President Orlando McMeans.

Present: Rev. Donald Ray Henry – Chair, Ms. Maple Gaines – Vice Chair
Ms. Zazell Dudley, Mr. Chris Masingill, Mr. Paul P. Matthews, Atty. Domoine Rutledge, Atty. Edwin Shorty, Mrs. Ann Smith, and Atty. Tony Clayton – Ex Officio

Absent: Dr. Rani Whitfield

C. Adoption of the Agenda

A motion has been made by Mr. Paul Matthews to adopt the agenda for the meeting. It is moved and seconded by Atty Domoine Rutledge without opposition, and the motion carries.

D. Public Comments

No public comments were made or received.

E. Informational Item(s)

1. Facilities Update (SUS)

Presented By Mr. Ken Dawson

Mr. Ken Dawson provided updates on several construction projects, including STEM building, Global Innovation Center, and police station efforts. Upcoming ribbon cuttings were announced for completed projects like Outdoor Classroom Amphitheater and Global Innovation Center. Project mobilization for the business building and commencement of construction for J.K. Haynes Nursing School Edition is anticipated shortly.

- Architectural selection has been completed with planning phases for a new science building.
- FEMA allocated \$15 million for Mega Shelter project with ongoing timeline extension efforts.
- Act 751 discussions focused on securing state legislature funding for maintenance projects.
- Confirmation that funds are effectively utilized without projects left incomplete was provided.

2. Update on Residential Housing Project (SUBR)

The board received updates on the residential housing project, reaching a critical stage after two years. A lease-leaseback structure is proposed to ensure cash flow with important bond-related dates approaching. The housing is split into two phases with anticipated opening dates. Affordability and strategic financial plans are emphasized to ensure market competitiveness.

- 360,000 square feet of new housing are planned, with construction costs approximately \$77 million.
- Focus on project self-sufficiency and addressing students' affordability is underscored.
- Transformative steps aim at modern housing facilities growth.

There will be a special board meeting requested by Chancellor Pierre on April 7th or 9th.

F. Other Business

None

G. Adjournment

Motion - With no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting is made by Ms. Maple Gaines

V. FINANCE COMMITTEE

A. Call to Order

The Finance Committee was called to order by Rev. Dr. Samuel Tolbert and roll call is conducted by President Orlando McMeans, confirming the presence of members and achieving a quorum.

B. Roll Call

Roll call by President Orlando McMeans.

Present: Rev. Dr. Samuel Tolbert– Chair, Mr. Myron K. Lawson – Vice Chair
Mr. Reggie Abraham, Atty. Quincy Cawthorne, Ms. Maple Gaines, Mr. Aaron Manzy, Mr. Chris Masengill, Atty. Domoine Rutledge, Mrs. Ann Smith and Atty. Tony Clayton – Ex Officio

Absent: None

C. Adoption of the Agenda

A motion is made by Atty Quincy Cawthorne to adopt the agenda for the meeting. It is moved and seconded by Mrs. Ann Smith without opposition, and the motion carries.

D. Public Comments

No public comments were made or received.

E. Informational Item(s)

1. Interim Financial Report (SUS)

Presented By Mr. Flandus McClinton

The interim financial report highlighted the Southern University System's budget status, showcasing a projected revenue excess of \$5.3 million across its campuses. Each campus's budget projections were discussed, with specific concerns raised about budget instability due to deviations in revenue sources.

- Advocacy for supplemental funding from the legislature was discussed to address financial challenges.
- Suggestions were made to ensure sustainable financial support, emphasizing infrastructure and operational costs.
- Action needed: Coordination for discussions with finance directors to address financial strategies. Meetings with Mr. McClinton to involve Lawson, Matthews, and Tolbert.

F. Other Business

None

G. Adjournment

Motion - With no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting is made by Rev. Dr. Samuel Tolbert.

VI. LEGAL AFFAIR COMMITTEE

A. Call to Order

The Legal Affairs Committee was called to order by Atty Quincy Cawthorne and roll call is conducted by President Orlando McMeans, confirming the presence of members and achieving a quorum.

B. Roll Call

Roll call by President Orlando McMeans.

Present: Atty. Quincy Cawthorne – Chair Atty. Domoine Rutledge – Vice Chair, Ms. Zazell Dudley, Ms. Maple Gaines, Aaron Manzy, Mr. Paul Matthews, Atty. Edwin Shorty, Mr. Henry Whitehorn, and Atty Tony Clayton – Ex Officio

Absent: Dr. Rani Whitfield

C. Adoption of the Agenda

A motion is made by Mr. Henry Whitehorn to adopt the agenda for the meeting. It is moved and seconded by Mr. Paul Matthews without opposition, and the motion carries.

D. Public Comments

No public comments were made or received.

E. Action Item(s)

1. Request Approval of Cisco Cloud Calling Migration (SUNO)

Chancellor Joseph Bouie explained the request.

A motion is made by Atty Edwin Shorty to adopt the agenda for the meeting. It is moved and seconded by Mr. Paul Matthews without opposition, and the motion carries.

F. Informational Item(s)

There were no informational items to report during the meeting.

G. Other Business

None

H. Adjournment

Motion - With no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting is made by Mr. Paul Matthews

VII. PERSONNEL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

A. Call to Order

The Personnel Affairs Committee was called to order by Atty Edwin Shorty -and roll call is conducted by President Orlando McMeans, confirming the presence of members and achieving a quorum.

B. Roll Call

Roll call by President Orlando McMeans.

Present: Atty Edwin Shorty – Chair - Ms. Maple Gaines – Vice Chair
Mr. Reggie Abraham, Atty Quincy Cawthorne, Mr. Donald Ray Henry, Mr. Chris Masingill, Mrs. Ann Smith, Mr. Henry Whitehorn, and Atty Tony Clayton – Ex Officio

Absent: None

C. Adoption of the Agenda

A motion is made by Mr. Henry Whitehorn to adopt the agenda for the meeting. It is moved and seconded by Mr. Chris Masingill without opposition, and the motion carries.

D. Public Comments

No public comments were made or received.

E. Action Item(s)

A motion is made by Chairman Tony Clayton to approve the action items (1-3) in global. It is moved and seconded by Atty Quincy Cawthorne without opposition, and the motion carries.

1. Request for approval of Personnel Action on Positions Equal to or Greater than \$100,000.00 (SUBR)

a. Extension of Appointment of Dr. Lealon Martin as Dean of the College of Sciences and Engineering (COSE) beyond December 31, 2026

Presented By Chancellor John Pierre

2. Request for Approval of Personnel Action on Positions Equal to or Greater than \$100,000.00 (SUNO)

a. Ms. Rachel Roche' - Vice Chancellor, Institutional Advancement - New Appointment - Search - \$140,000.00 - State Funding

Presented By Chancellor Joseph Bouie

3. Request for Approval of Personnel Action on Positions Equal to or Greater than \$100,000.00 (SUS)

a. Mr. Kenneth Dawson - System Director of Facilities, Director of Facilities - Salary Adjustment - (SUS)

F. Informational Item(s)

There were no informational items to report during the meeting.

G. Other Business

There was discussion around funding and budget hearings. Also there was discussion around decreasing staff and administrators.

H. Adjournment

Motion - With no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting is made by Mr. Donald Ray Henry.

VIII. SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

A. Call to Order

The Southern University Board of Supervisors meeting was called to order by Chairman Tony Clayton and roll call is conducted by President Orlando McMeans, confirming the presence of members and achieving a quorum.

B. Roll Call

Roll call by President Orlando McMeans.

Present: Atty Tony Clayton – Chairman and Reggie Abraham – Vice Chairman, Atty Quincy Cawthorne, Ms. Zazell Dudley,

Ms. Maple Gaines, Mr. Donald Ray Henry, Mr. Myron K. Lawson, Mr. Aaron Manzy, Mr. Chris Masingill, Mr. Paul Matthews, Atty Edwin Shorty, Mrs. Ann Smith, Rev. Dr. Samuel Tolbet, Mr. Henry Whitehorn.

Absent: Atty Domoine Rutledge and Dr. Rani Whitfield,

C. Adoption of the Agenda

A motion is made by Mr. Myron K. Lawson to adopt the agenda for the meeting. It is moved and seconded by Mrs. Ann Smith without opposition, and the motion carries.

D. Public Comments

No public comments were made or received.

E. Resolutions

Condolences were offered for recently deceased individuals associated with Southern University.

- Evelyn T. Bates
- Dr. D'Orsay Davenport
- Dr. Zina Muhammad
- Bobby Specks Ned
- Mary Ann Ned
- Willie Bolden II

A motion commending Southern Lab basketball team and nursing school achievements through a resolution was also passed unanimously.

F. Action Item(s)

A motion is made by Chairman Tony Clayton to approve the action items (1-2) in global. It is moved and seconded by Vice Chairman Reggie Abraham without opposition, and the motion carries.

1. Request for Approval of the Minutes for February 27, 2026, SUS Board of Supervisors Meeting

2. Request for Approval of Committee Reports and Recommendations

G. Informational Item(s)

1. Report on Southern University Branding and Marketing Opportunities to Strengthen Systemwide Visibility and Engagement (SUS)

Presented By Dr. Robyn Merrick

A presentation highlighted the importance of strategic investment in branding to enhance public awareness, reputation, student recruitment, and visibility of Southern University. Despite favorable trends, marketing investments fall behind peer institutions. Increased funding and diverse advertising strategies, including costly billboards, are emphasized.

- The Foundation and alumni contributions toward branding, matched by personal financial support, are suggested for further advertising efforts.
- Interest expressed in obtaining ads for Shreveport and Baton Rouge, with offers of assistance in billboard placements.
- State tours leveraging branding opportunities through social media are discussed to enhance university visibility.

2. President's Report

President McMeans gave his report.

3. Chancellor's Report

All Chancellors gave a brief report.

4. Presidential Search Update Report

Dr. Robyn Merrick reported that TM Squared commenced its work on the presidential search, actively engaging campus constituents for feedback and transparency. The established 17-member search committee met to ensure a transparent, inclusive process.

- The next meeting for updates on the presidential search process is scheduled for April 9th.

H. Other Business

None

I. Adjournment

Motion - With no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting is made by Vice Chairman Reginald Abraham