MINUTES OF THE
TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY BOARD OF REGENTS
STANDING COMMITTEES/ REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Thursday, April 16, 2026

- **Call to Order**

The Board of Regents of Texas Southern University held a Standing Committees and Regular Board meeting on Thursday, April 16, 2026. Mr. James M. Benham, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 8:02 A.M. The meeting convened at Texas Southern University, Library Learning Center, 3100 Cleburne Street, Houston, Texas 77004.

- **Roll Call**

The following Board Members were in attendance and constituted a quorum:

Mr. James M. Benham, *Chairman*
Mr. Lauren A. Gore, *Vice Chair*
Dr. Richard A. Johnson, *Second Vice Chair*
Ms. Marilyn A. Rose, *Secretary*
Ms. Paloma Z. Ahmadi
Ms. Caroline Baker Hurley
Mr. Benjamin H. Proler
Ms. Alithea Z. Sullivan
Mr. Kohl E. Crawford, Student Regent, *nonvoting*

Other Attendees: President J.W. Crawford III, Matthew Bauder (Virtual), Malachi Bird, Cassandra Black, Donovan Brooks, Joan Bullock, Thomas Cleven, Raijanel Crockem, Willie Davis, Clyde Duncan, Carl Goodman, Daniel Graves, Carmon Nelson Grimes, Tristan Ham, Albert Herd, Yokika Hornsby ,Victor Ihezukwu, Zion Ikuku, Melanie Jackson, Paula Jackson, Donyea Jarmon, Moriah Johnson, Kacy Kincade, Anthony Momon, Tamyiah Nielson, Fallon Perkins, John Pittman, Abdul Raman, Zyias Richards, Faith Ruiz, Rodney Smith, Mark Weatherspoon, James White

- **Prayer**

Chairman Benham invited Regent Johnson to introduce Pastor Willie Davis to deliver a prayer. Regent Johnson introduced Pastor Willie Davis, who then proceeded to pray.

- **Board Business**

- Item 1. Presentation of a Proclamation honoring former Regent Brandon L. Simmons

  Chairman Benham addressed the Board Business agenda item regarding the proclamation honoring former Regent Brandon L. Simmons and noted that the item would be taken up later when Regent Simmons joined the meeting.

- **Conflict of Interest**

  Chairman Benham addressed the matter of conflicts of interest and inquired whether any Board member had a conflict of interest to disclose regarding an item on the agenda. No conflicts were disclosed, and the Chairman proceeded with the agenda.

- **Open Forum**

  Chairman Benham opened the floor to individuals who signed up to participate in Open Forum. He summarized the Open Forum rules and procedures, noting that the procedures are intended to comply with state law and the Board's Bylaws. He also reminded speakers to maintain respectful decorum.

  The following individuals participated in the Open Forum:

  - Tamyiah Nielson, Student Government Association (SGA), President
    - Ms. Nielsen provided an update on her recent election as 79th SGA president, highlighting a student election that doubled in participation and reflected increased student engagement. She noted that students are actively expressing their expectations and holding leadership accountable. She also announced collaboration with the President's Cabinet to sustain momentum and advance shared goals ahead of the university's upcoming centennial year.
  - Victor Ihezukwu, Chair of Staff Council
    - Mr. Ihezukwu provided updates on recent staff engagement efforts, highlighting a town hall meeting with Dr. Smith on the ASCEND 2030 strategic plan. He announced monthly general staff meetings and the launch of staff recognition initiatives such as the Tiger Awards and the service recognition brunch. Lastly, he emphasized his continued advocacy for the University's transition from a tuition reimbursement program to a tuition waiver program for staff to better support staff development.
  - Yokika Hornsby, Community Member/Houston Resident
    - Ms. Hornsby expressed concerns regarding transparency, communication, and lack of inclusion in decision making. She raised concern regarding campus infrastructure, staffing shortages, and event accessibility. Ms. Hornsby emphasized the need for improved trust and prioritization of student, alumni, and stakeholder needs.
  - Joan Bullock, Professor of Law, Thurgood Marshall School of Law
    - Dr. Bullock spoke on behalf of the law faculty, emphasizing a desire for collaboration with university leadership. She noted that the faculty

submitted a written memorandum requesting the board's review. Dr. Bullock highlighted that key law school positions remain unfilled due to lack of authorization. She urged faculty to have a voice in decision making.

- Thomas Cleven, Faculty, Thurgood Marshall School of Law
  - Waived time to speak.

- Dr. Edieth Wu
  - Waived time to speak.

- **President's Report**

  - The President provided an update on Texas Southern University's response to the State Auditor's report, outlining continued progress across six audit findings and reaffirming the university's focus on strengthening institutional operations and compliance. He noted that the Board established an ad hoc Audit Response Committee to oversee corrective actions and accelerate implementation. Since February, progress has increased across all areas. He emphasized ongoing improvements to asset management and the university's commitment to weekly public updates. He noted that Dr. Rodney Smith (Interim Sr. VP/ CAO) is leading implementation efforts of the strategic and master plan to ensure measurable outcomes across student and academic success, operational excellence, and technology advancement.

  - In addition to operational updates, the President recognized key achievements across athletics, academics, and student leadership. He honored Coach Johnny Jones for his tenure as head men's basketball coach, highlighted the debate team's national success, and recognized student leaders, including the newly appointed SGA president and Mr. and Miss TSU. He also emphasized academic and research accomplishments, including a national conference hosted by the College of Pharmacy and research contributions in nuclear physics. The report highlighted student programs such as the Navy-funded Fresh Start STEM initiative and concluded with institutional advancements, including the launch of a new aviation facility at the Houston Spaceport and partnerships with military leaders. These efforts reinforced the university's commitment to academic excellence, student success, and expanded opportunities in emerging fields.

The Board entered Executive Session at 9:04 A.M. to discuss specific matters identified in the Executive Session portion of the agenda for this meeting and authorized under Texas Government Code. The Executive Session matters were heard pursuant to the following Texas Government Code provisions identified on the posted agenda: Section 551.071, consultation with attorney; Section 551.072, deliberation regarding real property; Section 551.073, deliberation regarding prospective gifts or donations; and Section 551.074, personnel matters.

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 10:06 A.M. Faith Ruiz presented roll call and reconfirmed the presence of a quorum. The following Board members were present:

Mr. James M. Benham, *Chairman*
Mr. Lauren A. Gore, *Vice Chair*
Dr. Richard A. Johnson, *Second Vice*
Ms. Marilyn A. Rose, *Secretary*
Ms. Paloma Ahmadi
Ms. Caroline Baker Hurley
Mr. Benjamin H. Proler
Ms. Alithea Sullivan
Mr. Kohl E. Crawford, Student Regent, *nonvoting*

- **Board Business**

Item A: Request Approval to Award an Honorary Doctorate to Admiral James Stavridis, US Navy (Retired)
The Board acted on a request to award an honorary doctorate to Admiral James Stavridis, U.S. Navy (Retired). A motion was made by Chairman Benham and seconded by Regent Baker Hurley to approve the honorary degree as presented. Following discussion, including concern regarding whether the nomination met established criteria, the motion passed by a vote of 7-1, with one member opposed and no abstentions.

- **Consent Docket**

- Item A: Request Approval of Past Board of Regents Meeting Minutes

  Action Requested: Approval
- Item B: Request Approval of Contract Extension for Information Technology Staff Augmentation Services

  Action Requested: Approval
- Item C: Request Approval to Negotiate and Execute a Network Services Agreement

  Action Requested: Approval
- Item D: Request Approval to Negotiate and Execute Cellular Services (New Contract)

  Action Requested: Approval

- Item E: Request for Approval to Negotiate and Execute the Renewal of Adobe Software Licenses

  Action Requested: Approval

- Item F: Request Approval to Negotiate and Execute Renewal of Ellucian Banner Software, Hosting, and Platform Services (HOSAL)

  Action Requested: Approval

- Item G: Request Approval to Negotiate and Execute Agreements for Equipment and Services

  Action Requested: Approval

- Item H: Request Approval to Negotiate and Execute Contracts for Summer Housing Make-Ready Services (New Contracts)

  Action Requested: Approval

- Item I: Request Approval to Negotiate and Execute a Master Lease Agreement for Student Housing (New Contract)

  Action Requested: Approval

- Item J: Request Approval of Student Accounts Receivable Write-off

  Action Requested: Approval

- Item K: Request Approval of a New PhD Program in Computational Science from the Department of Computer Science within the College of Science, Engineering & Technology

  Action Requested: Approval

- Item L: Request Approval to Create an Evaluation Certificate Program in the Department of Social Work within the College of Liberal Arts & Behavioral Sciences

  Action Requested: Approval

- Item M: Request Approval of Participation in EAB's (Education Advisory Board) Inaugural Re-Enrolling Stopout Students Initiative

  Action Requested: Approval

- Item N: Request Approval of the Texas Southern University Fiscal Year 2027 Holiday Calendar

  Action Requested: Approval

- Item O: Request Approval to Negotiate and Execute a Contract for Waste Disposal Services (New Contract)

  Action Requested: Approval

- Item P: Request Approval to Negotiate and Execute a Construction Manager-at-Risk (CMAR) Services Contract (New Contract)

  Action Requested: Approval

  [The Board reviewed the consent docket, which included items 8A through 8P. A motion to approve the consent docket was made by Chairman Benham and seconded by Regent Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.]

- **Administration and Finance Committee - Regent Lauren A. Gore**

  Mr. John Pittman, Interim Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Business & Administration presented the following items for approval and/or an informational update:

  - Item A: Administration and Finance Information Updates:

  Mr. John Pitman presented administration and finance informational updates, including interim financial reports and a cash forecast outlining expected revenues and expenditures. He reported a $15 million reimbursement from Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) funds. He explained seasonal revenue trends driven by tuition cycles, noting that tuition revenue was slightly ahead of the prior year while housing revenue was down because one facility was offline. He confirmed that the university is on track at the midpoint of the fiscal year. He also provided an overview of the FY27 budget development process, emphasizing increased departmental involvement, strategic planning, and upcoming capital projects.

  - Item B: Endowment Performance & Update (February 2026)

  Atlanta Consulting Group (ACG) provided a quarterly update on the university's endowment and investment portfolio, reporting strong market performance and continued growth. The portfolio reached approximately $128.2 million in February with a temporary market decline in March, followed by a full recovery to about $128.7 million. The portfolio returned approximately 5% net of fees year to date and remains well diversified across domestic and international equities, fixed income, and alternative investments. ACG highlighted strong performance among small cap managers, stability within private credit investments, and resilience amid market volatility.

- **Development and Legislative Affairs Committee - Regent Richard Johnson**

  Dr. James White, Vice President of Government Affairs and Civic Engagement, presented the following items for approval and/or information:

  - Item A: Legislative Affairs Informational Updates:

Dr. White provided an overview on rule and statutory implementation following recent higher education legislation, as well as updates from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Dr. White highlighted statewide data initiatives such as the Texas Talent Trajectory (T3) system, transfer student policy discussions, and ongoing rulemaking impacting higher education institutions. He also discussed the current fiscal and political environment, noting modest state revenue growth and continued emphasis on affordability as a key public concern influencing higher education funding decisions. Additional discussions included preliminary considerations for the upcoming Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR), including potential funding priorities such as law school facility needs and long-standing non-formula support items. The presentation also included updates on Navy Fleet Week engagement activities at Texas Southern University.

- **Academic Affairs, Research and Student Life Committee - Regent Marilyn A. Rose**

Dr. Carl Goodman, Provost/Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs, presented the following items for approval and/or information:

- Item A: Request Approval of the General Education Core Curriculum for Texas Southern University

  The Board approved the annual General Education Core Curriculum for Texas Southern University in accordance with Senate Bill 37 and Section 51.315 of the Texas Education Code. Dr. Goodman noted that no changes to the University's established core curriculum were recommended at this time and clarified that this item did not constitute the required five-year comprehensive review of the curriculum.

  [A motion to approve the General Education Core Curriculum was made by Regent Rose, and seconded by Regent Proler. The motion passed unanimously.]

  - Item B: Student Enrollment Trends

    Dr. Raijanel Crockem provided an update on Texas Southern University's student enrollment trends, including spring and fall enrollment patterns, student subgroup data, and historical context. She reported that spring enrollment stands at approximately 8,240 students, reflecting a slight increase from the prior year. She highlighted continued incremental increases in fall enrollment, including growth in transfer students, and provided subgroup data on first time freshmen, international students, and veteran populations. She also reviewed retention and graduation outcomes, noting approximately 1375 to 1400 graduates and ongoing efforts to improve persistence and reduce attrition through enhanced student support strategies.

- **Physical Facilities & Real Estate Committee - Regent Ben Proler**

Ms. Melanie Jackson, Senior Associate Vice President of Operations and Procurement, presented the following informational item:

- Item A: Landscaping Services Informational Update

  The Board received an update regarding the completion of the solicitation process for campus landscaping services. Superior Lawn Care was selected as the University's new landscaping services vendor after being identified as the top rated and lowest cost respondent. The updated bid also included additional services for the campus hangar. Supporting bid information and respondent details were provided in the board packet for review.

- **Audit and Compliance - Regent Sullivan**

Mr. Daniel Graves, Audit Executive with Weaver, presented the following item for approval:

- Item A: Request Approval for Updated Fiscal Year 2026 Internal Audit Plan

  The Board approved the updated fiscal year 2026 internal audit plan, which included separating the procurement card review into its own discrete report, separate from the broader procurement process and compliance audit. Management also requested the inclusion of an audit focused on invoice prompt payment procedures. The new audit was added without increasing the overall cost of the audit plan. Upon Board approval, the updated plan will be filed with the State Auditor's Office in accordance with the Texas Internal Audit Act.

  [A motion to approve the Updated Fiscal Year 2026 Internal Audit Plan was made by Regent Sullivan and seconded by Regent Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.]

- **Athletics - Regent Caroline Baker Hurley**

Dr. Paula Jackson, Interim Athletics Director, presented the following item for information:

- Item A: Athletics Key Highlights Information:

Dr. Paula Jackson recognized student athletes and coaching staff for outstanding athletic achievements. The men's indoor track and field team was recognized for winning the conference championship for the third consecutive year. Coach Duncan was also acknowledged as an 11-time Coach of the Year. This presentation featured coaches and student athletes being introduced publicly in recognition of their accomplishments and contributions to the university's athletic success.

- **Adjourn**

With no further business pending before the Board, a motion to adjourn was made by Chairman Brenham and seconded by Regent Proler. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 11:05 A.M.

All supporting materials for informational and action items presented during this meeting are available on the public posting here.

A video recording of this meeting is available here.

SIGNATURE OF APPROVAL

I certify that the foregoing minutes constitute a true, correct, and complete record of the Regular Board Meeting of the Board of Regents of Texas Southern University held in Houston, Texas on April 16, 2026.

Faith Ruiz
Executive Director
Board Relations Office

Date Approved by the Board

Marilyn A. Rose
Secretary
Board of Regents