

**ATHENS STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
BOARD MEETING
January 16, 2026**

The Athens State University Board of Trustees (also referred herein as the Board) held a meeting at 2:30 p.m. on Friday, January 16, 2026, at the Alabama Center for the Arts Recital Hall to consider University matters.

PRESIDING: **Senator Arthur Orr**

The Board of Trustees meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. by Senator Orr.

ROLL CALL

On roll call, the following Board members were present and constituted a quorum to conduct business:

Mr. Jim America
Chancellor Jimmy Baker
Dr. Denver Betts
Mr. Tommy Coblentz
Ms. Donna Coleman
Bill Dunnivant
Senator Arthur Orr
Mr. Goodrich 'Dus' Rogers
Mike Underwood

Also present were Dr. Catherine Wehlburg, President of Athens State University, Ms. Jackie Gooch, Secretary to the Board, and Mr. Shane Black, University Legal Counsel. Governor Kay Ivey and Mac McCutcheon were absent. Approximately 30 faculty/staff attended in-person and electronically.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On a motion made by Mr. Rogers and seconded by Mr. America, the Board approved the agenda by the following roll-call vote:

Jim America – YES
Chancellor Jimmy Baker - YES
Denver Betts – YES
Tommy Coblentz - YES
Donna Coleman – YES

Bill Dunnivant – YES
Senator Arthur Orr - YES
Dus Rogers – YES
Mike Underwood - YES

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion made by Mr. Rogers and seconded by Ms. Coleman, the Board approved the minutes from the October 17, 2025, Board meeting by the following roll-call vote:

Jim America – YES

Chancellor Jimmy Baker - YES

Denver Betts – YES

Tommy Coblentz - YES

Donna Coleman – YES

Bill Dunnivant – YES

Senator Arthur Orr - YES

Dus Rogers – YES

Mike Underwood - YES

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one officially registered for public comment.

OLD BUSINESS, PENDING MOTIONS AND RESOLUTION

None.

NEW BUSINESS, PENDING MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

Review and Affirmation of University Mission Statement (Attachment A)

On a motion made by Mr. America and seconded by Dr. Betts, the Board reviewed and reaffirmed the University Mission statement as follows:

The University advances the best interests of its students and the State of Alabama through teaching, service, research, and other creative activities to empower students to make valuable contributions in their professional, civic, educational, and economic endeavors. Through innovative communication and course delivery for high-quality undergraduate and select graduate programs, Athens State University provides a supporting environment for each student, demonstrating the importance of the diverse and interdependent nature of our state and society. Athens State University changes the face of Alabama by changing the lives of its students.

This motion was approved by the following roll-call vote:

Jim America – YES

Chancellor Jimmy Baker - YES

Denver Betts – YES

Tommy Coblentz - YES

Donna Coleman – YES

Bill Dunnivant – YES

Senator Arthur Orr - YES

Dus Rogers – YES

Mike Underwood - YES

Acceptance of Information Security Program Report (Attachment B)

On a motion made by Mr. America and seconded by Mr. Underwood, the Board accepted the Information Security report as presented by Mr. Cedrick Nkulu. This motion was approved by the following roll-call vote:

Jim America – YES

Chancellor Jimmy Baker - YES

Denver Betts – YES

Tommy Coblentz - YES

Donna Coleman – YES

Bill Dunnavant – YES

Senator Arthur Orr - YES

Dus Rogers – YES

Mike Underwood - YES

New Academic Program: GR – Strategic Leadership – Safety Management Track (Attachment C)

On a motion made by Mr. Dunnavant and seconded by Dr. Betts, the Board approved the Safety Management Track for the Master of Science in Strategic Leadership for the College of Business. This motion was approved by the following roll-call vote:

Jim America – YES

Chancellor Jimmy Baker - YES

Denver Betts – YES

Tommy Coblentz - YES

Donna Coleman – YES

Bill Dunnavant – YES

Senator Arthur Orr - YES

Dus Rogers – YES

Mike Underwood - YES

Academic Program Title Change – Interdisciplinary Studies (Attachment D)

On a motion made by Dr. Betts and seconded by Mr. Coblentz, the Board approved the title change from Bachelor of Science in Individualized Degree Program to Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies. This motion was approved by the following roll-call vote:

Jim America – YES

Chancellor Jimmy Baker - YES

Denver Betts – YES

Tommy Coblentz - YES

Donna Coleman – YES

Bill Dunnavant – YES

Senator Arthur Orr - YES

Dus Rogers – YES

Mike Underwood - YES

Organizational Structure Change (Attachment E)

On a motion made by Mr. America and seconded by Mr. Rogers, the Board approved the organizational structure change as presented. The proposed changes include: (1) elimination of the Associate Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services position; (2) reorganization of the Student Engagement role into a Dean of

Students position with responsibility for ADA and Accessibility Services; (3) reassignment of oversight for Veterans Affairs to the Financial Aid Office; and (4) reassignment of oversight for Career Services to the Student Success Office. Removing the Associate Vice President role streamlines the organizational structure, reduces redundancy, and improves decision-making. Strengthening director-level positions creates clearer accountability, deeper expertise, and more effective coordination across admissions, financial aid, advising, and student support. This structure increases efficiency, enhances collaboration, and positions the institution to respond more quickly to enrollment and student success demands. This motion was approved by the following roll-call vote:

Jim America – YES
Chancellor Jimmy Baker - YES
Denver Betts – YES
Tommy Coblentz - YES
Donna Coleman – YES

Bill Dunnivant – YES
Senator Arthur Orr - YES
Dus Rogers – YES
Mike Underwood - YES

Enrollment Marketing Contract (Attachment F)

On a motion by Mr. America and seconded by Ms. Coleman, the Board approved the Enrollment Marketing Contract as presented. This motion was approved by the following roll-call vote:

Jim America – YES
Chancellor Jimmy Baker - YES
Denver Betts – YES
Tommy Coblentz - YES
Donna Coleman – YES

Bill Dunnivant – YES
Senator Arthur Orr - YES
Dus Rogers – YES
Mike Underwood - YES

Naming of the Alabama Center for the Arts Performing Arts Center (Attachment G)

Due to the nature of the agenda item, Senator Orr relinquished the Chair and passed the gavel to Mr. America. Mr. America then requested that Mr. Rogers read the recommendation and supporting rationale.

At the January 14, 2026, ACCS Board meeting, the ACCS Board approved the naming of the Alabama Center for the Arts Performing Arts Center as the Arthur Orr Performing Arts Center. Because this facility is a joint operation between Athens State University and the Alabama Community College System, this action brings us into alignment with their recommendation and honors Senator Arthur Orr for his longstanding leadership and support of arts education and the Alabama Center for the Arts.

On a motion by Mr. Rogers and seconded by Dr. Betts, the Board of Trustees concurred with the Alabama Community College System's (ACCS) recommendation to name the Alabama Center for the Arts Performing Arts Center the Arthur Orr Performing Arts Center. This motion was approved by the following roll-call vote:

Jim America – YES
Denver Betts – YES

Tommy Coblentz - YES
Donna Coleman – YES

Bill Dunnivant – YES
Mac McCutcheon - YES
Senator Arthur Orr - Abstained

Dus Rogers – YES
Mike Underwood - YES

OTHER BUSINESS (No Action Required)

Learning Partnerships

Dr. Keith Ferguson provided an update on Learning Partnerships.

Foundation/Endowment Update

Mr. Tommy Coblenz provided an update on Foundation and Endowments.

Quarterly Financial Update

Mr. Jonathan Craft provided the quarterly financial update.

Alabama Commission on Education (ACHE) Update

The Board received a handout on actions taken by the Commission.

Bad-Debt Write Off

The Board of Trustees received notification of approval from the Alabama State Attorney General for bad debt write-off.

Family Relationship Disclosure

The Board of Trustees received a copy of the Family Relationship Disclosure form(s) received since the October 2025 Board meeting.

Statement of Economic Interests

The Board of Trustees was reminded to complete the Statement of Economic Interest with the Alabama Ethics Commission by April 30, 2026.

Volunteers for Commencement Greetings

Volunteers were solicited to bring greetings for the Spring 2026 and the Summer 2026 commencement ceremonies. Spring 2026 – 9:00 am (America), 1:00 pm (Coleman), and 4:00 pm (Dunnivant).
Summer 2026 – 10:00 am (Rogers).

President's Report/Update

Dr. Wehlburg also provided a written report including updates on the following areas:

Enrollment Management

- Spring early enrollment figures indicate a 2.6% increase in headcount and a 4.89% increase in credit hours.
- New student enrollment increased 8.97%.

Learning Partners Success

- Enrollments continue to increase with spring having a 10.26% increase over last spring. This is a 12.33% increase in net tuition and fees (\$515,809).

Facilities Update

- Construction continues Carter Hall.
- Brown Hall is now waiting for the final state inspection.

Strategic Planning

- Hosting a Strategy Workshop on January 29-30 as part of our overall strategic planning process.

Board Committee Updates and Report Acceptance

Finance and Facilities Committee – Mr. Rogers

Mr. Rogers provided the Finance and Facilities Committee update.

Enrollment and Student Affairs Committee – Mr. Bill Dunnivant

Mr. Bill Dunnivant provided the Enrollment and Student Affairs Committee update.

Academic Affairs Committee – Dr. Betts

Dr. Betts provided the Academic Affairs Committee update.

External Affairs Committee – Mr. America

Mr. America provided the External Affairs Committee update.

CLOSING COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Senator Orr adjourned the Athens State University Board of Trustees meeting at 3:18 pm.