

Kansas State University  
K-State Student Union  
**Union Corporation Board**  
**Date: 4/29/2025**  
Meeting Minutes

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**Carson Cuesta** called the meeting to order at 1:33 PM.

**ATTENDANCE:** Carson Cuesta, Samantha Suchanek, Vivian Griffith, Derek Jackson, Thomas Lane, Craig Johnson, Ethan Erickson, and Marshall Stewart

**RECORDER:** Marissa Fitts

**GUESTS:** Kurt Ohlenbusch

**II. OPEN PERIOD**

**Carson Cuesta**

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Carson** called for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025, UCB meeting.

**Ethan Erickson** moved, and **Thomas Lane** seconded the motion to approve the Union Corporation Board meeting.

**Passed:** 4-0-0

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

**V. OLD BUSINESS**

**VI. INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATES**

**a. Budget – Kurt Ohlenbusch**

i. The proposed budget projects \$5.2 million in revenue and a net income of \$121,000, based on a 3% increase in Student Service Fees over the prior year.

ii. Anticipates a modest rise in Union traffic and reduced capital expenditures compared to previous years.

1. Revenue & Operations

a. CFA and Bowling remain active revenue sources revenues expected to increase due to closings from July to August for renovations.

b. ID Center transition to university effective 7/1/2025, eliminating 1 FTE from Union payroll.

c. Minor projects are planned; it assumes no major fall changes.

d. \$100,000 in bad debt available to offset unforeseen changes.

2. Payroll & Staffing

a. \$106,000 increase in benefits, primarily absorbed by the Union.

- b. Efforts made to minimize individual impact from benefit cost increases.
  - c. Assumes 2% cost-of-living adjustments; limited merit increases (max 2%).
  - d. No new full-time positions; includes hiring of Executive Director.
  - e. \$0.25/hour wage increase for student employees.
- 3. Revenue Composition
  - a. Student Service Fees: 44% of total revenue.
  - b. Retail Operations (i.e., CFA, bowling, engraving): 22%.
  - c. Rent/Commissions (i.e., bookstore, Campus store): remainder.
- 4. Expense Breakdown
  - a. Payroll: 58% of total expenses.
  - b. Occupancy (utilities, operations): 15%
  - c. Depreciation: 20%
- 5. Capital Improvements
  - a. Includes room renovations, HVAC upgrades, furniture replacements, and miscellaneous repairs.
  - b. Implementation of new room reservation system.
- 6. Key Challenges & Considerations
  - a. Student enrollment trends directly influence Union traffic and revenue.
  - b. Potential changes in the K-State Campus store relationship may affect commission income.
  - c. Rising costs of goods and services continue to pressure the budget.
  - d. Recruitment and retention remain ongoing challenges.
- 7. Foot Traffic Summary
  - a. Spring 2025: Slight dip in February, significant increase since April.
  - b. Fall 2024: total entries reached 900,000; goal remains 1 million.
  - c. Recent Activity:
    - i. Last week: 24,000 entries (slightly down, up from two years ago).
    - ii. This week: 27,000 entries, boosted by the Boy Scouts Merit Badge event (1,000 plus attendees).
  - d. Clarification on Door Counter:
    - i. The primary door utilizes thermal sensors to detect entries.
    - ii. Some older units still use infrared beam-break technology. Legacy beam-break counters, no longer supported by the manufacturer, have been relocated to low-traffic areas, such as the Bowling Center.
    - iii. While the system is designed to count individual entities, scenarios such as doors that are open by multiple individuals may affect the precision.
- 8. Feedback
  - a. The board requests inclusion of projected actuals in future reports to better track fiscal performance and estimate

accuracy.

**Thomas Lane** moved, and **Vivian Griffith** seconded the motion to approve the Budget.

**b. EMS to Mazevo**

**i. Event Management Transition**

1. Following the Cybersecurity Breach in 2024, the Union initiated a transition from server-based to cloud-based software.
2. The event management system (EMS), previously hosted on campus, was identified for replacement.
3. An RFP was issued in December 2024, after evaluation, the Union selected Mazevo over EMS.
4. Mazevo was developed by the original EMS creator and offers enhanced features, including mobile and tablet accessibility.
5. The contract was approved in February 2025, and training and implementation are underway.
6. The transition is on schedule, with full development expected by June 1, 2025, upon expiration of the EMS contract.

**ii. System Expansion & Demonstration**

1. The system is considered scalable for broader campus use, including a catering component.
2. IT support has been asked to coordinate a demonstration for interested stakeholders, including representatives from other departments.

**iii. Questions**

1. Does Mazevo have a Catering component?
  - a. Yes
2. Historical Data Retention – EMS Transition
  - a. In preparation for the transition to the Mazevo system, the Union will retain up to three years of historical reservation data.
  - b. Per discussions with IT, the current EMS platform, which is server-based, can be disconnected from the network and preserved in an offline state, ensuring continued access to archived data without risk of loss.

**c. FY25 Agreement with Follett**

**i. Contract Status**

1. Follett has fulfilled current obligations; the agreement is up to date.

**ii. Renegotiation Request**

1. Follett seeks to revise terms due to ongoing financial losses.

**iii. Union Response**

1. The Union rejected proposals to reduce the minimum guarantee to a flat 6% commission.
2. Open to limited adjustments for FY25 only, pending the impact of the Immediate Access program.
3. Opposed closure of the lower-level convenience store; exploring Housing & Dining partnership for that space.
4. Rejected proposal to convert Salina store to virtual; Salina is seen as a growth area.

5. Considering a management fee model for Salina, pending further review.

iv. Salina Campus

1. Leadership affirms the necessity of maintaining a physical store on the Salina campus. A virtual-only model is considered inadequate for student service and campus engagement.
2. The Salina location has historically operated as a loss leader under the Follett agreement, intended to support the broader campus service.

v. Future of Follett Agreement & Campus Store Operations

1. While the current agreement with Follett remains in effect, there is consensus that a re-evaluation may be necessary. The Union may consider issuing an RFP in the future.
2. The textbook retail market has few viable vendors remaining. Barnes & Noble is the primary alternative but has experienced financial instability.
3. The Union may need to explore alternative models, including self-operation or non-textbook retail formats, especially as course materials trend towards fully digital delivery.
4. Maintaining a physical retail presence on campus remains a priority, even if the product mix evolves.
5. Increasing student and community investment in the campus store is essential. This includes improving offerings and building early brand loyalty among incoming students.

a. Retailer Behavior Trends

- i. Students increasingly purchase general merchandise through online platforms such as Amazon and Rally House, due to the convenience and prices.
- ii. Students have expressed that limited store hours are a barrier to frequent use.
- iii. Unlike previous generations, current students are less inclined to shop in-store, having grown up with digital retail as the norm.
- iv. Discussions are underway regarding the implementation of an Amazon locker system to accommodate the shift.

6. Strategic Consideration

- a. A new Executive Director will be joining the Union shortly and is expected to prioritize long-term strategic planning, including retail operations.
- b. The success of campus retail depends on active student engagement. Product offerings must align with student interests and ends to drive relevance and traffic.
- c. Peak purchasing moments, such as graduation and admissions events, present strong retail potential. Follett has demonstrated success in high-volume sales during graduation season (i.e., 4,000 cap and gown sets sold annually).
- d. Current textbook adoption rates remain below expectations. Addressing this is critical to improving academic retail performance.

- e. Faculty attitude towards the campus store has improved, shifting from adversarial to collaborative, with a shared focus on student access and affordability.
- f. The Immediate Access program has gained traction, with positive student feedback and strong adoption models at peer institutions. Success depends on continued faculty buy-in, strategic campus partnerships, and aligning value, pricing, and access.
- g. Recent collaboration has improved due to recognition that Follett maintains exclusive relationships with major publishers, offering access that individual faculty and librarians cannot independently secure. This has helped align stakeholders around a shared goal of supporting student access to academic materials, including open-source content.

## **VII. DISCUSSIONS, CONCERNS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **a. Executive Director Search**

- i. Final interviews for the Executive Director position concluded last week.
- ii. The search, conducted with Spelman Johnson, yielded strong candidates.
- iii. Background checks and reference reviews are in progress.
- iv. A formal announcement will follow once a candidate is confirmed and notified.
- v. Internal stakeholders, including Union leadership and the search committee, will be informed prior to public release.
- vi. The goal is to finalize the hire by the end of the Spring semester.

## **VIII. ADJOURN**

**Carson Cuesta** moved to adjourn at 2:05 pm, and **Vivian Griffith** seconded that motion. **Passed:** 4-0-0