

MINUTES
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS FOR THE
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA SYSTEM
SPECIAL MEETING
April 25, 2024

A. **Call to Order/Roll Call**

The Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System met for a Special Meeting on Thursday, April 25, 2024 at 1:02 p.m. The meeting was held in the Louisiana Purchase Room of the Claiborne Building, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge. Chair Jimmy Clarke called the meeting to order.

PRESENT

Mr. Barry Busada	Mr. Virgil Robinson
Dr. Jimmy Clarke	Mr. Mark Romero
Ms. Lola Dunahoe	Mr. Joe Salter
Ms. Jo Lethermon	Mr. Brad Stevens
Dr. John Noble, Jr.	Ms. Julie Stokes
Mr. Dana Peterson	Ms. Bailey Willis

ABSENT

Mr. Steve Davison	Ms. Elizabeth Pierre
Mr. Alejandro “Al” Perkins	Ms. Kristine Russell

Also present were the following: System President Rick Gallot, System staff, and Attorney Linda Clark.

B. **Invocation**

Mr. Joe Salter opened the meeting with an invocation.

C. **Report of McNeese State University Presidential Search Committee**

System President Rick Gallot gave a little background concerning the search. He said that in February the Committee held its first meeting on McNeese State University’s campus to gather input from the campus and constituents concerning desirable qualities for the presidency.

On April 4, the Committee met in Baton Rouge to review applications and select semifinalists for interview. Four candidates were chosen for interview: Dr. Andy Benoit, Jr., Dr. Shadow Robinson, Dr. Wade Rouse, and Dr. Allen Vital.

On April 16-17, the four semifinalists were interviewed by the Committee on the campus, where they also met with students, staff, faculty, alumni, and community members. On April 17, the Committee selected two finalists for interview by the Board, Dr. Andy Benoit, Jr. and Dr. Wade Rouse.

President Gallot took the opportunity to thank members of the Search Committee, including:

Board Members

Mr. Barry Busada
Dr. Jimmy Clarke
Mr. Steve Davison
Ms. Lola Dunahoe
Dr. John Noble, Jr.
Mr. Dana Peterson
Ms. Elizabeth Pierre
Mr. Mark Romero
Mr. Brad Stevens
Ms. Bailey Willis

Constituent Members

Judge Charlotte Bushnell
Judge James Cain
Dr. John Condos
Mr. Sam Gil
Ms. Heather Griffith
Mr. Kevin Guidry
Ms. Nicole Moncrief
Mr. Ryan Navarre
Ms. Angela Queenan
Mr. Jason Rashall
Mr. Dennis Stine
Mr. Gray Stream
Judge Gene Thibodeaux
Dr. Jimmy Trahan

President Gallot further expressed appreciation to the McNeese community for its hospitality to the Search Committee and the semifinalists.

D. **Overview of Interview Procedures**

There was one request for public comment. Dr. Jimmy Trahan, McNeese Faculty, commented on the importance of a commitment by a new president to shared governance.

Dr. Clarke explained the interview process. He said that each finalist will be introduced, given an opportunity to present an opening statement, and then interviewed by the Board. After each interview, the Board will meet with the finalist in Executive Session. At the conclusion of the Executive Session with the second finalist, the Board will remain in Executive Session to continue discussions. At the conclusion of the second Executive Session, the Board will return to Open Session for discussion and a vote.

E. **Candidate Interviews**

Dr. Wade Rousse

Dr. Wade Rousse was introduced to the Board, and he invited his wife Angela Rousse to introduce herself. Dr. Rousse made an opening statement. After several questions from Board members, upon motion of Ms. Dunahoe, seconded by Mr. Busada, at 1:41 p.m., the Board unanimously voted to adjourn to Executive Session.

At 2:31 p.m., upon motion of Ms. Dunahoe, seconded by Mr. Busada, the members reconvened in Open Session.

Dr. Andy Benoit, Jr.

Dr. Andy Benoit, Jr. was introduced to the Board, and he made his opening statement. After questioning by Board members, upon motion of Ms. Dunahoe and seconded by Ms. Stokes, the Board adjourned to Executive Session at 2:57 p.m.

At 3:56 p.m., upon motion of Mr. Romero, seconded by Ms. Dunahoe, the Board reconvened in Open Session.

F. **Deliberations**

After returning from Executive Session, Dr. Clarke asked for comments from the Board. Upon motion of Dr. John Noble, Jr., seconded by Ms. Bailey Willis, the following recommendation was made:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System hereby recommends that Dr. Wade Rousse be appointed as President of McNeese State University and hereby authorizes UL System President Rick Gallot and Board Chair Jimmy Clarke to negotiate the terms of appointment and execute an offer of employment on behalf of the Board.

A roll call vote was taken. The following affirmative roll call vote was recorded: Mr. Busada, Dr. Clarke, Ms. Dunahoe, Ms. Lethermon, Dr. John Noble, Jr., Mr. Peterson, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Romero, Mr. Salter, Mr. Stevens, Ms. Stokes, and Ms. Willis. The resolution passed.

G. **Introduction of President of McNeese State University**

Dr. Wade Rousse and his wife were escorted back into the auditorium to a standing ovation. Dr. Rousse expressed his thanks to the Board for selecting him and said it is a privilege to serve McNeese State University as President.

H. **Other Business**

There was no other business to come before the Board.

I. **Adjournment**

Chair Clarke thanked President Gallot, Dr. Calais, staff, members of the Committee and community, and the Board for their diligence. Dr. Noble also expressed his appreciation and congratulations to the staff in conducting the successful search.

There being no further business, upon motion of Mr. Romero and a second by Mr. Stevens, at 4:03 p.m., the Board voted to adjourn.