

THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON

RESOLUTION 4-1-25

Pertaining to the Academic Revitalization of The University of Akron

WHEREAS, On March 19, 2025, The University of Akron Board of Trustees (the “Board”) approved a Resolution Pertaining to the Revitalization of the University (Board Resolution No. 3-13-2025 or the “Revitalization”), which included a necessary \$22 million University-wide budget improvement by June 30, 2026; and,

WHEREAS, The Board further mandated a similar level of budget improvement to be achieved in the coming years, through FY2029, as part of our university’s continued Revitalization efforts; and,

WHEREAS, As part of the Revitalization, the Board resolved to achieve the University budget improvement in several ways, including, but not limited to, a combination of voluntary separations; right-sizing faculty and staff in identified units to better align with student enrollment; investment in areas of growth, fundraising and development opportunities; reduction in administration and athletics, reduction of campus footprint and debt defeasance; operational and financial efficiencies; restructuring; and enrollment growth; and,

WHEREAS, At this critical juncture, the Board recognizes that change is necessary and required within certain identified academic units as the marketplace that our graduates will enter is quickly evolving, as are our students' needs and interests; and,

WHEREAS, We must ensure our academic programs and services are properly and continually aligned with student and market demand; at the same time, we must tackle a changing financial picture in which the size of our budget relative to the size of our student body has become insupportable and unsustainable; and,

WHEREAS, The University president initiated the retrenchment process in Article 15 of the collective bargaining agreement (the “CBA”) with the Akron-AAUP , indicating the circumstances requiring the reduction of faculty positions in some academic units to better align with student enrollment, while continuing to invest in areas of growth; and,

WHEREAS, The University provost subsequently identified several academic units where the reduction of faculty positions would be necessary to more appropriately align the number of faculty in those units to student enrollment and demand; and,

WHEREAS, The University administration has been working collaboratively with the Akron-AAUP to seek individual separation incentive agreements with faculty members both within, and outside of, the identified retrenchment areas for the purpose of reducing or eliminating the need for retrenchment; and,

WHEREAS, Pursuant to the CBA, the president formed a Joint Committee on Retrenchment (“JCR”), which included members of the administration and the Akron-AAUP, and tasked the JCR with formulating advisory recommendations to include ways to relieve the need for retrenchment by raising additional funds, by reallocating funds, or by cutting or eliminating specified activities; and,

WHEREAS, The president now having received the JCR's advisory recommendations and having forwarded those recommendations, along with his own recommendations, to the Board for its consideration, the Board hereby resolves as follows; Now, Therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board, having fully reviewed and considered the provost's initial retrenchment proposal, the JCR's advisory recommendations, as well as the president's own recommendations, hereby fully adopts the president's recommendation and contingencies, determining that it properly aligns with the Revitalization Plan adopted by the Board and, specifically meets the academic portion in properly aligning the number of faculty with student demand, as identified in the provost's initial retrenchment recommendations regarding the identified academic units; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the incoming provost, in collaboration with Faculty Senate, have formed the Position Review Committee (the "PRC") which shall be tasked with reviewing and approving each requested faculty position at the University before seeking a replacement; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the president, and his leadership team, will regularly meet with the Board Finance & Administration Committee Chair, to discuss and advise on the progress on the Revitalization Plan to ensure the University meets budget improvement directives as outlined in the Revitalization Resolution; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the adoption of the president's recommendations, which included several contingencies, many of which have now been met, and which build on the JCR's advisory recommendations, coupled with the voluntary separation incentive agreements, and leveraging other funding sources than the general fund to accommodate those faculty who have an active research program, will likely avoid the retrenchment of any individual faculty members at the University, while also providing investment and time for growth in areas of high demand; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board adopts the president's recommendation, specifically as to the School of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering (SPSPE), that in Fall 2025, the SPSPE faculty shall meet the appropriate teaching load according to the University's current workload policy. Further the University will leverage other funding sources than the general fund to accommodate those faculty who have an active research program; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That with these recommendations and growth incentives in academics, the University can proceed with the other revitalization efforts, including continuing to trim our real estate footprint, improving the athletics budget, engaging in conversations to exercise proper stewardship over our facilities, selling underutilized assets and monetizing others that will assist in reducing expenses and increasing revenue; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board recognizes the shared sacrifice of those individual faculty members who have accepted voluntary separation incentive agreements to benefit the University and their colleagues and to avoid the potential retrenchment of junior faculty; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That by adopting the president's recommendations, the Board recognizes the hard work and effort of the Office of Academic Affairs, the JCR, the Akron-AAUP, as well as multiple University employees across campus.

Mark G. Stasitis, Acting Secretary
Board of Trustees