

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND ANNUAL MEETING

MONDAY, MAY 4, 2026

WASHINGTON, DC

1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.

Summary of Major Actions and Discussion

(These are not official minutes of the CHEA Board of Directors.)

Chair Javier Cevallos called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

Treasurer's Report

The board of directors:

- Received the FY26 third quarter financial report.
- Received an update on FY26 institutional membership.

Working Session

During the working session, the Board received a government affairs update from Senior Vice President for Government Affairs Jan Friis. Nasser H. Paydar, President, provided an update on current CHEA initiatives. The Board formally endorsed two major initiatives: the Accreditor Leadership Roundtable and the Council of Experts on Quality Assurance and Accreditation.

The Board also acknowledged and expressed its appreciation to the outgoing Board members for their service and contributions to CHEA.

Government Affairs Report

Senior Vice President for Government Affairs Jan Friis reported on the 2026 Accreditation, Innovation, and Modernization (AIM) committee and its Draft Regulation Proposed Changes to Accreditation as part of negotiated rulemaking. He reported that under the proposed rules, USDE, accreditors and institutions would assume new responsibilities.

Friis reported on the USDE proposed rules on implementing caps on student loans and implementing Workforce Pell grants for high-quality, short-term programs.

Friis also reported on two interpretive rules propounded by USDE. One speeding up the process to recognize new accrediting organizations and the second eliminating the use of "Regional" in reference to certain legacy accrediting agencies.

Lastly, Friis discussed the Capitol Hill Day convened for accrediting leaders by CHEA in response to a request made by accreditors at the All-Accreditor Forum held in 2025.

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Recognition

The board of directors approved recognition for a period of seven years, with an interim report due at the mid-point of the recognition term, for one organization:

- National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB)

The board of directors approved recognition for a period of seven years, with a follow-up report due in December 2-26, and an interim report due at the mid-point of the recognition term, for one organization:

- Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA)

Election of Members to the CHEA Board of Directors

The board of directors elected the following individuals to serve on the CHEA board for 2026–2029:

- Lora Bailey, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, University of the Virgin Islands
- Javier Cevallos, President, American Academic Leadership Institute**
- Julie Dinger, President, Oklahoma Panhandle State University
- Linda Essig, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Baruch College – CUNY
- Bennie L. Harris, Chancellor, University of South Carolina Upstate
- Kathy Johnson, President, University of New Orleans
- Marilee Bresciani Ludvik, Director of Academic Effectiveness and WSCUC Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) at the University of San Diego and Professor Emeritus, San Diego State University
- Carlos Morales, President, Lone Star College System
- Ellen Neufeldt, President, California State University San Marcos
- Catherine Welhburg, President, Athens State University*

** Incumbent elected to serve a three-year term.*

*** Elected to one-year as Immediate Past Chair*

Election of 2026-2027 Board Officers

The board of directors elected the following officers and members of the board executive committee:

- *Chair: Catherine Welhburg, President, Athens State University*
- *Vice Chair: David Schmidt, Webster State University*
- *Secretary: Lori Williams, Higher Education Consulting Services*
- *Treasurer: Colette Pierce Burnette, President Emerita, Huston-Tillotson University*
- *Immediate Past-Chair: Javier Cevallos, President, American Academic Leadership Institute*

2026-2027 Organizational Goals and Budget

Business Manager James Willis presented, and the board approved, the 2026-2027 organizational goals and budget that address CHEA's major function areas of government affairs, recognition, membership services and international quality assurance.

**The next meeting of the CHEA Board of Directors is
September 28, 2026, in Washington, D.C.**