NIUAA Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, September 7, 2016  
Human Resources Building, Room 100, 11:00 AM

Call to Order at 11:01a.m.

Present: Chris Atherton, Sara Clayton, Norden Gilbert, Michael Gonzalez, Joe Grush, Deborah Haliczer, Betsy Hull, Steven Johnson, Jim Lockard, Chuck Miller, Lynn Neeley, Margaret Phillips, Robert Self, Sherri Spear, Pat Vary, Dan Wunsch

Approval of the Agenda: Motion to accept the agenda was made by Lynn Neeley, seconded by Deborah Haliczer, and approved.

Approval of the Minutes of the April 13, 2016, Board Meeting: Motion to accept the minutes was made by Dan Wunsch, seconded by Pat Vary, and approved.

President’s Remarks
• Joe Grush asked everyone to introduce themselves so all board members—both new and old—could get to know one another.
• Joe indicated that he and Deborah Haliczer have been meeting with various constituencies during the months of May, June, July and August. These meetings included a pre-retirement workshop for those still working and presentations to the Operating Staff and Supportive Professional Staff Councils. The thrust of the latter meetings was to summarize various reasons why current employees should join NIUAA. To date, approximately 12 individuals have done so. The Operating Staff Council also contributed $1,135 to NIUAA in recognition of the legal battles that have been won on behalf of all employees and retirees. These funds will be used primarily to support public forums on contemporary issues (see New Business).
• With capable assistance from Lee Ann Henry, NIUAA’s website has been completely updated and enhanced. The site now includes the listing of officers and directors, our newly revised bylaws, as well as minutes of the board and annual meetings. New features include the financial reports for recent years, forms to pay dues by check or payroll deduction, and other useful information. Bob Self will help to maintain the website and keep it up-to-date.
• Joe indicated that he is on a three person SUAA committee to research the issue of the state’s taxing of retirement income. A thirteen page report has been drafted, but the committee has not yet finalized its report.

Treasurer’s Report - Betsy Hull submitted a written report.
• Betsy indicated that she has moved the reporting of NIUAA’s financial activities to a calendar year basis to better coordinate our reports with those required by SUAA and the IRS. NIUAA’s fiscal year ends December 31.
• Betsy consulted with John Engstrom on how the gift from the Operating Staff Council should best be treated. John said that the NIUAA Board should vote to accept the OSC donation as a contribution. A motion to that effect was made by Jim Lockard, seconded by Lynn Neeley, and approved.
• Pat Vary inquired as to why receipts and expenditures did not match. Betsy indicated that the apparent discrepancy was largely due to the fact that expenses for Travel Trips sponsored by NIUAA are not always billed, paid, deposited, and recorded at the same time.
• There was some discussion about what will happen when Lee Ann Henry, our Liaison to NIU, retires from the University on January 1, 2017. Joe Grush indicated he will be having discussions with Catherine Squires, University Advancement, about how the two units can
continue to work together for the benefit of both. If University Advancement and NIUAA do continue to work together, Lee Ann Henry’s replacement will be part of the discussion.

- Jim Lockard asked if SUAA has been behind in sending dues contribution to us and whether we were receiving all the dues that we should. By coincidence, these questions were recently asked of but not yet answered by SUAA. A question was also asked about how much NIUAA collects in dues. The answer is that we get $3 annually for every member.

Committee Reports

- Benefits: Sherrie Spear noted that the NIU Benefits Committee met last week and the issue came up about how the benefits choice period for health care would be handled this year for those who are eligible for Medicare. Sherrie also noted that Liz Guess from HRS is keeping the committee updated as the proposed CMS process constantly changes. The major issue here is whether individuals will have to register online or will have other means to exercise their choice. After considerable discussion, it was agreed that NIUAA should (a) try to get definitive answers from CMS, (b) disseminate this information to our members, and (c) provide some means for members to access online registration if that is their only option. A motion was made by Deborah Haliczer that NIUAA (President Grush) should pursue these matters. The motion was seconded by Chuck Miller and approved.

- Culture and Travel: Steve Johnson distributed a list of culture and travel opportunities that will be available to our members this year. Steve and Margaret Phillips have also worked together in planning activities for member to connect socially with one another. For example, a coffee hour has been scheduled for September 13 at the DeKalb Public Library and a second social gathering is planned for October at the Elks Club on Annie Glidden Road. Margaret also inquired as to whether NIUAA wanted to continue the holiday luncheon in December. One issue that comes into play here is guaranteeing (paying for) a certain number of participants. A second issue is whether to provide some type of entertainment (vocal or instrumental music) during the luncheon. After considerable discussion, a motion was made by Deborah Haliczer to continue the holiday luncheon as long as NIUAA does not lose money by guaranteeing a set number of participants. Deborah’s motion also contained provisions for NIUAA to continue paying a $1 per person for dessert and to provide some entertainment at a cost to NIUAA that does not exceed $300. Dan Wunsch seconded the motion and it was approved.

- Legislative: Jim Lockard indicated that not much is happening in Springfield at the moment. Lowering the rate of expected returns on investments by pension funds, however, has been widely discussed in the news. Jim summarized the consequences of lowered rates and also noted that pension reform is not dead. With regard to pension reform, ‘consideration’ or retirees giving up something to get something else of equivalent value is seemingly back on the table. Amendments to the Illinois Constitutional also seem to be under consideration.

- Membership: Pat Vary (Cathy Craddock was not present) reported that 1,883 is the current membership count as of July 2016. Pat also indicated that Carole Minor has made telephone calls to ask individuals who have dropped their membership to reconsider their decision. In short, the number of new members that we gain are offset by the loss of other members who are dropping out or dying.

- Political Involvement: Alan Voelker reported through Joe Grush that SUAAction paid for 4 NIUAA board members to golf in Bob Pritchard’s Outing and 2 additional members to attend his dinner. Alan also indicated that work is being done to identify 5 senate districts and their overlapping representative districts where more than just a few members reside. The districts most close to campus can then become the focus of the chapter’s political involvement. Each of these districts also include one or more community colleges that provide the opportunity to work with other SUAA chapters in expanding our lobbying efforts.
SURS Board and SUAA Foundation Reports: John Engstrom reported through Joe Grush that SURS is now recruiting both a new Executive Director and a new Chief Investment Officer. John also indicated that SURS had a disappointing 0.2% return on its investments for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016. No report was given on the SUAA Foundation.

Old Business

• Chair Appointments: President Grush asked the Board if it would concur in his appointing both Deborah Haliczer to chair the new Education Committee and Margaret Phillips to chair the new Social Committee. A motion to that affect was made by Jim Lockard, seconded by Lynn Neely, and approved.

• Meeting Dates and Times: Grush indicated that he plans to hold future board meetings on December 14 and March 8. Joe also indicated that he would like to change the time of the meetings from 10:30 - 12:00 to 11:00 - 12:30 so that board members who are still working could attend at least part of the meetings. While no motion was required, the consensus of the Board was that the proposed dates and times for meetings were acceptable.

• Openings on Benefits Committee and SUAA Foundation: Joe Grush indicated that he would like the Board to help him identify two individuals to serve in these positions. While Sherrie Spear is willing to continue her service on the Benefits Committee, both she and Joe think it would be desirable to get some new people more involved in our organization by assuming these positions.

New Business

• SUAA’s Fall Meeting is scheduled for November 21, 2016, in Bloomington/Normal. This meeting will deal with legislative initiatives that SUAA might support or oppose as well as the 2017 budget. While NIUAA can send up to six people, Grush said he would like at least four members to attend. If board members are willing to attend, they should let Joe know.

• Grush indicated that NIUAA will sponsor a Public Forum on Legal Issues affecting employees and retirees on November 16 in Carl Sandburg Auditorium. To accommodate those who are working at NIU, the forum will be scheduled from 4:40 to 6:00 p.m. John Carr, who serves as a lawyer and lobbyist for SUAA, will be the speaker. Co-Sponsors of the forum include NIU President Doug Baker, the Faculty Senate, the Operating Staff Council, the Supportive Professional Staff Council, and SUAA. Opportunities for individuals to join NIUAA will be provided both before and after the forum. A motion to cover expenses not paid by SUAA or assumed by NIU was made by Dan Wunsch, seconded by Chuck Miller, and approved.

• Board Liability Insurance: Both NIUAA and SUAA have previously looked into the possibility of providing professional liability insurance for their respective board members. Neither organization took official action, however, probably because insurance is expensive and there is some doubt as to whether insurance is actually needed. Nevertheless, Joe Grush asked Norden Gilbert and Steve Johnson to research the matter and report back to the Board on how best to handle liability concerns.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 12:41p.m.

[Future Board Meetings for this year are scheduled for December 14 and March 8. The meetings are scheduled from 11:00 to 12:30 in the Human Resources Building.]