NIUAA Board Meeting December 10, 2024

Attendance: Toni Tollerud, Terry Borg. Matt Streb, Pat Vary, Dave Sianson, Steve Cunningham, Andy Small, Paul Crawford, Debra Haliczer, Ferald Bryan, Pat Wielert

I. Call to order.

II. Approval of Agenda: Pat Vary moved and Dave Sinason seconded to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

III. Approval of minutes from September 2025 Board Meeting: Dave Sinason moved and Pat Vary seconded the motion to approve the September 20, 2024, minutes as amended. Motion carried.

IV. NIU President’s Office Liaison Remarks (Matt Streb)

• At the December 2024 Commencement, one thousand students graduated. Tom Skilling was awarded an honorary doctorate degree.

• The Huskies Football team was invited to the 2024 Famous Idaho Potato Bowl in Boise Idaho.

• The Aim High Huskie Pledge program (no tuition, no fees) has been expanded to include housing costs of up to $10,000 over four years.

• Matt and the President are busy reviewing legislation, and particularly Senate Bill 3965. The major issue is the impact of the university’s Endowment in the state’s funding formula. This is impacting all Illinois universities.

• FY2026 will be an austere state funding year for universities.

• Metra update: funding was released for a full-fledged planning study. Currently NIU does offer bus shuttle service to Elburn. NIU is currently discussing similar service to Aurora.

• Please coordinate with the President’s Office should NIUAA wish to meet with local legislators. Matt encouraged NIUAA’s participation in Advocacy Day

• Matt encouraged NIUAA to invite John Acardo, NIU Chief Human Resource Officer, to make a presentation at a future meeting.

• The Bausert Family Foundation made a $40 million dollar gift to fund creation of the Bausert Bahwell Health Technology Center. The $40 million dollar gift will be used to close the gap on construction ($10 million); $14 million for a restricted facility endowment maintenance fund; $14 million for future programmatic development, and $2 million is designated for the Northern Fund as part of the public campaign launch in spring.

VII. SUAA Update and Legislative Report (Steve Cunningham)

* Tier II discussion was tabled before the election. Many states have multiple tiers. Funding is much less for Tier II plans. A specific bill was introduced to enhance Tier II. If it does not match Social Security, then the federal government could come in and run program. We will see action in the lame duck session.
* Social Security Fairness Act is up for a vote.
* Need three-fifths vote to call a Constitutional Convention in Illinois in 2028. The “protection clause” could be at risk.
* Pension liability could become priority focus.
* Steve will check on reports that Delta Dental is going to require payment for dental procedures up front and then Delta Dental would reimburse.

An acknowledgement needs to be sent to Jim Lockard acknowledging everything he has done over the years for SUAA as the Legislative Liaison. It is timely for Jim to be honored again and receive the outstanding service award.

V. President’s Report (Toni)

* Twenty-two people and eight board members were at this morning’s social.
* A member of our board, Cynthia Nelson, has not been able to attend meetings for six months due to health issues. We have a policy regarding absences. Toni suggested there be a discussion about replacing Cynthia. Once her health allows, she would be welcomed back.

Andy Small moved and Pat Vary seconded the motion to go forward and replace Cynthia Nelson on the board. Motion passed.

Toni will deliver the message to Cynthia. A replacement may come from operating staff or faculty member. Share suggestions with Terry Borg.

VIII. Past President’s Remarks on NIUAA and Report from Co-chair of SUAA Membership (Andy)

* NIU SUAA is number one in the state for membership. We need more members.

VI. Treasurer’s Report

2024 endowment fund $127,000 in endowment. Two scholarships totaling $3,000.00. We rotate through colleges, and they choose who gets the scholarship. Alum match that up to $10,000.

The checking account is down $1,000.00.

We can ask for donations for the luncheon at the Annual Meeting or we can keep dipping into our savings or we can reduce meetings and/or newsletters.

One CD matured and that was cashed out and deposited in the checking account to replenish for costs for events. Four CD’s $25,000 in CD’s. $500.00 is due to scholarship fund.

Raising dues $2.00 or $3.00. We need to pass it here and then make a recommendation at the Annual Meeting. Information should be in the spring newsletter providing dues increase information along with information of what we have done this year. Also, information of how much of the dues goes to the State and what we receive.

Patricia Vary moved and Andy Small seconded the motion to increase the dues to $45.00. Motion passed.

X. Old Business

Annual Meeting is held in June. Barsema not available that week. Other dates were suggested.

Pat Vary moved and Dave Sianson seconded the motion to payment of $1,300.00 expense on July 1, 2025, for annual meeting expenses. Motion passed.

Paul Crawford stated he is comfortable with donation bowl.

Andy Small moved and Terry Borg seconded we investigate going forward with holding a social hour before the spring, fall and winter board meetings. Motion passed.

Ideas for presentations to incorporate at socials:

* How to use cell phone
* My items - what do I do with them.
* Dave Sinason’s presentation on cyber security for thirty to 45 minutes at the March social.

Toni asked Pat Vary to check on having a social gathering prior to the Board meeting at Oak Crest on March 11, 2025.

Barbara Peters passed away in March. Deborah Haliczer will prepare a letter of condolence.

XII. Laison and Committee Reports

A. Audit and Finance (Dave)

We have an internal audit due.

B. Benefits Liaison (Terry Borg)

* Working on bylaws with track changes on current bylaws. We will send the recommended changes out to members prior to the March meeting, and this will be a conversation at the Annual Meeting.
* University Benefits Committee met three times in Fall Semester 2024 (October, November, and December). Below are the key points from these meetings:
* Federal legislation (HR-82 and S-597) to repeal the WEP/GPO is making progress in the current Congress.
* State of Illinois TRAIL Medicare Advantage Aetna MAPD PPO enrollment period ended November 15, 2024.
* For current employees: Minimum wage on campus will increase to $15.00/hour on 1/1/25.
* HR's major focus is a systems implementation to eliminate the paper-based system of payroll/benefits reporting.
* The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas vacated and set aside the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)’s final regulation increasing the salary threshold for the “white collar” overtime exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) on a nationwide basis. The FLSA established increasing salary caps that required time and one-half hourly overtime pay for salaried employees working more than 37.5 hours a week. The January 1, 2025, increases will not go into effect as scheduled, and as a matter of law, the July 1, 2024, increase was nullified, per. Those NIU employees impacted by the July 1, 2024, salary increases will keep their salary increases and not be harmed.
* It is anticipated that State of Illinois legislation will attempt to resolve the Social Security Safe Harbor equivalency issue for Tier 2 employees in 2025.
* 403B maximums are increasing by $500 in 2025, along with catch-up provisions for those age 60-63. With the implementation of 'Secure Active' 457 contributions can now be done on a bi-weekly, instead of monthly, basis.

C. Communications and webpage Diane still wants to do the newsletter.

* Send newsletters out in April and October. Deadline for April newsletter is March 31 at 11:59 pm.

F. Parking (Ferald)

* October meeting cancelled, next meeting on December 19.
* Complaints concerning parking rates comparable to other schools and not enough gap between the rates.
* Concerns about parking on Normal and Gilbert by stop signs. Doing a roundabout on Normal and Lucinda.

A motion to adjourn and a second to adjourn at 12:30 was made. Motion carried.