

Minutes of the
NIU Board of Trustees
**ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, STUDENT AFFAIRS
AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**
March 1, 2006

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Cherilyn Murer at 9:10 a.m. in the Board of Trustees Room, 315 Altgeld Hall. Recording Secretary Sharon Mimms conducted a roll call of Trustees. Members present were Trustees Cherilyn Murer, Marc Strauss and Student Trustee Andrew Nelms. Chair Boey was present via teleconference. Not present was Trustee Manuel Sanchez. Also present were Committee Liaison Ivan Legg, President John Peters and Board Parliamentarian Kenneth Davidson. With a quorum present, the meeting proceeded.

VERIFICATION OF APPROPRIATE NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Confirmation of Open Meetings Act notification compliance was given by Board Parliamentarian Ken Davidson.

MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL

Trustee Strauss made a motion to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Student Trustee Nelms. The motion was approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Trustee Strauss and seconded by Student Trustee Nelms to approve the minutes of the September 1, 2005 meeting. The motion was approved.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

We have quite a full schedule today, Vice Chair Murer said. We have four key items that will be presented for action and three for information. The March meeting is of particular importance to the faculty, and the faculty is always of great importance to the university. This is the time of the year that the Board acts on recommendations for faculty and supportive professional staff sabbatical leaves for 2006-2007. Sabbaticals are such a vital part of a university. It is a time for faculty to step away from day to day activities and to think of the future, to revise programs, to be able to have new experiences that will enrich their ability to teach and the ability for the student to learn. Other action items include: a programmatic issue, a request for a new minor; transfer of tenure location in the College of Education; and approval of the new dean of the College of Business. Information items that will be discussed include the Oral English Proficiency Annual Report for the 2004-2005 Academic Year, which provides information on NIU's procedures to ensure that those who teach in classrooms are proficient in spoken English. There is an item being presented to the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee for information that will be considered for action by the Finance, Facilities and Operations Committee since it concerns approval of regional course delivery fees associated with academic programs. Also being presented for information will be the Annual IBHE Report on Underrepresented Groups for the 2004-2005 Academic Year.

The Vice Chair recognized the representatives of the University Advisory Committee, Joseph "Buck" Stephen and Ferald Bryan. As you mentioned, Dr. Stephen said, the tenure approvals are coming up. We appreciate the Board of Trustees' support and understanding of the importance of the sabbatical to the faculty body because, as a faculty, one of our goals is to impart a body of knowledge. But a more important goal is to make our students lifelong learners. That is also part of our goal as individual faculty members. The sabbatical leave process is an important component of reaching that goal individually and

as an institution. We continue to appreciate your support of these and their importance in our research mission and the role of faculty development.

I want to emphasize my colleague's comments, Dr. Bryan said, and further emphasize that it is a very rigorous process. Sabbaticals are vital for faculty to stay current in their field in order to impart that knowledge to our students. I again applaud your support of our sabbatical program.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chair asked Board Parliamentarian Kenneth Davidson if any members of the public had registered a written request to address the Board in accordance with state law and the Board of Trustees Bylaws. Mr. Davidson noted that no timely requests for public comment had been received.

UNIVERSITY REPORT

Agenda Item 7.a. – Recommendations for Faculty and Supportive Professional Staff Sabbatical Leaves for the 2006-2007 Academic Year

I would like to do what I did when I first came here five years ago, Provost Legg said, and just give you a one- to two-minute summary of what a sabbatical leave did for me. I am a chemist, and at the time that I was beginning my chemistry career, the significance in biological systems was becoming more and more important. I was awarded a fellowship at Harvard Medical School for a year and a half and ended up acquiring knowledge about the biological relationship to chemistry that I could not have received in any other way. And, as a result, a lot of my students who earned Ph.D.'s with me after that earned them in the biological chemistry area. One of them went to North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a 50-50 split between the medical school and the chemistry department. He is now working on neurological enzymes that affect the way the brain works and is doing research in Parkinson's disease. So the spin-off from my time with him really paid off.

As we have done in the past, the Provost said, at some future meeting, we will select two faculty members who have been on sabbatical leave to come and share their experiences with you. Sabbatical leave is really the basis of the creative growth of faculty, we sustain it and it is very important. I was very pleased to learn how good a sabbatical leave program we have here. There are 53 people who received sabbatical leave approval, and that is about six percent of our tenured/tenure-track faculty. The university requests that the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee endorse the university's decision to grant these recommended sabbatical leaves for 2006-2007 and ask the President to forward them by means of the President's Report to the Board of Trustees for approval at its March 23 meeting.

The sabbatical programs are very important and well-accepted here, President Peters said, and they are so enriching for the professors and our staff. It is unique that we also include staff. And it obviously helps professors on their scholarly, artistic and research sides. But also, many of our professors focus on their instructional role. And whether it is research or instruction, it gets back into the classroom and benefits the students. My sabbatical experience resulted in a couple of things: it changed my research direction, and it resulted in me publishing three articles in the *American Political Science Review*. But I also spent time with an individual who said, have you ever considered being a college president? And, of course, that was the furthest thing from my mind at that time. So, I am fully supportive of this.

Every year when we come to this sabbatical subject, Chair Boey said, I think it is wonderful to be able to refresh other people's memories. I am talking about beyond the staff and faculty of NIU, because the sabbatical subject is probably one of the most misunderstood subjects for people who are not connected day to day to the university and, in many cases, misunderstand and connect it with the term "vacation." Certainly, it is a problem that you and I have always talked about, and I think it is good each year to be sure that we articulate the reason for sabbaticals, which are so important to our faculty members.

In answer to a query from one of the Trustees, Dr. Legg said that each person who receives a sabbatical leave must return to the university for at least one year after the leave, which is quite common across the country. There is also a requirement that a written report be filed by everyone who goes on sabbatical, President Peters said, and we can share those with you as well.

I just want to echo the importance of sabbaticals, Student Trustee Nelms said, because as students, we see the benefit of sabbaticals in the classroom. The Student Trustee is required by State law and Board *Bylaws* to abstain from voting on this issue.

Vice Chair Murer asked for a motion to endorse the Recommendations for Faculty and Supportive Professional Staff Sabbatical Leaves for the 2006-2007 Academic Year. Trustee Strauss so moved, seconded by Trustee Murer. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 7.b. – Request for a New Minor

The world has challenges and universities have departments, the Provost said, and the problems that we have, by in large, require more than one discipline to tackle and find a solution. The request for a cognitive studies minor involves 34 existing courses from the Departments of Anthropology, Biological Sciences, Communicative Disorders, Computer Science, English, Philosophy and Psychology. That is a vast number of courses that have to do, in one way or another, with cognitive processes. No additional funding is required to implement this minor. The courses needed to complete the minor are currently offered on a regular basis and have sufficient space. The university recommends that the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee endorse this request and ask the President to forward it by means of the President's Report to the Board of Trustees for approval at its March 23 meeting.

I might add that this was a great love and passion of our late dean of Liberal Arts, Fred Kitterle, President Peters said, and being interested in cognitive theory and artificial intelligence myself, I had many conversations with Fred about this sort of concentration. This is a very good approach, and this is clearly a multidisciplinary intellectual activity.

Trustee Strauss moved to approve the request for a new Minor in Cognitive Studies, seconded by Student Trustee Nelms. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 7.c. – Transfer of Tenure Location

In 1999, the College of Education was reorganized extensively to create seven departments, Provost Legg explained. After the dean who was responsible for that left, the new dean, Christine Sorensen, was hired. And over the last five years, she has rearranged things even more. A consequence of all these changes is that her emphasis in her own field of higher education was left in another department, and she is now in a department that does not contain most of the courses and most of her discipline. So we are taking the core issue, her tenure, and requesting the Board approve the moving of that tenure from the current department to the department that contains her discipline. Therefore, the university requests the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee endorse the transfer of the location of tenure for Christine Sorensen and ask the President to forward the recommendation by means of the President's Report for Board of Trustees approval at its March 23 meeting.

Vice Chair Murer asked for a motion to accept the transfer of tenure for Dr. Christine Sorensen. Trustee Strauss so moved, seconded by Trustee Boey. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 7.d. – Appointment of the Dean of the College of Business

I am really pleased that I am here addressing this particular request, Provost Legg said. The search for the College of Business dean started almost two years ago. As in some searches, it took that long to find the right person for the job. I still remember when we were in the early stages of the search and Denise was the person I picked to be co-chair of the committee. But she came to see me and asked if it would be okay if she left the committee because she was considering a nomination to be a dean candidate. And I said, "Well, it's a long shot, if you want my opinion." And it was a long shot. She then stepped down, and we conducted a national search. This is a highly visible position in this community and in the Greater Chicago area. We hired the search firm of Baker Parker and Associates, to help us in the search. We interviewed many excellent candidates, and Denise's name came up again and again. Finally, we interviewed Denise. She locked in on the job, and we are so pleased. Her record is excellent.

Denise has her MBA from the University of Louisville and a Ph.D. from the University of Kentucky. She joined the Department of Marketing as a faculty member and rose through the ranks to become, ultimately, the chair of the department. She has received teaching excellence awards in marketing six years in a row, which is a real achievement when you consider that the focus of our university is the education of our students. And she has done a lot in terms of public outreach and in terms of reaching out for other departments, again, looking at the interdisciplinary issues, which are very important today and will become progressively more important. She has been, overall, an effective leader and a fundraiser. She even had Donald Trump saying that he would like to come to our university. She has also served on many committees. I got to know her when she was a member of a special committee that deals with the diversification of our faculty. She was and continues to be a leader in that committee.

Provost Legg gave the university recommendation that the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee endorse this request and ask that the President forward it by means of the President's Report to the Board of Trustees for approval at its meeting on March 23.

At this time, the Provost said, I would like to ask Denise to come forward and make some comments. Dr. Shoenbachler's comments were as follows:

Thank you, Dr. Legg, Trustees. I am delighted to be here this morning. As Dr. Legg said, a couple of years ago I made the decision that I would like to be the College of Business dean for reasons both personal and professional. And I am thrilled to have the opportunity to do so now – pending Board final approval at the end of the month. The College of Business is a very visible college at the university. I think we have the responsibility to represent the university in the Chicago business community, in the academic community, and I take that very seriously. I see the College of Business over the next five to seven years becoming much more active in reaching out to the Chicago business community and bringing those resources – financial, time and talent – back to the university as a whole, not just to the College of Business. As Dr. Legg noted, I believe strongly in collaboration across the university. I learned as a department chair and as a faculty member that there is a lot of excellence in pockets across this university. And when we pull those pieces together, we really can do great things. I am, as I said, very excited at this opportunity. I appreciate the support within the college and across the university. Through my interviews and through my nomination, I felt a lot of excitement and a lot of enthusiasm within the college to move forward within the next seven to ten years, and I think that we have the resources and what we need to do that. I look forward to leading the college and being part of the university. Thank you.

Assuming your approval, President Peters said, I am going to be very happy to bring this recommendation to the full Board. One of the first people I met on this campus was Denise, because she was on the presidential search committee by which I was lucky enough to be chosen. Since that time, I have, from afar, followed her fast-rising career. I want to compliment the Provost and the search committee for a very successful and thorough search. It is well known across the country, among presidents, that there are certain colleges where it is very difficult to attract quality individuals to lead, such as medical schools, law schools, business schools, etc. The normal time it takes to find a permanent dean is usually 24 months, so we were within that timeframe.

I feel that this choice is really a formational choice for the next stage in the development of the College of Business, the President said. The Trustees and I have high aspirations for the growth of the college in terms of its reputation – its scholarly reputation and its reputation for excellent programs. We certainly have a wonderful platform, we have one of the best buildings in the country, we have a wonderful student body and faculty. But we have a lot to do. Just last night, I met one of our business alums who praised the choice of Denise. Almost every segment of the university population with which I have come in contact, is very supportive of her appointment. One of the things you always hope for when you are named to be a chair or a dean or a provost or a president is that you have a mandate and you have support. I believe that, with your endorsement and the approval of the full Board, Denise Shoenbachler has a mandate and the support to take this college to the next level.

This process went on long before I was appointed to the Board, Trustee Strauss said, but it is nice to be here at the end. From my perspective, what is important is that we have somebody who is energetic, has

a collaborative spirit and is willing to work in cooperation with outside partners. And from the discussions that we have had, I am convinced that those are things that you will be able to do very successfully, and I look forward to working with you.

As Dr. Peters said, Chair Boey commented, Denise was a member of the presidential search committee, the first in over 20 years at NIU. I was fortunate to have worked on the same committee. And certainly, I have the highest regard and respect for her. All the accolades have been spoken already, so I will simply offer my congratulations to Denise.

Trustee Boey made the motion recommending Dr. Denise Schoenbachler as the next dean of the College of Business. Trustee Strauss seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 7.e. – Oral English Proficiency Annual Report 2004-2005

The Oral English Proficiency Annual Report indicates that we are doing a very good job of dealing with the language proficiency in the classroom, Dr. Legg said. And it is to our credit that only three out of 43 departments registered any kind of complaint, and those are being handled.

Agenda Item 7.f. – Regional Delivery Fees

Provost Legg explained that the regional delivery fees recognize that when we offer off-campus programs of any kind, it costs more than if we offer them on campus. These fees are approved routinely to help pay the cost of the off-campus programs.

Agenda Item 7.g. – Annual IBHE Report on Underrepresented Groups 2004-2005

For the last three years, the annual IBHE Report on Underrepresented Groups has focused on one area that has been recommended by IBHE. This year, it was individuals with disabilities. And from my personal tours, visiting the facilities and looking at the program, I was not surprised to find that we are very active and well known for our work with students with disabilities.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Vice Chair Murer announced that the next meeting of the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee was set for June 1, 2006* at 9:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no Other Matters, Vice Chair Murer asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Strauss so moved, seconded by Student Trustee Nelms. The motion was approved. The meeting was adjourned at 10:09 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon M. Mimms
Recording Secretary

**This date was subsequently changed to May 25, 2006.*