

Minutes of the
NIU Board of Trustees
**ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, STUDENT AFFAIRS
AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**
April 19, 2012

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Chair Cheryl Murer at 9:30 a.m. in the Board of Trustees room, 315 Altgeld Hall. Recording Secretary Sharon Banks-Wilkins conducted a roll call of Trustees. Members present were Trustees Robert Boey, John Butler, Wheeler Coleman, Robert Marshall, Student Trustee Jaemin Robertson and Chair Cheryl Murer. Also present were Trustee Anthony Iosco, Committee Liaison Ray Alden, President John Peters and Board General Counsel Jerry Blakemore. With a quorum present, the meeting proceeded.

VERIFICATION OF APPROPRIATE NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Confirmation of Open Meetings Act public notice compliance was provided by Board General Counsel Jerry Blakemore.

MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL

Trustee Coleman made a motion to approve the meeting agenda as amended. Trustee Marshall seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Trustee Butler and seconded by Trustee Boey to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2012 committee meeting. The motion was approved.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

It is always nice to start with Academic Affairs, the Chair commented, which I always say is the heart and soul of the university. We are going to look at faculty tenure and promotion for the 2012-2013 academic year, the identification of the quality of our professorships and the recommendation to extend tenure to those professors. One element of tenure benefits the individual, but it also lends stability to the university. There are two programmatic issues on the agenda, a request for new degree programs in Financial Risk Management within the College of Business and Integrated Systems Engineering within the College of Engineering. Our final action item is a request for a new Emphasis in Geography and Geomatics within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Information items include an update on Higher Learning Commission accreditation and an overview of undergraduate capstone projects.

The Chair recognized representatives of the University Advisory Committee: Dr. Kerry Freedman and Mr. Andy Small.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chair asked General Counsel Blakemore if any members of the public had registered a written request to address the Board in accordance with state law and Board of Trustees *Bylaws*. Mr. Blakemore noted that he had received no requests to address this meeting.

UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS/REPORTS

Agenda Item 7.a. – Recommendations for Faculty Promotions, Tenure, and Promotions with Tenure for 2012-2013

As Chair Murer alluded, one of the most important things in the life of the university is recognizing our quality faculty. It is also a major milestone in the professional lives of faculty members. The granting of faculty promotions, tenure and promotions with tenure is a very rigorous process. There are written criteria approved at all levels, beginning at the department level. At all levels of evaluating the quality of the records of the faculty being considered for tenure and promotion, there are both faculty and administrative voices on the faculty committee. By the time we bring the candidates forward, they have been very well vetted, and you can rest assured that the quality is truly there. There are 21 individuals recommended for promotion from associate to full professor. Three individuals are recommended for tenure only. Some departments choose to hire with rank individuals who have had experience elsewhere, but want to be sure they fit in with the educational and disciplinary culture of the department before granting tenure. There are 38 individuals recommended for tenure and promotion, largely coming from the junior ranks going to the associate level. Four individuals, who have experience elsewhere, have been granted tenure as part of the hiring process, pending Board approval. Chair Murer asked for a motion to endorse the Recommendations for Faculty Promotions, Tenure, and Promotions with Tenure for 2012-2013. Trustee Coleman so moved, seconded by Trustee Marshall. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 7.b. – Requests for New Degree Programs

The M.S. in Financial Risk Management in the Department of Finance within the College of Business is a relatively new concept, Dr. Alden said. Considering events of the last five years, it is a very much needed concept to have people educated in the latest techniques in balancing the risks of corporation investment portfolios and will qualify individuals for professional certification as a financial risk manager. The requirement involves 30 credit hours in analysis of derivatives, financial markets, investments, financial data analysis, analysis of fixed income securities, finance management strategy and risk management strategies, and it is appropriate for individuals wanting to work both in the private and public sector. This new degree was advised by the Board of Executive Advisors for the college. This can be offered within the context of the off-campus course delivery fee since the demand is by working professionals who need off-campus delivery.

The M.S. in Integrated Systems Engineering also was brought to our attention by the advisory board for the college as an area that is much more in demand in the professional workforce. It provides an integrated systems look at a number of complex engineering problems relevant to the private sector. It would permit students to elect one of two specializations, one in Mechatronics and Intelligent Systems, or one in Biomedical and Health Systems Engineering, both clearly in-demand areas that require an integrated approach to understanding various engineering and technology backgrounds. This is something we have emphasized in our strategic planning process, and we have really had a lot of cooperation across departments within the college.

Chair Murer called for a motion to endorse the university's new degree requests: the M.S. in Financial Risk Management in the Department of Finance within the College of Business and the M.S. in Integrated Systems Engineering within the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology both on campus and off campus in Region 3 (West Suburban). Trustee Coleman so moved, seconded by Trustee Boey. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 7.c. – Requests for New Emphases

For the new Board members, Provost Alden explained, within our undergraduate programs we have tracks called emphases, and those tracks within graduate programs are called specializations. These particular focus areas appear on the individuals' transcripts to allow identification of a particular program subdiscipline of expertise that will help provide the value added to the graduating individual who wishes to go into that particular field. The first emphasis is in Geography in the B.A./B.S. in Geography within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. This new emphasis was the major focus of the department until

they started developing the second emphasis area and wanted to distinguish the two tracks. This baccalaureate degree in geography provides 36 hours of course credit hours in physical and world geography, the atmosphere, maps and mapping, geographic information systems and 12 hours of electives. It is a recognized strength in a very strong department that recently acquired a Ph.D. program. This will provide the emphasis that has been the traditional focus of the department while the second emphasis has evolved.

The second new emphasis is in Geomatics. It focuses on gathering and using computerized information that is applied to land surveying, map making, global positioning, navigation systems and other related areas. It includes methods in geographic information science, geovisualization and will allow a student to become a professional surveyor or map maker with a baccalaureate degree. At present, the State of Illinois has no land surveying baccalaureate program in this area, so we see this as a student employment opportunity. Chair Murer asked for a motion to endorse the request for a new Emphasis in Geography in the B.A./B.S. in Geography within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and a new Emphasis in Geomatics in Geography in the B.S. in Geography within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Trustee Marshall so moved, seconded by Trustee Butler. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 7.d. – Higher Learning Commission Accreditation Update

Provost Alden asked Vice Provost Virginia Cassidy to present the update on the Higher Learning Commission accreditation.

With the help of our audio visuals, Dr. Cassidy said, we will take you to the university's Higher Learning Commission web site, which was just launched last week. We have tried to make it a resource for the campus community and any others who would have interest in knowing about Higher Learning Commission accreditation in general or about what NIU's processes are in particular. On the home page is a letter to the campus from President Peters talking about the importance of this endeavor and encouraging all individuals to be actively engaged in the process. There is also a statement from the chair of the steering committee, Dr. Doris Macdonald, from the Department of English, who is the point person for the development of the self-study.

A link to the Higher Learning Commission web site has been provided for individuals who have questions about what the criteria are and what the Higher Learning Commission is. Also included is a link to some frequently asked questions about institutional accreditation in general. Information about our timeline and our processes preparing for a visit in 2014 is also available. The members of the steering committee are identified for the campus community and the criterion on which they are working is given. These individuals are leading subcommittees that will collect the information from various parts of the organization in order to develop our self-study and demonstrate how we meet those criteria. Our e-mail address has been provided for anyone who has a question about the process or about accreditation in general. That mailbox is monitored, and we will respond to those e-mails in a timely manner. In addition to the individuals who were tapped to serve on the steering committee and the subcommittees because of their specific expertise, there is a new announcement section on the homepage issuing a campuswide invitation to any faculty, staff or students who would have interest in serving on one of the committees.

Agenda Item 7.e. – Capstone Projects

This item will consist of presentations from three individuals. The first speaker will be Dr. Carolinda Douglass, who will provide the overview of capstone programs on campus. She is a professor in the School of Nursing and Health Studies within the College of Health and Human Sciences and also is currently the Associate Vice Provost for Academic Outcomes Assessment. She holds a Ph.D. in Health Policy Analysis from the Rand Graduate School and has had over 20 years of research experience in the area of evaluation and assessment. Her current research interests are in building strong cultures of evidence-based teaching and learning that educate and engage students in assessment practices and include assessing the assessor. Carolinda recently has been appointed to assume the responsibilities of Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Development when Vice Provost Virginia Cassidy retires at the end of May.

I would like to recognize Virginia. This is her last committee meeting for AASAP, and she has done a phenomenal job in all of her various activities. She is responsible for all academic program review and academic program development, and provides leadership in the Academic Planning Council. Obviously, she is very important in staffing me and to this Board in bringing these programs forward. She also is a key liaison to the IBHE staff and attends the Academic Officers meetings with me, or if my schedule does not permit me to travel to Springfield for these meetings, she well represents the university. Now she has, for the second time, started the effort for the Higher Learning Commission.

I cannot let this occasion go by without adding a couple more words to what Provost Alden has said, Trustee Boey remarked. When I first joined the Board of Trustees, Virginia was the first person that really was extremely helpful. I will never forget the definition of emphases, specialization. I went to her and asked, "What on earth is that, Virginia?" and the education of Bob Boey by Virginia went on from there. I cannot thank you enough. You have always been very diligent in whatever you do and extremely responsible. Especially when it comes to the Board of Trustees, we cannot thank you enough.

Provost Alden introduce the next speaker, Chris Jones, a professor and past chair of the Department of Political Science within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, who is also serving currently in the role of Associate Vice Provost for University Honors. Dr. Jones earned his Ph.D. in Political Science from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse. His research and teaching specialties are in the areas of U.S. foreign policy and national security. Professor Jones has been widely recognized for his teaching excellence and is the recipient of numerous national and institutional teaching awards. The final speaker will be Cliff Mirman, a professor and chair of the Department of Technology within the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology and is one of our inaugural Presidential Engagement Professors. Dr. Mirman received his Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Illinois at Chicago. He has worked on over 25 federal-, state- and industrially-funded engineering and technology projects and grants. Over the past three years, Dr. Mirman has worked with other faculty members in the college to secure \$2 million in funding from the Department of Energy to develop a series of research programs to provide energy efficiency in the railroad industry.

I want to thank the members of the committee for inviting us here today to talk about experiences at NIU, Dr. Douglass stated. On behalf of my colleagues and myself, we believe the capstone experience is very important and transformational for students and one that we are trying to give more students an opportunity to experience.

Although there are many forms of capstone experiences, they all have at their foundation some very basic principles. They help students to integrate knowledge. The capstone may begin earlier, but it culminates in the senior year. It engages students in the real world in a way that is safe yet challenging. It provides closure on the college experience so that they are able to go out into the next phase of their lives. We have a wide variety of capstone experiences at NIU, Dr. Douglass said, some examples of which are the Honors Capstones at the broad university level, which Dr. Jones will present; senior design projects, which Dr. Mirman will present; internships, clinical experiences, student teaching, portfolios, both electronic and on paper; senior theses and papers; and the exit essay. In the Office of Assessment Services, we did an overview to look at the types of programs that had capstone experiences and found that of all the undergraduate academic programs, 81 percent offered some form of capstone experience in one of its various forms.

There are three levels of honors education at the university, Dr. Jones stated. If a student wants to graduate with full university honors, s/he must complete a university capstone, and approximately 100 students elect that option each year at NIU. The university honors capstone is an in-depth project that extends over multiple semesters. At a minimum, we see seniors focusing on research in the fall semester of their senior year and then finishing up with the writing in their spring semester; however, we are encouraging students to start in the second semester of their junior year. The final product will vary across disciplines. It can be anything from a senior thesis to a video presentation to a computer program to an artistic creation or detailed project statement. Many times students work in teams, therefore, they

would be detailing what aspect they contributed to the overall project. One of the most significant aspects of the capstone is that it is completed under the supervision of a faculty member. Value added education is a focus in the University Honors Program to have that one-on-one mentored experience, so we try to connect the best and brightest students with the most capable faculty members at NIU.

Dr. Mirman discussed the capstone experience in the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology. Most of our students develop a one-year project or two-semester project actually building hands-on, Dr. Mirman remarked, where they are applying theory and their knowledge over four years. Three capstone projects that typically involve larger interdisciplinary team projects of four or five students working together are a basic utility vehicle, which came in first place among about 20 teams; a super high mileage, one-person vehicle that ran 1,270 miles per gallon; and the Formula SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers), where the students build a vehicle from start to finish and each year they look at a different component: the turbo charger, the engine, the tires, suspension, etc.

It appears that the committee has a great deal of interest in this particular matter, Chair Murer stated. I would like to see this continued to the August meeting. Also, I think, Trustee Butler identified that one of the things we really need to address is the integration with the strategic plan and how any of the activities we are currently involved in are integrating with that strategic plan.

OTHER MATTERS

Since I have been on the Board, Trustee Coleman commented, I have had an opportunity to spend time with staff members and talk to the IT folks about some of the key activities taking place around our investment in IT. I have also looked at some of the financial numbers in IT investments, and they have been significant, so I have been sharing some of my thoughts about some of the best practices that we should consider surrounding IT with some of the administrators. For the past 29 years, I have been engaged in implementing emerging technology as well as adopting best practices for my organization. Earlier this year, I put a recommendation on the table for the administration to consider.

However, what I wanted to talk about today is a best practice that most organizations have in place surrounding their IT spin, especially since IT is one of the critical drivers for a lot of institutions. It plays a major role in communicating with our students, and it plays a major role in collecting funds and individuals having access to their classrooms and schedules. Trustees stated their support for the idea of some type of IT audit and had a brief discussion about which committee this subject should fall under.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The Chair announced that the next meeting of the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee will be Thursday, August 30.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Murer asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Boey so moved, seconded by Trustee Coleman. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon M. Banks-Wilkins
Recording Secretary