

Minutes of the
NIU Board of Trustees
LEGISLATION, AUDIT AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE MEETING
February 2, 2012

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Marc Strauss at 11:57 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 John Butler, Wheeler Coleman, Student Trustee Jaemin Robertson and Vice Chair Strauss. Not present was Chair Anthony Iosco. Also present were Trustees Robert Boey, Robert Marshall and Cherilyn Murer, President John Peters, Committee Liaison Kathryn Buettner and Board General Counsel Jerry Blakemore. With a quorum present, the meeting proceeded.

VERIFICATION OF APPROPRIATE NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

In accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act, as amended, timely notices of this committee meeting for the NIU Board of Trustees were timely posted and distributed.

MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL

Trustee Butler made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Trustee Coleman. The motion was approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Trustee Butler and seconded by Trustee Coleman to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2011 meeting. The motion was approved.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Vice Chair Strauss welcomed those University Advisory Committee representatives who were present, Dr. Rosita Lopez and Mr. Todd Latham.

Committee Chair Tony Iosco could not be with us this morning, Vice Chair Strauss remarked, thus I am acting as chair at his request. Anyone who has read a newspaper this week or any other week in the not too distant past, has seen various summaries of news analyses completed by the Chicago Civic Federation that says within five years, the State of Illinois' unpaid bills will average over \$35 billion, one-third more than the State currently receives in tax revenue each year. The culprits, according to the Civic Federation are spiraling Medicaid costs, public pensions and a failure to cut state spending. The most disturbing part of the report is that it acknowledges that even with the pension reforms in Senate Bill 512 and significant Medicaid payment reductions, the State will remain hopelessly mired in debt. The State's depressing and precarious financial situation is an ever present reminder of the importance of NIU's pursuit of our Vision 2020 plans and strategies. It is clear that the budget, pensions and Medicaid reform will once again dominate this session in Springfield.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Vice Chair Strauss asked Board General Counsel Jerry 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 Board committee meeting.

UNIVERSITY REPORT

Agenda Item 7.a. – 97th General Assembly Report

The Governor delivered his State of the State address yesterday with his much awaited budget address coming soon, February 22, the Vice Chair Strauss remarked. Lori Clark, Director of State and Federal Relations, is here to brief the committee on key issues facing the General Assembly this spring with an emphasis on those that most affect higher education operations and budgets.

I wish I could say I have good news, Ms. Clark began, but I would say the environment in Springfield and in Washington, D.C., is very much like today's weather -- foggy, icy and cold. As Trustee Strauss pointed out, the Civic Federation Report and the State's fiscal condition has put a damper on everything at the state capital. As mentioned, the Governor's State of the State message was yesterday. It called for a jobs agenda basically with three components to that jobs agenda. One is to abolish a natural gas utility tax which would cost about \$164 million. The second is to establish a child tax credit for about a hundred dollars per working family, which would cost about \$130 million. The third is a tax credit for companies that would be hiring returning veterans. The business groups very much embrace the fact that the Governor recognized that we need to grow jobs. But the foremost concern is how are we going to pay for that. If we do not have enough to meet our bills now, how are we going to pay for these additional things? There was only one mention of Medicaid reform as well as pension reform. On pension reform, everybody is talking about it but there have been no concrete proposals. The AFSCME contract is currently being discussed and negotiated, and I am sure these topics are playing a big part in those negotiations. The Speaker's Office has made it very clear that there will be no action of any real substance before the primaries on March 20. Session was canceled for today and next Thursday. There will be some committee hearings next week. Only one bill was posted in the Higher Education Committee. It is a bill the university opposed last year, and we will continue to oppose this year. This bill would eliminate the fifty percent tuition waiver that the university provides for our faculty and staff whose children are attending public universities in the state. In the meantime, legislators probably will file anywhere from three to five hundred bills a week. It appears that five or six bills have been filed that would eliminate the General Assembly Scholarship. As you will recall, that has been proposed in the past, but it looks like there may be increased momentum this year. There have been stories about wide spread abuses. The Senate Republicans have taken a pledge that none of them will give out General Assembly Scholarships, and many other individual legislators are not giving them out.

Just to clarify, President Peters stated, we take no position on the elimination of the legislative scholarships. That is a matter for the legislators, and we have no part of that process. Where we do take a position is against the elimination of the fifty percent tuition rebate for employees.

The Governor did mention in his State of the State that he does want to increase funds significantly for MAP, Ms. Clark commented, but that is all he said. There were no details in terms of dollar amounts or anything related to that. We should see more details in his budget message in three weeks.

Agenda Item 7.b. – Congressional Report

In Washington, the Congress will be looking at the President's budget when he releases it on February 13. Again, D.C. is very much caught up in the election year politics, and there is very little hope that much of substance will pass before the November elections. We will continue to keep you apprised of what transpires.

Agenda Item 7.c. – University Communications Council Report

Brad Hoey, Director of Marketing and Communications, gave a PowerPoint presentation on a campuswide communications initiative, the new University Communications Council. This committee has its origins

with our branding and marketing committee that originated close to two years ago, he said. That committee was comprised of representatives and stakeholders from throughout the university and was the impetus behind the framework of the branding and marketing initiatives that included the new logo we introduced in the middle of the summer. Once that initial branding and marketing initiative went forward, we knew there had to be a group of communications representatives from throughout the university to not only keep that momentum going, but also to share some of their initiatives and resources, and their stories about what is going on in their colleges, departments and individual units or divisions on campus. That is where the UCC was born and began in earnest in September 2011.

The UCC serves as a forum to exchange promotional, marketing and/or advertising initiatives. In the past, prior to the development of the Division of University Relations, many of the marketing initiatives on behalf of the university were carried out by separate departments or colleges. With the formation of University Relations around Fall 2009, it became a clearinghouse to some extent. The UCC now brings all these units together and facilitates the sharing of information, resources and marketing research data with communication peers within the university to build a foundation for what we will be doing in the future.

Kathy Buettner is chair of the UCC, and I serve as vice chair. Kathy has shared with this group and with a number of university stakeholders over the last couple of years, the different marketing data we have been able to acquire with the help of our Public Opinion Lab's polling of students, prospective students, faculty, staff, families and alumni. One of the first things we did when we met with the UCC is share a lot of that data with these group members. Many of them were part of the Branding and Marketing Committee, but there were several new members as well.

Another goal of the Council is to enhance the university's efforts to efficiently implement precious marketing and communications resources by sharing strategies or findings from communications consultants on best practices or marketing approaches. Trustee Coleman mentioned that there are countless talented and experienced people at this university, and this council brings together some of the most talented and experienced people in one group to share these ideas and resources.

The UCC is representative of many groups throughout the university. Some members have been with the university for a long time, and we have several new members who recently joined the university. That is tremendous because bringing in talented people who have not necessarily been with the university for a long time brings a wealth of experience from the private sector or other areas where they previously worked. Right now we have approximately 37 members, and that could grow to as many 45.

An initiative we shared during one of our earlier meetings is the direct mail campaign where we are mailing information about the university to prospective students' families. These mailings began in late September and are ongoing. Two examples Mr. Hoey showed were a postcard promoting NIU Open Houses, and a small brochure that talked about student life and what is happening on campus. Some brochures have gone out that talk about student life, academic reputation, community and campus housing. The latest brochure we sent out talked about the value of an NIU education. Marisela Rosas worked very closely with our Admissions Office, Document Services and other areas throughout the university to prepare some of these documents. Everything was done in-house, but we would not be able to put this together so readily if we did not bring together some of the synergies created through the UCC. This is just one example the many kinds of demonstrations and presentations that members of the UCC were able to undertake during the fall semester, and it is an example of how we are able to put together not only these current publications, but also future projects utilizing some of the information drawn from those UCC meetings.

Earlier I mentioned the presentations made by some members throughout the semester. Late in the semester, Angela Johansson, Assistant Director for Development Communications with the Foundation, showed us one of the wonderful profiles they have produced about students who have benefited from the generosity of our alumni and our donors. Moonja Jeong is an international student from Korea studying in the College of Visual and Performing Arts. She is studying voice and is truly blessed with an

unbelievable talent. Her story is very poignant. Ms. Jeong ran into financial difficulties that might have prohibited her from continuing her education in her senior year. But thanks to the generosity of the Foundation and the scholarship initiatives we undertake here at the university, she was able to obtain a scholarship to close out her career here at NIU. I believe she will be performing at the Foundation's Red and Black. I encourage everyone to watch the video on *NIU Today*. It is not only an indication of the talent as well as the unbelievable generosity of people who are giving back to the university. We will be doing a series of similar student profiles to let people know about the talent we have here to let people know that the NIU family supports its diverse population of students. If it was not for the scholarship dollars we receive through the generosity of our donors, many of our students' dreams would not become a reality.

Going back to the sharing of resources, one of the ways we are able to easily disseminate some of the resources and information to our colleagues on the UCC is by using the Blackboard site. Everybody on the University Communications Council is enrolled in Blackboard. When the site is accessed, there are various resources, whether it is information, videos, multimedia content or fliers from all the different organizations that our UCC represents. University Relations can take this information and disseminate it in a variety of different ways, but members of the UCC have the ability to readily access this information through Blackboard.

In the social media folder, there are perhaps a hundred plus articles and PDF files and different resources within the university that people can access. Technology and information is always evolving, especially in the area of social media. As we move into the next stage of our branding and marketing initiative for the university, the University Communications Council will assume the role they had as the Marketing and Branding Committee as we look to what we are doing in the future, and as we think about how we perpetuate some of this momentum gained during the summer and fall. This committee will be responsible for putting together and helping formulate many of these branding, marketing and messaging initiatives for the near and distant future.

Trustee Coleman inquired whether the UCC is also advising these university groups on whether or not their material is consistent with the overall theme and message of the university. Mr. Hoey replied that this was one of the original missions of the UCC. Oftentimes, prior to University Relations coming into existence, many of the departments and colleges were tasked with trying to push that messaging forward. With the University Communications Council and University Relations, we are able to have a more unified message.

To clarify, Ms. Buettner said, University Relations takes full responsibility for the central messaging of the university's branding and marketing writ large. We work with the deans and through a collaborative process to help them formulate their messaging, the divisional messaging, admissions and such, to help steer them in the right direction. Basically, the UCC is providing a forum to allow us to inform the communicators in the colleges and the departments about what we are doing and the standards that we develop, but also to encourage them to bring new ideas to the table. It is a good give and take, and the colleges themselves still do much of their own marketing, and that is the differentiation. We are trying to create a forum where the messaging, the opportunities and the interaction are exchanged before the recruitment materials are distributed.

The university has made great strides in the last three years, Trustee Murer commented. Dr. Peters had this vision to have a unified marketing and message, and Vice President Buettner has taken that responsibility and made great leaps and bounds by bringing these people together. That is very important, not only when you have shared governance, but when you are trying to get the opinions of very learned individuals who are stakeholders. Trustee Murer inquired where the fact that we are using technology has given us greater accessibility and timeliness in our messaging and, from the point of cost where a significant decrease has been seen in the cost of paper brochures versus using the internet and other technology. Mr. Hoey stated that he had no metrics on that yet, but would try to get that information for the committee.

In reply to a question from Student Trustee Robertson, Mr. Hoey stated that an initiative undertaken by the Branding and Marketing Committee was looking at initiatives of new members to the committee who came from outside the university. As new members come in, they bring in different ideas from either the institution they came from or possibly from the private sector or the corporate world. We look at best practices and the things that are working well for other institutions. We also look at what may not have worked well so that we avoid going in that direction.

Consistency of messaging and constancy of effort are important for the branding mission and its promotion, Vice Chair Strauss remarked. Thank you for your efforts, and we look forward to further reports.

OTHER MATTERS

Vice Chair Strauss reminded those Trustees planning to tour Cole Hall that they should proceed to the main entrance of Altgeld Hall, as soon as practicable, where transportation would be available.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The Vice Chair announced that the next meeting of the Legislation, Audit and External Affairs Committee will be on Thursday, April 19, 2012, at 11:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Strauss asked for a motion to adjourn. Student Trustee Robertson so moved, seconded by Trustee Butler. The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon M. Banks-Wilkins
Recording Secretary