

Minutes of the  
NIU Board of Trustees  
**LEGISLATION AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE MEETING**  
February 27, 2014

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Cheryl Murer at 9:02 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, Wheeler Coleman, Anthony Iosco, Robert Marshall, Marc Strauss, Student Trustee Elliot Echols, BOT Chair John Butler and Chair Murer. Also present were President Douglas Baker, Committee Liaison Kathryn Buettner 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 notification compliance was given by Board General Counsel Jerry Blakemore.

**MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL**

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

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Trustee Strauss and seconded by Trustee Butler to approve the minutes of the November 7, 2013 meeting. The motion was approved.

**CHAIR'S COMMENTS**

Chair Murer welcomed the University Advisory Committee representatives, Deborah Haliczner, President of the Supportive Professional Staff Council, and Rosita Lopez, University Council Representative. Many faculty and staff around campus are concerned and watching the pension changes closely, Dr. Lopez commented.

When I met with Kathy Buettner to set the agenda for this committee meeting, Trustee Murer said, I was delighted to learn that we just completed the first annual report for this division. Marketing and public relations is very difficult to do. The more you think you have done, the less people say they remember; then you do more and someone says, well, I did not see that. It depends on how it touches your life personally. So when we are talking about marketing and public relations, we are talking about a very intense process. Public relations really talk about name identification, who you are. Marketing goes much deeper. This annual report that talks about the roadmap to integrated marketing is very important to the university, especially as we realize how difficult the process is. Kathy identified two things that were surprising to me, but are very critical elements in terms of how we develop our materials. One was that the Chicagoland area is THE most recruited area in the nation by colleges and universities across the U.S. So when we talk about our competition where students are looking, we are not necessarily talking about DePaul or Loyola or SIU, but we are talking about schools all across the country, and they are aided by the ease of technology that makes every university available to them instantly. Puzzling to me was that Kathy also told me Illinois exports more high school seniors to colleges and universities outside of Illinois than stay to attend Illinois colleges and universities, second only to New Jersey. I will not speak to that issue except to say it just means that no matter what we think we have done, we still have much more to do. We had a great effort put forth this past week. President Baker was on the circuit for an

entire day and did an extraordinary job from an early morning radio program to a very prestigious keynote speech at the City Club of Chicago that was extremely well attended, and finished off the evening on WTTW, Chicago Tonight, as the only guest, and that is highly unusual for WTTW. So, this is an example of just one day in the life of marketing and public relations. This was a very exceptional day and we appreciate all of the efforts of the President, his cabinet and faculty.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The Chair 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 the Board of Trustees *Bylaws*. Mr. Blakemore noted that no timely requests had been received to address this Board Committee meeting.

## **UNIVERSITY REPORT**

### **Agenda Item 7.a. – Division of Marketing and Communications Annual Report**

This morning's committee presentations will focus on the university's Marketing and Communications efforts, primarily to recruit and retain students. That is what we are about, recruiting and retaining students, not just in numbers, but from a qualitative perspective in the types of students we recruit that are appropriate to the foci we have here at the university in majors and in emphases.

We will also have a review of the spring legislative session in Springfield. There is always something going on, and Senator Maloney certainly knows well about the activities in Springfield. Before we introduce our special guests, Senator Ed Maloney and Dr. Elaine Johnson, Kathy is going to present the annual report.

As most of the Board members remember, we were formed about four and a half years ago, and at that point in time, when we were formed, we were formed by our previous president because the university really had not devoted any centralized effort to the functions of Marketing and Communications in any kind of meaningful way. We were formed by taking, basically, pieces of other divisions and kind of fashioning them together with what made sense. The thing I am most proud of is that our division, as new as it is, had a history, even when the departments were under other different divisions, of really engaging the students. And so, this year, we actually have been paying much closer attention because of the student career success vision that President Baker has illustrated so well for all of us as to what role these students actually play. They were playing tremendous roles throughout the years. And, think about it, if our purpose is to recruit and retain students as a division, and that is really our foremost purpose, to serve that function for the university, having our students engaged at every level is really important to us. We have 55 student workers now that are interns. Some of them are getting academic credit, some of them are simply able to earn extra money and able to gain valuable experience on equipment. We have graduate assistants, in fact we have a grad assistant in our Web Communications program who basically has designed our entire content management system training program for the entire campus. So these are students that are heavily engaged, they are not simply performing menial tasks. So, I am very, very proud of our engagement and, frankly, the real world skills that we are able to offer our students as a result of serving in our division.

We work very closely with Admissions, enrollment management and Dr. Weldy's Office in Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, and this, as I said, is our primary task and we do try to provide the marketing and the advertising support for the Admissions Department. And everything we do, you will see is focused on a lot of the data that we have learned are important to moving the needle in terms of student recruitment. A lot of it is directed around event management and open house. Another type of issue that is important is the web.

Another area where we spend time is on the print side. For example, The Higher Learning Commission Self-Study Report that was all written by the faculty and the Academic Affairs people, but our people basically brought it to life in terms of the arts and the graphics and the design. We also know that we hosted the IHSA football finals. We did all of the marketing materials for the community as part of that.

Additionally, we have also been working on sub-branding the departments in the past year. And, the direct mail recruitment campaign is a very labor intensive effort, but we put out a million pieces of mail annually for that for Admissions.

We also do radio ads. We go after moms, we go after dads, particularly in the athletic programming on the weekends in the college football areas. We go after high school junior and senior and after transfer students. And we choose radio stations that we feel have demonstrated strong results in the past in terms of actually being able to turn people into a visit, which is so important along the way and in terms of getting them to enroll. Obviously, we are heavy in the Chicagoland area, but based on admissions and our work together in targeting, we are up in Rockford, we are down in the Champaign/Bloomington area and also Peoria.

Online digital is an area where we have really gotten some exposure in the last year or so, it is a growing area by leaps and bounds, and we are, basically, leveraging all of the internet technologies to bring our promotional advertising on behalf of NIU directly to people on their laptop and their mobile devices. We won a gold and a merit award for our March 2013 Transfer Digital Retargeting Campaign and we won a silver award for the Pandora Mobile October Open House advertising.

Outdoor advertising, billboards, you know, obviously, I know that the Chair is a billboard connoisseur, and most of you have probably seen our billboards. Again, we use these as a supplement to our larger marketing efforts. In Chicagoland area, we select our locations by proximity to feeder high schools or community colleges or high traffic areas like the I-294 corridor or near O'Hare. When we are outside of Chicago in the downstate area, we purchase outdoor advertising in high traffic areas, not necessarily on a highway, but close to high school students ... places that high school students and their parents frequent, primarily malls, shopping malls, where there is a lot of traffic, major intersections, things like that where we know that people are coming and going, community colleges, that area. Again, these are extensions, we do not simply rely on a billboard. Billboards are extensions of our marketing efforts in a region.

Let me spend a few minutes talking about what we are doing in-house in terms of on-campus issues. We have, through our staff and Media Services, basically upgraded our campus cable channel, we do have one, to Digital HD. We are now able to feed our university messaging through that channel into our housing. We also have and are putting in a lot more what we call digital displays and signage across the campus. This year, alone, in 2013, we put in 60 flat screen digital displays.

Social media is here to stay. If you look at a survey of high school student interactions on college Facebook pages you find that almost 75 percent of the students enjoy looking at photos, while 50 percent watch a video or use the Facebook page to launch to the university's website, a very, very growing area. We have a university main Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram and Foursquare social media account linked in, all of which are maintained within our division. In addition, Dr. Baker also strongly believes in the importance of social media and created his own Facebook and Twitter accounts, and we do provide some support to him in his social media efforts as well.

Our website is very, very important. 68 percent of the kids look at a college website on a mobile device, 32 percent do not. We spent this past year moving our website into what we call a responsive web design template. Additionally, if you have not downloaded the university's app, you should do so. We do have both for the android and the IOS platform, that is also a partnership out of our shop and ITS, and we have got over 60,000 people.

**Agenda Item 7.b. – Illinois General Assembly Legislative Report**  
**Agenda Item 7.c. – State Budget Update**

Chair Murer introduced two special guests, Senator Ed Maloney and Dr. Elaine Johnson, who formed a new government relations company a year ago. They have a third partner, Don Sevener, who could not be here today. We wanted to introduce them to this committee and to our audience because they serve as our primary liaisons with the Illinois legislature, both the Senate and the House, the Chair said. Senator Maloney came with an extraordinary background as Chair of the Higher Education Committee in the Senate for many years, so he is very understanding of the mechanics of what goes on in Springfield,

but he also is sensitive to the key issues relative to a university. With that, I would like to introduce both Senator Maloney and Dr. Johnson.

We are very happy to be the face for NIU, Dr. Johnson said, it is an exciting opportunity for us. In your packets you have information on our firm, MJS Associates. You will notice that we have representation from across the state. Senator Maloney is from the Chicago area, Don Sevener is from the Springfield area and I am from the southern part of Illinois. We bring different characteristics when we have different connections throughout the state. As the Chair indicated, Senator Maloney was a Chair of the Higher Education Committee, which is how I met him about nine years ago. I was the Vice President for the Illinois Community College Board over academic affairs and workforce development. I spent a lot of time testifying on behalf of the community colleges. Our other partner, Don Sevener was with the Board of Higher Education, over external affairs. He spent a lot of time dealing with the General Assembly and also served as Executive Director of the Board of Higher Education for about two years. We formed a partnership with each other, and as we were changing our careers, we had a perfect opportunity to do something different, and we talked about a philosophy, a mission of a company that we would start. We formed MJS Associates with the understanding that we were only going to serve clients whose purpose we believed in, basically, education, especially higher education. We said we were going to stay focused on education, what we know, what we believe in, and we have stayed true to that mission. We were very pleased when we met Kathy last year and did a few jobs for you when you were in need of some assistance. When the opportunity to apply to be your representatives from NIU came about, we were very happy to do that. We really hope to have a presence on the campus, at this committee meeting or actually wherever Kathy or Dr. Baker says. There is not one day that goes by that we do not have several emails from Kathy, and we want to make sure we are responding because Kathy has been very effective in Springfield. We were able to introduce Dr. Baker when he came to Springfield during the spring session and had an opportunity to talk to him about his philosophy.

Mr. Maloney thanked Dr. Baker for allowing MJS to represent NIU in Springfield. As Elaine mentioned, we had an opportunity to show Dr. Baker around Springfield last spring, and his visit was very effective in terms of talking about NIU's mission. We met with some key people in Springfield who are very much aware of his presence and of his dedication to this university. My background is primarily in high school education. I was a high school teacher, counselor, coach, administrator for many, many years at a suburban high school, Oak Lawn High School, in the southwest suburbs. I worked for the Chicago Park District as an area manager until, one day, I found I was not in the budget for the following year, so I did something that gave a little more job security and ran for the Senate. I was elected to the Senate in 2002 and, two years after I was in, I became Chairman of the Higher Education Committee. Quite frankly, it was not my first preference to go into education, but I quickly learned the value of higher education, not only to the individual, but to the community and to this entire state. I am more convinced than ever of its importance to the State of Illinois. As we explore the processes of the things going on in Springfield, I can tell you that there is no easy issue in Springfield, and that is because of the demographics of this state. For example, the State Senate has 59 members that range in age from their early 30's to 80. They are men, women, Black, White, Hispanic. They represent districts like mine, which was in the southwest side of Chicago and in the close in suburbs, inner city districts, wealthy suburban districts, rural area districts, and everybody brings with them their own opinions about what is important to them. Again, my background was in high school education. The person who sat next to me was a former state's attorney, a district attorney. We have farmers, we have business people, and now you throw in the Republican/Democrat dynamic. It is a very difficult, exhaustive, complex process and can be extremely frustrating. You can have a bill that you think is a slam-dunk and, all of a sudden, viewpoints and values are raised that would never have occurred to you because of the diversity of this state.

There are currently over 9,000 bills that have been introduced in the General Assembly since January, in this session alone. We are currently tracking about 300 bills that are related to higher education. Keep in mind that less than 10 percent of those bills ever become law. Two overriding issues that will impact his legislative session are the primary election on March 18, which is about three weeks away, and the budget, obviously. While we do not anticipate a great deal of seriously contested races in the General Assembly, the numbers between Republicans and Democrats probably will remain approximately the same in each house for the coming year, even after the November election. The budget address is scheduled for March 26. For several years in a row we have been faced with a very difficult budget situation. This is compounded by the fact that the temporary income tax increase is to expire at the end

of the year. The budget is most important. As we all know, higher education has been battered pretty badly in the budget in the last few years. That is a result of a lot of factors going back to the Blagojevich days the attitude was "they can always raise tuition." Now we are to the point where tuition increases impact enrollments and can tax individuals for a long time. So the budget issue and the other issues related to the budget are going to be very important. Higher education has done its share of shared sacrifice the last few years and needs to put on a unified face when it comes to the budget.

#### **Agenda Item 7.d. – Federal Relations Report**

The federal report was provided to the committee in written format.

#### **OTHER MATTERS**

Ms. Buettner noted that on the *NIU Today* page was an article featuring Chair Murer, who had just been appointed to a Clinical and Rehabilitative Medicine Research Program as a peer advisor for the Department of the Army. She was also appointed to another board called the Solving Organ Shortage Program, which is an international effort to end the organ shortages through a science and partnership and policy. These appointments give her the ability to really expand her role as Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Sponsored Research Activity and Technology Transfer. Any time a Board member receives recognition, we try to write about it because we are very proud of all of our Board members and the tremendous amount of community service they do, not only for this university, but in their daily lives as well.

#### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting of the LEA Committee will be Thursday, May 29, at 11:00 a.m.\*

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Murer asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Strauss so moved, seconded by Trustee Boey. The meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon M. Banks-Wilkins  
Recording Secretary

*\*The time was later changed to 12:30 p.m.*

*In compliance with Illinois Open Meetings Act 5 ILCS 120/1, et seq, a verbatim record of all Northern Illinois University Board of Trustees meetings is maintained by the Board Recording Secretary and is available for review upon request. The minutes contained herein represent a true and accurate summary of the Board proceedings.*