

Minutes of the
NIU Board of Trustees
Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee
February 18, 2016

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Chair Marshall in the Board of Trustees Room, 315 Altgeld Hall. Recording Secretary Ms. Wright conducted a roll call. Members present were Trustees Robert Boey, John Butler, Wheeler Coleman, Cheryl Murer, Tim Struthers, Board Chair Marc Strauss, and Committee Chair Robert Marshall. Also present: President Baker, Executive Vice President and Provost Freeman, Faculty Senate President Greg Long, Associate Dean Marc Van Overbeke, Dean Chris McCord, Dean Derryl Block, Chair Sherrill Morris, Chair Jan Strom, Chair Chang Liu, Chair Sarah Marsh, Chair Suzanne Degges-White, Vice Provost Carolinda Douglass, Brian Lance.

VERIFICATION OF QUORUM AND APPROPRIATE NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

General Counsel Blakemore indicated the appropriate notification of the meeting has been provided pursuant to the Illinois Open Meetings Act. Mr. Blakemore also advised that a quorum was present.

MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Marshall asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Trustee Murer moved and Trustee Strauss seconded. The motion was approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Marshall asked for a motion to approve the minutes of November 12, 2015. Trustee Coleman moved and Trustee Strauss seconded. The motion passed.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Marshall informed the committee that NIU has a 99% pass rate for the teacher licensure exam and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Chair Marshall went on to review the agenda and noted eight items for approval and two informational items. He stated that the approval items would include a request to delete the minor in Dance Education; a request to delete an emphasis five, non-government organization in Environmental Studies; a request to delete a specialization in Rehabilitation Counseling within the MA in Communicative Disorders; a request for a new degree program, the MS in Rehabilitation Counseling; a request for a new School of Nursing; a request for a new minor in Business Analytics; a request for new emphasis in Entrepreneurship and Social Responsibility; and a request for a new specialization in Adult Education, Higher Education, and Public Service Law and Management. Chair Marshall added that the recommendations for faculty and supportive professional staff sabbatical leaves for the 2016/2017 year would also be on this meeting's agenda.

Chair Marshall added that they would hear the annual report on outcomes of sabbatical leaves and have a presentation from Professor Jon Briscoe on his sabbatical entitled "Crafting Career Interventions for Mid-career Professionals." Chair Marshall also informed the committee that Chris Parker from the Office of Assessment Services and Brian Lance from the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management would be presenting on assessment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

General Counsel Blakemore indicated that there were no request for public comment.

Chair Marshall recognized the members representing the University Advisory Committee that are in attendance: Professor Gebo; and Faculty Senate President, Professor Long.

Dr. Long offered support related to the curricular recommendations that the board would be voting on and emphasized the rigorous examination that was undertaken before they were brought to this committee.

Dr. Long also emphasized the importance sabbatical leaves play in the development of faculty. Dr. Long professed the invaluable nature of the sabbatical he took and strongly encouraged the Board to maintain their support of faculty and SPS sabbaticals.

Dr. Long then acknowledge the important guiding nature of assessment at the university and thanked the board.

Chair Marshall affirmed Dr. Long's characterization of sabbaticals and stated that he would hope to see more in the future.

UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS/REPORT

Agenda Item #7.a.

Request for a Deletion of Minor in Dance Education

Chair Marshall invited Executive Vice President and Provost Freeman to present the University Report.

Provost Freeman thanked Trustee Marshall and informed the board that indicated that Dr. VanOverbeke would be presenting on the request for deletion of a minor in Dance Education. Provost Freeman stated that the meeting's agenda exemplified the university's on-going remodeling of the curriculum: that the university deletes or adds emphases, minors, or specializations and undertakes reorganizations to make programs more contemporary, more attractive, and more relevant. Provost Freeman added that is on-going transformation of the curriculum goes on without Program Prioritization.

Provost Freeman invited Dr. VanOverbeke to speak about the request relative to dance education.

Associate Dean, Van Overbeke stated that the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education has decided to delete the minor in Dance Education as there are no students currently or recently enrolled and that pursuing a Dance Performance minor in the School of Dance and Theater is a better option for students. Associate Dean VanOverbeke stated that deleting this minor will not affect students negatively in any way and will reflect the current practices of students pursuing this minor in a different college.

Provost Freeman affirmed that the recommendation would be for the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Personnel Committee to endorse this request to delete the minor in Dance Education and ask that the president forward it by means of his report to the Board of Trustees for approval at its next special meeting.

Chair Marshall called for a motion. Trustee Boey motioned, and Trustee Coleman seconded; Chair Marshall asked for discussion on the item.

Trustee Murer endorsed the self-reflective nature of Provost Freeman's mention of the parallels between the on-going curricular transformation exemplified by this meeting's agenda and Program Prioritization.

Trustee Murer asked if there any cost implication, from either a fixed budget perspective or a variable perspective, related to deletion of a minor that has a zero enrollment. Additionally, Trustee Murer asked if there is a difference between deleting a minor with zero-enrollment and a minor or an emphasis where there may have been underutilization. Trustee Murer further clarified by asking if there is a variance relative to underutilization or no utilization as it relates to budgetary purposes.

Provost Freeman answered that when a minor/specialization has low or no enrollment or is no longer contemporary, there are two ways savings can be realized: through allocation of personnel costs and discontinuation capital investment and equipment renewal. Provost Freeman continued by stating these savings can range from immediate to long-term and that whether the savings are realized before the deletion request comes to the Board, is in the process of being realized as the minor is taught out, or is realized afterwards, varies with the specific situation.

Associate Dean Van Overbeke answered that in this particular case there are cost savings in the reduction of investment costs to facilities needed for dance classes. He added that there were additional cost savings as the faculty required for this minor have retired and were not replaced; thus, those resources can be reallocated.

Trustee Murer commented on the importance of this process regardless of if there is a financial saving to keep the university relevant and responsive to student needs.

Trustee Boey asked for clarification that the dance minor exists in the theater program.

Associate Dean VanOverbeke confirmed Trustee Boey's statement.

Trustee Boey asked if there are duplications in other areas.

Provost Freeman addressed the efficiency of the university as a whole and conceded that in such a large organization some duplication is always probable. Provost Freeman stated that the program prioritization process will provide opportunities for identification of overlap and replication as well as assistance in meeting retention and cost efficiency goals.

Associate Dean VanOverbeke stated that this duplication arose out of the changes in K-12 education and pre-service teacher education.

Trustee Boey thanked Provost Freeman and Associate Dean VanOverbeke.

Chair Marshall requested a motion to pass this on to the next full board meeting for approval.

Trustee Murer so moved; Trustee Coleman seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Agenda Item 7.b. Request for Deletion of Emphasis in Non-Governmental Organization

Provost Freeman introduced agenda item 7.b., deletion of the non-governmental organization emphasis within the Environmental Studies bachelor program, and invited Dean McCord to speak.

Dean McCord asserted that the rationales between this item and the previous item are very similar: very few students have sought this emphasis and there is significant overlap between this emphasis and an emphasis area in the new interdisciplinary major, Community Leadership and Civic Engagement. Dean McCord informed the board that this duplication came about due to its recent creation. He indicated that

this was a necessary part of establishing a new program after evaluating which emphases students were seeking.

Provost Freeman affirmed that the recommendation would be that Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Personnel Committee endorse this request to delete the emphasis in non-governmental organization and ask that the president forward it by means of his report to the Board of Trustees for approval at its next special meeting.

Chair Marshall requested a motion to pass this on to the next full board meeting for approval; Trustee Strauss moved, and Trustee Coleman seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously approved.

Agenda Item 7.c. Request to Delete a Specialization in Rehabilitation Counseling within the M.A. in Communicative Disorders

Provost Freeman introduced the next two agenda items as connected: the request for a deletion of a specialization in Rehabilitation Counseling within the Masters in Communicative Disorders and the request for a new degree program. Provost Freeman invited a representative from College of Health and Human Sciences to speak to the next two agenda items.

Dean Block spoke of a need to formally recognize the specialization of Rehabilitation Counseling within the Master of Arts in Communicative Disorders as its own program. Dean Block reminded the board that while there had been significant crossover between these courses and the courses for students interested in pre-audiology, speech language pathology and rehabilitation counseling, this is no longer the case. Dean Block emphasized that Rehabilitation Counseling has potential for growth beyond the 20 students currently enrolled but appears to be stymied in its current position.

Provost Freeman announced that the recommendation would be that Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee endorse the request and ask the president to forward it to the Board for their next special meeting.

Chair Marshall requested a motion to pass this on to the next full board meeting for approval; Trustee Murer so moved, and Trustee Coleman seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Agenda Item 7.d. Request for a new degree program, the M.S. in Rehabilitation Counseling

Provost Freeman re-articulated the relationship between items 7.d. and 7.c. and asked if further discussion would be needed. No one requested further discussion.

Provost Freeman announced that the recommendation would be that Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee endorse the request for a new degree program, a Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling, and ask the president to forward it to the Board for their next special meeting.

Chair Marshall requested a motion to pass this on to the next full board meeting for approval. Trustee Strauss so moved, and Trustee Boey seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously approved.

Agenda Item 7.e. Request for a new School of Nursing

Provost Freeman introduced item 7.e., the request for a new school – a School of Nursing – and invited a representative from the College of Health and Human Sciences to address the board.

Dean Block provided the rationale for the request to relocate the current nursing programs into a School of Nursing that would house the existing graduate and undergraduate nursing programs due to the high enrollment in, and stringent accreditation of, these programs. Dean Block stated that a recent external review supported this recommendation and administrative placement of nursing as its own school is a very common structure in many universities. Dean Block emphasized the opportunity this reorganization would provide for greater visibility and increased attention that could be paid to the pre-majors that enter the university.

Provost Freeman added that others who have looked at the program have indicated that reorganization along these lines would be helpful in terms of providing great service to students, faculty recruitment, and the advertisement of programs to nursing professionals at various stages of their careers.

Provost Freeman affirmed that the recommendation would be that Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee endorse the request for a new School of Nursing and ask the President to forward it to the Board for their next special meeting.

Trustee Boey voiced his enthusiastic support for this motion.

Chair Marshall called for a motion and discussion. Trustee Coleman moved.

Trustee Strauss inquired into the magnitude of the additional costs associated with this reorganization.

Dean Block noted that an additional chair in the college with administrative support is estimated to cost \$177,000 at the beginning and decrease over time due to increased student recruitment and retention that this reorganization will hopefully prompt.

Trustee Strauss inquired into the timeline of the administrative changes.

Dean Block replied that the hope is for this to take effect in the fall of 2016.

Trustee Murer applauded the direction of this endeavor and expressed her hope that during this reorganization the curriculum would be reexamined and the role of new technology further incorporated. Trustee Murer emphasized the importance of equipping students with the skills to address the new challenges facing nurses today. She added that this would be an opportunity for NIU to distinguish itself with a school on the cutting edge of education within a critical discipline.

Trustee Coleman asked about a potential increase in capacity to serve students and if there is a way to absorb the additional cost of the new school without relying on increased revenue.

Provost Freeman answered that there are several ways that this new school would save money. First, through a savings in marketing and recruitment costs as the school will be more visible and students' abilities to move into various programs will be significantly facilitated. Additionally, a dedicated Nursing School should enhance NIU's ability to retain faculty and save on the costs (as well as curricular inconsistency in programming) associated with faculty turnover. Provost Freeman added that this renovation should allow for NIU to be competitive in grant and philanthropic opportunities.

Dean Block added that there are many faculty positions that are difficult to hire for when candidates question why there is not a dedicated school of nursing. Dean Block restated Provost Freeman's hope that this would open up philanthropic opportunities as well. She added that there is not internal capacity to fund this restructure.

Trustee Coleman confirmed that during the current fiscal situation that cost is a concern. Trustee Coleman also asked if this restructure would result in an increased capacity to serve students and if so, what kind of volume change would be the result.

Provost Freeman asked Dean Block to address this question with regard to the external reviewer, Kathleen Long, who was on campus.

Dean Block outlined the current enrollment in nursing programs, approximately 800 students, and the limits that the reviewer saw based on the current faculty and administration levels. She added that the restructure to a dedicated school of nursing would hopefully address some of these faculty and administration limits. Another limitation Dean Block cited is in clinical placement for students where NIU competes with other institutions. She stated that one area in which there is room for growth is in the RN to BSN program due to the number of employers encouraging RN's to pursue BSN degrees. Additionally, Dean Block stated that they are in negotiation with an employer for education of their employees.

Provost Freeman added that within the RN to BS opportunity, most of those students are working adults who are often interested in online and onsite programs which require the type of employer-NIU relationships that Dean Block spoke of earlier. Additionally, most employers believe that having their RN to BSN employees at a school of nursing is more prestigious than having them at a school of nursing and health studies and so this is an important opportunity for NIU to make the most efficient use of the resources we have, grow in an area without the infrastructure capacity issues, and do it in an efficient way so to make money on increasing enrollment and serving the students effectively.

Trustee Struthers asked if there were any economic models that were put together when this recommendation was considered such as one that looked at the past and what the future might look like.

Provost Freeman confirmed that such a model was looked at and added that a major financial area of opportunity would be an increased potential to retain pre-health studies majors and invited Dean Block to expand.

Dean Block stated that some of NIU's pre-nursing majors are not getting the kind of attention that they need. She added that one of a number of steps in the two year restructuring will be an increase in advising into a specific curriculum to better serve these students and retain them.

Trustee Struthers stated that he strongly supports this move but thinks that looking at this model and seeing these variables quantified would help move this decision along.

Provost Freeman added that this is the first step in a larger reorganization, and the reason it's being presented piecemeal is due to the IBHE approvals necessary. She added that program prioritization outcomes will also be coming out in the middle of the proposed overall vision for reorganization, and those will be taken into account in terms of how resources are reallocated. Provost Freeman clarified that they would be happy to share the overall vision and consultant reports with the Board.

Trustee Struthers asked how the capacity limits of the facilities will affect proposed school of nursing's ability to attract and retain students in relatively small quarters.

Dean Block responded that the teaching facilities and simulation labs are completely stuffed and a new building or an addition to that building would be very welcomed.

Trustee Struthers thanked Dean Block and requested that information to be included within a report.

Trustee Murer expressed concern over discussion of new buildings while recognizing the importance of looking forward strategically. With regard to facility space, Trustee Murer inquired into the potential to

optimize the utilization of the Hoffman Estates and Naperville as part of this program. She further inquired what financial impact increased use of those facilities would have.

Dean Block summarized their last analysis which revealed that while off-site classes at these sites and employer sites would be appropriate – they could not solve the problems they are having with the nursing program.

Chair Strom added that within the industry nursing courses and programs are increasingly being offered on-line at the request, to some degree, of students. NIU does not do on-line education at the undergraduate level for pre-licensure students because of the immense socialization that they need for the role. Chair Strom stressed the importance of the simulation lab being within the building so that faculty, students, and staff can address the students learning in an integrated fashion. Chair Strom described the experience of prospective nursing students who visit the simulation lab and find certain things missing in comparison to other schools labs.

Trustee Murer encouraged open-mindedness in the search for solutions and cited Lewis University's respected College of Nursing which has its simulation lab at its Oakbrook facility in order to expand enrollment in Nursing. Trustee Murer restated her support for the direction of this move.

Trustee Coleman emphasized that he believes that our nursing program could be a growth and revenue generation area for NIU and for those reasons he supports a new structure and having a chair. He stated that he does not support additional costs being associated with this plan and that there needs to be found a way to fund this without adding to existing expenses. Trustee Coleman clarified that if the board is voting for the approval of this new structure by adding another \$177,000 to the overhead of the university, then he is opposed to it. Conversely, Trustee Coleman stated that if the vote includes a reallocation of funds to support the proposed restructuring, then he is in favor. He recommended that if the Board moves forward with this, then they should find a way to reallocate funds to support this versus adding to the university's overhead.

Trustee Boey cited his familiarity with and connection to the nursing program. He further stated that in recent years NIU has had to turn away more applicants than they can admit because of spatial constraints. He added that, in terms of future earnings, the increase costs associated with restructuring would be paid for by increased enrollment or could be paid for by raising tuition costs. Trustee Boey added that NIU's reputation is positively impacted by the nursing program and this restructuring is very necessary. Trustee Boey added his full support for the program.

Chair Marshall added his full support to the "work in progress" and pledged continued reports to the board.

Chair Marshall called for a vote to recommend the motion to the full board.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Trustee Coleman asked to put in a request that this restructuring would be made expense neutral and asked if this was already part of the recommendations or if a separate motion would be needed.

General Counsel Blakemore advised that the current recommendation does not include an expense neutral provision and that this is more of an operation issue related to the delegation provided the president. General Counsel Blakemore elaborated on this and advised the board that they can provide direction and consensus in this matter, but the recommendation does not include that and a second vote would be required if the board wishes to provide a condition on this.

Trustee Struthers reiterated that this is a vote to pass it on to the full board.

Provost Freeman reminded the board that the vote of the full board is scheduled for this afternoon due to the constraints on IBHE approval deadlines.

Agenda Item 7.f. Request for a new minor in Business Analytics and a new emphasis in Entrepreneurship and Social Responsibility

Provost Freeman introduced Item 7f from the College of Business: the request for a new minor and a new emphasis. Provost Freeman introduced Chair Chang Liu and Chair Sarah Marsh who would address a minor in Business Analytics in the Department of Operations Management and Information Systems, and an emphasis in Entrepreneurship and Social Responsibility within the Bachelors in Management within the Department of Business respectively.

Chair Liu cited market demand as the first reason for the Business Analytics minor which has been suggested by the Advisory Council for three years running. Additionally, Chair Liu added that a lot of students request this minor and because it's AACSB – their accreditation body requires that they have business analytics in their curriculum.

Trustee Struthers added that a recent article in *Crain's Business* two weeks ago cited a huge demand for this in the city of Chicago as the number two hub in the country for business analytics. Trustee Struthers applauded this direction.

Chair Marsh addressed the emphasis in Entrepreneurship and Social Responsibility as the next step in a long development of entrepreneurship in the College of Business. Chair Marshall referenced the Strategic Planning Council in the College of Business which identified entrepreneurship as an area for expansion, because there's high interest from prospective students in gaining these skills, and there's high interest from employers in having students who have the ability to think and act entrepreneurially. After the development of minors, Chair Marsh explained that this is the next step.

Provost Freeman stated that there are two elements to this request; the minor in Business Analytics and the emphasis in Entrepreneurship and Social Responsibility; the university recommendation is that the committee endorse the request and ask the president to forward it by means of the president's report to the full board.

Chair Marshall requested a motion to forward this to the full board. Trustee Strauss so moved, and Trustee Boey seconded; the motion was unanimously approved.

Trustee Murer added that these two areas are timely, responsive to the marketplace, and will be a strong enhancement to the College of Business.

Trustee Butler asked if, as minors are typically open to any student at the university regardless of their major, this minor would also be open to any student at the University.

Chair Liu confirmed Trustee Butler's evaluation that this minor would be available to any student.

Trustee Butler asked if Liu could speak to how his minor might lead to pairings with other majors outside of the College of Business.

Chair Liu suggested that pairing for students from the Department of Statistics and some students from the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology could be fruitful.

Agenda Item 7.g. Request for new specializations in Adult Education, Higher Education, and Public Service and Law Management

Provost Freeman introduced Item 7g, a request for two new specializations in adult education and higher education, within the M.S.Ed. in Adult and Higher Education. She also requested a new specialization in Public Service and Law within the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program.

Chair Degges-White introduced herself as the chair of Counseling, Adult and Higher Education in attendance to speak to the request for the addition of two specializations in the Adult and Higher Education program. Chair Degges-White reviewed the substantial changes in curriculum structure that this program has undergone in the last 10-12 years including a complete turnover in faculty. She added that these proposed specializations would result in an increase in academic rigor and marketability of students' degrees post-graduation which is part of their recruitment efforts and retention efforts.

Dean McCord noted that the proposal within the MPA program is to codify an existing relationship for students to do dual enrollment in the MPA and a JD program; as there hasn't been sort of a track within the MPA program that focused in that area, this would align their curriculums and require no new resources.

Provost Freeman stated that the recommendation is that the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee endorse this request which includes a specialization in adult education, a specialization in higher education, and a specialization in public service law and management, and ask the president to forward the request by means of his report to the Board of Trustees for approval at its special meeting.

Chair Marshall called for a motion; Trustee Strauss so moved, and Trustee Butler seconded. The motion was unanimously approved

Agenda Item 7.h. Annual Report on Outcomes of Sabbatical Leaves

Provost Freeman introduced a "trio of items" related to sabbatical leaves, their outcomes, and the approval of proposed sabbaticals for the coming year. Provost Freeman reminded the board this is discussed annually and during last year's discussion, she had described sabbaticals as a privilege and was complimented by Trustee Murer on the use of that word. Provost Freeman expressed her desire to reiterate and clarify that sabbaticals are a privilege for faculty, and they are also a privilege for the institution; it is a privilege for NIU to be able to use such a cost effective mechanism to provide faculty with an opportunity to stay current in their disciplines and to have time to think, be creative, and to bring that energy to curricular innovation, research, scholarship, and artistry.

Provost Freeman spoke to the accountability that faculty feel for being offered this privilege by citing the most recent sabbatical outcomes report: of the 33 faculty who took sabbatical leaves, 100 percent participated in the survey to provide outcome reports.

Provost Freeman outlined the scholarly work conducted during those sabbaticals: included 214 publications – 110 journal articles, 60 books or book chapters, 6 conference proceedings, 2 sheet music and music recordings, 29 contributions to the public media, and 203 presentations at international, national, and regional conferences. Provost Freeman described the result of the sabbatical activity including 39 applications for grants and projects that created 27 initiatives funded in excess of \$8.2 million. Provost Freeman added that those 33 faculty members revised or created 37 graduate and undergraduate courses benefiting more than 850 students annually.

Provost Freeman spoke to the value of sabbatical leave as a way of encouraging innovation during a time at the university when hiring is very limited. She continued by stating her feelings that a program of

regular sabbatical leaves is an absolute necessity in order to allow faculty the time to produce major scholarship and artistry as well as reshape courses and innovate curriculum.

Trustee Murer commented that during in these times of financial strategizing – cost benefit analysis is at the forefront. Trustee Murer continued by highlighting the importance of sabbatical leaves for faculty, NIU continues to contribute to faculty retention during a time of limited raises. She added that NIU must continue to be very cognizant of the institutions role as a public research institution, and asked the Faculty Senate president, the provost, the chairs of departments, and deans to help the faculty mold their research and artistry in as best and narrow a way possible to turn those things into papers, presentations, books, research projects and grants. Trustee Murer emphasized that the scholarly demeanor of the institution is of utmost importance.

Agenda Item 7.i. Presentation on Sabbatical Leave

Provost Freeman introduced John Briscoe from the Department of Management who would be presenting “Crafting Career Interventions for Mid-Career Professionals”.

Presenter Briscoe thanked the Board of Trustees and expressed his feelings that the university is a good steward of the funds which in turn helps faculty focus all of their resources on teaching, research and the students.

Professor Briscoe followed with his sabbatical presentation.

Trustee Butler inquired into the methodology of Dr. Briscoe’s research.

Professor Briscoe answered that he primarily used before and after surveys of key variables.

Trustee Butler asked about a narrative “future self” assignment that Professor Briscoe mentioned during the presentation.

Professor Briscoe confirmed that a narrative assignment was used and made a connection between student achievement and career focus which is encouraged by the narrative assignment.

Trustee Butler asked if Professor Briscoe could speak to his areas of expertise.

Professor Briscoe answered that is areas of expertise lie within careers, self-directed careers, career development, and cross-cultural differences in careers and leadership.

Board Members thanked Professor Briscoe for his presentation.

Agenda Item 7.j. Recommendations for Faculty and Supportive Professional Staff Sabbatical Leaves for 2016-2017

Provost Freeman introduced item 7j, an action item on the recommendation for faculty and supportive professional staff sabbatical leaves for the 2016-2017 year. Provost Freeman briefly reviewed the process by which this recommendation comes to the board and stated that there are 49 sabbatical slots available this year.

Provost Freeman affirmed that the recommendation from the university is to endorse the request for sabbaticals as presented and to ask the president to forward it by virtue of his report to the full Board of Trustees.

Trustee Coleman called for a motion. Trustee Murer moved, and Trustee Butler seconded. Trustee Coleman called for discussion from the trustees.

Trustee Strauss expressed concern over budget issues stemming from the Illinois budget impasse and costs associated with sabbatical leaves. He asked whether a decision must be made at the current time with regard to the sabbatical requests for spring of 2017. Trustee Strauss qualified these concerns by expressing his belief in the benefit of sabbatical leave and his intention to support it today.

Provost Freeman stated that there is almost always an implied contingency in the granting of sabbaticals which can be seen enacted at local levels where unexpected life events or enrollment changes in a department have required chairs or faculty to defer granted sabbaticals. Provost Freeman added that planning occurs at the level of the individual who has been granted the sabbatical and at the level of the institution who are required to develop very low or zero cost provisions for covering instructional responsibilities, graduate student advising, etc. Provost Freeman then requested that Carolinda Douglass and Greg Long address the bylaws and governance issues related to sabbaticals as they are knowledgeable on this point and have a computer at their disposal. Provost Freeman specified that she was asking, from the standpoint of our governance documents, is it more in alignment to grant with a contingency than to try to consider spring sabbaticals separately?

Vice Provost Douglass stated that she did not know the exact wording of the governance documents; however, she believes that it would be highly unusual to consider the Fall and Spring separately and that she would advise granting the proposals with a contingency that depends on funding.

Faculty Senate President Long added that due to the nature of planning sabbaticals it would be preferable to approve the Fall and Spring semesters together; a delay in making the decision could create difficulties for faculty in planning sabbaticals.

Trustee Strauss asked if any challenges would be presented if a contingency was attached to the proposal with regard to the availability of funding.

Provost Freeman stated that everyone at the university is very aware of the unprecedented nature of the budget impasse in Illinois and agreed with Professor Long's assessment on delaying spring approvals.

Trustee Strauss stated that he wanted to be clear that he was not signaling extreme financial peril. However, in recognition of the current financial situation, Trustee Strauss made a motion to amend the current recommendation to impose the condition that there be sufficient funds available to be able to finance the sabbatical leaves.

Trustee Coleman called for a second, and Trustee Butler seconded the motion.

General Counsel Blakemore advised that he believed the amendment to be proper and suggested that the board use the language that is typically used in hiring which is "subject to the availability of funds" and then the university can make that determination consistent with what is typically done.

Trustee Strauss amended the motion to add the condition that there be sufficient funds available to finance the sabbatical leaves, and Trustee Butler seconded the motion.

Trustee Struthers asked Provost Freeman if she could provide some general context with regard to the added expense of sabbaticals.

Provost Freeman answered that the cost will vary by unit and that many departments do not use additional instructional staff that require additional funds. Provost Freeman described the gentleman's agreement present in most departments in which faculty take turns teaching extra courses as they

colleagues take their sabbaticals. She added that at times, a few people have such a unique expertise that requires an instructor or a professor of practice coming in to cover for a semester – which are relatively small expenses when they do happen. Moreover, Provost Freeman added, individuals travel is paid through the funding that faculty receive externally.

Trustee Struthers commented that there has been a decrease in how many sabbatical leaves are granted each year and further cuts may be appropriate in the future to reflect current budget cuts that are anticipated to come from the state of Illinois.

Trustee Murer inquired after the 3-4 individuals who will have two semesters rather than one for their sabbatical and how this came about.

Provost Freeman replied that taking a longer duration during a sabbatical is always an option but the pay is always the same. She stated that the activity as defined by the faculty member substantiates the duration of the sabbatical: i.e. a data gathering project in a foreign country may not generate the same quality of results in a single semester than could be produced by two semesters and so the project generally determines the length while taking into consideration the department's needs.

Vice Provost Douglass stated that the proposed amendment would be consistent with the bylaws, particularly 8.3.2, which states that there will be determination of sufficient resources whether or not they're available to accommodate the absence of the faculty member.

Chair Marshall asked to hear the amendment to amend the motion to reflect that the sabbatical leaves to be approved would be subject to the availability of funds as determined by the administration in the normal course.

The amendment passed.

Trustee Marshall asked to hear the main motion for the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Personnel Committee to forward the recommendations for sabbatical to the president so that he could forward them through the president's report to the full board for approval at their next special meeting.

The motion with amendment passed.

Agenda Item 8.a. Assessment of Student Learning at NIU

Provost Freeman introduced the final (informational) item, 8.a., a presentation on the assessment of student learning at NIU by Associate Vice Provost Parker and Assistant to the VP for SAEM Lance.

Associate Vice Provost Parker and Assistant to the VP for SAEM Lance presented on Assessment of Student Learning at NIU.

Trustee Strauss inquired about the desired outcomes for this assessment. As an example, he inquired into Standard Learning Outcomes (SLO's) and what those look like.

Associate Vice Provost Parker answered that each degree program has student learning outcomes which generally relate to knowledge, skills, or abilities that one expects students to be able to demonstrate as a result of their experience in a class and through a curriculum.

Trustee Strauss asked for clarification that SLO's may mean the acquisition of a set of skills as well as specific knowledge.

Associate Vice Provost Parker confirmed this.

Trustee Strauss asked how desired SLO's are established.

Associate Vice Provost Parker replied that they're established at the local level by faculty within an area in conjunction with the standards that are appropriate for their field that may come from an accrediting body (when appropriate).

Trustee Strauss inquired if there is a way to test whether NIU's outcomes compare favorably with outcomes at other places in the absence of an accrediting body.

Associate Vice Provost Parker confirmed that research is done on peer and aspirational institutions for comparison during the collaborative process of establishing SLO's.

Trustee Strauss spoke to his collegiate experience and the value that he sees in the skills he learned during that time. Trustee Strauss address the complexity of defining the end result of an education with regard to citizenship, scholarship, and life-long learning.

Associate Vice Provost Parker confirmed that the trends within the field of assessment are in line with Trustee Strauss's thoughts on the value of skills; assessment is moving away from the content areas and focusing more on transferrable skills and posited the baccalaureate student learning outcomes as an example of this.

Trustee Strauss requested that this topic be revisited at a later date.

Chair Marshall asked Associate Vice Provost Parker to provide the board with copies of the presentation and thanked him for coming.

OTHER MATTERS

No other matters were discussed.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Personnel Committee will be May 19, 2016.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Marshall asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Strauss moved and Trustee Murer seconded. The motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 12:02.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Wright
Recording Secretary

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.