

Minutes of the
NIU Board of Trustees
Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee
August 17, 2017

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 10:12 a.m. by Chair Wasowicz in the Board of Trustees Room, 315 Altgeld Hall. Recording Secretary Rippberger conducted a roll call. Members present were Trustees Robert Boey, John Butler, Veronica Herrero, Giuseppe LaGioia, and Committee Chair Eric Wasowicz. Also present were Acting President Lisa Freeman, Chief of Staff and Board Liaison Matt Streb, General Counsel and Board Parliamentarian Greg Brady, Acting Executive Vice President and Provost Chris McCord, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing Communications Sol Jensen, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs Anne Birberick, Hope Schmelzle, and Mikayla Voight.

VERIFICATION OF QUORUM AND APPROPRIATE NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

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

MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL

Committee Chair Wasowicz asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Trustee Boey moved and Trustee Herrero seconded. The motion passed.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Committee Chair Wasowicz asked for a motion to approve the minutes of May 18, 2017. Trustee Herrero moved and Trustee LaGioia seconded. The motion passed.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Wasowicz welcomed the Board and meeting attendees. He stated that there was one approval item from the Division of Athletics. The authorization to retain executive search firms to support selected searches for the division of Athletics. He continued that there were three informational items including a presentation on recruiting and retention activities at NIU, the 2016-2017 faculty emeritus recognition, and a presentation from two student athletes sharing their stories of student athletic and academic success.

PUBLIC COMMENT

General Counsel Brady indicated that there were no requests for public comment.

Chair Wasowicz recognized the representative of the University Advisory Committee in attendance, Professor Alex Gelman.

Professor Gelman encouraged the Board and all those present to reward faculty for the merit of their accomplishments and for cost of living. He continued that it is important for employee morale and also to reward faculty for their understanding during the university's budget situation.

Chair Wasowicz also recognized Faculty Senate President Linda Saborio.

Professor Saborio agreed with Professor Gelman and stated that the best way to boost morale for faculty and staff is with raises.

Chair Wasowicz thanked them.

UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS/REPORT

Chair Wasowicz asked Acting Executive President and Provost McCord to present the university report.

Agenda Item 7.a.

Authorization to Retain Executive Search Firms to Support

Acting Executive Vice President and Provost thanked Chair Wasowicz. Dr. McCord summarized the item for the Board. Pursuant to the provision of the public act 970814 and the Northern Illinois policy on the use of external search firms approved by the Board of Trustees and based on the previous approval at the December 10, 2015 board meeting of such approach, it is recommended that the board authorize the president to retain such executive search firms as need to assist in the search for head coaches in the division of Athletics. The critical role and functions that the head coach fulfill at the university makes these a justifiable need to use search firms for such positions. Moreover, the timeliness with which such searches must be conducted, may mean that such searches need to be authorized on very short notice and need to be authorized prior to the availability of a board meeting.

It is recommended that the president be authorized to select executive search firms to support selected searches for head coaches in the division of Athletics. It is further recommended that the president report plans to retain such search firms to the board as soon as may be practicable and periodically report back to the board regarding the selection and status of such searches. The university recommends that the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee endorse this request and ask that the president forward it by means of the president's report to the Board of Trustees for its approval at its September 14, 2017 meeting.

Chair Wasowicz asked for a motion to approve the recommendation. Trustee Boey moved, Trustee LaGioia seconded and the Committee discussed.

Trustee Butler asked how long this authority was being granted for. Dr. McCord responded that the recommendation would be for this cycle, this year, and would expire with the fiscal year. It could be reapproved then as necessary next year.

Parliamentarian Brady said that it may be prudent to amend the motion in order to have a clear record of that. Trustee Boey moved to amend the motion that the approval for the fiscal year. Trustee Butler seconded the motion.

Parliamentarian Brady clarified that the motion to amend is to reflect that this approval is only valid until the end of the fiscal year 2018.

Chair Wasowicz asked for discussion on this amendment. There was no discussion and he called the question.

The motion passed.

Chair Wasowicz asked for further discussion on the original motion. Seeing none, he called the question.

The motion passed.

Agenda Item 8.a.

Recruitment and Retention Presentation

Acting Executive Vice President and Provost McCord continued to the first information item, a presentation on recruitment and retention activities. The presentation was made by Acting Executive Vice President and Provost McCord, Vice President Jensen, and Vice Provost Birberick.

They presented the efforts to both recruit and retain students through graduation. A request was made to have an opportunity to present graduation and completion to the Board at a future date.

Acting Executive Vice President and Provost McCord stated that enrollment numbers are prone to change up until the last minute. As the 10-day enrollment numbers were not available, the presentation focused on current trends for student populations. For both freshman and transfer students the trend is that enrollment remains flat, which is better than down as it has been in the past. Master's students are trending down while both doctorate and law students are remaining flat. Second, undergraduate retention rates have been improving steadily year over year. It was noted that although there is potential for a slight increase in enrollment of undergraduates, the classes that have graduated are larger, so it does not compensate for a smaller overall base.

Acting Executive Vice President and Provost McCord shared graphs regarding trends for recruiting cycles, as well as enrollment for students including freshmen and transfer students. He also noted the re-enrollment trend including the importance of the re-enrollment of students from freshman to sophomore year. First year retention is critical to helping students achieve graduation. Transfer student reenrollment rates are consistently higher. By the time a student has made it to NIU as a transfer student, they have already made it through the instability and adjustment to college.

Trustee Herrero asked what percentage of the current student population are transfer students? Vice Provost Birberick said that transfer students make up about 47% of the student population.

Acting Executive Vice President and Provost McCord said that graduate student enrollment has been declining. Part of this trend is due to international enrollment being down nationally. Another part is related to the complicated cyclical, contra-cyclical phenomena with the graduate market and the job market. When the job market is very, very bad students may avoid graduate school, a bit bad they seek graduate school as a way to get a credential and engage themselves. When it's robust they may opt for employment rather than graduate school. He stated that he had been showing student headcount, however, it is not the only consideration for the enrollment profile. Student credit hour production is also an important indicator. Students consume instructional resources not by being at NIU but by signing up for classes at NIU. The more classes they sign up for, the more space they occupy, the more seats we need to ensure we have for them, the more facilities we need to make sure we have. Student credit hour production is strongly correlated with headcount.

Trustee Boey clarified from the presentation that total enrollment for the last three years is down. Dr. McCord replied that yes, that was correct. Trustee Boey asked about the plan to get it back up. Dr. McCord stated that enrolling and retaining students is part of that plan, and Vice President Jensen and Vice Provost Birberick will speak to that.

Chair Wasowicz asked about high school graduate numbers being down in the State of Illinois. Dr. McCord stated that Vice President Jensen would speak to that.

Vice President Jensen stated that he would go through the state demographics, as well as the marketing and advertising plans for the university. Regarding demographics, he confirmed that the State of Illinois is the number one exporter of high school students and that is compounded by the decline in the number of students graduating high school. He shared the demographics in terms of race and ethnicity, and

highlighted the need to have strategies in place for recruiting diverse students. NIU should provide the greatest access and affordability to students within our service region.

Vice President Jensen continued with his portion of the presentation and covered his unit's goals, as well as the targeted metrics that will be utilized in measuring these goals. The first goal is increasing the market share of Illinois students. Second, increase out of state enrollment and international enrollment. He noted the need to create online enrollment dashboard to increase visibility of this information to the board as well as leadership on campus and within his division. A priority for this year is meeting with every department chair and establishing goals for every academic department related to enrollment with the support of the EMMC division. Recruitment initiatives and strategies were discussed for all demographics of students that attend NIU. Some of the highlights included the consolidation of the customer relationship management (CRM) through Hobson's Connect; ensuring communications through electronic and hard mail media are distributed appropriately by audience type while working closely with high school counselors and community college advisors; survey to admitted students to determine likelihood of enrollment or to those that do not enroll to determine why; coordinating faculty, staff, student, and alumni recruitment efforts; evaluating tuition models for non-resident students; providing brand awareness through marketing and athletics; purchasing additional names from the ACT/College Board; evaluating geographic areas to infiltrate for marketing; increasing online courses and program offerings; surveys to students that leave in good academic standing; increased graduate school marketing; and implementing a diverse marketing plan.

Vice President Jensen provided an overview of the NIU website and changes that were made. He highlighted the excellent skills and expertise of the web communications team. The page is visual, with easy access for students to apply or get additional information about the university. The page includes social media links and is interactive.

Trustee Barsema asked Vice President Jensen what the two or three biggest areas of opportunity, right now, for us to get better and significantly increase enrollment?

Vice President Jensen noted that communications planning and personalizing the message is something that can be done and have a significant impact. For example, many different academic departments bring students on campus. Providing consistency in the type of visit that students are having is a priority. The Division of Enrollment can provide brochures, t-shirts, etc. so that students are getting similar visits. Increasing out of state enrollment is another way to impact enrollment.

Trustee Herrero asked, after hearing opportunities and strengths from earlier presentations, how are the university strengths being aligned with marketing efforts?

Vice President Jensen replied that confirms the need for increasing promotion, advertising, marketing promotion of programs that have the most potential to grow enrollment quickly and partner with those programs.

Trustee Butler noted the need to think innovatively about the students we serve, and about market shifts around admission standards, so that NIU is not behind other institutions in considering ways to increase enrollment. He asked Vice President Jensen if nontraditional ways of evaluating applications are being considered.

Vice President Jensen stated that this is one of the things he has discussed with President Freeman. Any changes to admission standards would have to go through the appropriate academic process.

Board Chair Coleman stated that there are campuses providing automatic admission for individuals in the top 10% of their class. He was unsure of the effectiveness, but utilized it as an example of looking at admissions creatively.

President Freeman made it clear that NIU is extremely proud of recognizing talent and potential and meeting students where they are in order to help them to succeed. In an effort to be creative and to be inclusive of as many students as possible, decisions need to be made being data informed. She clarified that this is not about changing admissions standards, as students admitted need to be able to succeed in higher education. The question is how can the university remove barriers to help students have an easy path to enrollment and the opportunity to have a transformative education experience and graduate. This is a good conversation to engage shared governance in.

Trustee Struthers commented that the idea of resources is important, shifting resources during this period. Pricing structures are important, so having more net revenue in the short term until we can recover and then be able to reevaluate pricing, product, place, and promotion are important factors. He asked about legacy strategies and whether that was part of the plan.

Vice President Jensen stated that he met with Reggie Bustinza, Executive Director of the Alumni Association and Liz McKee, Director of Alumni Volunteer Services. He has also met with Vice President Squires regarding this topic of legacy. There is a plan in progress for alumni to begin to personally reach out to high school students, which will be a starting point.

Trustee Barsema asked how the Board of Trustees can help those working on enrollment and retention. He would like to see the Board be a part of the solution.

Chair Wasowicz asked to continue to the next presentation.

Vice Provost Birberick thanked the board for an opportunity to update them on ongoing retention initiatives. She summarized the direction of the Program Prioritization process and the recommendation to have complex conversations, defined as conversations across multiple units. One of the conversations related to retention was focused on tutoring and student support services. Vice Provost Birberick shared initiatives associated with these conversations. Another one of those conversations was focused on advising. The advising conversations have included support for students across diversity groups and the team is preparing to send a recommendation to the provost and president very soon. The final Program Prioritization conversation that has been ongoing is regarding retention and reorganization. She explained that this meant closing one office to redeploy those resources in a different way. That has been completed.

Vice Provost Birberick also discussed the opportunity to review the structure of the organizations that currently report to her. She is working with Acting Executive Vice President and Provost McCord on ensuring that the current structure works to advance the NIU mission and retain students. Additional opportunity with dual credit programs, dual programs, community college agreements, relationships in the Chicagoland area, and developing pipelines are all in progress or being considered. She also noted that NIU is a finalist in a national grant opportunity called the Transfer Pathways Design Challenge. It is sponsored by Dell, and has 10 finalists. NIU is the only school in the Midwest that is a finalist.

Chair Wasowicz open the floor for questions.

Trustee Herrero confirmed Vice Provost Birberick's comments regarding NIU being known for its retention initiatives. She continued that she has witnessed the commitment to talking within the state about retention as well as closing the attainment gap.

President Freeman added that retention efforts are not only a collaboration between Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Marketing and Communications, but the P20 network that was convened by Outreach Engagement and Regional Development. Their efforts to engage families where English is not their first language, were also foundational to creating some of those initiatives.

Acting Executive Vice President and Provost McCord noted that everything done as an institution contributes to retention and recruiting.

Agenda Item 8.b.

2016-2017 Faculty Emeritus Recognition

Chris McCord continued to the recognition of our faculty that have retired in good standing. It is an academic tradition that upon retirement faculty retain their professorial title emeritus. NIU has a process for this. Essentially faculty who retire in good standing, do not have any parking tickets unpaid or library books they have not returned, is accorded emeritus status. This list is all of those faculty that have achieved this status at the end of this past year.

Agenda Item 8.c.

Student Athletic Academic Success

Chair Wasowicz introduced the presentation by students that have had student athletic and academic success. Here invited Ms. Hope Schmelzle, NIU Track, to address the Board.

Ms. Schmelzle noted that she was a recent graduate of Northern Illinois University and continued to share her experience as a student and as an athlete. During the presentation she noted several individuals that helped her along her journey, as well as providing a sense of belonging on campus. These individuals included her coach, Adrian Myers; Kiera Miller, Athletics; Melissa Dawson, SSASS; Monique Bernoudy, formerly Athletics; coach Connie Teaberry; Professor Amanda Durik, Department of Psychology; Professor Phil Krasula; and all of her other professors that helped her achieve her goal of a B.S. in Psychology from NIU. She concluded by saying "NIU allowed me to find myself by offering unconditional support and guidance as I discovered my true potential and the decision to transfer will forever be one of the best decisions of my life. Thank you guys."

Chair Wasowicz noted that Ms. Schmelzle ran in the World Championships was the only collegian in the United States to make it to the finals of that meet. Congratulations. Please share why you did not run in the final.

Ms. Schmelzle responded that she had a prior engagement – her wedding.

Chair Wasowicz asked whether or not the rumor he heard that she was training for the Olympics was true.

Ms. Schmelzle said that is the goal. She has three years to train.

Chief of Staff Streb pointed out that Ms. Schmelzle was not all the first All-American, but also our first track Academic All-American. He stated how proud he was of her.

Chair Wasowicz thanked Ms. Schmelzle and congratulated Coach Myer on the excellent job they are doing. He then introduced Ms. Mikayla Voight, NIU Women's Basketball.

Ms. Voigt shared her experience of being a recruit and the feeling that NIU is the right place for her. She stated that she shares her story with recruits and how she knew that NIU felt right. She stated "my teammates and coaches have become like my second family. My professors have always been willing to go the extra mile to help me accommodate my schedule and demands as an athlete as well as offer any additional help outside of the classroom so that I can maximize my academic potential." The other draw she had to NIU were the beautiful facilities and campus. Finally, as someone that wanted to play both NCAA Division 1 basketball and pursue a nursing degree, she had been discouraged by other university

coaches that did not want to accept her unless she picked a different major. NIU provided her the opportunity to follow her dream of playing basketball and pursuing nursing.

Ms. Voigt continued to describe the rigorous academics combined with the nursing scheduling, as being challenging with her basketball commitment. She noted the support of her coach, Lisa Carlson, as well as her teammates and the assistant coaches. Coach Carlson has been willing to schedule practices around her clinical schedule. The nursing instructors have also been willing to work with her to ensure she could be in the MAC championship and also be able to take exams. Ms. Voigt stated, "I forever grateful to NIU and I'm excited to see what my future holds in the classroom and on the court. Thank you and as always, Go Huskies!"

Chair Wasowicz asked Vice President Jensen to get photos of these students up on the website.

OTHER MATTERS

No other matters were discussed.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Personnel Committee will be November 16, 2017.

ADJOURNMENT

Committee Chair Wasowicz asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Herrero moved and Trustee LaGioia seconded. The motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vicky Rippberger/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.