

Minutes of the  
**NIU Board of Trustees**  
**Legislative Affairs, Research and Innovation**  
February 15, 2018

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. by Chair Butler in the Board of Trustees Room, 315 Altgeld Hall. Recording Secretary Cathy Cradduck conducted a roll call. Members present were Trustees Dennis Barsema, Wheeler Coleman, Giuseppe LaGioia, Timothy Struthers, Eric Wasowicz, and Chair John Butler. Trustee Robert Boey was not present. Also present were Acting President Dr. Lisa Freeman, Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships, Gerald Blazey, Acting Vice President and General Counsel, and Board Parliamentarian, Gregory Brady, and UAC Representatives Kendall Thu and Cathleen Doederlein.

**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**

Chair Butler asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Trustee Wheeler Coleman so moved and Trustee LaGioia seconded. The motion was approved.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Butler asked for a motion to approve the minutes of November 16, 2017. Trustee Eric Wasowicz so moved and Trustee Wheeler Coleman seconded. The motion passed.

**CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chair Butler commented: Twenty-six years ago I came to my first Board of Trustees meeting as the Student Regent (at the time because it was called the Board of Regents), and it was an exciting time for me. I'm not sure this will be as exciting for some of you who are new to this meeting, but I hope that in the process of being part of this Committee session, you derive an appreciation for the hard work of the leadership of the University and the Board of Trustees. We're going to listen intently to what's being said to us today and throughout the day, and we're going to be taking that in. We do not typically comment very much about those public comments. We may; we may ask questions, and we may not. That is not an indication of our level of interest and concern for the issues that are brought before us. We do a lot of processing. We do a lot of consulting with the leadership of the institution after we hear from people who make public comment. So, all of it is welcome. You are welcome here. I am glad to see all of you. This is the most students we have had in the room in a long time, which is a good thing. I would only say, in terms of public comment, we are going to hear a presentation later in the meeting on the University strategy for enhancing research and innovation, and I was struck particularly by Dr. Blazey's PowerPoint presentation, which I reviewed before today. I would ask that the Committee members really focus on the relationship that he draws in that presentation between research productivity, the purpose of this Committee, and important issues of recruitment and retention that cut across all the activities of all the Board's committees and the Board itself. There's some stunning data presented here, not to steal your thunder, Dr. Blazey. One out of eighteen factors is of interesting data. When freshman are surveyed for what's important to them and their selection of a university, they choose the academic reputation of the institution as the most important factor out of eighteen, which I think is really significant. In terms of retention, it is difficult to determine the relationship between research and

scholarly activity and retention, but we do have some interesting numbers. For example, undergraduate students who are engaged in a collaborative research effort with faculty, what we call Research Rookies - a formal process where they work with the faculty on a research project. Their retention rate is 99% as compared to the overall freshman year-to-year retention rate of 73%. That is a significant data point, I think. Dr. Blazey will share other points, but those are the things that I really want us to focus on here because this is such an integral part of what makes the University. That concludes my remarks. I want to move if we can to the comments of our University Advisory Committee members.

Good morning. I am Kendall Thu from the Department of Anthropology. I just want to steal a little bit more of Jerry's thunder here this morning and point out the continued faculty productivity that we are seeing during a period of time when the University and the State has faced so many challenges. I want to share kudos with my colleagues for the perseverance and their continued productivity and their continued mentoring of so many students. Thank you.

Barb Andree and Ms. Doederlein both indicated they had nothing additional to add.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Brady indicated that three timely requests for public comment were received. One untimely request was received and, in his discretion, the Committee Chair allowed comment.

Chair Butler began, I have three requests that have been handed to me by our General Council, Mr. Brady. The first speaker who I will ask to come to the podium so that her remarks can be recorded is Kristen Foley. Our general practice is to provide for five minutes for public comment. So, I'm going to do that. I'm not going to strictly enforce that, but I may let you know when we've reached that point.

Ms. Foley began, I am the mom of a freshman at NIU. I could easily be the mom of any of these students here today who represent Greek life at NIU. Can you raise your hand if you represent Greek life? My son volunteered me to be an advisor for his fraternity's Student Conduct hearing for Social Policy Violations because I am an attorney by profession. Let me tell you upfront, the violations have absolutely nothing to do with hazing, binge drinking, or anyone getting hurt. I witnessed a Student Conduct Hearing process myself, and I strongly believe that the investigation and the hearing did not comport with due process and violated your own Student Code of Conduct. But the problems with Student Conduct really transcend my son's fraternity. I speak on behalf of many Greek life students who are here to show their support but fear retaliation if they speak out. Many are anxious and worried about where they are going to live next year or whether they should transfer to a different school. I am hopeful that my words will spark a change between the administration and the Greek community about issues affecting Greek life, including placement on a watch list, monitoring social media, and unjust investigations and hearings in the Office of Student Conduct. I would not have taken a day off work to drive to beautiful, overcast DeKalb if I did not feel strongly about these issues. You have or will no doubt hear from your administrators that Greeks are not living up to the national values, the values established by their national organizations. I believe that's a fair conversation to have with these organizations, but truth be told, the same conversation about values needs to be had with your administrators and staff members. Are your actions toward Greek organizations reflective of NIU's values? If NIU values a climate of respect for the intrinsic dignity of each individual, then Student Conduct investigations shouldn't turn into demeaning and coercive police-like interrogations of freshman girls where 14 sorority members filed written complaints about the nature of their interrogation by Student Conduct. And they said, and I quote, "They just wanted me to confess to it, even though it didn't happen. They laughed in my face. They called me a liar and told me to rethink my major." If NIU values programs that prepare students to be lifelong learners and productive socially conscious citizens, then NIU should respect the First Amendment rights of students to free speech, and to freely associate with organizations of their choice and not tell fraternity executive board members that continued activism of criticizing administrators may

lead to a suspension of Greek life on campus. If NIU values student success through academic and co-curricular programming and activities, then belonging to a Greek student organization should not require mandatory placement on a secret watch list for troubled students, the secret monitoring of social media, including Instagram and Snap Chat, surreptitious patrolling of Greek Row at night, and even taking pictures of students in bathrooms in fraternity houses. If NIU values shared governance that incorporates input from faculty, staff, and students and decision and policy making, then the one-sided Student Conduct controlled hearing process must be changed to incorporate measures of fundamental fairness for students. Imagine for a moment that Student Conduct is like a police department. How would you feel if the police could investigate, bring charges, prosecute the case, decide whether you get a judge or jury, pick the judge, train the judge, hold the hearing in the police department, and handle the appeal? Do you think that's a fair process? Because I don't. Oh, and by the way, Student Conduct predetermines the penalty prior to the hearing and has incorrectly calculated the penalty to the detriment of three specific student organizations three times. When I wear my "Mom" hat, I'm concerned about the response when I've spoken or e-mailed administrators from the University. There's an immediate, "We did nothing wrong." Or "Stop complaining." Instead of saying, "We understand your concerns. Maybe we can do better." When I wear my "Lawyer" hat, I'm concerned that the behavior of Student Conduct without oversight can lead to liability. NIU was sued in November of 2017 by a past member of a fraternity. One of the allegations in this complaint was an unfair Student Conduct investigation. The very next month he also alleged that his due process rights were violated. The very next month, I raised similar concerns to the University about Student Conduct violating due process rights. I am waving the red flag of possible liability, and no one is listening. My son told me last week, he's considering transferring to a different school, and I am beyond disappointed at that. But I will support whatever decision he makes. In this competitive college market, you cannot afford to lose students. In closing, I'm all for holding students accountable for the rules and the values of their organization, but that accountability must be established on both sides of the equation. And the hearing process to hold those accountable must be fair and equitable. If you have any other concerns about this, the organization that I assisted wrote a 29-page appeal, documenting all of the problems we saw in the process. I would be more than happy to send that to anyone. Thank you.

Chair Butler thanked Ms. Foley and asked if any members of the Committee had any questions for the speaker? He added, I will ask Dr. Freeman at the end of all the public comment if there is any member of the staff that wishes to make any comment in relation to anything we hear today. But, for now, let me move to our next speaker who is David Jacobson. I believe "Alderman" David Jacobson from the City Council of DeKalb.

Hello and good morning, I am David Jacobson. As mentioned by Chair Butler, I am the First Ward Alderman of the City of DeKalb. I come in today wearing multiple hats. Obviously, wearing my Greek letters on my chest in a show of support to the Greek system. Being both a City official and an advisor to a local fraternity, I have seen the distinct change in how things are done and operated in DeKalb and at NIU over the last several years of my participation. Obviously, I do not need to tell you that the neighborhood is changing. We are seeing an influx of families and low-income individuals into the Greek Row neighborhood, which is certainly destabilizing the neighborhood and creating an environment about which the University has concerns about and we in the City have concerns. I am often asked when I started to see the change, when this change started to occur. I look back and look back over the years and say 'what was the turning point'? In going back, again, in my involvement of the fraternity, the turning point changed when the University viewed Greeks differently. While I appreciate a parent's perspective and agree with nearly everything that was spoken by the speaker before me, I think it is important to remember that we are all fighting the same battle in this neighborhood. We are fighting a battle to keep our students safe. We're fighting a battle to keep our students comfortable and wanting to occupy the neighborhood, and we also fight the battle on the Greek side of providing the social element that so many students on our local City surveys say their biggest concern with NIU and DeKalb is that there is no social outlet for them. There is no night life. There is nowhere for them to go. There is

nothing for them to do, and consistently, that is what we keep hearing as a City as to why students don't want to come here and/or stay here, which affects all of us. My perspective of going through the Greek conduct process and as an advisor – I have done it probably a half dozen times over the years with either individuals or the organization, or organizations involved in the process – is that it is very much as the last speaker said. While the old anecdote is, "Judge, Jury, and Executioner," our process not only has the judge, jury, executioner, but also legislator, investigator, police officer, interrogator, and everything else all wrapped up into one package. The problem in going in and looking for accountability is that there is a problem with fairness and honesty and trust. Those are the foundations of any accountability process within any organization. To go in and have administrators outright and flat-out say that joining a fraternity gives up your constitutional rights. I've had that quoted by an administrator in that department in terms of some of these cases. That when you join an organization, there is a different perspective and set of rules. When you join an organization, you give up your right to have the ability to live in your private off-campus housing, freely and fairly without being attacked or intruded upon. When you lose your freedom of speech rights, when you lose your freedom of assembly rights – these are constitutional rights that make up the foundation of what we believe in in this country. For administrators to ignore those rights and in their description, say that those rights are no longer valid for you in their office because you are a member of any organization is outrageous to me, unfortunately. I have often joked to other people in the advising world that if any other group was subject to the focus and scrutiny Greeks get, whether it was based on age or race or religion or any other protected class that the University would be dead to rights in a lawsuit. It is a scary situation, and it's my goal today to come in and not only say, "Yes, this is going on." Yes, the administrators have been aware. I have personally lodged complaints over the years that have been ignored and brushed to the side and told not to worry about them. The goal is to make change. Accountability is important. These Greek organizations need to live up to their Greek organizations' ideals and to what their letters mean. I have served as an undergraduate officer, as an advisor locally, as a housing corps rep locally, as a national board member of my fraternity. The ideals matter. The accountability matters, but this should be educational. These are 18-22-year-old kids in most cases. The goal is to educate them. The goal is to show them what they're doing wrong and ask them and ensure that they do better, not necessarily to investigate them and punish them, and throw them off campus where they can't be rehabilitated. I hope in coming to this group you see the Greek outpouring. You see the adults in the room that are here that are involved in the Greek system whether they're parents or advisors or staff members. And that the University agrees to come to the table to make this system fair and honest and truthful and transparent so that we can all move forward down that educative path to change the system for good and not continue to blight both the Greek community and the neighborhood I serve. Thank you for your time.

Chair Butler thanked Alderman Jacobson, asked if there were any questions from the Committee, and then introduced a third speaker, Michael Shackle.

Good morning, said Michael Shackle. I am a school board president of actually one of the top 35 high schools in this state. While I was going to speak much about the same things that the two previous speakers talked about, I am throwing that out, and I'm going to talk from the heart. I am going to talk as a parent and as an alumnus of this University, a two-time graduate of this University. And let me tie myself even closer to you guys. I was a two-time board member of the Alumni Association when we voted the money, the support, and the lobbyist to hire you as a Board of Trustees and get out of the Regency System. Season ticketholder. I bring students here. Me, too, on Valentine's Day, it doesn't mean the same thing to me anymore. It's a day of sadness for me every year. That's my concern. I have two students here. Both of them in Greek life. One is a junior and one is a freshman. And I speak for all alumni, I think that – well let me actually take it back and make it even a little bit more personal. My high school, Lemont High School, is one of the top high schools in the state as I have talked about. Many of the teachers and the guidance counselors are NIU graduates. You want to know how many of those kids come to NIU? Not very many. Why? Why? There's a lot of problems here. I don't mean academic program problems. I mean perception problems. Not necessarily the fault of the University.

There are problems with the state, but there are a lot of PR problems in this University. It would be reckless for us not to ignore that, and I can tell you I hear it from the alumni of this University as well. The kids that you are trying to recruit. The kids with some academic excellence. I know we're trying to be a University for all kids, and I get that, and I think that's very important. They are not coming to this University. They're going other places. This further issue, and my concern here is with what's happening with Greek life, is there's that other part, and you guys talked about that earlier of the experience of the kids here. You talked about social outlets. A big part of the University experience, and many universities, is Greek life. My student is a junior at ASA. They got a three-year suspension. She is going to be a senior, and she will be out the door soon. My son is a freshman. It breaks my heart when a kid that's been coming here since she's been 2 years old, never wanted to go anywhere else but NIU, is now part of another fraternity that's being, you know, hard hit with sanctions, and I'm all about accountability and I'm all about law and order. But we need to think about a couple different things here. One, we need to think about the overall experience of the University and what kids are looking for here. That's a death blow to that fraternity. That fraternity is not going to recover from that. Now, while they should be held accountable and we should have standards that they be held to, we need to figure out another way in which to accomplish that mission. We need to be very supportive of Greek life because that's a lot of the reasons why these kids come to universities. My son, who's a freshman here, who's been coming here since he was 2 years old, coming to football games, has heard nothing about other than NIU his entire life from his father and his aunts who also went here. And his father and his aunt's friends. Has now said to me, "Dad, I don't know if I want to stay here." Breaks my heart. So, as you think about this, administrators, Board of Trustees, and other folks associated with the University, let's rethink what we're doing here, and let's see if we can look to find another way to hold our students accountable, hold them to the highest ideals but also look to preserve and support fraternity and other social aspects of the life of the University. Because we know that alumni support for universities, which is a big part of what universities need in today's day and world, you know, today's day and age. Ohio State doesn't get \$500 million a year because they had a great experience in their ECON-300 class. Let's face it. You know, when I went here, there was 25,000 students. How many do we have now? How many of them live on campus? How many activities? How many things are there for them to do? And I'm not even going to talk like it was talked earlier about what life is like out there in Greek Row. I was there this morning, and I thought I was in a war zone. So, again, I ask you. I urge you as an avid supporter of this University and an alumnus to rethink your positions and look to encourage and hold accountable in a different fashion than what you're doing. Thank you.

Chair Butler thanked Mr. Shackle, asked if there were questions from the Committee, and asked if there were comments about any of the speakers thus far?

Trustee Wasowicz commented, I, too, have heard a lot about this, and I spent two hours on a Sunday a couple weeks ago on a private Facebook thread, just responding to the same types of questions about this as well, and you know, I agree with some of the things you're saying here about Greek life. There's four Greeks on this Board here, and I've been to alumni events, and I've always been amazed at how at the alumni events, it's usually former Greeks and the people that are writing the checks back to the University, for the most part -- Yordon, Barsema -- are Greeks. I am obviously a huge supporter of Greek life, and I guess these are things that we will be talking about. We are very well aware of the neighborhood. We have had various discussions on that as well. This isn't a blind eye. We know what's going on in terms of the neighborhood. From a Greek life perspective, I've heard a lot about it, answered a lot of phone calls lately, and will be definitely be talking about this. So, thanks for coming out today.

Trustee Struthers also commented, I appreciate the strong passion and commitment that all the speakers presented. Something I think that we are well aware of, but to hear it from you directly with the passion, professionalism, and perspective that you gave it was meaningful and something I think we needed to hear. So, thank you.

Chair Butler recognized President Freeman and invited her to speak.

President Freeman began, I'd like to just make a few comments on behalf of the University. First, I want to thank everybody who came to speak today and also those who we're going to hear from in the next committee meeting. We always welcome people who wish to speak to constructively provide feedback, concerns, and ideas. We listen carefully, and I'm actually pleased that what I heard today resonates so well with the values of the University and there's so much common ground in terms of concern for students, belief in our Constitution, First Amendment, our shared governance system, and an appreciation for Greek life and a concern for all aspects of our community.

I sit here also wearing a number of hats: As a parent who cares about a child who went through sending a student off to college and making sure that you did what you could do to make sure that they were safe. As President of the University, concerned about all members of our Huskie community. I'm also a former Greek. I was not in a letter organization as an undergraduate, but in veterinary school, I was a proud member of Omega Tau Sigma. And for those of you who can't put it together quickly, that's OATS. That's a joke for veterinarians who take care of horses, but it is a social and professional organization and I do understand the value of Greek life. I want to take a moment and respond specifically to what I heard here today, share some of the University's ongoing concerns, and most importantly express the University's willingness to continue to work with student organizations such as those in Greek life. The faculty and staff, including administrators, at NIU strive to create a safe, inclusive and fun environment that's conducive to learning and thriving during a student's time at NIU. To do this, we provide academic and well-being support, and we set appropriate expectations and policies related to student conduct at both the individual and the organizational level. Our Greek letter chapters provide NIU students with important opportunities, to seek memberships in organizations that are founded upon three principles: academic and scholastic excellence, service to the greater community, and bonding through brother- and sisterhood. And we appreciate all three of those. We want our students to be socially connected while they're on campus and after they leave. We value these positive contributions to our University life, and as a result, we try to work closely with the Greek organizations to establish formal relationships and agreements that directly aid in those principles being upheld and that improve your experience while you're on campus. Those relationships and agreements come together every August when NIU requires each sorority and fraternity to participate in alcohol and substance abuse education, for training about NIU's Off-Campus Social Events Policy, and other expectations related to student conduct. Our chapter presidents, alumni advisors and faculty advisors are required at that time to review and sign a relationship agreement with the University. In the event that a policy or a relationship agreement is violated, NIU has an obligation to take corrective measures. Last semester, Student Affairs provided three different times for students to come and provide feedback on our policies, particularly the Off-Campus Social Events Policy and its connection to conduct. As I understand it, no one attended those sessions. Regardless, last semester Student Affairs also began collaborating with Student Association President Rachel Jacobs to create a task force comprised of students and Student Affairs staff to look at our Off-Campus Social Events Policy. Their first task force meeting is today. I look forward to their progress and their recommendations; and, based on the testimony we have heard today, perhaps there is more opportunity for parents and alumni advisors to be part of that particular task force and their conversations.

Within the past several months, we have been alerted to a number of events where members of Greek organizations knowingly and willingly participated in unsafe behaviors and violated the Off-Campus Social Events Policy. Examples of this includes events with drugs, common source alcohol, dangerous binge-drinking games, lack of sober monitors to help identify if a student could be in trouble, lack of guest lists, and a failure to register events. This concerns us. Not because the rules were broken, but because we care about your safety and your well-being. And it's troubling because some of the organizations involved were previously sanctioned for violations. I heard a lot today that resonated with the University's beliefs. What I'm not sure I heard was anybody acknowledging that these behaviors are concerning or owning up to mistakes. The choice to partake in these activities puts your educational goals at risk and, more importantly, puts your lives at risk. This is a university that has experienced the loss of students and knows firsthand the profound ways that life can change in an instant. And we're not alone in this.

Universities across our nation grapple with similar issues, and this is what weighs on our hearts and minds as leaders with years of experience putting our students first. I ask that you consider this when you interact with our Student Affairs team or attack them in comments in the sections of the paper or on social media. Whether you choose to believe it or not, they are looking out for the best interests of our students and the communities to which they belong and live. As we went through the 2/14 commemorative events that they planned and executed and supported, I doubt that anybody really does not believe that that is their orientation. I value the experience and intentions of our Student Affairs team, and I appreciate their openness to review our policies and procedures. I also want you to know that I do hear the concerns and fears that you have expressed today that more stringent conduct penalties such as multi-year suspensions are too severe, ineffective, and deter you from wanting to work with the University. That is certainly not our aim. There is room for improvement, especially when students are willing to be accountable for their choices and part of the larger dialogue that seeks solutions and common ground. So, in the same spirit of collaboration that's happening with our Off-Campus Social Events Policy, I want to talk about what NIU wants to do and is willing to do to work with our Greek students. We want to build trust. Trust has to be earned and to be mutual.

The Fraternity and Sorority Life Relationship Statement that the chapter presidents and advisors sign indicates our expectation that each chapter will establish and maintain trusting relationships with all constituents, including NIU staff and administrators. We want, and we acknowledge, that we need to work with you to create a good environment for building trust so that we can work together on mutual goals such as strengthening the Greek system so that it is healthy, thriving, lasting, and a fun community, built on the three pillars of academics, service, and leadership. Working with all of our student organizations to have clear pathways to success, clear ways to utilize even more restorative justice techniques to make educational corrections when necessary, peer accountability and support. We do not want there to be fear that when one organization missteps, a whole community will suffer. There is an important dialogue that's happening. We've moved it forward here, and we're committed to moving it forward in a positive and constructive way that empowers our students and their organizations to be their best, academically and personally. As we have heard this morning, that will allow NIU to be the best university that it can be. So, again, thank you for coming and sharing your concerns. We have listened and I've heard a lot of common ground, and I look forward to working with you on solutions to achieve the goals we've all articulated this morning. Thank you.

Trustee Barsema thanked the students who came out today and added, it's awesome to see that you are involved in what's going on and that you care about what's going on. So, thank you for being here. I am an SAE, and I don't have a daughter in ASA, but we have a very close family friend who is in ASA. I heard her pain a few weeks ago, and it broke my heart. We care first and foremost about you as students. We care about your safety. There is accountability and again, thank you to all the speakers who spoke today. I think you did an awesome job, so thank you very much. In expressing your views and the views that you represent. But, there has to be shared accountability in what we're doing, because if we don't do what's right for your safety, then you'll be up in front of us with a different message. So, there's a balance that we need to strike that is fair for all. Not everybody is going to like whatever the outcome is. There is no perfect solution here. Whatever comes of this effort that Dr. Freeman spoke of, to understand that we have the right processes in place, it may please some. It may anger others. I am just going to put it out there out for you that there is no perfect process. But, I want you to know that the Board of Trustees takes your concerns very seriously. We hear you. I heard the pain of a person I care a great deal about a few weeks ago, and this is something that we take very, very seriously. Again, thank you for being here today. Thank you for expressing your views and opinions. You have been heard, and we will go on together from here and work together on this issue. Thank you.

Trustee LaGioia commented, I am not sure if everyone knows me, but I'm Giuseppe LaGioia. I am the Student Trustee, also a member of the Greek community. I am a Phi Sigma Kappa. As you many of you know, I have been a student in the Greek life for the past four years. First, thank you all for coming. This

has been something that we have all been talking about. It has been going on in the community for years now, and we are finally making change on it. Making change here is showing up and talking to the Board and expressing these concerns. To everyone showing up here, wearing his or her letters today is a huge thing. As your student representative for this Board, I can assure you that we will work towards making a policy where we come to an understanding. From a University aspect, we want to make sure that you are all safe, but also we want to make sure that everything is going smoothly and that we represent you first and foremost. So, as we continue with this process and going into the future, please keep showing up. Please express your voices and go on, move forward. Thank you.

Chair Butler began, I, like many of my colleagues, was part of a Greek organization. When I was on campus, I was president of my chapter house, and it was a harrowing year of fearing the consequences of misbehavior and realizing that I could be held personally accountable. As a trustee, I think many of the members of this board also realize that they could be held responsible for activities that happen in your chapter homes, and activities sponsored by your chapters. So, I agree with much of what has been said. It sounds to me like, in the next several weeks or so, there's going to be an opportunity for the individuals in this room to think carefully about what you can offer as corrective action to right the ship, so to speak, to move your chapter houses in the direction that will not result in the things that got them in trouble in the first place. That is going to be challenging. You are going to have to put things on paper. You are going to have to think creatively. You are going to have to push yourselves harder than you may think is warranted in the situation. You are going to have to spend some of your valuable time talking about these issues and soul searching about what is the essential purpose of the organizations to which you belong. I hope you will engage that activity and realize that the University administrators working with you are doing so in good faith, and that means really reaching a point -- hopefully -- where we can restore some continuity and peace in this relationship and bury the hatchet a little about some of the things that are concerning you about the process and the activities that brought you here today. This requires some give and take. I hope you will take that very seriously, the gesture that Dr. Freeman just described, and again, that you will come back to us and you will tell us what you think of the process and how things are going because we are interested. With that, we are done with, I believe, the public comment related specifically to the Greek organizations.

Chair Butler continued, I do have one more speaker who has requested to speak, and that is Professor Virginia Naples. I'll ask that Professor Naples step to the podium as well and I'll ask if you could, please just stay for the rest of the professor's remarks because it would be disturbing to try to leave during them. Professor Naples?

Professor Naples began, saying thank you very much and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the group today. The topic that I'm talking about does not relate directly to what has been discussed previously, which we all take as a very serious issue we need to work to resolve, but it is related at least in a tangential manner. What I am asking to do is request the Board of Trustees enhance and increase the opportunities for students through the Chance Program. This was in "NIU Today." This is a celebratory picture of many of the, I assume, Chance Program members, and the article says this is the 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the Chance Program. It is a unique program at NIU that other universities do not have. There are many successful graduates who participated in this program, and it offers an opportunity to students who might not have had the same opportunity without this availability to obtain a good quality degree and launch their careers and their futures. But to this date, Chance has only served undergraduates students, and therefore, I am requesting that the Board of Trustees expand the Chance Program to the graduate students. Now, our spring enrollment was down 4.7% for the undergraduates, and this is a very sad issue that we all have to deal with. I know there are lots of efforts trying to improve the situation, but the graduate enrollment was down even further. It was down 6.3% since last year. The graduate students not only benefit from getting advanced degrees from NIU, but they are also a critical component of both the teaching and the research mission. Without a sufficient number of graduate assistants, it makes it very difficult for students to have access to tutorial kinds of assistance to

additional sorts of access to learn and improve their understanding of course material. Graduate assistants are also critical for the research process for our faculty. They serve both as mentees and as collaborators and as such are part of our main educational mission. This is a major concern on the part of most faculty. I, of course, hear faculty asking about salary increments and working conditions and teaching loads and all of these other things, but setting the financial concerns aside, the most serious concern they have is the decreasing number of graduate students. For example, in my department, we used to have over 80 graduate students, and we now have about 60. We still have as many majors, or close to as many majors, and we have a greater diversity of courses and needs for research opportunities for graduate students, and those also enhance the research opportunities for undergraduate students as well. NIU needs to demonstrate its commitment to building diversity and inclusion by increasing minority graduate student enrollment. This is something that NIU can do as a leader on a national basis. To my knowledge, no other university has a program equivalent to a Chance Program, and therefore, there is just no opportunity for graduate students to participate in such a program. There was a previous application made to enhance the Chance Program, and that was not funded. I am hoping that will be redone, but one of the things that I think would assist that would be if the NIU community would provide the equivalent of some seed money to demonstrate the depth of commitment to improving the diversity on campus at the graduate level as well as the undergraduate level. I usually don't ask the trustees to spend lots of additional money because I like to try to find more economical solutions, but in this case, I think this is a situation where the benefit-to-cost ratio is extremely high and so I would ask that this be done. Enhancing Chance at both the undergraduate and graduate levels could place NIU in a leadership position and make us a role model for universities, not only in Illinois, but on a nationwide basis. It is something that would generate a tremendous amount of positive publicity that would go along with our increased efforts at marketing and improving the knowledge of NIU so that we are no longer a best kept secret, but we are a well-publicized secret – or no longer a secret. In conjunction with the policy to end sexual harassment, abuse, and assault as I had proposed earlier, and I sent the statement I read to the University Council to our Trustees, that's a proposal to do something equivalent to the #MeToo movement. That is one of the reasons I am wearing black today as I did at the University Council. I usually wear red and black to show University spirit. I'm wearing black in support of all of the celebrities in Hollywood that attended various programs of awards to support the #MeToo and the "Time's Up" kinds of movements. I see that these things can work together to improve the campus climate, and both of these initiatives are apart from what other universities have done and they can demonstrate what we can do to improve the total campus climate for all of our community members, staff, faculty, students, and other people that have an interest in NIU. So, thank you very much.

Chair Butler thanked Professor Naples and asked if the Committee members had any questions for her?

Trustee Wasowicz responded, I just have one comment on that. Our overall enrollment was down 4.3% not 4.7%. The reason why some of this is, is because our enrollments coming in in '15 and '16 were lower. So, therefore, you're going to see it like that. We will talk about that more at the AASAP committee.

Professor Naples apologized for the incorrect figure, and added, I may have transposed the numbers, but it is still down and I really want to see us improve it. I think the proposal that I put forward, should you be willing to accept it, would go a long way toward improving our position of leadership among universities.

Chair Butler recognized Board Chair Coleman to make some comments in relation to the prior subject of the Greek organizations.

Trustee Coleman began, I would be remiss if I did not say a few words to all the students that are here today about concerns that were raised. I'm not a Greek member. I am a graduate of NIU. I would tell you I am a little disturbed by all the messages that I have received and all the comments that were made

surrounding our Greek life, our process, I guess our judge/jury process, that have been raised today. There are two messages that I have for the students: that we want you to continue to raise your concerns about anything that we are doing here at the University that you think we need to do better. We are not a perfect institution and our attempt is continuous improvement upon everything that we do. One way we can continue to get better is that you raise your concerns about things that we need to improve upon. We need to take a closer look at the process that we have in place today. I think you heard from Dr. Freeman that we would do exactly that. I am not sure what kind of changes will come out of that, if any, but one thing that we will be certain to do is take a look at the process that we have in place. Secondly, students, you are precious. We need you, and we need you to succeed, and we need you to help your fellow students to succeed. We do not want any of our students' lives to be put in jeopardy. We don't want that on our watch or anybody's watch. So, if you're engaging in behavior that could jeopardize your fellow students or yourself, we're saying that's behavior that's unacceptable. Now, I will tell you the last thing that I would like to see, and I'm speaking personally here, is a death spiral to any of the Greek organizations. But, at the same time, I don't want any of our organizations to put fellow students at risk and possible risk of losing their lives. We need to have a balance here, right? There has to be accountability here. And one thing that we're going to promise is that we'll look at the process, but we need you to do your duty and make sure that you're not putting fellow students at risk, especially at risk of losing their lives. We don't want that. We have been through too much as a University, and we don't want that to happen again. I want to also encourage you to continue to come to our meetings, continue to raise your voice. Thank you.

Chair Butler responded, President Freeman has asked for a moment to address some of the comments by Professor Naples, I believe.

President Freeman said, I first want to start out by thanking Dr. Naples for coming to talk to us, and I want to say that I think it's so important that she brought this proposal, and a commitment to diversifying our graduate student population, to the committee that deals with research and innovation because it's well-established that, while we have different perspectives and different life experiences, in forming research, innovation, leading our classrooms, better ideas result. Society sees better outcomes, and, as a University, we are certainly committed to that. In terms of enrollment, one of the most important things that diversifying graduate student populations does is allow us to grow those students into future faculty and diversify our faculty so that all of our students have an opportunity to be taught by people of different lived experiences, to see people who look like themselves in leadership roles, and NIU is committed to these goals and ideals. We actually have a fair amount already going on. NIU is a leader in the Diversifying Illinois Initiative. The work of Dr. Janice Hamlet, and the College of Liberal Arts and Science has a conference in February where we will exhibit this leadership and bring GFA scholars from around Illinois to NIU. We are actively pursuing federal funding, things like McNair Scholars grants to help us diversify our graduate student population and advance our ideals and commitment. We are looking into anti-bias training for Graduate Admission Committee so that we make sure that people have a chance at getting into graduate school and are not inadvertently exposed to the implicit biases of those evaluating their applications. I'd love to ask Dr. Naples to bring the idea she presented here today to work with others on campus who are equally committed to the goal of diversifying both our graduate student population and our faculty, and let's move forward together.

## **UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS/REPORT**

### **Agenda Item 7.a. – State Legislative Update**

Dr. Streb began, I am going to be very brief. The biggest thing that has happened since my written report was submitted was obviously the Governor put forth his budget address yesterday. I just want to give you a very quick overview of where we stand according to that. I want to be very clear that what the Governor proposed yesterday is the first step in a long process, and what will come out ultimately

could be very different. We have a budget proposal that would put us flat from FY18; that would be roughly \$82 million from the state of Illinois. That is under the IBHE proposal, which was to increase from FY18 by 1.9%. It is also well under what the President pushed, which was to return us back to our FY15 budget numbers. The Governor also in his address is proposing to hold MAP funding flat. That is different from the IBHE recommendation of \$100 million of an increase to MAP. But there's a flipside, where the Governor has now asked for \$100 million to be put for deferred maintenance, and IBHE only suggested \$20 million. While there's many concerns that the University has, certainly, no doubt, one of the major concerns we have is that the Governor is trying to move pension and healthcare costs completely on the backs of the institutions. Over a 4-year period, according to what the Governor proposed yesterday, we would be required to pick up all pension and healthcare costs. He said that he's made it about 25% per year. The first year would be a one-to-one split, so essentially, what that means is the state would be essentially giving us a little bit extra appropriations so that we could cover the pension healthcare costs. What that looks like going forward, though, is unclear, and that is something that the presidents are very, very concerned about. Again, I want to be very clear. This is the first offer, so to speak. Actually, it is not even the first offer. IBHE has put forward a proposal; the presidents have put forward proposals. This will be discussed a bunch over the next several weeks. President Freeman will be in Springfield next week, presenting our Senate Appropriations testimony. I am hopeful that a budget will be passed. If you talk to people in Springfield, they tell you that they expect a budget to be passed, but if you also look at the reactions yesterday to the Governor's speech from both sides of the aisle, it is very easy to say we want a budget to pass. We understand the problems of not having a budget. Whether that actually happens is anybody's guess, to be quite blunt. There are still all sorts of options on the table. We could get what the Governor proposed or we could get slightly more than what the Governor proposed. We are not going to get what the presidents proposed, I can guarantee you that. We could get a half-year budget; we could get no budget; we could get a full budget. So, everything's still very up in the air. It will be a little bit clearer, I think, once the primaries are over in March. There is a competitive primary right now. That will help, I think, make things a little bit clearer, but that is essentially where we are right now on the state budget proposal. I am happy to answer any questions.

Trustee Wasowicz said, Matt, I'm kind of curious about pension and healthcare costs. What is that in terms of dollars? Do you have any idea off the top of your head what that might be?

Dr. Streb responded, I don't have an actual number. I know that the Governor put, I think, \$105 million in pension, I think it was, for all state institutions. I don't know what our share of that would be, but it would be a significant amount of money. Sarah McGill said that she can get that information for you.

Chair Butler continued, we have calculated that in the past, I know, as an important discussion point in understanding the total amount of state investment in higher education institutions. I know that that's actually very interesting information.

Trustee Struthers also remarked, A quick note, it is in our audit if we look at last year's. We can find that pretty quickly. It is significant, though.

### **Agenda Item 7.b. – Federal Relations Update (written report only)**

### **Agenda Item 7.c. – Sponsored Programs Administration Report (written report only)**

### **Agenda Item 7.d. – Scholarship Goals, Impacts, and Metrics**

Chair Butler began, I'm going to recognize our Committee Liaison, Dr. Jerry Blazey, Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships, who's going to discuss University report 7.d.

Dr. Blazey began, after your earlier theft of my thunder, and Professor Thu's theft of my thunder, and the previous talks, I'm just hoping for a low rumble in the distance. So, as President Freeman indicated, I'll be addressing specific aspects of the presidential goal to increase capacity for research, innovation, and regional engagement. I will focus on research, but it is important to keep in mind that those three are linked very close, and they have impact on one another. In particular, I will focus on research cluster strategies to promote the intensity of scholarship at the University. A reminder: The specific goals are to initiate at least one research cluster in fiscal year '19 and fiscal '20. And by research, as always, I ask for you to stipulate that I mean research scholarship and artistry. In addition, we have two additional doctoral programs to add to our curriculum, and you will be hearing about one of those later today. I also want to address the Board's request for Vision and Strategy, which we discussed at the last meeting, and at that meeting, you all requested that we provide a specific goal and metrics for tracking the increase in research intensity. These will focus on the research clusters because they are our main mechanism for increasing research intensity. So, last meeting, we discussed strategic actions to build scholarship in the areas that underpin our vision, and the vision we presented was preparing Northern Illinois and the nation for a century a change. The pillars, or the emphases under there, were responding to a change in climate, preparing for change in demographics, leading the evolution of technology, and interpreting our changing world. Now, we didn't pull these out of thin air. I had many discussions with many departments, many researchers, and these speak to our strengths, speak to societal needs, and we believe that these will engage our students. You will see at the end of my talk that student engagement is crucial for the health of the University. I listed some tactical actions to promote our research, and these were new doctoral degrees, research and scholarship clusters, leveraged partnerships, improving infrastructure – and there I mean equipment, stipends, innovation resources – and enhancing the culture of scholarship. By that I mean reducing impediments, parts or units of the University, taking a more service-based orientation, faculty incentives, and providing faculty mentorship. The first two – new doctoral degrees and initiate research and scholarship clusters – as I mentioned earlier, are presidential goals. A new doctoral program is already in the works, and we will hear about it later today. The goal I will put forth is a 25% increase in scholarships. Now, that is not thunderous, but it is reasonable given our current financial situation and the resources we have to bring to bear on increasing scholarship. I like to think of this in terms of basic unit of growth, and to get that basic unit of growth, I used the standard – but it is incomplete in the sense that it doesn't apply to all disciplines – the proxy of externally-funded research. In FY2017, we had seven faculty who attracted external funds for research; and, on average, they each attracted about \$135,000 per given year. It is just a simple calculation. It is more plausible that, for us to see a 5% increase in research activity as measured by external grants, we need to create or revitalize an initiative with four additional research-active faculty. To reach the 25% goal, then, we need five new initiatives, which can be achieved by a combination of new degrees or centers of scholarship. External funding is just one form of measurement. These initiatives should be distributed across the University and tracked with appropriate metrics. So for instance, if you were an English professor or historian, we would track it most likely with books or monographs. Here's a very successful example. It comes from the STEM field, which is our accelerated cluster, and it is a shared initiative with Fermilab to enhance our collaboration and accelerate our science with joint collaborations and professorships. This actually speaks to two of the tactics in the sense that it is a cluster, but it also really leverages a partnership with a local institution. Our investment is about 450k per year over five years, which is matched by Fermilab. So, we really get a big bang for our buck. We have recruited two senior faculty and now are recruiting two junior positions. Since 2015, the two individuals have already brought in a little over \$2 million in external grants from NSF and DOE. They currently engage 18 graduate students. The two faculty were added to the two that we already had on staff in this area. We can now claim that we have one of the largest university groups in accelerated science in the nation. We are right up there with MIT, with Michigan, and with Cal Tech. It is because we were able to leverage our partnership. Our metrics should also reflect the impacts of scholarship. I am looking for a set of metrics that not only measure our increase in research productivity, artistry, and scholarship but also directly speak to what I take to be the four main impacts of scholarship, and they're listed here: enhanced peer and public reputation, faculty recruitment and retention, student (both undergraduate and

graduate) recruitment and retention, and donor and alumni interest and activity. These to me are good bins for the impact of scholarship on the University as a whole. The metrics should somehow speak to that as well. The highest level metrics I think are helpful in this regard are: publications, citations, and books as a group of metrics, and grant activity from the main agencies, for us the Department of Energy, National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, National Endowment for the Arts, and the Department for Defense. Then also, I think a very important measure is student engagement and research. Here's just a peek at what these metrics look like. I have taken these from Academic Analytics which is known to be incomplete; it underreports, but it does let you get a good sense of trends and allows you to compare to other universities and departments at other universities. First thing I'll note, these are time plots over a decade of the number of books, the number of publications, and the number of citations. Related to our publications and books, Professor Thu is absolutely correct that despite our difficult financial situation and productivity, we've held pretty constant, and that's even in the light of slightly declining faculty members. On average, the University publishes about 40 books per year, a little over 600-700 publications. Scientific journals and citations normally are around 5,000. There is a spike there in 2012 because of the particularly impactful publication by some of our faculty, but normally the citations are around 5,000. The second type of metric would be research grant activity. It averages about \$10 million a year. I would like to see it get up to \$12.5 or \$13 million a year as our goal. Here the focus is just on externally funded basic research. Our overall portfolio is \$30 million a year, but that includes instruction and public service. Notice I have not put the time scale on this plot. That is intentional. Both the magnitude of the increase in scholarship and the time it takes to do it depends entirely on our ability to invest. The third metric that I suggest the Board track is associated with student engagement, and why is that important? Why is that impactful? Well, it is because the number one thing most students care about is academic reputation. This is some data that I took from the April 2016 Lipmann Hearne survey of students. It is the rank, program strength, and academic reputation that students consider when they join a university. For freshman prospects, it is the number one. For transfer students, it is number two, but they focus a bit more on the program they are joining. For graduates, current undergraduates, and current graduate students, it's in the top four for all of them. It is the single most important aspect when we're recruiting and retaining students. Engagement, research, and scholarship is a very high impact practice. Our current first year retention rate is 73%. If you look at the honor student cohort, which are closely linked with scholarship, it goes up to 93%, and if you look at our Research Rookie program, it is 99%. Now, the statistics are small, 87, but it is still a significant increase in retention. We will develop a metric around that participation and engagement as associated with research, and this shows the connectivity to the other goals because the engagement is important for the University's health. If you translate those retained students into tuition, you are getting in the many millions of dollars. I believe we have established a forward-looking vision, focused on societal needs and student interest. I am setting a modest goal of 25% growth, but I will remind the Board that the magnitude and time scale goes with the resources. The performance will be measured at the highest level with publications, citations, and books. That really covers all of the disciplines; grants, which is counted towards the STEM disciplines, and student involvement which covers all of the disciplines. I just want to mention that, on those other tactical items, work continues on infrastructure and the impediment issues for all three types of scholarship. That's my presentation and I am happy to take questions.

Trustee Barsema continued, thank you, Jerry, for that. That is outstanding. If we could go back to slide 6. I appreciate the relative numbers that you have there. This is the books, citations, and publications. How do we rank against our peer institutions? Because without that context, I don't know if that is a good number or a bad number? Where we should be, where we shouldn't be?

Dr. Blazey replied, they are representative numbers for a regional public university without a medical school. Our productivity is right in line, on average. In some departments, it's off the charts.

Trustee Barsema asked, off the chart in a good way?

Dr. Blazey responded, well, it is amongst the highest percentile, yes.

Trustee Barsema responded, my takeaway from this is student engagement is really critical, and the more we get our students engaged in different activities on campus, be it research, scholarship, whatever it might be, the greater retention and so forth. Honors clearly has a big role to play in that. Research Rookies, you know, which is part of that; it has a big role. But are we looking at what other things we can do to get students involved, to expand the Honors Program, to expand Research Rookies or programs like Research Rookies?

Dr. Freeman answered, this is one area where I could actually talk forever. The academic term for this type of connecting activity is a "high-impact practice." Research and engagement in research and scholarship is a very important one because it has the largest impact among all the high-impact practices, but the other ones include things like service learning and community service, study abroad, internships or job shadowing opportunities, and interestingly our own data, not just national data, shows that with each high-impact practice that a student engages in after two, their success, their GPA, their time to graduation, all the variables we want to track, get better. We also notice that one of the glaring differences between our students from underserved populations and those from more privileged backgrounds – where we have what we call an equity gap in graduation rates and retention – one of the glaring differences is the lack of participation in high-impact practices in general and research in particular in the group of students, the cohort who tend to come from more underserved backgrounds. We have shown with some of our programs on campus that when you offer research opportunities, engagement opportunities, and high-impact practices to those students, you start to close that gap in retention, in persistence, in a very meaningful way, and in fact our desire to do that is reflected in the presidential goals. So, we have some excellent examples of impact. That probably this is not the venue to share with you, but I very much appreciate the question. And it's something that we think about every day, and it's something that I believe we use when we define the value proposition of NIU that we've spoken about a number of times this morning.

Trustee Barsema continued, those last few slides are great data that we need to keep in front of us because it's eye-opening.

President Freeman agreed, it absolutely is. You know, here, you could actually argue, in some of the data Jerry showed that there might be some selection bias, but we have other datasets that really suggest it is an intervention that can make a difference as you move forward.

Dr. Blazey responded, the selection bias is actually positive because we're attracting students that are interested in these areas. So, I would say it's slightly different. Not only is creation of knowledge just the right thing to do, it's absolutely crucial to our ability to recruit and retain. That's how I would say it in a sentence.

Trustee Barsema said, I would just say I've been lucky to participate in a couple of Research Rookie projects as a mentor, and my experience as a mentor was great, but the outcome that I saw that resulted in the Huskie Student Food Pantry on campus - that is in a lot of ways the result of a Research Rookie project. That one particular program is a terrific program, and I'd love to see us blow that up in a good way, expanding.

Dr. Blazey continued, I want to make one more comment. I really did not address how research impacts our relationships with donors and alumni, and that's because that's underway. Vice President Squires and I are now currently trying to develop strategy to move this research excellence into the realm of alumni relations and donor activity. So, you will be hearing more about that in the future.

Chair Butler continued, I'll try to encapsulate everything I want to say before this committee is concluded in these comments and what I think is a question. First of all, this committee carried a lot of water this morning for the rest of the committees. So, I hope that you're not holding it against me personally that

we've gone way over time. Secondly, I am a little bit concerned about the term "regional public," and I want to just make sure that I understand that that's a concept that might be relevant to this kind of measurement but it's not a determining concept or label.

Dr. Blazey replied, no, it's really a reflection of size.

Chair Butler continued, right, but the word "regional" concerns me always when we are talking about where Northern fits within the national spectrum. We have legislators in Springfield obviously who just think because there is a direction in our name that we are a regional university, and that puts us in a different classification on a number of different levels which concerns me. Obviously, what I would like us to say is – and not that I'm imposing a language standard here – but I would like to remind us always that we are a doctoral-granting "higher research" classified university, which is really important that we keep hold of that identity. I would like us to think about measuring in some manner how research relates to curriculum, and there may be a ready system for looking at that. I know there's a difference between when a faculty member comes onto the faculty and they're asked to teach a course that's existed in the curriculum for years and they do that because they're an expert in that discipline. That is different from when a faculty member develops a course, or even a line of curriculum or program, that is related to their research. I think it's really significant in terms of academic programming and sophomores and juniors in terms of what they look at that's important in terms of the program they're actually selecting. And, then, as a humanist, I'm always concerned about citation indexes, just because they work better for social scientists than they do for humanists or at least that used to be the case. I wonder as we continue to measure this progress and put value on the work that we're doing, if we can't really dig deep into how humanists measure research productivity and that may be different from how social scientists do. Finally, I just want to remind everybody that this report comes after the vision itself was presented, and it was in response to a desire for a deeper dive into the way that you and the president were viewing the return on investment. I don't think there's any doubt at this point that this Board is committed to this vision and this strategy, and we want you to proceed.

#### **OTHER MATTERS**

No other matters were discussed.

#### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting of the Committee is expected to be May 10, 2018.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Butler asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Barsema so moved and Trustee Wasowicz seconded. The motion was approved. The meeting adjourned at 10:33 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Cathy J. Cradduck  
Recording Secretary

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