

Minutes of the
Board of Trustees of Northern Illinois University
Regular Meeting
December 10, 2020

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Board Chair Dennis Barsema virtually. This regular meeting was conducted through video conferencing communications pursuant to Section 6 of Executive Order 2020-7 (Suspending Open Meetings Act requirements of in person attendance by members of a public body). Recording Secretary Crystal Doyle conducted a roll call.

Trustee Rita Athas: Present	Trustee John Butler: Present
Trustee Montel Gayles: Present	Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent
Trustee Bob Pritchard: Present	Trustee Aidan Shields: Absent
Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Present	Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Present

All members of the Board of Trustees were present.

Also present: President Lisa Freeman; General Counsel Bryan Perry; Chief of Staff and Board Liaison Matt Streb; Executive Vice President and Provost Beth Ingram; Vice President for Administration and Finance and Chief Financial Officer Sarah Chinniah; Vice President for Enrollment Management, Marketing and Communications Sol Jensen; Dean of the College of Law Cassandra Hill; Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships Jerry Blazey; Vice President for Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Interim Chief Human Resources Officer Vernese Edghill-Walden; Associate Vice President for Information Technology Matt Parks; Vice President for University Advancement Catherine Squires; Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Kelly Wesener-Michael; and University Advisory Council (UAC) Representatives Cathy Doederlein, Katy Jaekel, Natasha Johnson, Sarah Marsh, and Kendall Thu.

VERIFICATION OF QUORUM AND APPROPRIATE NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

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

MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Vice Chair Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Gayles seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes	Trustee John Butler: Yes
Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes	Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent
Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes	Trustee Aidan Shields: Absent
Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes	Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 12, 2020

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve the minutes of November 12, 2020. Trustee Gayles so moved, and Trustee Athas seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Absent

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Barsema welcomed the members of the University Advisory Council who were present and asked for their comments.

UAC Representative Thu congratulated President Freeman on her appointment to the Strategic Advisory Board to the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Thu thanked staff, faculty, and students for commenting on the Strategic Plan stating that all the comments were heard and made a difference. Thu acknowledged and congratulated all the recipients of the Professional Excellence Awards for Faculty and Staff and all the wonderful work they have done and continue to do for NIU.

UAC Representative Jaekel congratulated the staff, faculty, and students for all their hard work this semester and wished them all well with finals this week. Jaekel commented how proud she is to be a part of a University that is so thoughtful around affordability for our students.

UAC Representative Doederlein also thanked the staff, faculty, and students for all their hard work during this challenging semester. Doederlein also wanted to share her appreciation of the transparency the University has shown recently with sharing very robust information regarding the fees and affordability that will be discussed at today's Board of Trustees meeting.

UAC Representative Johnson mentioned that she is very grateful for how all the staff, faculty and students have worked together to get through this semester. Johnson mentioned that the Operating Staff Council is working to start an Emergency Fund for Civil Service Employees.

Chair Barsema congratulated this year's recipients of the Professional Excellence Awards for Faculty and Staff and mentioned that he is very proud of everyone at NIU. Chair Barsema wanted to thank all the staff, faculty, and students for getting through a very difficult year.

Chair Barsema noted a press release that was put out by the Illinois Board of Higher Education about enrollment at public universities and colleges, as he was very pleased to see NIU highlighted in many areas regarding enrollment. Further, he congratulated the cross-country team for winning the MAC Championship for 2020 and congratulated the Educator Licensure Program for receiving very high marks from the Illinois State Board of Higher Education.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Barsema introduced the public comment portion of the meeting.

General Counsel Perry indicated that there was no request for public comment.

REPORTS OF THE BOARD COMMITTEES AND BOARD LIAISONS

Chair Barsema reminded everyone that the reports of the Board Committees and the Board Liaisons are information only.

Vice President for University Advancement Catherine Squires presented a report for the Northern Illinois University Foundation.

Chair Barsema and Trustee Gayles thanked Vice President Squires and her team for all their hard work and all that they do.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT NO. 147

Chair Barsema asked President Freeman to present the President's Report No. 147.

UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS FORWARDED BY THE BOARD COMMITTEES

Agenda Item 8.a.1. Sabbatical Postponements to FY22 Due to COVID-19

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.a.1. for approval.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 8.a.1. Trustee Pritchard so moved, and Vice Chair Wasowicz seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Abstain

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Absent

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 8.a.2. FY22 Budget Request

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.a.2. for approval.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 8.a.2. Vice Chair Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Gayles seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Absent

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 8.a.3. FY22 IBHE Capital Budget Request

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.a.3. for approval.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 8.a.3. Vice Chair Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Athas seconded.

Vice Chair Wasowicz asked if this is a request that NIU routinely needs to put forth to the Illinois Board of Higher Education. President Freeman responded that this is a request that NIU does put forth each year.

Chair Barsema asked President Freeman at a very high level to talk about the process that NIU goes through internally to prioritize this list. President Freeman responded there is a group that meets regularly that represents administration and finance, academic affairs, student affairs, research and innovation partnerships, and a few others, to discuss how the capital needs of the university align with our mission, vision and values. Each year the group evaluates what is happening on campus as they look at the existing lists, both our list and a list from the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Once recommendations are made, there is a larger discussion, and the list is shared broadly to make sure it meets all aspects of our mission.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Absent

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

UNIVERSITY REPORTS FORWARDED BY THE BOARD COMMITTEES

President Freeman briefly revisited agenda item 8.b.1. President Freeman recognized and congratulated all the recipients who received the Professional Excellence Award for Faculty and Staff. Even though there have not been celebrations this year like in past years, it does not diminish their accomplishments.

Trustee Pritchard asked, once live events can be held again, will there be an event held for the faculty and staff who received the professional excellence award during the pandemic. President Freeman agreed that a recognition event will be held at a later date. NIU will be working to determine whether that is possible for many events that were unable to be held due to the pandemic.

President Freeman asked whether any Trustees wanted to revisit information items forwarded from the committees. Hearing none, she continued to the items directly from the President.

ITEMS DIRECTLY FROM THE PRESIDENT

Agenda Item 8.c.1. Appointment of Interim Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.c.1. for approval.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 8.c.1. Trustee Pritchard so moved, and Vice Chair Wasowicz seconded.

Chair Barsema thanked Dean Block for her service to NIU and the College of Health and Human Sciences.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Absent

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 8.c.2. Authorization for Release of Reimbursable Funds for Participation in Mid-American Conference Football COVID-19 Testing Program

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.c.2. for approval.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 8.c.2. Vice Chair Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Gayles seconded.

Board members shared their support of the agenda item and agreed it was a good idea to put forth.

Trustee Athas asked if with the loss of revenue from college football playoffs, was there any concern that the source of funding will be diminished. President Freeman responded that the loss of revenue should not jeopardize the ability to cover the testing for the athletes.

Chair Barsema asked if the plan to receive reimbursed funds in early 2021 is still on track, and if it is anticipated that the funds will be reimbursed in FY21. President Freeman confirmed that they are still on track to be reimbursed in FY21.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Absent

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 8.c.3. COVID-19 Testing Costs for Remainder of FY21

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.c.3. for approval.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 8.c.3. Trustee Athas so moved, and Trustee Pritchard seconded.

Trustee Pritchard confirmed that the amount in the agenda item is through FY21 and up to \$1.2 million. President Freeman confirmed that this is a not to exceed the \$1.2 million amount, and it only extends through FY21 in hopes that with the vaccine being more widely available.

Trustee Gayles asked when test results can be expected. President Freeman responded that the SHIELD Illinois test turns results around within 24 hours.

Vice Chair Wasowicz asked whether the new test under development at NIU had the possibility of being offered at a lower cost and whether NIU plans to offer it. President Freeman responded that once that test is ready and available for us, NIU plans to incorporate it into our testing.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Absent

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 8.c.4. Draft FY22 Undergraduate, Graduate, and Law Fee Pricing Recommendation

President Freeman pointed out that the word “draft” incorrectly appears in the item title and the associated recommendation. This is not a draft, but a final version of the agenda item.

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.c.4. for approval.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 8.c.4. Vice Chair Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Pritchard seconded.

Trustee Pritchard questioned whether the move of some of the student fees to other expenses is anticipated in this fee structure. Further, he asked if services that may not have been provided recently were taken into consideration in the pricing formula. President Freeman responded that at this point NIU is working under the assumption that this coming fall, AY21 and FY22, we will more closely resemble the fall of AY19 rather than AY20. When creating the FY22 Fee Pricing Recommendation, the need to divert student fees to pay for extensive COVID mitigations was not anticipated.

Trustee Gayles asked whether students were engaged in the development of the new fee for cultural diversity. President Freeman responded that students have been made aware of the fees and have been a part of the process along the way. At this point, students have been very receptive to the programs that the fees will be supporting. Vice President Edghill-Walden and Associate Vice President Wesener-Michael both agreed that the programs supported are needed for students and it is very exciting that NIU will be able to offer these resources for our students.

Chair Barsema asked that based on the \$0.80 per credit hour, approximately how many dollars will go to this programing and what is expected to be done with those dollars. President Freeman responded that a variety of programs may be offered including high impact speakers, and cultural heritage celebrations which could be of interest to many of the students on campus. President Freeman added it is anticipated that with the \$0.80 per credit hour fee, about \$280,000 per year will be budgeted.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Absent

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 8.c.5. FY22 Room and Board Fee Recommendation

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.c.5. for approval.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 8.c.5. Trustee Athas so moved, and Trustee Pritchard seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes	Trustee John Butler: Yes
Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes	Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent
Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes	Trustee Aidan Shields: Absent
Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes	Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 8.c.6. Authorization to Retain Executive Search Firms for the Appointment of Specific Dean and Executive Level Positions

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.c.6. for approval.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 8.c.6. Trustee Gayles so moved, and Vice Chair Wasowicz seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes	Trustee John Butler: Yes
Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes	Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent
Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes	Trustee Aidan Shields: Absent
Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes	Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

Break at 10:41 a.m./Resume at 10:51 a.m.

Agenda Item 8.c.7. College of Law Overview

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.c.7. Dean Cassandra Hill presented on the College of Law.

The trustees and President Freeman congratulated Dean Hill on a wonderful presentation. Many of the trustees had questions about the bar exam passage rate for the College of Law. Dean Hill commented that given the delays and switch of the format of the exam, the College of Law is very happy with an 81% passage rate from the exam in fall of 2020. The state passage rate was 84%. The students that did not pass the bar exam, are contacted, and provided support to help with taking and passing the exam when it is offered again.

The trustees wondered, generally, after graduation, where College of Law graduates tend to move to. Assistant Dean Greg Anderson responded that many do stay in the Chicago area or the greater Midwest, including Iowa and Wisconsin, as well as states out west.

Trustee Athas asked about the 3+3 programs and was wondering if the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology was a part of the accelerated law degree program. Dean Hill responded

that there are 13 accelerated law degree programs and one of them is with the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology. Assistant Dean Kellie Martial added that each year there are about one to two students that come from the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology to participate in the accelerated law degree program.

Chair Barsema asked for a few examples on what type of jobs fall under the category “public interest” when you are referring to job placement. Assistant Dean Anderson responded that public defenders fall under the “public interest” category as well as graduates who go and work for a non-profit organization.

CHAIR’S REPORT NO. 96

Chair Barsema presented the Chair’s report.

Agenda Item 9.a. 2020 Annual Performance Review of President Freeman

Board Chair Barsema presented agenda item 9.a.

The trustees congratulated and thanked President Freeman for all she has done and for her dedication to NIU. The trustees acknowledged President Freeman and her leadership team and how they led NIU to be very successful despite having a tough year with the pandemic. The trustees all agreed that they are excited and look forward to working with President Freeman in the future.

President Freeman thanked the trustees for all their comments and appreciate all the confidence and gratitude. President Freeman also thanked the trustees for acknowledging and thanking the leadership team and everyone at NIU that makes the university successful.

Agenda Item 9.b. Closed Session Minutes Review and Release

Board Chair Barsema presented agenda item 9.b. for approval.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 9.b. Vice Chair Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Pritchard seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Absent

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

OTHER MATTERS

No other matters were discussed.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Chair Barsema announced that the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held March 18, 2021.

CLOSED SESSION

Chair Barsema stated that the Board needed to go into closed session and would not take up new business following the closed session. He asked for a motion to close the public meeting to conduct closed session to discuss the following subjects as authorized by the Open Meetings Act: personnel matters as generally described under sections 2(c)(1)(2)(3) and (21) of the open meetings act; collective bargaining matters as generally described under section 2(c)(2) of the open meetings act; litigation and risk management matters as generally described under sections 2(c)(11) and (12) of the open meetings act; and closed session minutes matters as generally described under section 2(c)(21) of the open meetings act.

Trustee Athas so moved, and Vice Chair Wasowicz seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Absent

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

The meeting closed at 11:57 a.m.

At 2:15 p.m. the Board returned from closed session.

Chair Barsema asked Dr. Streb to conduct a roll call.

Trustee Rita Athas: Present

Trustee John Butler: Present

Trustee Montel Gayles: Present

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Present

Trustee Aidan Shields: Absent

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Present

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Present

The motion was approved.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Athas so moved, and Trustee Pritchard seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Dr. Streb to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Absent

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 2:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Crystal Doyle
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.