

Minutes of the
NIU Board of Trustees
Research and Innovation, Legal and Legislative Affairs
COMMITTEE MEETING
May 14, 2020

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 12:53 p.m. by Committee Chair John Butler. The Committee meeting was conducted through video conferencing communications and was conducted pursuant to Section 6 of Executive Order 2020-7 (Suspending OMA requirements of in person attendance by members of a public body). Recording Secretary Jessica Cima conducted a roll call of the Trustees. Members present were Trustee Montel Gayles, Trustee Veronica Herrero, Trustee Madalynn Mershon, Trustee Eric Wasowicz, Board Chair Dennis Barsema, Committee Chair John Butler, and Committee Vice Chair Rita Athas. Trustee Bob Pritchard joined the meeting at 1:09 p.m. Also present were President Lisa Freeman, Committee Liaison and Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships Jerry Blazey, General Counsel Bryan Perry, and Board Liaison Matt Streb.

VERIFICATION OF QUORUM AND APPROPRIATE NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

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

MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Trustee Montel Gayles, seconded by Trustee Rita Athas, all were in favor. None were opposed. The agenda was approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2020 meeting was made by Trustee Eric Wasowicz; seconded by Trustee Veronica Herrero. All were in favor. None were opposed. The minutes were approved.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee Butler welcomed the members of the University Advisory Committee representing the Research and Innovation, Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee and requested comments. No members of the University Advisory Committee offered comments. Trustee Butler discussed the ways in which NIU has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and noted that many NIU faculty members continue to participate in research projects in response to COVID-19.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Perry confirmed that there were no timely requests for public comment.

UNIVERSITY REPORTS

Chair Butler asked Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships Dr. Jerry Blazey to provide an update from the Division of Research and Innovation Partnerships.

Vice President Blazey reported that the Division has been responding to the shifting compliance and regulatory environments induced by the pandemic. He noted that there has been increased research activities in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Dr. Blazey reported that NIU faculty are engaged in research projects ranging from predictive modeling to the effects of the pandemic on nonprofits. Dr. Blazey also reported that the Division of Research and Innovation Partnerships has developed and rolled out a plan to reopen scholarly facilities and spaces on campus, with the goal of having spaces up and running by June 1.

Agenda Item 7.a. - State Legislative Report

Jenna Mitchell reported that neither the state house nor senate have held session since early March due to the pandemic. However, it recently announced that both chambers will be in session May 20-22 to consider new and pending legislation. She noted that working groups are meeting to determine the state's FY21 budget. Ms. Mitchell reported that the Governor's Office of Management and Budget (GOMB) released a revised revenue outlook for the state based on the preliminary impacts from COVID-19. The GOMB's revised outlook for FY20 is \$2.7 billion below estimated revenues and the revised outlook for FY21 is \$4.6 billion below the base revenue estimates that were used to craft the Governor's recommended FY21 budget. Ms. Mitchell noted that given the COVID-19 circumstances, NIU has appropriately adapted its Spring 2020 legislative agenda to only include time-sensitive items such as outstanding FY20 payments to NIU, an FY20 supplement budget fix for the AIM HIGH program, and stable funding for FY21.

Agenda Item 7.b. – Federal Legislative Report

Dr. Anna Quider reported that the White House has granted federal research agencies the flexibility to adjust their policies for federal awards in response to the pandemic, and many have adopted temporary changes that affect federally funded programs at NIU. Additionally, she said that several agencies, including the National Science Foundation, have released calls for research proposals related to COVID-19 and NIU has been actively pursuing these opportunities.

Dr. Quider reported that Congress and the White House have worked together on four pandemic response bills. Two of those bills include provisions that affect NIU. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, signed into law on March 18 and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (or CARES) Act, signed into law on March 27. Dr. Quider reported that NIU is engaging our congressional delegation on the impact of the pandemic to our campus. In addition to legislation related to the pandemic, the Department of Education released the final revised Title IX regulations addressing campus sexual misconduct. Dr. Quider noted that Dr. Blazey led a group of senior research officers from nine Midwestern research universities in submitting comments to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy regarding open access publishing of scientific journal articles. Lastly, Dr. Quider reported that the Supreme Court is expected to soon rule on the lawfulness of the DACA.

Agenda Item 7.c. – Sponsored Programs Administration (written Report)

The committee reviewed the sponsored program administration quarterly written report submitted by Assistant Vice President Dara Little.

OTHER MATTERS

Chair Butler asked the Committee members if there were other matters to come before the committee. The committee confirmed that there were no other matters to be discussed.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Chair Butler noted that the next meeting will be held on August 20, 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Montel Gayles motioned to adjourn; Board Chair Barsema seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Cima/Karen Campbell
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.