

Minutes of the
NIU Board of Trustees
Research and Innovation, Legal and Legislative Affairs
COMMITTEE MEETING
August 20, 2020

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 10:12 a.m. by Committee Chair Rita Athas. 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 Board Chair Dennis Barsema, Trustee Montel Gayles, Trustee Veronica Herrero, Trustee Bob Pritchard, Trustee Aidan Shields, Trustee Eric Wasowicz, Committee Vice Chair John Butler, and Committee Chair Rita Athas. Also present were President Lisa Freeman, Committee Liaison and Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships Gerald 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

Committee Chair Athas asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Trustee Gayles so moved, and Trustee Pritchard seconded. The motion was approved.

Chair Athas asked Ms. Cima to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Yes

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Committee Chair Athas asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 18, 2020. Trustee Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Pritchard seconded. The motion was approved.

Chair Athas asked Ms. Cima to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Yes

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee Athas 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 Athas noted that despite COVID-19 NIU has continued with research despite the challenges. Further, she noted that faculty have engaged with research projects related to COVID-19.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Roderic Moyer made a public comment.

UNIVERSITY REPORTS

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

Dr. Blazey reported that by June 1, 2020, more than 100 scholarly spaces and facilities had been safely reopened. He noted that despite the many challenges presented by COVID-19, faculty have been responding to research possibilities with excellent scholarship and innovation and that staff continue to provide outstanding support.

Agenda Item 7.a. State Relations Update

State Legislative Liaison, Jenna Mitchell, reported that lawmakers passed a budget in May at the close of the state's fiscal year. Ms. Mitchell reported that NIU received a flat appropriation of \$87.8 million in general funds and that the budget included flat appropriations for the Monetary Award Program and AIM HIGH. She noted that the budget also included a fix to the FY20 AIM HIGH appropriation, removing the cohort restrictions, which provided NIU expenditure flexibility and autonomy to spend its \$3.8 million allocation on any existing or future cohorts. Ms. Mitchell reported that NIU had received approximately \$8.1 million of its FY21 appropriation from the state and that the budget includes a re-appropriation of all capital projects, authorizing expenditure this year; however, many of those projects remain on hold due to COVID-19 and the specific tax revenue sources necessary to pay for the projects. She noted that the \$7.7 million released and authorized for expenditure on the planning and design of the new health IT building and the \$15 million for the Northern Illinois Center for Community Sustainability has not yet been received, and the \$53 million for deferred maintenance has not yet been authorized for release. She reported that getting capital dollars released is a top priority for State Relations. She reported that NIU will receive \$2.9 million from the Governor's emergency education relief (GEER) fund, created by the Federal CARES Act.

Agenda Item 7.b. – Federal Relations Report

Assistant Vice President for Federal Relations, Dr. Anna Quider, reported that in March, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and the CARES Act were signed into law. NIU received an allocation of \$14.8 million from the CARES Act, to be spent equally between direct emergency grants to students and institutional expenses related to the pandemic. She reported that there is broad agreement among the House, Senate, and the White House that additional pandemic relief is needed but negotiations have stalled. Dr. Quider noted that the federal FY21 begins on October 1, 2020 and a continuing resolution that funds the government at last year's levels through at least

mid-November is expected. Dr. Quider reported that there were two major supreme court rulings this quarter. The Court rejected the Trump Administration's termination of DACA so the policy remains in place for the time being. The Court also ruled that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects gay and transgender individuals from workplace discrimination.

Agenda Item 7.c. – Sponsored Programs Administration Report

Assistant Vice President for Sponsored Programs, Dara Little, reported that total sponsored funding for FY20 was \$44 million, NIU's highest level of funding in five years, of which \$7.5 million is COVID-19 related funding. She noted that even without COVID-19 funding, NIU has seen consistent growth in external funding since 2017. Ms. Little reported that NIU received \$44 million in funding that was received through 325 awards that are comprised up of awards between research, instruction and other activities. She noted 383 proposals have been submitted this year, 13 have been for specific COVID-19 relief or research. She noted that NIU anticipates additional proposals for COVID-19 research as the federal and state governments release their aid funds and agencies prioritize research funds. She reported that faculty members from across university departments pivoted aspects of their research to the COVID-19 pandemic and the scope of the work is extremely varied

Agenda Item 7.d. – Innovation Impact Report and Plans

Director of Innovation, Luke Sebby, provided a snapshot of the intellectual property portfolio reporting that NIU holds 39 U.S. and 18 foreign patents in its portfolio along with two license agreements and two option agreements. Mr. Sebby also reported that a recent innovation impact report by the George W. Bush Institute, Opus Faveo Innovation Development, and Southern Methodist ranked NIU third among peer institutions. He noted that NIU placed third largely because of efficiency, with a heavy reliance on research and teaching productivity coupled with prudent TTO patent prosecution decisions. Mr. Sebby discussed recent efforts in prioritization and streamlining of the Innovation Office activities, identifying opportunities to implement best practices in particular with regard to IP management. Mr. Sebby reported that future plans for the office of Innovation include playing a key role in the newly-formed Strategic Development Team as well as setting the conditions for long-term innovation success at NIU by leveraging the innovation engines NIU has to offer to build a commercialization capability. Mr. Sebby noted that the team is building momentum through FY21, aiming to achieve greater innovation impacts in the coming years.

OTHER MATTERS

Committee Chair Athas 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

Committee Chair Athas noted that the next meeting will be held on November 12, 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

Committee Chair Athas asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Trustee Gayles so moved, and Trustee Herrero seconded. The motion was approved.

Committee Chair Athas asked Ms. Cima to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Yes

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Cima/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.