

Minutes of the  
**Board of Trustees of Northern Illinois University**  
**Research and Innovation, Legal and Legislative Affairs**  
**Committee Meeting**  
November 18, 2021

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Committee Chair Veronica Herrero.

Committee Chair Herrero asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Committee Vice Chair Rita Athas: Present    Trustee Dennis Barsema: Present

Trustee John Butler: Present                      Trustee Montel Gayles: Present

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Present                  Trustee Jacob Sommer: Present

Board Chair Eric Wasowicz: Present              Committee Chair Veronica Herrero: Present

Also present were President Lisa Freeman; Committee Liaison and Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships Gerald Blazey; Vice President and General Counsel and Parliamentarian Bryan Perry; Chief of Staff and Liaison to the Board of Trustees Matt Streb; Director of State Relations Katie Davison; Assistant Vice President for Federal Relations Anna Quider; and Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry Tao Xu.

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

**CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Committee Chair Herrero welcomed the members of the University Advisory Committee and requested comments. There were no comments. Committee Chair Herrero remarked that the intersection of diversity, equity, inclusion, transdisciplinarity, and research promotes excellence in higher education and that she was pleased to see these items highlighted in the University's goals. She noted that striving towards these goals will prepare NIU students for everchanging workplaces.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Committee Chair Herrero introduced the public comment portion of the meeting. General Counsel Bryan Perry confirmed that no public comments were received.

## UNIVERSITY REPORTS

Committee Chair Herrero 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 noted that the Committee would receive reports from Director of State Relations Katie Davison and Assistant Vice President for Federal Relations Dr. Anna Quider regarding legislative matters relevant to NIU. He reported that the quarterly sponsored programs report was submitted and noted that in the first quarter of FY22 NIU received 72 sponsored awards totaling \$8.1M. Dr. Blazey also reported that the Office of Research Compliance, Integrity, and Safety's (ORCIS) FY21 report has been completed and published. He noted that in FY21 ORCIS handled 915 applications, inspected 200 labs, and trained over 2200 individuals. Dr. Blazey reported that the Office of Innovation facilitated the signing of a lease agreement in the 71 North Partnership Studio, as well as developed a variety of innovation programs in the space. Dr. Blazey reported that Dr. Courtney Gallaher has been appointed as NIU's Sustainability Coordinator and that she is currently working on NIU's Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

### **Agenda Item 7.a. - State Legislative Report**

Director of State Relations Katie Davison noted that during the fall veto session, three pieces of legislation that would impact higher education went through the general assembly. Ms. Davison reported that House Bill 2778, which would require k-12 and higher education institutions to offer paid leave to faculty or staff who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or have been in close contact with someone testing positive for COVID-19. Ms. Davison noted that the bill passed both chambers with very little opposition from either party. She then reported on Senate Bill 1169, The Health Care Right of Conscience Act amendment, which clarifies language allowing employers to create COVID-19 vaccination and testing policies. Ms. Davison reported that the passage of this amendment allows NIU to continue implementing vaccination and testing protocols. She noted, that although the bill passed, it did not get three fifths majority, and therefore will not go into effect until June 1, 2022.

Ms. Davison reported that during the veto session, a new congressional district map was drawn, and that Illinois lost a house seat due to the results of the 2020 census. Ms. Davison noted that the map creates a congressional delegation of 14 Democrats and three Republicans starting in 2022 and it puts DeKalb in the 14<sup>th</sup> District with incumbent Congresswoman Lauren Underwood.

Ms. Davison reported that she along with NIU alumni and Chief of Staff Matt Streb, met with every member of the NIU Caucus to discuss legislative priorities and ask for their support to release the capital funds for the Northern Illinois Center for Community Sustainability and Ms. Davison noted that our highest legislative priority is to advocate for stable funding that supports the needs of NIU students

### **Agenda Item 7.b. – Federal Legislative Report**

Assistant Vice President for Federal Relations Dr. Anna Quider reported that President Biden issued an Executive Order requiring employees of federal contractors to become fully vaccinated for COVID-19. She noted that NIU is working with our associations and colleagues to monitor and respond to this order.

Dr. Quider reported that President Biden signed the \$1.2T Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into law and that staff are analyzing the legislation for potential opportunities for NIU. Dr. Quider reported that Congress continues to make progress on the major reconciliation bill called the Build

Back Better Act. The House released draft text for a \$1.75T bill, which indicates that it would increase the maximum Pell Grant award by \$550, expand eligibility for federal student financial aid to undocumented students including DACA recipients, invest in regional innovation hubs, provide additional funding for federal research agencies including the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy, and include research infrastructure investments.

Dr. Quider reported that federal government is currently funded under a continuing resolution through December 3<sup>rd</sup>, and that Congress would likely pass another continuing resolution, which will delay action on a FY22 budget.

Dr. Quider reported on NIU's success in the newly reinstated congressionally directed spending process, formerly known as earmarks. She noted that the House and Senate Appropriations Committee had approved funding for two projects totaling an allocation of \$1.16M for NIU.

Dr. Quider reported on recent federal engagement, which included NIU's nomination of Presidential Research, Artistry, and Scholarship Professor David Gunkel for the White House's National Artificial Intelligence Advisory Committee. Dr. Quider noted that Congressman Sean Casten joined a panel of NIU faculty to discuss climate change for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Rebuilding Democracy Lecture Series and that Vice President Blazey recently met with Dr. Karen Marrongelle, Chief Operating Officer of the National Science Foundation, to discuss equity in research funding.

#### **Agenda Item 7.c. – Sponsored Program Administration Quarterly Report**

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

#### **Agenda Item 7.d. – Faculty Presentation**

Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry Dr. Tao Xu presented his research on developing renewable energy and catalytic production of chemicals from atmospheric carbon dioxide.

#### **OTHER MATTERS**

Committee Chair Herrero asked 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 Herrero noted that the next meeting will be held on February 10, 2022.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Committee Chair Herrero asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Gayles so moved, and Committee Vice Chair Trustee Athas seconded. The motion was approved. The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

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.*