



Special Meeting  
of the  
Board of Trustees

*April 7, 2022*

**Special Meeting of the  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
9:00 a.m. – Thursday – April 7, 2022  
Board of Trustees Room  
Altgeld Hall 315**

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Verification of Quorum and Appropriate Notification of Public Meeting
3. Meeting Agenda Approval.....*Action*..... i
4. Chair's Comments/Announcements
5. Public Comment\*
6. President’s Report No. 159
  - a. [Request to Approve Contract with Braven, Inc.](#).....*Action*.....1
  - b. [Use of Executive Search Firm for Dean of College of Health and Human Sciences](#).....  
.....*Information*.....3
7. Other Matters
8. Next Meeting Date
9. Closed Session
10. Adjournment

\*Individuals wishing to make an appearance before the Board should consult the [Bylaws of the Board of Trustees of Northern Illinois University, Article II, Section 4 – Appearances before the Board](#). Appearance request forms can be completed [online](#) in advance of the meeting or will be available in the Board Room the day of the meeting. For more information contact Crystal Doyle [ccoppel@niu.edu](mailto:ccoppel@niu.edu).

**Anyone needing special accommodations to participate in the NIU Board of Trustees meetings should contact Crystal Doyle, [ccoppel@niu.edu](mailto:ccoppel@niu.edu) or (815) 753-1273, as soon as possible.**

## REQUEST TO APPROVE CONTRACT WITH BRAVEN, INC.

**Summary:** The University requests approval to collaborate with Braven, Inc., a non-profit corporation, to provide career-readiness opportunities to undergraduate students to address the inequities in social and economic mobility faced by NIU students from underserved backgrounds. This partnership will provide NIU students opportunities to build career-accelerating skills, mentorship relationships, networking opportunities, and real-world problem-solving competencies. The Braven program includes an academic course and post-course internships, networking, and career coaching. Services will support students to transition to strong first jobs, meaningful careers, and lives of impact.

**Background:** This partnership will support the FY2022 university goals and Strategic Enrollment Management plan to offer NIU students, through a partnership with Braven, Inc., additional opportunities to build skills, confidence, experiences, and networks, thereby enhancing their potential to transition to strong first jobs.

Braven, Inc. offers an innovative model that embeds career education through their virtual Braven Career and Leadership Accelerator, supporting students to cultivate their career skills, participate in interactive experiences, and build their network. A mutual goal of NIU and Braven is to reduce post-graduation equity gaps that students face when entering the job market. This goal is pursued by working with students who, based on analyses both at NIU and nationwide, experience these challenges, specifically those from low-income backgrounds and students of color. Many students who identify in these groups lack the social capital to create opportunities for strong first careers. For example, in Illinois, black college graduates earn, on average, 11% less than their white counterparts three years after graduation.<sup>1</sup>

Braven offers students skill development for working in teams, leadership, problem-solving, networking and communicating, and operating and managing. As more employers capitalize on their own personal and professional networks to recruit talent, Braven works to create those connections for students who are first-generation and from underserved communities. Braven connects students directly to employers through hands-on engagement in the culminating capstone project in the Accelerator course and ongoing mentoring and ensures our students will have greater access to internships during college and more robust career opportunities after graduation. Nationwide, 58% of Braven fellows have strong job attainment six months after graduation compared to 36% of Black and Latinx public university graduates. In their first job after graduation, 53% of Braven fellows are outearning their parents.

This proposed partnership includes the Accelerator course and follow-up activities provided by Braven, Inc. for July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2027. The multi-year period will allow for comprehensive outcomes evaluation, an essential component in planning, assessing, and working with the students who stand to benefit from the partnership. Students take a credit-bearing course in year one and participate in mentorship and career activities in years two and three.

The estimated cost for the first year is \$400,000, with a total anticipated cost of approximately \$2,337,500 for the five years.

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<sup>1</sup> ASSESSING EQUITY IN ILLINOIS HIGHER EDUCATION Presentation to the Illinois Board of Higher Education Ginger Ostro, Executive Director August 4, 2020: [https://www.ibhe.org/pdf/IBHE\\_Equity\\_Update\\_ppt.pdf](https://www.ibhe.org/pdf/IBHE_Equity_Update_ppt.pdf).

**Funding:** Foundation and University Funds

**Recommendation:** The University recommends the Board of Trustees approve the request to enter into a contract with Braven, Inc.

**USE OF EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRM FOR DEAN OF COLLEGE  
OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES**

**Summary:** At the December 10, 2020 Board meeting, the Board authorized the President to select executive search firms for the search for the appointment of specific dean and executive level positions. As has been the practice, the President will periodically report back to the Board regarding selection and status of such searches. Further, provisions of Public Act 97-0814 and the Northern Illinois University policy on the use of external search firms approved by the Board of Trustees on May 23, 2013, allow the use of an external search firm for senior executive level positions when needed.

In Fiscal Year 2022, the University will begin a search for the position of Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences. This senior leadership position is critical to the success of the university and the expertise of a search firm will be utilized to ensure the most qualified and diverse pool.

Pursuant to the provisions of Public Act 97-0814 and due to the approval received on December 10, 2020 by the Board of Trustees, the University is informing the Board of the intent to utilize a search firm from the Illinois Procurement Bulletin – Public Institutions of Higher Education list to perform the search for the Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences.

**NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY POLICY  
ON THE USE OF EXTERNAL HIRING SEARCH FIRMS**

Pursuant to the Northern Illinois University Law, as amended by Illinois Public Act 97-814, it is the policy of Northern Illinois University that charges for the services of an external hiring search firm may not be paid from any source of university funds, except:

- (1) In the hiring of the President of the University, or
- (2) In the case of when the Board of Trustees and the President demonstrate a justifiable need for guidance from an individual or firm with specific expertise in the field of hiring.

In furtherance of this authority, the President may implement this policy through the development of further guidelines and procedures for determining when the use of an external hiring search firm is justified. The Board and/or the President may delegate their respective responsibilities under this policy to appropriate university officials as deemed necessary.

Any NIU hiring department or entity that wishes to utilize the services of an external hiring search firm must make a request to the Office of the President for appropriate review under this policy before engaging the services of such search firm. In determining whether a request qualifies for the justified use of an external hiring search firm, the President will consider the following applicable criteria:

- The nature and scope of the position being filled (e.g., senior level versus non-senior level);
- The nature and scope of the search (e.g., nationwide versus local or regional);
- The university's goals and priorities surrounding the search;
- The availability of personnel, monetary resources and other university resources to dedicate to the search;
- An external search firm's ability to help recruit and screen candidates;
- An external search firm's ability to enhance the quality of a candidate pool;
- An external search firm's ability to help conduct and coordinate the logistics of a search;
- The expertise/specialization of an external search firm in conducting searches
- An external search firm's ability to bring fresh and new perspectives from outside of the university.

Northern Illinois University understands that the determination of whether a search is justified in using the services of an external hiring search firm depends upon the unique circumstances of the search being conducted. The President is not prohibited from considering other factors that may be deemed relevant and important for a search.

Upon completing a review, the President will determine whether justifiable need exists for the selection of an external hiring search firm and shall make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees for final action on the matter at any regular or special meeting of the full Board of Trustees. In its consideration of the matter, the Board will consider the above-referenced applicable criteria, as well as any other factors that may be deemed relevant and important. The Board's decision will be final.