Minutes of the

**Board of Trustees of Northern Illinois University**

June 12, 2025

**Call to order and roll call**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Montel Gayles in the Board of Trustees Room, 315 Altgeld Hall.

Recording Secretary Crystal Doyle conducted a roll call.

Trustee Rita Athas: Absent *(arrived at 9:02 a.m.)*

Trustee Dennis Barsema: Absent Vice Chair John Butler: Present

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent Trustee Aidan O’Brien: Present

Trustee Leland Strom: Present Trustee Eric Wasowicz: Present

Board Chair Montel Gayles: Present

Also present: President Lisa Freeman; Vice President and General Counsel and Board Parliamentarian Bryan Perry; Executive Vice President and Provost Laurie Elish-Piper; Vice President for Administration and Finance and Chief Financial Officer George Middlemist; Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer Carol Sumner; Senior Associate Vice President and Chief Human Resource Officer John Acardo; Vice President for Student Affairs Clint-Michael Reneau; and University Advisory Council (UAC) Representative Felicia Bohanon and Benjamin Creed.

**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 Gayles asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Trustee Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee O’Brien seconded. The motion was approved.

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to amend that motion, in order to approve a consent agenda for action items 8.a.1. through 8.a.3. Trustee Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee O’Brien seconded. The motion was approved.

**review and approval of minutes of may 8, 2025**

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the special meeting on May 8, 2025. Trustee Strom so moved, and Trustee O’Brien seconded.

**chair’s comments/announcements**

Chair Gayles welcomed the members of the University Advisory Council who were present.

Chair Gayles thanked the university community on the work that has been done on the budget this year. He also thanked everyone who made commencement a joyous occasion for all the families that attended.

*Trustee Athas joined the meeting at 9:04 a.m.*

**public comment**

Chair Gayles introduced the public comment portion of the meeting. General Counsel Perry introduced Martha Villagomez and Rave Meyer to make public comments.

**Reports of the Board committees and board liaisons**

Chair Gayles reminded everyone that the reports of the Board Committees and the Board Liaisons were information only.

Vice Chair John Butler, Universities Civil Services Merit Board Representative, provided a verbal report for item 7.e.

Catherine Squires, Vice President for Advancement and President and CEO of the NIU Foundation, provided a verbal report for item 7.g.

**PResident’s report no. 189**

Chair Gayles asked President Freeman to present the President’s Report No. 189.

**UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS FORWARDED BY THE BOARD COMMITTEES**

President Freeman presented the items that were moved to the consent agenda including:

**Agenda Item 8.a.1. – Fiscal Year 2026 NIU Foundation Professional Services Contract**

**Agenda Item 8.a.2. – School of Nursing Standardized Test Prep Services**

**Agenda Item 8.a.3. – Oracle ERP Hardware/Software Contract**

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda items. Trustee Strom so moved, and Trustee Athas seconded. The motion was approved.

**UNIVERSITY REPORTS FORWARDED BY THE BOARD COMMITTEES**

President Freeman asked whether any Trustees wanted to revisit information items forwarded from the committees.

President Freeman continued to the items directly from the President.

**ITEMS DIRECTLY FROM THE PRESIDENT**

**Agenda Item 8.c.1. Fiscal Year 2026 Non-Represented Staff Salary Increment Allocation Guidelines**

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

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to approve item 8.c.1. Trustee Wasowicz so moved, and Vice Chair Butler seconded. The motion was approved.

**Agenda Item 8.c.2. Fiscal Year 2026 Non-Represented Faculty Salary Increment Allocation Guidelines**

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

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to approve item 8.c.2. Trustee Athas so moved, and Trustee O’Brien seconded. The motion was approved.

**Agenda Item 8.c.3. Fiscal Year 2026 University Internal Budget**

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

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to approve item 8.c.3. Trustee Strom so moved, and Trustee Wasowicz seconded. The motion was approved.

**Agenda Item 8.c.4. Honorary Doctorate Recommendation for James Baustert**

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

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to approve item 8.c.4. Trustee Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Strom seconded. The motion was approved.

**Agenda Item 8.c.5. Fiscal Year 2026 Honorary Doctorate Recommendation for Joe Sener**

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

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to approve item 8.c.5. Trustee Athas so moved, and Trustee Wasowicz seconded. The motion was approved.

**Agenda Item 8.c.6. Fiscal Year 2026 Medical Laboratory Sciences: Hands-on Learning Presentation**

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.c.6.

**chair’s report no. 113**

Chair Gayles presented the Chair’s Report No. 113.

**Agenda Item 9.a. Closed Session Minutes Review and Release**

Chair Gayles presented agenda item 9.a. for approval.

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to approve item 9.a. Trustee Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Strom seconded. The motion was approved.

**Agenda Item 9.b. Fiscal Year 2026 Election of Board Officers and Civil Services Merit Board Representative**

Chair Gayles presented agenda item 9.b. for approval.

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to approve item 9.b. Trustee O’Brien so moved, and Trustee Athas seconded. The motion was approved.

Mr. Perry explained the process for the FY26 elections and announced the results. Montel Gayles was elected as Chair for FY26, John Butler was elected as Vice Chair for FY26, Rita Athas was elected as Secretary for FY26, John Butler was elected as Civil Service Merit Board Representative for FY26, and Eric Wasowicz was elected as 5th Member for FY26.

**Agenda Item 9.c. Endorsing the Launch of NIU’s Campaign, Forward: The Campaign for NIU**

Chair Gayles presented agenda item 9.c. for approval.

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to approve item 9.c. Vice Chair Butler so moved, and Trustee Wasowicz seconded. The motion was approved.

Chair Gayles read the resolution.

**Agenda Item 9.d. Resolution Honoring Student Trustee Aidan O’Brien for Distinguished Service to the Northern Illinois University Board of Trustees**

Chair Gayles presented agenda item 9.d. for approval.

Vice Chair Butler asked to make a change to the resolution and add that Trustee O’Brien also received a Certificate in Digital Marketing in addition to a Certificate in Professional Selling.

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to approve item 9.d. with the change Vice Chair Butler mentioned. Vice Chair Butler so moved, and Trustee Strom seconded.

Vice Chair Butler read the resolution and Trustee O’Brien thanked the other trustees for the opportunity to serve as student trustee for NIU.

The Trustees thanked Trustee O’Brien for his outstanding service on the Board of Trustees and wish him luck as he starts his career.

The motion was approved.

**Other Matters**

There were no other matters.

**next meeting date**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held September 25, 2025 at 9 a.m.

**Closed Session**

Chair Gayles 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: closed session minutes matters as generally described under section 2(c)(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; real estate matters as generally described under section 2(c)(5) and (6) of the open meetings act; student disciplinary cases matters as generally described under sections 2(c)(11) and (12) of the open meetings act; and personnel matters as generally described under sections 2(c)(1)(2)(3) and (21) of the open meetings act.

Trustee Strom so moved, and Trustee O’Brien seconded.

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

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes Trustee Dennis Barsema: Absent

Vice Chair John Butler: Yes Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent

Trustee Aidan O’Brien: Yes Trustee Leland Strom: Yes

Trustee Eric Wasowicz: Yes Board Chair Montel Gayles: Yes

The motion was approved.

The Board closed the public meeting at 11:20 a.m.

The meeting reconvened from closed session at 1:02 p.m.

Chair Gayles asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes Trustee Dennis Barsema: Absent

Vice Chair John Butler: Yes Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent

Trustee Aidan O’Brien: Yes Trustee Leland Strom: Yes

Trustee Eric Wasowicz: Yes Board Chair Montel Gayles: Yes

**Adjournment**

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee O’Brien so moved, and Trustee Wasowicz seconded.

Chair Gayles asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes Trustee Dennis Barsema: Absent

Vice Chair John Butler: Yes Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent

Trustee Aidan O’Brien: Yes Trustee Leland Strom: Yes

Trustee Eric Wasowicz: Yes Board Chair Montel Gayles: Yes

The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 1:03 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.*