Minutes of the

**Board of Trustees of Northern Illinois University**

March 20, 2025

# Call to order and roll call

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m. by Board Vice Chair John Butler in the Board of Trustees Room, 315 Altgeld Hall.

Recording Secretary Crystal Doyle conducted a roll call.

Trustee Rita Athas: Absent *(arrived at 9:22 a.m.)*

Trustee Dennis Barsema: Present Vice Chair John Butler: Present

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

Trustee Leland Strom: Absent Trustee Eric Wasowicz: Present

Board Chair Montel Gayles: Absent *(arrived at 9:26 a.m.)*

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 Research and Innovation Partnerships Richard Mocarski; 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; Vice President for Enrollment Management, Marketing and Communications Sol Jensen; Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life Vicki Gerentes; SGA President Ja’Kobe Jones; and University Advisory Council (UAC) Representative 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

Vice Chair Butler asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Trustee Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Herrero seconded. The motion was approved.

Vice Chair Butler asked for a motion to amend that motion, in order to approve a consent agenda for action items 8.a.1. through 8.a.4. Trustee O’Brien so moved, and Trustee Herrero seconded. The motion was approved.

# review and approval of minutes of February 20, 2025 and February 27, 2025

Vice Chair Butler asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the special meeting on February 20, 2025. Trustee Barsema so moved, and Trustee Wasowicz seconded.

Vice Chair Butler asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the special meeting February 27, 2025. Trustee O’Brien so moved, and Trustee Herrero seconded.

# chair’s comments/announcements

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

UAC Representative Creed thanked President Freeman and her senior leadership team for helping NIU navigate this challenging time with all the changes at the federal level. He also thanked the Board of Trustees for the continued support of the sabbaticals that are offered to staff and faculty.

# public comment

Vice Chair Butler introduced the public comment portion of the meeting. General Counsel Perry introduced Martha Villagomez, Lesly Schoo, and Tom Kapraun to make public comments.

*Trustee Athas joined the meeting at 9:22 a.m.*

*Board Chair Gayles joined the meeting at 9:26 a.m.*

# 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.

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. 187

Chair Gayles asked President Freeman to present the President’s Report No. 187.

## 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. – Recommendations for Faculty and Supportive Professional Staff Sabbatical Leaves for the 2025-2026 Academic Year**

**Agenda Item 8.a.2. – Request for the Deletion of the Master of Science in Early Childhood Education**

**Agenda Item 8.a.3. – Request for the Deletion of the Master of Science in Teaching**

**Agenda Item 8.a.4. – Request for New Minor in Accountancy**

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda items. Vice Chair Butler 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. Revitalization of Greek Life Presentation**

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.c.1.

# Other Matters

There were no other matters.

# next meeting date

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held June 12, 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 Wasowicz 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: Yes

Vice Chair John Butler: Yes Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

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

Trustee Eric Wasowicz: Yes Board Chair Montel Gayles: Yes

The motion was approved.

The Board closed the public meeting at 10:42 a.m.

The meeting reconvened from closed session at 11:50 a.m.

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

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes Trustee Dennis Barsema: Yes

Vice Chair John Butler: Yes Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

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

Trustee Eric Wasowicz: Yes Board Chair Montel Gayles: Yes

# Adjournment

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Athas so moved, and Trustee Barsema seconded.

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

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes Trustee Dennis Barsema: Yes

Vice Chair John Butler: Yes Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

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

Trustee Eric Wasowicz: Yes Board Chair Montel Gayles: Yes

The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 11:51 a.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.*