**Supportive Professional Staff Council**

**General Meeting – Draft Minutes**

September 12, 2024

Teams/In Person Hybrid Meeting AL 225

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 p.m.

**Approved October 10, 2024**

**Call to Order:** President Bohanon called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

**Roll Call:** Administrative Aide called the roll and confirmed a quorum.

**Members Present:** Chynar Amanova,Emily Belcher, Felicia Bohanon, John Boswell,

Karinne Bredberg, Heath Duncan, Deborah Gettemy, Liz Guess, Jennifer Manning,   
Kellie Martial, Margaret Myles, Tom O’Grady, Candice Olagunju, Anthony Preston,

Erin Smith, Kyle Springer, Shannon Stoker, Megan Woodruff

**Members Absent:** Bill Braksick, Cody Carter, Matt Mattox, Lauren Teso

**Members Excused:** Michael Kunigonis

**Guests:** Ben Creed

**Approval of Agenda:** Agendaamended to include Introductions. Properly motioned and seconded (Duncan/O’Grady); all in favor, none opposed, Amended Agenda approved by chat vote.

**Approval of May, 2024 Minutes:** Properly motioned and seconded (Myles/Duncan) all in favor, none opposed, May, 2024 minutes approved by chat vote.

**Introduction: FY 25 Council Members**

**University Committee Reports: Board of Trustees, University Council, University Senate**

Board of Trustees: Ben Creed reporting: Board of Trustees sub-committees met August 22. At these sub-committee meetings is where a lot of decision conversations occur.

We got updates on the search for a Dean of the College of Education; the Learning Center was reaccredited for 10 years; we got reports on state legislation, including how the state budget was approved; we have a new VP of the Division of Research and Innovation Partnerships, Richard Mocarski, PhD from San Jose State University.

The big action item during the Board of Trustees meeting was an initial investment in phase one of a Campus Energy Improvement Plan. Three million dollars was approved by the Board to address broader, bigger packages to be considered at the next BOT meeting, September 19.

The $3,000,000 was to make sure we are eligible for various incentives that the federal government has for us to get the project started and consider the next four meetings. The money will be going towards improving campus energy use through efficiency. Water conservation, solar generation. There is an agreement that training is going to be included.

**University Council**

President Freeman gave a budget update, beginning with an update on the activity of the public funding commission. Below are excerpts from her presentation:

*The Illinois Commission on Equitable Higher Education Funding released a report that proposed a new funding model that would allocate state appropriated funds to Illinois public universities using a formula that prioritizes adequacy and equity. The report also recognized the need for increased funding of public universities, suggesting that additional investment of nine percent or $100 million annually will be required to fully fund our institutions to adequacy within 15 years.*

*From the standpoint of NIU,. . .the key findings are, between 2015 and 2023 state investment in public universities decreased overall by 22 percent in inflation-adjusted terms. NIU saw a decrease during that time period of 24 percent or $29 million in our annual appropriation. And that’s just because the appropriated funds didn’t keep pace with inflation.*

*NIU is found to be operating at only 55 percent adequacy, meaning that we receive only a little more than half of what we need to operate and serve students effectively. These are sobering findings that really speak to the need for advocacy for public higher education funding. But a couple of weeks ago, the recommendation of the funding commission was introduced in Senate Bill 3965 in preparation for next year’s legislative session. But no bill would probably come to a vote before the spring session. I spoke at the press conference that introduced the bill. I was interviewed by Inside Higher Education and a WNIJ piece that I was in, along with Lori Lightfoot, was picked up by Politico. So, we are getting national attention for this innovative approach to funding Illinois public universities.*

*On* ***October 24****, one of the advocacy groups,* ***the Partnership for College Completion****, will be on campus* ***hosting a community conversation on equitable funding in Illinois****. That will be* ***from 2******to 4 p.m. in the Barsema Alumni & Visitors Center.*** *And this will be an opportunity for advocacy. And I think they’d be interested in hearing from students, hearing from faculty and members of our community. So, mark that on your calendar and think about what that means.*

*Of course, while we continue to advocate for adequate, equitable and sustainable funding from the state, we also have to continue to address our budget deficit. And that means we have to find additional ways to reduce spending and increase revenue. It’s not going to be easy, but it’s essential. As anticipated, the past fiscal year ended right where we thought it would with an operating deficit of about $30 million. And we closed half of that – the budget for the coming year anticipates a deficit of $15 million. These results are completely in line with the university goals, the internal budgets that were approved by our Board of Trustees and our overall commitment to achieve a structurally balanced budget by fiscal year ’26.*

*[W]e took actions internally to increase tuition and fee revenues, not just by raising tuition, but by being aggressive in our reenrollment campaigns and our recruitment campaigns, to be more efficient in academic and administrative operations and to increase revenue through licensing, sales and service.*

*This university commitment has been recognized and respected, for example, by the Higher Learning Commission Accreditation Report. They were impressed with our commitment to transparency and the fact that university operations and processes include shared governance, that we’re transparent and that we look for a voice of shared governance. We have been transparent about the deficit and the need to align revenue and expenses. And we’ve been that way because transparency drives strategic decisions, it encourages effective collaboration, and it ensures accountability.*

*Over the summer, I accepted recommendations put forward by a working group that worked through the past academic year about the best ways to even more completely incorporate shared governance into budgeting resources and space decisions.* ###

The Council also heard from **VP Clint-Michael Reneau** focusing on the health and well being

of NIU’s student body. Below are excerpts from his presentation:

*I want to tell you about and share with you, . . . some pieces around some of our strategic plan around health and well-being. We partnered with JED, which is a program that looks at suicide prevention, looking at health and wellness behaviors and indicators or health and well-being. It’s a national model that’s used on a lot of campuses. With this, we created a strategic plan in partnership with our JED partners. One of the first scopes that we’re working on is looking at life skills and developing a life skills inventory here on campus.*

*We’re also working to promote social connectedness. So, looking at the idea that not one center, not one resource area, has a hold on our students. We have to understand the intersectional approach. Our folks who work in Disability Resources and our Center for Black Studies or the ARC or wherever it may be, our Veterans Resource Center, also really need to know how to connect and shift and send students over to our Huskie Academic Services Center, so we look at who can support them on tutoring and writing and some of the math labs and those types of things. And so, helping to understand the connectedness and that our teams understand this intersectional approach.*

*We’re also looking at how each of these areas and each of these centers have a wellness model in terms of their programming and thinking around what does it look like to program and support wellness in a way that is meaningful for these students.*

*[W]e created a unified peer education and mentor training where we trained 81 peer mentors across campus using an equity mindset, using a growth mindset, and thinking around how to support students who are struggling, looking at various ways to detect when someone is struggling,*

*what are some of the signs. And then thinking about how to support, enhance and expand what we do to support students and show up for them in ways that make sense.*

*[W]e will have the JED Campus Partners with us on campus at the end of September. We will then go through the continued support of the strategic plan and thinking about how we move forward with our next options.*

*The other piece that we’re working on is Counseling and Consultation Services is working very hard to look at thinking around this year in terms of de-escalation, mindfulness and well-being.*

*This past Saturday, we had a leadership development conference that we had many sessions offered from clinical staff in our Counseling and Consultation Services team, where we had 400 students in attendance. I actually think it was like 393. They came to this program. They came to the conference, and there were programs around conversations across difference, civic engagement, looking at how to disagree when the stakes are high, how to lead during contested times, various different leadership development aspects.*

*I just want to finally say thank you, because this takes a village. We know that we’re all in the business of retention and supporting students and helping their health and well-being. And this campus really turned out in such magnificent ways, with a smile, with helping our students feel like they matter, that they belong, that they’ve been seen. Our block party had 1,327 students in attendance. Our Welcome Holmes event at the Holmes Student Center had 1,574 students in attendance. Our fraternity and sorority life glow party had 614. You just see the sea of smiling faces, and you know that the reality is a student needs to know that they matter, that they belong, and that this is home, this is the right place to be. So, I am grateful for how you show up for our students; I’m grateful for how you show up for each other and this community as a whole. So, thank you very much.*

Faculty Senate: September 4

Below is a summary of the September 4th, 2024 Faculty Senate Meeting, provided by Ben Creed

that includes some interesting links:

Changes to the FS Bylaws

* *Approved amendments – no votes were taken on amendments*
* *Proposed amendments – these proposals will be voted on at the Oct. 2nd, 2024 meeting*
* *Changes to the composition of FS Steering Committee (Article 3.1.1)*
* *Rationale for proposed changes:* The proposal is intended to ensure the Faculty Senate Steering Committee includes sufficient representation from all constituencies without placing unfair burdens on faculty senators who serve in leadership roles on standing committees.

Presentations and resources shared during the Faculty Senate meeting

* *Overview of Faculty Senate’s role in shared governance*
* *FS core roles and responsibilities in the governance of the university are related primarily to three general areas: i) the policies related to the academic core of the university (e.g., faculty personnel system, curriculum, academic policies, etc.), ii) inform other bodies on campus of faculty perspectives, and iii) ensure the continued health and inform the direction of the university. An overview of the various bodies was provided as well as the related articles in NIU’s Constitution and the FS Bylaws. Slides attached.*
* *Provost Announcements* ***–*** *EVPP Elish-Piper shared two items*
* *The Higher Learning Commission Reaccreditation –* NIU earned reaccreditation for 10 years -- 17 out of 18 categories were met fully; the one category with concern was related to the structural deficit. There is a report on this concern due in one year to show progress towards the BOT approved plan for mitigating the deficit.
* *CITL New Program offerings –* CITL has a wealth of teaching resources on the [CITL website](https://www.niu.edu/citl/index.shtml) and flagged three key resources
* [*Resources to support first generation students*](https://citl.news.niu.edu/2022/02/09/supporting-first-generation-college-students/)
* [*What’s new in AI*](https://www.niu.edu/citl/programs/recordings/new-in-artificial-intelligence.shtml)*?*
* [*Addressing Politically-Charged Topics in the Classroom*](https://www.niu.edu/citl/resources/toolkits/politically-charged-topics/index.shtml)
* ***Huskies Vote Presentation*** *Executive Director Student Affairs Central Michaela Holtz presented on overview of the Huskies Vote efforts on campus. Slides attached.*
* [*Huskies Vote Website*](https://www.niu.edu/huskies-vote/index.shtml) *–* This is the main website for Huskie Votes
* [*Upcoming Presidential Debate Watch Party*](https://calendar.niu.edu/event/presidential-debate-watch-party-huskies-vote?utm_campaign=widget&utm_medium=widget&utm_source=Northern+Illinois+University) *–* Tuesday, September 20th there will be a debate watch party in the Huskie Den
* ***The Real Talk Conference*** *Associate VP for DEI Jade Silva Tovar, Director of Equity and Justice Tara Kristoff, and Executive Director Student Affairs Central Michaela Holtz shared information about the upcoming Real Talk Conference and NIU’s Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Center. Slides attached.*
* ***Pre-conference October 24th, 2024 –***[*Designing Engagement for Equity – Building Inclusive Community Engagement with Human-centered Design*](http://go.niu.edu/engagementexecutive)
* ***Real Talk Conference on October 25th, 2024 -*** *Opening Pathways to Embrace Our Humanity*
* *Registration to attend the conference will open soon*
* [*Call for proposals*](https://go.niu.edu/real-talk-proposal) *–* Submit a proposal for the Real Talk Conference by September 17th, 2024. This can be a great opportunity for graduate and undergraduate students to share their work at poster sessions; for faculty and staff to share their work in breakout sessions.

Operating Staff Council: No report.

Student Government Association: No report.

**Vice President’s Report**

1. Committee’s Summary Report: No report.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business**: Election of Officers: Motioned and Seconded: Duncan/Bredberg

Vice President: Tom O’Grady

Secretary: Deborah Gettemy

Treasurer: Kellie Martial

**Additional University Committee Selections:**

University Council: Anthony Preston

UC Personnel Committee: Anthony Preston; Tom O’Grady

FS-UC Rules, Governance & Elections: Shannon Stoker

FS-Steering Committee: John Boswell

FS-Social Justice Committee: Felicia Bohanon

Athletic Board: Emily Belcher

Campus Parking Committee: Candice Olagunju

Libraries Advisory Committee: Erin Smith

Non-Union Faculty and Staff Grievance Panel: Deborah Gettemy, Heath Duncan,

Chynar Amanova

Student Conduct Advisory Board: Deborah Gettemy

Student Fee Committee: Margaret Myles

Student Grievance Panel: Kellie Martial, Shannon Stoker, Kyle Springer

**Human Resource Services Report:** Alan Clay: Administrative Workshop, Oct 4 (8:00 am-12:00 pm)

**SPSC Committees:**

Advocacy: Felicia Bohanon, Deborah Gettemy, Anthony Preston

Awards: Kyle Springer,

Communications & Technology:

Constitution & Elections: Tom O’Grady, Felicia Bohanon, Kellie Martial

Events: Margaret Myles, Shannon Stoker, Candice Olagunju

Professional Development: Erin Smith, Megan Woodruff

Regional and Community Relations:

SPS Dependent Scholarship Fund: Heath Duncan, Tom O’Grady, Karinne Bredberg

**Announcements:** None

**Adjournment:** President Bohanon adjourned the meeting at 11:23 a.m.

**Representatives**: Please contact our SPSC Administrative Aide, Frances Mitchell, ([fmitchell@niu.edu](mailto:fmitchell@niu.edu)) if you are unable to attend a meeting. An Alternate will be contacted for you. A**lternates: You are invited to attend all meetings**.

*Respectfully submitted by*

*Frances Mitchell, Administrative Aide*

*Supportive Professional Staff Council*