
VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Bond, Monteiro, Nelson, Pietrowski, Rajagopalan, Scherer, Stephen, Valadez, Zamora

OTHERS PRESENT: Blazey, Bryant, Klaper, McGill, Wesener Michael

OTHERS ABSENT: Falkoff, Ferguson, Jensen, Kortegast

I. CALL TO ORDER

T. Arado: Good afternoon everyone. I know it sounds a little weird that I’m starting our meeting today, but President Freeman has a little less of a voice than usual, so we’re going to do a little tag teaming.

Before I officially start us, I want to remind everyone – and this is for today’s meeting – we ask that you approach either the podium over there or one of the microphones in the center aisle when addressing the body so we can make sure it picks up the clearest on the recording. When you choose to speak, please make sure you come to the center aisle or over to the podium.

So now I’m calling us to order.

Meeting called to order at 3:02 p.m.

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

T. Arado: Pat will verify that we have a quorum. We do have a quorum, thank you.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

T. Arado: May I have a motion to adopt the agenda for today?
C. Doederlein: So moved.

T. Arado: Doederlein, thank you, Cathy. And may I have a second.


T. Arado: Thank you, Holly. All those in favor of adopting the agenda, please say aye.

Members: Aye.


IV. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 5, 2018 MINUTES

T. Arado: And this is not a typo, we are approving the December 5 minutes. If you all remember, it was a little cold last month, and we didn’t make it here. So may I have a motion to approve our December 5, minutes.

H. Bateni: So moved.

T. Arado: Hamid is first. May I have a second?

J. Wilson: Second.

T. Arado: Jim Wilson is our second. All those in favor of approving the December 5 minutes, say aye.

Members: Aye.

T. Arado: Any opposed? Any abstentions? Great, our minutes have been approved.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

T. Arado: Do we have any public comments at this time? Okay, seeing none, I will turn it over to President Freeman briefly.

VI. PRESIDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

L. Freeman: Just so you know that it’s probably more painful for you to hear my voice than it is actually for me to talk. Therese already said the winter weather makes the semester break seem like it was a long time ago. And this is our first UC meeting of the semester. I think if we actually did a motion on three words like, “done with winter,” we might have one of the first truly unanimous votes in the history of UC.
I had the opportunity to welcome many people back during the first week before classes started when I went to all-college and staff council meetings. And I just want to let you know that those meetings generated a number of questions that required follow up. Some of them have already been addressed with material that we’ve sent out, either collectively to the groups, or individually. Others are still in the process of being addressed, and that effort will continue until all of the appropriate information is shared.

Understandably, there’s been interest in the university’s Strategic Enrollment Management Plan. And Chris McCord will be presenting on that topic at this meeting. Sol Jensen is, unfortunately, home sick in the earlier stages of what I’m manifesting the late stage of now. We’ll take topics on the enrollment management plan after that presentation. We’re also in the midst of budget development for FY20 and beyond, and Vice President McGill will say a few words about those efforts informally today as well.

But before we move into that agenda, I wanted you to have a brief update on an initiative that was developed and championed by the University Council in a previous academic year, the Policy Library. And I’m going to ask Therese to read that update to you, to spare my voice for a later agenda item.

T. Arado: Through the hard work of faculty and staff across the university community, almost 300 policies have been submitted. This is a big step forward. If there are university policies that have not been submitted, it is important to do that in a timely manner. The details on how to do that can be found on the website of the Ethics and Compliance Office. The Policy Library website is now scheduled to go live in early April. At that time, the Policy on Managing University Policies, the policy librarian and the Policy Library Committee will assume active roles in managing the policy review process and maintaining NIU’s online Policy Library. You’ll be hearing more about that from Becqui Hunt in the near future.

L. Freeman: Thank you.

A. Strategic Enrollment Management Plan
Chris McCord, Acting Executive Vice President and Provost
Sol Jensen, Vice President, Enrollment Management, Marketing & Communications
Presentation

T. Arado: You’re welcome. At this time, Acting Provost Chris McCord is going to speak to the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan.

C. McCord: Thank you. Good afternoon. Thank you for being here this afternoon. At least some of you have seen this presentation before. I think one or two of you have seen this now for the fourth or fifth time. Appreciate your patience as we go through it. I would like to use the opportunity to review a really important initiative that we have – planning initiative and it’s going to guide actions for the foreseeable future.

This presentation was made last week to the Faculty Senate; and earlier this month, to the Board of Trustees. The presentation largely parallels the enrollment management plan and document that is
available on the website. And so what I’d like to walk through are, first of all, the trends and important factors that sit behind our planning effort. I’d then like to note the goals and the strategies that we’ve developed that are the core of the plan, the impact that we expect to achieve from that plan, and some of the keys to its success.

I think we’re, in broad strokes, familiar with the trends that have been facing higher education nationally, higher education in Illinois, NIU in particular. We’ll see in a moment, we have been facing more than a decade of declining overall enrollment. Unfortunately, this comes at a period where we have also been facing a period of declining state support. So, as we’ve become a more tuition-dependent institution, we have had fewer students and, therefore, significantly less tuition. This has been driven by a number of factors – that is particularly declining enrollment has been driven by a number of factors. There is a declining population of 18- to 24-year olds in Illinois to draw on. And at the same time, there has been increasingly aggressive external recruiting of those students. As a general rule, it is great to have an export economy. Unfortunately, what Illinois has been exporting has been 18-year olds. We are I believe second only to New Jersey for the number of students who go out of state for education. So outmigration has been a very significant factor. But we’ll also explore another factor – I’ll come back to this in a moment. In addition to the students who go out of state, there are the students who go nowhere and the lost opportunity that represents for us is something I want to explore with you as well.

So our numbers – we’ve seen for the past decade, you can see, almost a straight line decline in enrollment from over 24,000 students to just over 17,000 students. That decline has been largely balanced. That is, graduate and undergraduate populations have declined at roughly the same rates. Kudos to Mark Cordes in the College of Law. They have not seen this large decline. Unfortunately, the College of Law’s 270 students don’t make up for the decline of 7,000 undergraduates.

This is not happening in a vacuum. You have to pay careful attention to the scale on this graph. Please note this is showing the trends in Illinois high school graduates. The bottom of the scale is 110,000. The top of the scale is 150,000 students. You can see going back to 2001, high school graduates climbed from about 130K to peak just north of 150K, and then have fallen off down now to about 140-ish. So not a huge decline in high school graduates, but a decline to be sure.

The other thing you see is that the graph trends gently down until about 2024, 2025, and then trends not very gently down after that. So the point is, there is nothing in the demographics of Illinois overall that’s says, just wait this out and more high school students will come along next year or the year after, and take care of it for us.

In addition to our overall numbers, our demographics have changed. Our balance has changed. And if you can’t see the scale clearly, what this is showing is the percentage of undergraduate students at Northern Illinois from Fall 2009 to present. The change in percentages of going from bottom to top, Asian students, black, Hispanic, white, two or more race, non-resident alien. And I think that the three things to see the most are: Asian and black students have been fairly stable as a percentage of our population. Hispanic students have been significantly growing as a percentage of our population. And white students have been declining as a percentage of our population. Our demographics have been shifting. We are, at this point, about 45 percent minority students. In the not too distant future, we will be a majority minority campus. For a little bit of context, the Hispanic
students have grown from about eight percent to just under 20 percent. And we see that trend continuing to grow, because if you look at – jumping now back to the Illinois high school graduates picture and looking at the demographics of high school graduates – what we see are Asian and Hispanic high school graduate numbers growing, black and white high school graduate numbers declining. As we see the absolute number of graduates has change, we’re going to continue to see the mix, the balance, of student change as well.

So if you look at where do high school graduates go, a snapshot of a recent year found that roughly 40 percent enter either two-year or four-year institutions in Illinois, 17 percent two-year, 23 percent four-year. Almost as many students go out of state, 22 percent, as stay in state, 23 percent. So we send an enormous fraction of our high school students out of state. But there’s 37 percent who do not go on at all. And included in that 37 percent, we looked at some of our own data very carefully a year or so ago and found – we were asked by the Illinois legislature about losing students out of state. So we looked at the students who applied to NIU, were admitted by NIU, were academically qualified for NIU, but didn’t go to NIU, where did they go instead. And what we were expecting to identify, we knew, of course, we would see that schools like University of Illinois at Chicago, Illinois State, are significant attracters of students who apply to NIU, but don’t go. That was not surprising. But what really surprised us was, by far the largest cadre are students who went nowhere, didn’t go out of state, didn’t go to another four-year school in the state, didn’t go to a two-year school, went nowhere. And these were academically qualified, high GPA, high ACT scores. And we found the same phenomenon for our transfer students. By far, the largest number of transfer students who applied to us, were admitted by us, were qualified for us, went nowhere.

So this has been very much in our thoughts as we’ve looked at what our opportunities for, and what our challenges are, we know that we’re looking at significant headwinds in demographics. We know that the absolute number of high school students eligible to be recruited is not going to increase. We know that the demographics of that student population is changing. And we know that there is a real opportunity not just to try and hold in-state students who are choosing to go out of state, but there’s an even greater opportunity to reach out to students who are not currently accessing higher education at all.

So within that context we set about developing a strategic enrollment management plan. And our overarching goal is a simple one: to attract and retain students representing the diversity of the region, the nation, the world. We need this to fulfill our mission. If we are not serving that student population, we are not fulfilling our obligations as a public university. And we need it to be sustainable. In order to achieve this overarching goal, we needed a plan. We needed a data-informed plan. We needed a long-term plan.

So to that end, President Freeman called upon the leadership to develop such a plan and to do so in a very deliberately staged way. Starting with what are our higher level enrollment management goals. What are the strategies that we’re going to pursue to advance those goals? What are the objectives? What are the measurable outcomes that tell us whether or not we’re advancing those strategies? And then, finally, what are the specific tactics that help us achieve those objectives?

We pulled together a group known as the strategic enrollment management group – clever name, I know. We sought input from colleges and support units across campus that regularly engage with
our student population. We drew on the colleges. We drew on the leadership. And went through a planning process over the summer, which then drilled down through the fall into very detailed planning, and produced the report which is now on the website.

At one point, we had, I think, strategies. I believe we had four overarching goals. We had, I think, 43 objectives and 125 tactics – something like that. We forced ourselves to edit down a bit. We forced ourselves to prune and identified under the overarching goal of attracting and retaining students who represent the diversity of our region, we identified three goals and three strategic imperatives that pair with them. To strengthen our distinctive identity and the strategic imperative that drives is perhaps unfamiliar phrase of brand penetration. I’ll amplify a little bit of what that represents in a moment. We need to achieve student enrollment that respects our mission and values and also positions us for financial sustainability. That translates into a strategic imperative of focused recruitment efforts and improving access of students to our institution. We need to support equitable access opportunity and success for students from diverse backgrounds, understanding diversity broadly. And that translates into an imperative to improve retention and student success.

I want to jump to some of the key outcomes. We went through a planning process. We translated those into detail that deliberately gave you a very high level take on the strategic imperatives. We worked those down, though, in some detail, and worked carefully through an analysis of: in light of the information that I ran through very quickly, in light of our changing demographics, in light of expectations about high school populations, in light of competition, we worked very carefully through what we felt were realistic, but aggressive, recruitment, retention, graduation goals for the university. And what we found when we mapped through this was that NIU can expect to stabilize in the range of 17,000 to 18,000 students for the foreseeable future. And I think if we draw nothing else out of this planning, I think that long-term expectation that, if we are successful, we are stabilize in the range of 17,000 to 18,000 students, that puts us in a place to build real authentic plans about every aspect of the university – about budget, about degree programs, about staffing, about housing, about facilities. We can build a realistic plan for a university around a realistic set of enrollment goals.

We also recognize that that student body as we seek to stabilize in that range – again, that student body is going to look different. Some of the racial, ethnic diversity of the student body is going to change. But we also anticipate that there will be more online students, more graduate students, fewer main campus face-to-face students. And that’s going to be something that we’re going to need to adapt to. We’re celebrating, we’re embracing, that our student body diversity is going to become increasingly one of our best assets. One of the opportunities for us to bring students to campus who celebrate that environment and who can benefit from it.

We recognize that, in order to achieve these goals, and particularly to achieve our retention goals, our best opportunity is to address what we call our achievement gaps or equity gaps. Those places where we recruit a very, very diverse student body. That student body does not advance through retention to graduation at equal rates. Our black student population has run historically about 10 percentage points below our average population in terms of year-to-year retention. It’s clear that our best opportunity to improve our overall retention rate is to address those equity gaps, address those achievement gaps, and help identify: What do we need to do differently so that these student populations can succeed at the same rates as their peers?
And we recognize, of course, that affordability is a huge issue for the students we serve. It’s not just that we need more financial aid. We need new approaches to financial aid. We need new ways to help support our students.

So let me dive into a little bit more detail. Brand penetration is really about helping both our campus community deeply live who we are, what we value, and what we are providing to our students – and then project that out to the community that we’re a part of, project that out to our prospective students, even begin to project that out nationally. And make the case outside of northern Illinois that we are an institution, in spite of our winters, that offers much value for students and they can have a distinctive experience here that will be very valuable and set them up for success. We need to invest in technology. We need to improve advertising. But not just those sorts of exercise, we really need to emphasize our values, our distinctive strengths, and really drive home for our own campus community, our own DeKalb community, our northern Illinois community, the value and values of NIU.

Within the recruitment and access arena, again, we have, as you probably know, recently changed to drop the distinction between out-of-state and in-state tuition, and we’re now using that to drive out-of-state recruiting. We are engaging with Wiley Education Services to better provide marketing, recruitment and concierge services for students in online programs to drive our online enrollments. We’re recognizing that, as we become an ever more diverse campus, we need faculty and staff who can serve a diverse student population, in particular, we’re recognizing that culturally competent and bilingual staff in the key student-facing offices will be an important support mechanism. We need to use data effectively to drive retention. We need to use data to drive our scholarship packaging, our financial aid awarding to make sure we’re leveraging opportunities to the best [inaudible]. One particular we’re a bit weak on – we have not done a great job historically in supporting transfer students with financial aid. We’re recognizing we can do better there. And we’re looking at things like income-sharing agreements. Purdue is a leader in this. We’re looking at some non-profit partners who can work with us to help us advance these sorts of agreements. These are different ways of approaching financial aid, and we believe that these are things that can be of important appeal to the students that we’re trying to reach.

Technology, we have a client relationship management, or CRM, system that is over a decade old. If you think about where your cell phone was a decade ago compared to where your cell phone is now. If you think about where a student’s cell phone was a decade ago compared to where a student’s cell phone is now, a decade-old CRM, we might as well be sending them stone tablets. We need to modernize our technology. We’re investing in a chatbot. I know it’s a little creepy, but we’re really recognizing that we need tools like this to keep up with a rapidly evolving technology environment for student recruiting.

Within the sphere of retention, we’re focusing on many of the same issues. We’re focusing on scholarships and improving financial aid. We’re focusing on culturally competent staff. We’re recognizing, again, that data is a critical tool. Using data to identify students at risk for retention persistence to graduation and targeting our advising in sophisticated ways at the students who most benefit from that advising. We’re committed to investing in advising. We’ve had NACADA, the national organization for advising, offer recommendations. We have looked at those
recommendations frequently internally. We are moving on them. We are investing in advising. We are investing in making sure we have student advisor ratios that are in line with industry expectations. We are investing in retention specialists who can provide high-touch services to students. We’re making use of what was formerly known as SSE Campus, now referred to as NIU Navigate. That again is the data tool that helps us target that advising. And we’re using that data also to really identify – I mentioned a moment ago about equity gaps – we’re really trying to drill that down to very granular levels so we can intervene in targeted ways. Using data to identify: What are the courses? What are the activities? What are the places where students begin to see branch points? We might have a course where overall success rate looks very high, but when you dig into the data, you find that black students or Latino students aren’t succeeding at the same rate in that course. Once we identify those places, then we, of course, need to develop local strategies for them. We need to pilot those strategies. We need data to analyze whether those strategies are impactful or not. And then adjust as needed.

And we’re not doing this alone. Much of the higher ed community is engaged in issues like this. We’re part of a project with the Association of Public and Land Grand Universities, working with a cluster of schools with very similar missions and very similar student profiles nationwide, schools in Arizona, Texas, California and New Jersey, Illinois. We’re part of a collaboration there nationally to look at how we can support each other and drive best practices. We’re also part of a local network here in the Chicago area, working under the leadership of the Partnership for College Completion, Illinois Equity and Attainment Initiative, looking to drive success for recruitment, retention, graduation rate for under-represented minorities in the Chicago area.

We took a data-informed approach to what were realistic options for recruitment, what were realistic options for improving retention. And then we modeled through. If we were able to improve retention by a few percentage points, how would that propagate through to impact enrollments over the next few years. If we were able to recruit more Latinx students, how would that propagate through. If we were able to use our contract with Wiley to drive our enrollments in online programs, how would that propagate through. And so you see, somebody rightly the last time we presented this noted, these are very precise numbers. Don’t take the precision of these too seriously. This is modeling, and we’ve modeled through what we think enrollment might look like. Don’t take the precise numbers too seriously, but do look at the big effects. As you look from Fall ’18 to Fall ’23, what you see is some decline in our on-campus undergraduate population, about 500 students less. That’s not because we want a smaller on-campus undergraduate population. It’s because we realize that, in light of the demographics of the region we’re looking at, even with success in recruiting, those are the trends we’re going to see in the near future in our undergraduate on-campus population. And we better know that and recognize it. We’re looking, on the other hand, for significant growth in our online population. That’s not a competition. We’re going to be trying to reach adult learners, non-traditional students for whom coming to DeKalb was not an option anyway. It wasn’t a question of: Were we going to have them in our online program or in our face-to-face program? The question was: Were we going to have them in our online program or was somebody else going to have them in their online program? Put it all together, we trend down slightly for the next couple of years, and then begin to trend back up, but stay in this range of 17,000 to 18,000 students.
When we segment this a bit, we see some different areas where we are either targeting growth or anticipating that the result will be growth. And yes, some of these look like big percentages because the starting point is fairly small. We hope to double our out-of-state students from just over 100 to just over 200. We’ve got a lot of upside capacity for out-of-state students, let’s say.

One I particularly want to draw attention to, though, is the opportunity to continue to attract growth in our Latinx student population. We believe by the time we reach the end of this planning period, we’ll be 25 percent or more of our undergraduate students will be Latinx students. That will qualify us as an Hispanic-Serving Institution. And there are a number of federal funding opportunities that open up once you become an HIS. So there’s an import milestone, not just symbolically, but practically as well. We will also become a minority-serving institution. And other opportunities will present themselves as a result of that.

Just to visualize it, we modeled what would happen if we were successful. We also modeled what would happen if we just continued our current trends without any change. And I think you can see very clearly the difference. Please note the scale. The bottom of the scale is not zero. The bottom of the scale is 14,500. But you can see the difference between what happens if we do and what happens if we don’t. That tells me a lot about why we need to be about this.

To move this forward, we have identified strategic priorities we need to invest in. We have identified roles and responsibilities for advancing the plan. We recognize that we need those involved to have ready access to data to inform their decision making. There’s a saying in the military world where no plan survives first contact with the enemy. This enrollment management plan, I can guarantee you, will not be executed exactly as written. The world doesn’t cooperate with us to that extent, that everything we plan to have happen will happen exactly as we planned it. So we’ll make efforts. We’ll learn from them. We’ll adapt. We’ll adjust. We’ll correct. And that requires us to make adjustments and to be accountable to ourselves for what we’re doing. We are developing an accountability plan to supplement the enrollment management plan. That will be released very soon and will indicate what we’re doing, what tactics we’re pursuing, who’s responsible for them, what assessment will be associated with them, so that not just those responsible for the plan, but the whole community, will have some visibility into it. There is a strategic enrollment management website. We will track data on there, so progress toward the plan will be visible. And of course, this will require commitment from many people, require leadership to move this forward, and will require all of your support and assistance. And as a step toward that, I welcome your questions and your discussion.

T. Arado: Please remember if you have a question, come to one of the microphones or the podium. All right. Sarah McGill.

S. McGill: Thank you. Good afternoon. I’ll just pick up on the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan. The information presented certainly give us information on our student size and our study body that’s useful in planning. It’s especially useful when we think about our financial planning. And as we started to work through the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, it also became clear to us that there was a great opportunity to think about aligning our financial planning and planning overall, as we start to think about one of the most critical variables when you think about our campus. And that’s understanding our enrollment.
As we were preparing for the launch of the SEM Plan, we also started discussions to move forward with the start of a multi-year budget and planning model. We launched the framework, the assumptions for this model, in January. The provost and I, the president, met with members of senior leadership and the deans to talk about what a multi-year planning and budget model would look like, why we were launching this now, and how we were going to move forward.

And just very briefly, talk you through that. Many of you have heard a more in depth conversation related to this, but I’ll hit the high points here. As we start to think about Northern Illinois University as a 17,000 to 18,000-student institution, that’s different than perhaps how we’ve thought of ourselves before. And certainly helps to frame our finances around that. You think about NIU as an institution that maybe had been closer, or had aspirations to be closer, to 24,000 or 25,000. And there were different assumptions that went into that. Certainly around tuition and fees, but also around state appropriations. So as we start to use the SEM Plan and the information in there, and we start to look forward, we start to get a better picture of what our revenue base looks like. And our revenue is what allows us to support a lot of the operations.

And, as we started to move forward with the launch of the plan, we started to work through some of the history. And with that history, we realized that we’re operating at about two-thirds the number of students, which, when you look back over prior years, it’s about a three percent loss of tuition and fee revenue from prior year. You look at that and you start a trend maybe five years back, and that culminates.

We also looked at our state appropriations. And with the budget impasse, we lost about $81 million just with changes to our appropriation. And that’s funds that we’re not going to get back. So as we start to look forward, we also wanted to look at those priorities that we need to do, that we want to do, to continue to be a successful institution, to continue our ambition and our momentum. And oftentimes, as we thought about our budget, we would often look at the revenues that were there. So we would add up all the money that we thought would come in. And then we would add up all those expenses that we wanted to support, all those initiatives, all those items that we knew we had to pay for. And from what’s left, that’s what we would allow ourselves to think about those other things we wanted to do. And oftentimes, there’s not a lot of money left, so you often find yourself in a position where you’re not able to advance. So those initiatives that we identified to move forward on, those investments that we wanted to make, we were somewhat in a stagnant position.

So as we launched our multi-year plan, we said, no more. We’re going to add up those things that we have commitments in place for, but we’re also going to say: What are those things that we have to do, that we want to do, to continue to be a successful institution. So what are those investments that we have to make? Investments in support of rewarding our faculty and staff. Investments to support the research, scholarship and artistry agenda. And investments in our campus facilities and infrastructure.

So part of the multi-year plan that we launched in January included projections based on realistic revenue; so where our SEM Plan was, what we assumed for state appropriations, which was a flat amount. And then we also looked at those investments that we wanted to make. And those investments included an increment in support of faculty and staff increases, an increase to graduate
assistant stipends. It looked at items in support of the strategic enrollment master plan, facility initiatives, as well as financial aid initiatives. And we looked at what that was. And for the first time, we’re allowing ourselves to look at investments.

What that meant was that we also have to acknowledge the fact that, like many organizations, our ambitions exceed our funding. And if we wanted to do that, how do we start to look at how we accommodate those increased ambitions. So as we look forward to our multi-year plan, which starts in FY20, so that’s next year, and would go through FY23 at this time, so we’re looking at probably a four-year window as we continue to evolve this plan. We’re looking at roughly a $28 million shortfall between our revenues and our expenses. And as you model out in future years, you see that number roughly repeat year after year, after we think about continuing to make those investments.

So as we launched our budget plan this year, we also launched a process that, through the next four years, by FY24, we would work together – the “we” being members of senior leadership, the deans along with our divisional business managers, to look at how do we set forward a plan that by FY24 we would address that structural shortfall. So we’ve had a series of meetings that launched in January. We have presentations coming up later this week where divisions will present their unit plans. And we’re going to continue the process to see what this looks like, what we’re finding. And we’ll continue to report back to members of the university as we understand better what those plans and what those timelines look like.

It’s a significant undertaking, and it’s an undertaking that we’re able to move forward with because we have data like the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan. We have information from our research planning. We have some preliminary efforts in support of a campus facilities master plan. All of these are initiatives that have been ongoing on campus that are identified in the presidential goals. And this is a really valuable and useful way to bring them all together and identify for the university those investments we want to make, and hold ourselves accountable for how we are going to actualize and move forward on those.

So this is definitely going to be the first – many of you have heard a more in depth presentation – so I won’t say the first conversation on this. But this is going to be a topic that we’re going to continue to come back to as we talk about the SEM Plan, as we talk about budget and planning overall. So, like the provost, I’m happy to take any questions or hear any feedback.

**K. Thu:** I just want to ask the same question that I asked in Faculty Senate, which is: We have this four-year annual $27.5 million deficit, and I asked in Faculty Senate, what kind of direction colleges and divisions are being given to attain that. And I think, Chris, you said, it’s just not going to be a percentage across the board for each unit. But could you shed a little more light on how those conversations are happening?

**S. McGill:** I appreciate the question, Kendall. How we approached it, just in getting the information out, was: Divisions were presented with a roughly 14 percent target. And we identified a plus or minus of four percent. So there were targets of 10, 14 and 18 percent presented. And each division was asked to work within their division to determine how to respond to that. So I can’t say that each division took the same approach. In my area, for instance, I have Facilities, IT, Finance; there were certain areas where we made the decision in support of the university priorities, we’re not going to
make any actions. Procurement, for instance. Facilities, we tried to minimize impact. That meant other areas were asked to look a little closer at what options were available. So I think each division was asked to respond differently. We haven’t had the conversations about what’s coming forward yet, or what approach they took. We’ll know more about that on Friday. But if that was responsive to your question?

K. Thu: Yep.

R. Siegesmund: This is actually a question for Chris, because it took me a little time to figure it out. With the enrollment numbers, that’s clearly going to have impact on programs. And we have set up a system of Program Prioritization, of review of that. What we haven’t done, as far as I know, is we haven’t thought about facilities in quite the same way that inherent in this is that our facilities footprint is overbuilt for the university that we’re going to have. And facilities are not just that everybody gets so many modules, but that different programs need different kinds of space. And as the programs are reshuffled, it would also mean that the space needs to be reshuffled. And there are internal committees already for space allocation. But it is, at least from the perspective I can see, it’s still kind of the traditional academic sumo wrestling match of who gets what space and what are we doing. So would there be something that attempts the transparency of Program Prioritization that attempts to really put the cards on the table and sort this out in a meta kind of a way of what kind of spaces are we dealing with, and what kind of space allocation we going to have going forward.

C. McCord: Excellent point. Let me respond to that in a couple of different ways. And I’ll make first a particular connection to Program Prioritization, which is particularly on the administrative side, Program Prioritization led to a significant amount of restructuring and reorganization at the org chart level. But we didn’t realign space very well in response to that. So you’re absolutely right. You inference that this implies a smaller footprint is absolutely valid. But there’s also the fact that we haven’t rebalanced space very well. We have other factors that we haven’t touched on to this point. We have ongoing explorations of changes in the tax law that create opportunities for, what we refer to as opportunity zone, that may create new dynamics and new opportunities for space utilization.

There are a couple processes to respond to this. We’re doing a space allocation survey. Right now we don’t have the band width. We don’t have the capacity to do it entirely campus-wide. So we’re focusing on the parts of campus, largely in this area. And we’ve asked units to identify their current space, their space requirements and their infinities. Who would it be productive for you to be in proximity to? So we’re pulling all that information together in a first round. And we’ll make space reassignments that, I hope, will reflect a rational approach to rebalancing space.

President Freeman has also called for a longer-term facilities master planning effort that will look beyond that. That will probably launch next academic year?

S. McGill: We’re planning for the plan to be announced prior to the end of the fiscal year. So we’ll talk more about what the scope, what the timeline is, and how we’ll go about that. So in preparation of a formal launch next academic year.
L. Freeman: I guess what I want to say is that there are three levels of conversations that need to come together. There’s [inaudible] that’s ongoing to look at space, space assignments, [inaudible]. The question of the larger footprint [inaudible] Feeding into that is our extreme backlog of deferred maintenance that I know everyone is all too familiar with. And as you’re trying to stage how investment is used to renovate, repair or demolish, you need to have some sense of what your space needs are and what your facilities master plan is. And I would agree with you, sumo wrestling is not an unfair analogy. Space planning on this campus has been intentional and strategic. And so what we’re trying to do now is do what we can do ourselves to get the information as quickly as we can, figure out where we need to get some outside expertise to help us, look at things like changes in the tax laws that might allow us to attract investment, changes in the state laws that might allow us to sell assets. The president’s house is [inaudible] money draining fast in our facilities. To get that done quickly but also not to get that done in an uncoordinated fashion that leaves us not as much than we are or as we could be. Hopefully, that made sense.

T. Arado: Any other questions?

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

VIII. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE – Linda Saborío – report

T. Arado: [inaudible] we’ll move to Reports from Councils, Boards and Standing Committees. And the first one is Linda Saborío reporting for the FAC to the IBHE.

L. Saborío: Good afternoon everyone. The January meeting was held at Illinois Central College. Yes, January meeting, I have not reported on that one yet. ICC president met with our group and talked about their assessment and realignment process that they have been pursuing to help the community move forward. Peoria includes zip codes that are among the poorest and the wealthiest in Illinois, and in the nation. So ICC is seeking to address that gap. They want to enable self-sufficiency, develop contributing members of society, change the trajectory of their families and expand their workforce. And this includes a reallocation of resources, customizing student support, seeking strategic partnerships, informing decisions with data, and making systematic innovations.

We then also met with the ICC vice president of diversity, international and adult education. She talked with us about ICC’s Lumina Foundation-funded initiative, which is one of only 19 proposals funded by the Lumina Foundation of 312 that were submitted for racial justice and equity. ICC is seeking to institutionalize racial justice, equity and inclusion within the college and community by engaging key stakeholders to create pro-equity policies, practices and systems. Their program is modeled on some successful initiatives in King County, Washington. And I have that website if you’re interested in viewing it.

Marie Donovan, the FAC chair, discussed talks with the educational success committee on the Pritzker transition team. And their message is that education has not been forgotten and is in the queue. I guess it’s better to be in the queue, than not in the queue. Gretchen Lowman, the IBHE liaison, updated us on changes for the IBHE staff. Al Phillips, the former deputy director of fiscal
affairs, has returned part-time to help with the fiscal division until a new executive director is appointed. And Nyle Robinson was appointed as the interim executive director. She also reported on some closures – that Vatterott College in Fairview Heights abruptly closed on December 17. Vatterott College in Quincy conducted a full teach-out and closed on October 30. And Argosy Schaumburg and the Illinois Institute of Art Schaumburg and Chicago closed on December 28, 2018.

We also met with our working groups until lunch time and then reported out. If you will recall, I’m with the P-20 outreach group. We continued our work on the draft of an email and survey that we’ll be sending out to Illinois institutions, faculty, leadership. And I’ll be contacting Therese about that later. And we still hope to identify patterns in the different programs for which we received data. And the final goal is still the interactive map that we hope to share with legislators and other key stakeholders across the state.

Next month we are meeting at St. Xavier University on March 22, so as to avoid any overlap. That was a good date change for me, because I’m leaving for Santiago, Chile Monday. And that concludes my report. I’m presenting at a symposium there. Any questions?

T. Arado: Thanks, Linda.

B. University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees – report
   Holly Nicholson, Catherine Doederlein, Therese Arado
   Alex Gelman, Sarah Marsh, Kendall Thu

T. Arado: Next item on the agenda is the UAC to the BOT. And the Board of Trustees committee meetings, which met February 7. And just a couple of highlights from that. We had two presentations during our meeting [inaudible] And there were several people from and connected to NIU [inaudible]. The Academic Affairs, Student Affairs endorsed the list of faculty-recommended sabbaticals, and that’s being forwarded to the full board meeting. Two new degrees, a B.S. in [inaudible] and a B.S. in actuarial science were endorsed and are being submitted to the full board. There was discussion in the Finance, Audit Compliance Committee about the Stevens complex franchise agreement and an authorization so that food services can be involved there. The Research, Innovation and Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee – we got a state legislative update and I was surprised to hear that over 2,200 bills have already been introduced since the start of our legislative session. And of those, there’s about 200 that the university is tracking. All of these things, there is significantly more information available through the Board of Trustees committee link to the reports that are posted up there. So if anything peaked your interest, feel free to go take a look. And if you have nothing to do next Thursday, March 7, the full Board of Trustees meeting is taking place in this room, so you can come and see what’s going on there.

C. Academic Policy Committee – Vicki Collins, Chair – no report
D. Resources, Space and Budget Committee – Jim Wilson, Chair – report

T. Arado: The next report that we have is actually from Resources, Space and Budget. Jim, do you have a report?

J. Wilson: This will be somewhat short since you have the gory details of our meetings. But we’ve met so far this academic year six times, four of which President Freeman has attended. And so, along with the leadership, we have been able to discuss, talk about, and put on the radar, a number of issues from our constituents. And you can see some of these details in the report, which I won’t go over or verbalize. The report contains two of our meetings and, if I were to characterize them, the first meeting, it was announced the Strategic Enrollment Plan would be forthcoming, along with the $20 million authorization for the online development portion of that, which later caused much heartburn in some of our people in my department, who had read the Daily Chronicle and it was a lesson to me not to look at your email at 10:30 at night when all this was unfolding. So, from the first meeting, we did have a resolution drafted that was to address one major concern about the IBHE proposal to fund $25 million to non-public universities. So we created a resolution for that, but it’s been in cold storage for now due to the budget proposal from Gov. Pritzker, which seems to address that little problem.

Later on, again some of these details are in the report, for the next meeting we did talk a little bit more about the details and concerns about the Strategic Enrollment Plan. Also those who are on the committee previewed everything you probably have heard so far at the Faculty Senate and here at this meeting today. So the big concern was: What do you mean a $21 million contract with Wiley? And where’s that coming from? And what is that all about? And so that was addressed in our second meeting on the first of February. The understanding that came out of it is that it’s $20 million authorized, but it’s really looking like $7 million that will actually be spent, but that’s what the Board of Trustees authorized for spending. Another concern: Are we outsourcing this? How much control will people have on their content that they develop online? And there are several other questions that were raised in the last meeting having to do with facilities, which were addressed today.

With that, I’m going to be merciful and not verbalize in detail a lot of the content of this report. But overall, our meetings have been, I think, very productive. We’ve had a lot of exchange with our constituents in bringing those forth to the leadership. And the leadership has been very approachable, and I think we’ve had pretty good dialog over the last six meetings. Thus ends my report. If you have any questions. Seeing non.

T. Arado: Thank you, Jim.

E. Rules, Governance and Elections Committee – Richard Siegesmund, Chair – no report
F. University Affairs Committee – Hamid Bateni, Chair – report

1. Proposed amendment to NIU Bylaws, Article 20. The University Ombudsperson
   FIRST READING

T. Arado: Our next report is from University Affairs Committee, Hamid.

H. Bateni: The University Affairs Committee has reviewed the proposed amendment to NIU Bylaws Article 20 and brings it forward now for the first reading. I direct your attention to the proposal summary, which Pat is showing now on the screen. This is just the first reading, but if you have any questions, please let me know or we can actually leave discussion for a later time. Any questions?

T. Arado: Linda, were you raising your hand with a question?

L. Saborío: Just a few things. Thank you for doing this, first of all. Much needed amendment to this bylaw. I noticed that the original bylaw states that there is a three-fifth vote required, “recommendation shall require a vote of three-fifths of the membership of the committee,” and that’s not in the proposed one. Do you think that we should include some kind of language in there regarding a majority vote of the committee? In particular, 20.5.5.1(a) in the original. Three-fifth vote. Do you think we should have something in there about a majority vote from the committee in terms of

H. Bateni: I can take it to the committee.

L. Saborío: And ask? Okay, okay. And I also noticed that in the same area there, the section (b), “when the ombudsperson does not wish to be considered for another term,” etc., you eliminated that from this proposed amendment. Do we not want to keep that in there?

H. Bateni: I think I also have to ask

L. Saborío: You’ll take a look at it and see? It just says what happened in the case of the ombudsperson is saying: I do not want to continue. And even though it’s implied in other sections, maybe just to keep it in there to know that it goes straight to a search then at that point. That’s all I have. Thank you.

2. Proposed 2028-29 academic calendar

H. Bateni: Thank you. Any other comments? So are we in a quorum to move forward with the calendar?

T. Arado: Any more comments or questions? Then, yes, we can move on to the calendar.

H. Bateni: Are we in a quorum to vote on this?
T. Arado: The calendar needs a motion, second, discussion.

H. Bateni: Okay. Now included in your agenda packet today is also a proposed 2028-29 academic calendar, along with the guidelines used to determine the calendar dates. And I move to approve the 2028-29 academic calendar.

K. Thu: Second.

T. Arado: Any discussion? Okay, then we can go ahead and vote. All those in favor of approving the calendar?

Members: Aye.

T. Arado: All those opposed? Any abstention? Anyone that hopes they might be retired by then.

H. Bateni: Thank you very much. 2028, yes. 2028-29, yes. Right, ten years from now, yes, almost, yes. Surprising but that’s true. Thank you.

T. Arado: Thank you.

G. Student Association – report
Khiree Cross, President
Tristan Martin, Speaker of the Senate

T. Arado: Our next reports are from the Student Association. Tristan, is Khiree here as well?

T. Martin: He’s coming. He’ll be here soon. Hi guys, how’s it going today. All right. So, like I said, Khiree should be coming here pretty quick. He had a couple of previous engagements that he had to take care of. So he will be back as soon as possible. But I will give my report in the meantime.

First off, just a couple of things. We have been working on our elections, so we are going to be having our election dates the 26th and 27th of March. So far it’s been looking pretty decent. We’ve had a total of five candidates meetings throughout the entire month of February, and so far we’ve attracted over 30 candidates with the very strong likelihood of having two executive branch tickets. So moving forward, we’ll be able to, hopefully, update you on that after the month of March, hopefully in our April University Council meeting.

Second, a resolution was passed in the Student Association Senate last January, regarding the IBHE’s recommendation to the state legislature on some of the things that they had thought would be good to fund for higher education. And this was kind of just in the preliminary talks. And I think there would have been some sort of resolution to come before the University Council if we would have had a meeting at that time, but we had so many snow days. So we passed that. That was pretty much saying that, because there had been $25 million allocated to private institutions, that was more of us saying that we would instead like for recommendations to be put into increasing MAP and, hopefully, fully funding it in the future, because it was kind of a slap to the face to the student body
and for us in the Student Association. The IBHE had recommended that money to go to MAP [non-
public institutions] when MAP is not currently not fully funded. So that’s something that we’re
going to be taking down to Springfield later in the month of March and later in the month of April
as well.

And something that I have been working really hard with our director of governmental affairs,
Sandra Puebla, and our legislative director, Ian Pearson, to coordinate. So from what I understand,
NIU has an advocacy day on April 30. And that’s something that we’re actually to go full on for.
We’re trying to have as many students come and speak as possible. So if any of you guys know of
any students that would be interested in that, please let us know as we’re trying to, hopefully, fill a
bus full of students to go down. Typically, our lobby trips haven’t been too well-attended. But that’s
something that we want to change moving forward.

The other thing that we’ve been doing in regard to the state legislature is that we’ve been working
really hard with staffers of Jeff Keicher and Tom Demmer to, hopefully bring them to campus
sometime so we can have a Dinner with Demmer, Pizza with Jeff event. So that’s something that
we’ve really been looking forward. We’ll hopefully have a couple dates solidified, whether it be
April 1 or April 8. So we’ll, hopefully, be able to report on that in March as well.

Final thing – in regard to the state and federal legislatures, I’ve also been working again extremely
hard with legislative director Ian Pearson and the director of governmental affairs, Sandra Puebla, to
create a state and federal list of priorities. And I really want to give a lot of credit to the legislative
director, because he put a lot of hard work and effort into this. So this is something that the Student
Association will, hopefully, be having come through the [student] senate as a formal resolution
stating that these are the priorities that the student body would wish to be fulfilled in both the state
and federal legislatures. So the topics on this list of priorities ranges from anything from mental
health, to fully funding MAP, to fully funding federal grants that students take advantage of, to
giving more funding to the university to just increase student resources on campus. So that’s
something that we’re looking toward, hopefully, even inviting some federal legislators out to talk
with us about.

Beyond that, we’ve also had a couple of mental health things going on. So the Student Association
is working to address the concerns of students with disabilities and those who are actively using the
DRC [Disability Resource Center]. In fact, we’re hopefully going to be pushing for, and working
with, President Freeman to have the DRC moved into an accessible location in the future. I know
that there has been a lot of concerns from students on that, and that’s something that we’re looking
toward increasing and making a little more awareness of. Thankfully, the president has been very
willing to hear about that idea, and I very much appreciate that.

A couple of other things, too, is that there were some concerns about the start date of tele-
psychiatry. That will be starting tomorrow. I’m happy to see and hear that that’s going to be starting
up. And it’s especially important, because there are a lot of our resources, specifically in regard to
mental health and our partnership with different mental health facilities that can be improved upon.
There is a drastic decrease from the fall semester from what I have understood. But that’s something
that we’ve been looking toward. We’ve been talking with the right people on that, and we’ll be able
to have an update on that moving forward as well.
Beyond that, one other thing that I wanted to inform everyone about is the 50th session of the Student Association. And we’ve been working to advertise it as such. In fact, we’ve been working with the City of DeKalb, specifically, the office of the Mayor, to have April 23, 2019, which 50 years ago, would have been when the Student Association was formed. Have it being declared this year as Student Association Day. So we found a proclamation from the City of DeKalb made 25 years ago, to which we are amending and will, hopefully, have the entire [student] senate look at for Mayor Jerry Smith to, hopefully, approve and create as his own proclamation.

Beyond that, that is it for my report. That is it for my side of the report. Does anyone have any questions, comments, concerns specifically for me before Khiree comes up? Great. Khiree.

K. Cross: How are you guys doing? Sorry for my tardiness. I had a meeting prior to this. But I’m not sure what Tristan touched on, but I’ll just touch on a few things, so please, sorry if I reiterate something.

So what I’ve been doing since the last time I was here, I’ve been meeting with presidents across from universities. I met with 12 different presidents from 12 different states just to get their perspective on some of the things that we have going on here, including undocumented students, how they’re providing funding for them, what are they doing as far as fundraising, and what are they doing as far as advocating for undocumented students in their state. Luckily, my fraternity is well-flourished with student government presidents, so we’ve been doing a lot of collaboration, sharing the documents that we have, and moving forward with that process.

Something else that I’ve been doing is Project Orange. Project Orange is something that I started with [Student Association] Sen. Bolden. The [student] senate initiative against anti-violence campaign. I’m sure you’ve probably heard me speak of it all last semester, about starting it up. So that’s something that’s very dear to me, seeing that I’ve lost a lot of family to gun violence. I think it is time. You know the way that you make a change is being the change. So I think starting at something like Project Orange on this campus is going to be monumental, not just for this campus, but I can bring it on to other places as well.

Doing a lot of in-house cleaning. When I say in-house cleaning, documentation, bylaws, constitutions, procedures, things of that nature, how we do transition, a lot of things of that nature. I’ve done a lot of in-house cleaning over the past two months.

We’re going to do another Pizza with the Presidents – a shout-out to Lisa Freeman. This time, I’ll be inviting student presidents from all organizations. I feel that me and Lisa are not the only important presidents on this campus. So I think to give exposure to those other presidents, to show them their value and importance as well, incorporate them into the event.

Do you guys have any questions? Thanks.
H. Operating Staff Council – Holly Nicholson, President – report

T. Arado: Thank you both. We appreciate your time. Our next report is from Holly Nicholson, Operating Staff Council president.

H. Nicholson: Thank you.

T. Arado: Another important president, yes.

H. Nicholson: I was excited about the pizza. First of all, I wanted to have a more concrete report on this, but I’ll just introduce the topic. The recent unfortunate closures due to weather, they unearthed some gaps in policy and clarity of those policies, for staff especially, when it involves time reporting and shifts and shift changes. So I’m going to try to work with some people to try to get some clarity on that and set some policy, just to help everybody, supervisors and staff. Also it was reported to me by several people that President Freeman brought donuts to building service staff and physical plant staff and I’m not sure who else. That was very meaningful to them, so I just want to report an appreciation for that that I’ve heard. People commented that a president has never done that, and it was in thanks, I think, for all the shoveling and the salting and the hard work that they’ve had to do with this terrible winter. So, thank you again for that.

Finally, our elections are going to be coming up in March and April. And civil servants, while we’re a large group of employees on campus, historically have struggled to get approval to be involved in councils and committees. So I just appeal to all the leadership in the room who have civil service staff reporting to you. As much as it’s up to you, please let them get involved. It only benefits them and the department. Looking forward to another round of elections this year. Thank you.

I. Supportive Professional Staff Council – Catherine Doederlein, President – report

T. Arado: Supportive Professional Staff Council President Cathy Doederlein.

C. Doederlein: Just very briefly, just wanted to let folks know that we have completed most of our awards nomination process for different SPS presidential awards and recognitions. And the award ceremony for that is Wednesday, April 10, in this building in the auditorium downstairs, I believe starting at 2:30 p.m. with some light refreshments. And then the actual program starts at 3. Definitely welcome the whole campus to attend and hear about some of the great things that SPS on campus are accomplishing. And thank you for those of you who took the time to nominate folks that you work with for that recognition.

T. Arado: Thank you.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
X. NEW BUSINESS

T. Arado: That is the end of our reports. We have no Unfinished Business, so we’re going to move on to New Business. And I’m going to turn the microphone over again.

L. Freeman: Thank you. I have written everything out so, if my voice gives away, I may hand it over, but I think I’ll be okay. In today’s packet under X.I.S., there’s an information item that is a determination letter from the public access counselor in the Office of the Illinois Attorney General that indicates our RSB Committee is subject to the Open Meetings Act. I’m telling you this as a sort of a set-up for the new business.

Some of you may remember that a formal challenge regarding the operations of that committee was lodged with the Office of the PAC in October of 2017, because in December of that year, I not only advised this body of that challenge, but also indicated that the university would respond in advance of any ruling on the matter with an operational change to have that committee, as well as the UC and its standing committees, operate in compliance with the Open Meetings Act. And since that time we’ve made great strides in this respect through voluntary compliance. So with respect to the RSB, the letter requires no further action.

There are, however, differing interpretations about the implications of that PAC determination, the one that’s an information item, for meetings that are not specifically addressed in the opinion, specifically those of the senior roundtable. The senior roundtable is an informal meeting of divisional leaders that I convene weekly. It’s a vehicle for fostering trust and collaboration across the senior leadership team for addressing developing issues and for providing divisional leaders with a chance to give me, and each other, constructive insights. The university does not believe that the senior roundtable is a public body under the Open Meetings Act for a number of reasons. The group serves a purely consultative function. The membership is determined solely by the president, and the group serves at the pleasure of the president.

The university’s position has been challenged by a community member who argues that anybody listed in the NIU Constitution and the bylaws of the university is automatically considered a public body under the Open Meetings Act. And the community member equates the senior roundtable with the mention of president’s staff in those documents. We don’t agree that the mere recognition of the president’s ability to form an administrative committee in these documents qualifies any such group as a public body for the purposes of the Open Meetings Act. It’s also clear that the senior roundtable serves a different function from the president’s staff, the body that’s described in the Constitution and Bylaws.

The university first requested an advisory opinion from the public access counselor in March of 2018, and we recently renewed this request, which has not been acted on, after receiving their determination regarding the RSB, and after a series of inquiries and challenges from the interested community member. The community member has also filed a request for review with the Office of the Attorney General, and we are awaiting guidance.

But we don’t determine the timetable for the public access counselor in the Office of the Attorney General. So at this time, I’m simultaneously seeking to clarify the issue through this alternative
route of removing mention of the confounding president’s staff from the university constitution and the bylaws of NIU. And the proposed change is summarized in agenda item X for first reading. And given my voice, I think I’ll let you read the box and the proposed change, and let Therese guide you through that. But I am happy to answer any questions today about the roundtable, the president’s staff or other concerns that come to your mind.

T. Arado: This is the first reading, so any discussion absolutely, we appreciate it. We don’t have to make a motion on any of them. Linda made it to the podium first, though.

L. Saborío: Go ahead, you probably have the same thing.

K. Thu: Just to the point of clarification, so the language in 6.5.2, that sentence stays, but the headers get deleted, is that right? So there’s just that one sentence left under 6.5.

L. Freeman: Correct.

K. Thu: Okay.

L. Saborío: Okay, so we don’t have the same question. I thought maybe we would. Do you have any idea of why this was initially put into the Constitution and Bylaws? I’m a little bit curious.

L. Freeman: Greg Brady and the regional history archives looked into that. Therese or Pat, if you have the facts, you can summarize. Basically, it was part of NIU’s constitution before we had our own Board of Trustees.

L. Saborío: Okay, that makes sense. And so the purpose of the roundtable – would you prefer a roundtable – what do you call it?

L. Freeman: I have been in meetings convened by the president under two previous presidents. And now I convene one. And all of them have been a little different in terms of who attends. But none of them have been policy-making bodies. None of them have been voted or made recommendations to the University Council.

L. Saborío: So I’m just going to make a big assumption here. Maybe the concern is that there are some type of reporting happening in the meeting, and this reporting is not being shared through other means with the campus in general. That’s a big assumption on my part. Is that something that you see happening?

L. Freeman: It’s a pretty informal roundtable where people bring up ideas that get reacted to. It’s a place where I try to build trust across the team, and people try to keep each other aware of what they’re thinking in case they’re not seeing how what they’re thinking might impact another division. Occasionally, we do have presenters come in, but we never have a presentation that impacts the university policy that doesn’t ultimately also go to the University Council. I would not see this ever as the way to make policy on this campus. I refer to my opening remarks to the Policy Library initiative that’s moving forward. We have worked pretty hard as a university over the course of the last year to put some structure to the university Policy Library and the Policy Library Committee. I
would envision that that committee would be subject to Open Meetings Act, and that will be where policy is seen. The states where the president’s cabinet is in Open Meeting, it is the policy-making body. It doesn’t meet weekly. It meets generally with the same frequency as the Board of Trustees, and it is an open meeting. If the campus really wanted another meeting where they see the things that they see at the Board of Trustees and the University Council, we could have a discussion about having a president’s staff that fit that bill. I would see it as redundant, and we’d have to reconcile it with the Policy Library Committee. But the senior roundtable is informal. Sometimes bad ideas die there. Sometimes good ideas are born there. But nothing that happens there moves forward without going through shared governance. If it’s something that impacts the academic and educational mission, it comes to the University Council. I don’t know what else to say. I think I’m making the point, hopefully.

L. Saborío: Yes, I think that works, yes. Thank you.

L. Freeman: Also ability to not have a formal agenda so that something that comes up over the weekends can come to that body to get people’s wisdom, is a real advantage. And so when we’ve had white supremacist groups paper the campus over the weekend, Tuesday morning was a good time for everyone to sort of share what they knew about it, what was happening, how we were going to communicate with everybody. And if we had had to post an agenda the Friday before, we wouldn’t have been able to address that. We probably would have had to find other time in our crowded day. Functionally, not having to lock ourselves in to what we’re discussing, if something arises, is also an advantage for the leadership team of the university.

We had two other questions?

V. Naples: One of the things that occurs to me is that, wouldn’t it be a major enhancement to communications and inclusiveness and shared governance for the members of the university community to be involved earlier in the decision-making process, such as being able to attend such a meeting and listen to what is just being contemplated, perhaps to offer a few suggestions or to know where we are, because there have been many instances where the Board of Trustees has talked about issues, but it’s very clear that the decisions have already been made and the reports are being provided and the rest of us who are attending those meetings – which I do regularly – have not been in the mix before the decision-making process was undertaken. Thank you.

L. Freeman: I’m not sure I totally agree with your conjecture, but let me say that the policies that may be born as ideas at senior roundtable will go to other committees. They go to staff councils. They go to Faculty Senate. They go to deans council. They go to Resource, Space and Budget. They go to the University Advisory Committee, to the Board of Trustees. RSB is an open meeting. The Policy Library meeting will be an open meeting. University Council is an open meeting. I would find it difficult to believe that the senior leadership can’t sit at a table and have a conversation without posting an agenda and inviting the press and members of the larger community into the room. I think that’s something that most divisional leaders have the ability to do, and I think the president should have the ability to do that. You may not agree with me, and we may agree to disagree.
K. Thu: I just wondered whether that remaining sentence really is needed anymore. I’m not sure it says a whole lot. I just pose it as a question.

L. Freeman: Do you mean the “there shall be administrative committees…”?

K. Thu: Yes.

L. Freeman: I kind of wondered about that, but taking that out seemed to somehow reduce the power of the University Council, and I wasn’t willing to put that forward. My concern is really that the president’s staff, as described, doesn’t exist. It’s causing confusion that’s having operational difficulties. And so I felt that, by taking out the sections related to the president’s staff, I was creating a clarity that was needed for my team to meet.

T. Arado: Holly, yes.

H. Nicholson: Would you say that there’s ever information shared at the senior roundtable that would include things that we don’t want our competitors to know, maybe our tactics or suggestions of tactics or enrollment data or things that really shouldn’t go out beyond the university community?

L. Freeman: Definitely. There are things that are sometimes discussed related to intellectual property by the vice president for research. There are definitely proprietary tactics related to enrollment management, recruitment, that are shared there. There are things that are in draft form, and that would be an issue. There are sometimes personnel issues that are discussed there about individuals. Those could be discussed in a closed session, but this is an hour-and-a-half meeting, so having a formal agenda, having public comment, having to go into closed session, we probably just wouldn’t be able to have the meeting in its current form.

T. Arado: Any other questions? Okay, as I said, these are both first readings. So at our next meeting, they will be coming up for a vote and discussion, if necessary, then as well.

A. Proposed amendment to NIU Constitution, Article 6.5, Administrative Committees
FIRST READING

B. Proposed amendment to NIU Bylaws, Article 18.1, President’s Staff
FIRST READING

XI. INFORMATION ITEMS

T. Arado: I’m flipping through my agenda. As President Freeman pointed out in her comments, in the Information Items was the PAC letter. But there also are a number of other things in the Information Items – minutes, remember those are always links that you can get to other things going on on campus.

A. Minutes, Academic Planning Council
B. Minutes, Athletic Board
C. Minutes, Baccalaureate Council  
D. Minutes, Board of Trustees  
E. Minutes, Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee  
F. Minutes, Comm. on the Improvement of the Undergraduate Academic Experience  
G. Minutes, General Education Committee  
H. Minutes, Graduate Council  
I. Minutes, Graduate Council Curriculum Committee  
J. Minutes, Honors Committee  
K. Minutes, Operating Staff Council  
L. Minutes, Student Senate  
M. Minutes, Supportive Professional Staff Council  
N. Minutes, University Assessment Panel  
O. Minutes, University Benefits Committee  
P. Minutes, Univ. Comm. on Advanced and Nonteaching Educator License Programs  
Q. Minutes, University Committee on Initial Educator Licensure  
R. 2018-19 University Council remaining meeting dates: Apr 3, May 1  
S. FS-UC RSB Committee – Illinois Open Meetings Act review  

XII. ADJOURNMENT  

T. Arado: So that then brings us to the end of our agenda. May I have a motion to adjourn? Kendall. A second? Tristan second. Then we are adjourn. Thank you everybody. Oh, we have to vote on that. All those in favor?  

Members: Aye.  

Meeting adjourned at 4:37 p.m.