TRANSCRIPT

University Council
Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 3 p.m.
Altgeld Hall 315
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois


VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Arado, Bolden, Coleman, Coli, Davis, Halicki, Kassel, McCord, Mershon, Mogren, Peterson, Pietrowski, Rajagopalan, Siegesmund, Song, Stephen, Zamora

OTHERS PRESENT: Bryan, Hu, Jensen, McGill, Parker, Ressler, Subramony, Wesener Michael

OTHERS ABSENT: Blazey, Ferguson, Klap, Kortegast

I. CALL TO ORDER

L. Freeman: Good afternoon, everybody. That aggressive tap with the gavel was our call to order. We’re trying something new. Therese is at a professional conference, and the president, alone, is in charge of running University Council today. So I will try to do my best to move us forward through the agenda correctly and in a timely fashion.

NIU President L. Freeman called the meeting to order at 3 p.m.

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

L. Freeman: Before we can proceed, though, we need to verify a quorum using our clickers. I believe the magic number is 31. And is there anyone who is a voting member who doesn’t know how to press A to get a smiley face and let us see that you’re here. Pat, are we ready to vote? Okay. [Pause] Excellent, let’s move forward.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

L. Freeman: Before we can actually move forward, we need to adopt the agenda. Can I please have a motion to do so? Motion by Penrod. A second? Jim Wilson second. I’m repeating it just for the microphone sake and for the record. All in favor for the agenda.
Members: Aye.

L. Freeman: Opposed? Great.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 12, 2018 MINUTES

L. Freeman: Our next item is approve of the September 12, 2018 minutes. Can I have a motion? So moved by Doederlein. Second? Reed Scherer seconded. Any discussion or corrections? Hearing none, all in favor?

Members: Aye.

L. Freeman: Opposed? Great.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

L. Freeman: Item V is Public Comment. Has anyone registered, or is anybody prepared to comment? Hearing none, we will move forward to the president’s announcements.

VI. PRESIDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

L. Freeman: So there is a lot going on on campus. This was a big week, and I want to just review a few of the current events. Yesterday we announced an NIU-led hub of the Illinois Innovation Network. That will take the form of the Northern Illinois Center for Community Sustainability. It will be a new building located on our far west campus. And the building is made possible by the commitment of $15 million from a current fiscal year appropriation to the University of Illinois-led Discovery Partners Institute and Illinois Innovation Network. This initiative builds on the academic and research success of NIU faculty who work in the areas that are supported by the Interdisciplinary Institute for the Study of Environment and Sustainability and Energy. And it’s also a very encouraging initiative, given the enthusiasm of our students and our community for this area.

The land where the building will be put up is in an opportunity zone, a zone designated by our state to be eligible for a significant tax advantage of any income that’s invested. And, in fact, almost our entire campus is in an opportunity zone. Save for a slice of the North 40 by the Colleges of Business and Engineering, we are in an opportunity zone. To consider what that means for us over the long term – and we’re talking about an eight-year period where these tax sheltered, tax advantaged investments can be made – and they’re good for about ten years, so we’re really looking at an 18-year time window here.

To help us think about what that means for us, members of the leadership team have met with financiers who are interested in helping us identify investment opportunities to spur development, both on our west campus, other parts of our campus and potentially in collaboration with partners in the Annie Glidden North neighborhood. We’re considering projects such as community revitalization, initiatives related to manufacturing, health care, food systems. And I asked Dr. Blazey to lead an opportunity zone task force and to do so on a fairly short time line to start
proposing, selecting and preparing projects that could be presented to potential investors. And that task force includes many of the folks who are in the back of the room: Dean Rajagopalan from the College of Business; also Catherine Squires from the NIU Foundation; Acting Provost McCord; Dean Block; Diana Robinson, Center for Governmental Studies; Dean Peterson from the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology; Trustee Wasowicz; Corrine Karinne Bredberg, Division of Research and Innovation Partnerships; Matt Streb representing state relations, as well as the President’s Office; Melanie Magara for communications support; Melissa Nigro from the Foundation for staff support; and then Vice President McGill from Administration and Finance. Their work is ongoing, and I hope to be hearing more about their suggestions within the course of the next four to six weeks. Is that about right, Sarah? Okay.

Yesterday we also held an event in Rockford, the Salute to Illinois Scholars. And this was a joint effort of the three University of Illinois campuses, NIU, Governors State and Western Illinois University. We worked together to invite high-achieving students, either new high school graduates or upcoming high school graduates and transfer students. They were selected on the basis of academic parameters, such as GPA, honor society membership, standardized test scores. There were 172 students and their families there, for a total of just under 400 people. There was about two hours devoted to a college fair. Our Honors Program and all of our colleges had tables. The tables were staffed by advising directors, deans, admissions counselors. All of our colleges, except Engineering, were in the center of the room. And some of the other universities were around the sides, so I felt that we were well-positioned. We had good traffic. There was a whole separate room for engineering programs so, obviously, our College of Engineering was in there.

The college fair was followed by a lunch with a panel. The panel consisted of the presidents of all of those universities, or the chancellors in the case of the U of I campuses, and students from all of the universities. Brianna Falcon, a student in our B.S. to M.P.H. program accompanied me there, did a wonderful job representing NIU, and the feedback was very positive. Obviously, anything that we can do together as public universities to help stem out-migration of our most talented students is positive. This was a great opportunity for us to start talking about the infusion of new dollars into merit aid made possible by the AIM HIGH appropriation that came from the state. We have lovely new fliers that talk about our investment in additional scholarships. And to talk a little more in detail about AIM HIGH, I thought I would ask Vice President Jensen to just say a couple words. And please, if you want to add anything to what I said about the event, go ahead. Your staff did an amazing job.

S. Jensen: Yeah, that was a great event yesterday. Thank you, President, for being there and being part of the panel. I think that was a critical piece. But I think, one added benefit is, because NIU is a great partner there, we were the ones that provided a lot of the input to the local media in Rockford. And, although, I would say the University of Illinois system did a lot of the legwork in terms of the planning, we were able to be in front of a lot of the media. And so that was good exposure for NIU.

Specifically related to AIM HIGH, this is again a relatively newer program. The total amount that the state has issued is $25 million. And NIU’s portion of that was approximately $2.73 million, with the opportunity to match that with institutional funds from the Foundation, which we did do. So altogether we have about $5.5 million additional scholarship aid that we can offer to our incoming students. There are a whole list of requirements, most set by the state as part of the AIM HIGH
criteria. But in terms of where we’ve focused our dollars, we spent quite a bit of it working toward increasing the number of students who are already receiving some of our academic merit scholarships. So we’re able to provide additional aid for those higher achieving students. In terms of the highest students, those students who are currently receiving $7,000 a year, and through this AIM HIGH opportunity, we’re able to provide them now an additional $2,466. Now that sounds like an odd number, but the $7,000 plus the $2,466 equals full tuition. And so we can, for some of those top scholars, we can go out and say, we’re going to cover full tuition for you here, for four years. And so that is a renewable scholarship. And so we do hope to continue to draw in even more high-achieving students.

One of the other opportunities I think that we have that we have not heard from other institutions with AIM HIGH is – well we already do have a very large population of transfer students who come here. And we’ve focused a lot of additional funding on the transfer population. And our transfer scholarships, our current merit scholarships, are not nearly as high as what we provide to our incoming first-year students. They range anywhere from $1,000 to $2,000. And so through this AIM HIGH initiative, we’re actually able to provide a lot more in funding toward our transfer students. And that also is renewable through the end of the completion.

Another opportunity that we have that’s specific to transfer is, we know that there is a population of student who fall below where we were previously offering our merit scholarships. So anyone between a 2.5 and a 2.99, who are very good students, these students tend to do very well in terms of retention and graduation, but yet we hadn’t been able to provide any academic merit scholarships for them. We were also able to provide AIM HIGH scholarships toward those students.

And then we were able to do some more niche-type scholarships. And so one of those is specifically to DeKalb County. So for students who are graduating from any of the high schools here in DeKalb County, we want to keep our best here at NIU. And so we’re providing a $3,000 scholarship for students who are coming from one of the DeKalb County high schools. We also are providing a $3,000 scholarship for students who are transferring specifically from Kishwaukee College.

And then finally, our last focus is on the city of Chicago. We feel like there’s a great opportunity to continue to draw more students from the city. And so we have a scholarship specific to any high school student who’s graduating from a high school in the Chicago Public School District. And then we also have another scholarship that will be for students coming from the City Colleges of Chicago, and more specifically, students who meet their Star Scholarship criteria.

On a little bit of a side note, we’re also working on how we can become a full-time or full-fledged official partner of the Star Scholarship program. These are the students who graduate from a CPS high school. If they meet certain academic criteria, then they’re able to go to City Colleges for no cost of tuition. And as long as they continue to perform well at City Colleges, then they can receive a scholarship at partner institutions. And so as we continue to work through our relationship with the City Colleges, we found that 80 percent of the Star Scholar students end up going to a partner institution. So we want to, obviously, draw more of those students from the City Colleges out here to DeKalb.

So those are where we’re at right now with AIM HIGH and the matching, or what we’re calling the
partner scholarships. We have a very aggressive marketing plan that has already begun. I think that you’ll start to see press releases, perhaps the NIU Today story tomorrow. We already have a story out on the NIU website as of this afternoon and so we’re being very aggressive, reaching out to all the schools that have students that would be impacted positively and also reaching out directly to the students, themselves.

**L. Freeman**: Great, and just to make it easy for everyone to see the material, the joint press release from yesterday’s event and the NIU press release, I’ll make sure Pat gets a copy of that, and she can share. And Sol, if you would do that with the marketing material you just referenced, I think that would be helpful too. It makes it easier for people to have the reference at the same time they’re reviewing your comments.

**S. Jensen**: And if I could also just add, www.niu.edu/aimhigh is a new webpage that we’ve developed. And that has all the details, along with the different scholarship levels. I think that’s another important reference for anyone. I think it is important that all of us here in this room, as leaders, are aware of these opportunities. We want to make sure that we are getting the word out as much as possible. We have a full marketing plan, but as we all know, the best way to get information out is face-to-face. And so if you are interacting with neighbors, with colleagues, with family, we’d love to have you be informed and aware to be able to share all that information.

**L. Freeman**: Great. Does anyone have a question for Vice President Jensen before we move on? Okay. This is Homecoming at NIU, and there is a lot going on. In addition to the football game, we have events scheduled this whole week. And I thought that our Dean of Students Kelly Wesener Michael could give us an update.

**K. Wesener Michael**: Thank you. Everyday is a day for Huskie Pride, but certainly this week we are really excited about our homecoming with the theme of Mission of Tradition. We’ve had a number of events already that have opened the week, but we continue to have events throughout the week. This evening we will have Yell Like Hell, which is a signature event where student organizations come and do their own original cheers. We have a homecoming blood drive that the campus community can participate in, which I think is really important. We have lip sync competitions. We have a number of student events. But most importantly, at the end of the day we have a big football game on Saturday that we’re hoping for folks to be able to be a part of. And we’re really excited about all of the alumni returning to campus, and your ability, and our ability to connect with them and really generate some Huskie Pride.

One of the changes in the schedule this past year is that we won’t be having a homecoming parade. And specifically, historically that has not been an event that has had a high amount of attendance. We’ve done a lot of things in partnering with the city to try and bring a different level of success to the event. We’ve brought it downtown a few years ago; did it in the evening; we had greater participation. We couldn’t continue that particular initiative downtown because of some safety concerns, and that was a joint decision by DeKalb and the university. Bringing it back to campus, we just haven’t been able to generate the participation we would hope, not only in terms of people attending the parade, but also those participating in it. So we made the decision that that wasn’t the best use of our resources in terms of really being able to focus our time and energy on events that, historically, have been popular, and to really think about how we do this bigger and better, and
really create events that bring students and faculty and staff together under Huskie Pride. So we’re excited about the week, but wanted to share some of the upcoming events and also some of the decision-making we’ve made leading up to make sure that our events are really the ones that we know are going to be successful for our community.

L. Freeman: Any questions on homecoming for Kelly? Okay. I wanted to update you on the two searches that are going to be going on at the university level. First the provost search. Matt Streb and Liz Wright are following the processes that are outlined in our governing documents to assemble an appropriately representative committee, and that outreach is ongoing. In this case, the executive vice president and provost, as in many others for leadership positions, our bylaws designate the hiring official as the search committee head. For the case of the provost, that’s the president. For the case of the deans, that’s the provost.

Given that that’s an unusual HR practice, our practice has been for the hiring official to then pick an appropriate designee to be the functional chair and to sort of stand back from the committee playing an appropriate role as the hiring official. And in this case, given the portfolio of the executive vice president and provost and the two distinct roles of executive vice president and chief academic officer, I’m going to make designated co-chairs. So the Faculty Senate president/UC executive secretary will be one of them. And this is what’s been done recently. And then the vice president for research will be the other. And the reasoning for that is that the Faculty Senate president/executive secretary of the University Council is the voice of the faculty in shared governance and very important for the role of chief academic officer, as well as some of the portfolio of executive vice president and provost. The vice president for research has direct insight into the importance of the provost’s academic voice among the senior leadership. The vice president for research serves as a member of Round Table and Dean’s Council. And Therese and Jerry Blazey, I think, will make excellent co-chairs. They’ve both agreed to take on this responsibility.

We’ve engaged Witt/Kieffer as the search firm. They’re going to be on campus next week and having some remote conversations as well, to generate an initial draft of the university profile. I think that they’re going to look at what was done in the last search, as well as the presidential profile that was developed by the Presidential Search Planning Committee. They’re going to have conversations with me, with deans, with Round Table, with the committee chairs. And then the initial draft will then be something that can be edited and feedback can be provided from the search committee as soon as possible thereafter. And then sequentially to Faculty Senate Steering Committee and Faculty Senate in November.

So that’s the plan for that. It’s moving forward. That’s about as fast as we can have it move forward. And it should still position us, I think, for a successful search this academic year.

The general counsel search will also be moving forward. You may remember we had made an offer to one candidate who didn’t accept, so the last search was unsuccessful. Sean Frazier will be replacing Jerry Blazey as the chair since Dr. Blazey has moved over to the provost search, and it seemed cruel and inhuman to make him chair both searches. There was an athletics representative on the GC search committee who has departed the university. With the athletic director chairing the search, we don’t believe there’s any reason to replace the athletic representative. The Supportive Professional Staff representative is from the Division of Research and Innovation Partnerships.
That’s Shannon Stoker from Compliance. And so I think we’re likely, at this point, to move forward with a one-person smaller committee for GC, and again, we’ll be bringing that committee back for approval to this body.

Any questions on the status of those searches or the plan to move forward? Great.

So we have one last item in the president’s announcements. Therese and I meet in between Faculty Senate and University Council to talk about suggestions, ideas that may have come up, items that could be of interest in the president’s announcements. And I understand that there was a suggestion that we modify the proposed university holidays for 2019. And the specific request was for administrative closure on July 5, which is a Friday, and on December 23, which is a Monday. And this will be reflected in the revised calendar that you all have a copy of, that UC will be voting on today. So the good news is that we will have two more administrative closures, or two more holiday days for 2019. And I want to say it’s my pleasure to actually approve these. It’s certainly motivated by common sense, but I’ll give you a little personal story. When I joined the university in 2010, the then-provost insisted that I physically show up for my first day of work, which was Monday, July 3, so a Monday in between a weekend and July 4. And on my very first day of work at NIU, I was literally the only person in Lowden Hall. [laughter]. And because we had Friday closures in those days, there was no air conditioning. So that was my welcome to NIU. I’m still here, but I think we should all take advantage of the long weekends for both the July 4 holiday and the Christmas holiday break this year.

All right, that’s all I have for announcements, but as always, I’m willing to take Q&A.

M. Haji-Sheikh: One note of caution. And we talked a little bit about this at RSB. One of the things that we’ve had in the past is we’ve gotten money from the state with no long-term planning at what to do with the facility after we’ve built that facility. For an example, my laboratory, $8 million from the state, no additional funding from the university. Now if you’re going to do something like that to them, please don’t, because what you end up doing is spending the poor whoever it is rest of their time trying to figure out how to find money to run a vacuum pump. Instead of going out and finding research dollars, you’re going to be out there trying to keep the place running in five or six years, because these buildings take about five years to start having problems. And so I’m going to suggest that at least when you put the committees together to design the building, come up with maintenance contingency. It will make your lives much easier.

L. Freeman: That is an excellent suggestion. Thank you, Professor Haji-Sheikh. And I think in the spirit of that suggestion, I’ll share something that a professor shared with me right beforehand. We have just unveiled the time capsule from Stevens Hall. And in the time capsule from the early ‘50’s? 1958, there is a document lambasting the state for their lack of deferred maintenance funding. [laughter]

Okay, happy to move on. Oh yes, absolutely, please. Everyone can do questions.

J. Novak: I just wanted – I mean I like the ideas of these new holidays, but this calendar is like for whom, because for the students and professors and instructors, there is not enough information about when spring break is, the fact that we have the day before Thanksgiving off, all that stuff that
you need to know. Is that something other than University Holidays? Is that something else?

**L. Freeman:** I am told by Pat – thank you, Pat – that that would be the academic calendar. This is a function, I believe we’re mandated to do by our bylaws on a regular basis. And the more detailed academic calendar will probably be more helpful for the purposes that you suggest.

**J. Novak:** Okay, thank you.

**L. Freeman:** And I’m also told – and I should know this because I’ve been here since 2010 – that we also approve the academic calendar in the spring. So that will be coming forward then for comment.

**L. Saborío:** Ten years.

**L. Freeman:** Ten years in advance, yes.

**L. Saborío:** I just had a tour of the new Discover area. I think Trustee Wasowicz was down there. Have you talked about that already, because I came in late? I apologize if you did.

**L. Freeman:** I actually didn’t mention that when I was going through everything, but I certainly can. I think we spoke about it last year when the board approved it. But certainly it’s very exciting now that it’s open. For those of you who haven’t heard the story, we have a partnership with Discover Financial Services. They are leasing space from us on the ground floor of Founders Library for an initiative called **Code Orange**. So this is Discover-run. The name, code, stands for coder. And orange is Discover’s color. And they are employing as interns, for their company, in their space, on our site, 40 students. And those students are working on Discover projects, having an authentic workplace experience, learning to work on nimble teams together. And they’re going to become more employable because of it. Discover has access to our tax-savvy students and the minds of the future.

I was down there for the opening last week, and I have to say the space is beautiful. It was renovated by Discover, and we also had some additional space renovated. Their space has garage doors that open to the remainder of the ground floor of Founders Library that are very inviting. To say when we program events, we can program events for people beyond Discover, beyond our Discover interns, for everybody. The technology in there is theirs, and it’s very nice and high-tech.

But really, to me, the best thing was talking to our students and talking to the Discover coaches who are there overseeing our students’ efforts. Our students are being given coding projects, and they’re being treated as they treat the nimble teams at Discover. So the teams are largely self-assembled. They’re working on these problems together, and they’re given guidance toward the outcome, but they’re not really told step-by-step what to do, because this is how the real world functions now. And so when Discover folks told our students that, at first they were kind of like, oh, aren’t you going to…No, it’s not really like that. You can just can of, and our students have just taken off. They’re coming in and out in between classes. They’re working together on these problems. And the name that they’ve given our student interns in these roles is campus innovators. And I just couldn’t stop myself from smiling. Students came up, and it’s a good mix of gender. It’s a fairly
diverse group. But students came up and they’re like, I’m a Discover campus innovator. And I’m working on a nimble team to solve a problem. And they were so excited. And when they first interviewed our students, and we first talked about how this project would phase in, the initial vision for the pilot was somewhere between a dozen and 20 students. And after they interviewed our students, they decided they couldn’t stop at 12 to 20. And we started with 40, and we’re going to scale up to 50 next year.

So it’s going well so far. I hope that it continues to go well. And kudos to the chair of Computer Science, Nick Karonis, and to our alumni network. Computer Science Alumni are very tied to each other through an alumni affinity group. You may have seen advertisements. They do events called Beer and Bytes – bytes with a “y” occasionally. And it was a lunch between Nick Karonis and one of the alums who works for Discover who started this whole idea. This is a model Discover hopes to replicate around the country, but we are the first campus to have this model.

Did that answer your question? It’s a cool space, isn’t it? Go down and peer through the windows.

All right, any other questions? Okay.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Proposed amendment to NIU Bylaws Article 15.7 Committee on Initial Teacher Certification – Pages 4-6

SECOND READING/ACTION

Jenny Parker, Associate Vice Provost for Educator Licensure and Preparation
Jim Ressler, Assistant Professor, Department of Kinesiology & Physical Education, UCIEL Chair

L. Freeman: All right, so we’re now going to move to Item VIII, which is Unfinished Business. And we have as our first item a proposed amendment to NIU Bylaws Article 15.7. There are 36 present to conduct the vote, and our rule is two-thirds of those voting. So before we even take a motion and ask for a second, do we want to click in and just confirm? Can we click in and confirm the number? [pause] Okay, so we need 36 in the room to conduct a vote. Yes, if your clicker isn’t functioning, this is the time to get one that actually smiles at you when you press A. [pause] All right, so as you can see, we have enough people in the room to take a vote. To pass the motion, we will need a majority of the group, which is 30, or two-thirds of those who are voting, whichever is great. And I’m going to let Pat and Ferald track that.

Before we have Jenny Parker here to answer questions or any further discussion, can I please have a motion on the proposed amendment.

M. Koss: I’ll make that motion.
L. Freeman: Thank you. And second?

L. Shi: Second.

L. Freeman: Great. So we have a motion and a second. And the floor is now open for discussion; and I believe Jenny Parker wants to say a few words.

J. Ressler: Good afternoon. Hi, I’m Jim Ressler. I’m in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education. I’m the chair of the UCIEL this year, the [University] Committee on Initial Educator Licensure. As stated last month in this meeting, we’re here to clean up some language on the bylaws, notably, an inaccurate description of the representation across both the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the College of Education, as well as to articulate representation from interested parties, such as academic advisors, and then also student representation.

L. Freeman: Any questions for our presenters?

T. Martin: Hi, how’s it going? So you guys said you wanted to clear up student representation on the committee. How did you do that?

J. Ressler: We have one student representative on the committee. This is someone either from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences or the College of Education to be that student voice for any actionable items within that committee.

T. Martin: I’m kind of ignorant on this, so please help me with this. But how many colleges can give an educating license?

J. Parker: Currently four, coming down to three. And the previous bylaw said that we would have a student from each of the licensing colleges. We struggled with that for multiple years. And so then the decision was made that it would rotate between the colleges still to allow for that student voice.

T. Martin: Okay. My question is, have you guys tried reaching out to the Student Association to try to get some student representation on those committees.

J. Parker: Yes we have.


K. Cross: Just for clarification, so I’m a little bit ignorant as well. But the procedure for student representation is the committee is supposed to submit a list to the SA president. And then the SA president selects from that committee for the students, correct?

J. Parker: What we have done – and let me clarify. This year the new bylaw – and if we can scroll down – is that the colleges will provide the student representative. So this year, TEACH House has been approached, and so the student rep who would be put forward from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Next year it would be from the College of Education. In the past, we have reached out to the Student Association, but the students had to be in a licensure program.

L. Freeman: Okay, hearing no further discussion or additional questions, let’s vote to approve the proposed amendment to NIU Bylaws, Article 15.7, the Committee on Initial Teacher Certification. 1 is yes, 2 is no, 3 is abstain. [pause] We’re good, all right.

Yes-42
No-3
Abstain-3

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of Proposed University Holidays for 2019 – Page 7 Revised Proposed University Holidays for 2019 – walk-in

L. Freeman: Our next Item IX is New Business. IX A is approval of the Proposed University Holidays for 2019. Everyone should have the amended list of holidays, and I discussed this during the president’s comments. May I have a motion to approve? So moved, Nicholson. And a second? Okay, second from Novak. Any further discussion? All those in favor?

Members: Aye.

L. Freeman: Opposed? All right, we now have university holidays for 2019.

B. Higher Learning Commission Four-Year Assurance Review Results
Ritu Subramony, Director of Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation

L. Freeman: Item IX B is a presentation. It’s one that I alluded to in my comments at the last UC meeting. We have Ritu Subramony from Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation here to talk to us about the results of the Higher Learning Commission four-year assurance review.

R. Subramony: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Ritu Subramony. I am serving as the director of Core Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation and Institutional Effectiveness at NIU. My supervisor, Carolinda Douglass, who is the vice provost for institutional effectiveness, was unable to be here. So I get to make this fun presentation in her absence, and it’s all good news. Thank you.

I wanted to share with you today the findings from our Higher Learning Commission’s fourth year assurance review. Many of you have been directly and indirectly a part of this, so I think this is good news to share.

So as I mentioned, this is a really good presentation to make, because it’s full of good news, positive reviews, and really does speak to the collaborative effort of our NIU colleagues. I’m happy to be here. We successfully completed our four-year assurance review. We met all the five criteria and 21 core components. Many of you here I can see are from accredited programs, so you truly
know what it means to be given a met and also be commended in some areas for our efforts. It’s really a big honor, thank you.

In the next few minutes, I do want to review a couple things. I want to tell you why this is important. I mean it’s pretty obvious it’s important, but also it’s a cause for celebration. And in that, I want to give you a context as to how we develop the strategy for the assurance review. There are some learning moments for us trying to do this work, and also speaking to the voice that came out from the various groups, and in terms of collaboration, in terms of shared governance. There were many things to be learned. Anyone who was a part of it, I’m sure went away understanding the university so much more on the back end also.

I will briefly touch upon the significant findings at the highest level. The report is available on the website, on the NIU HLC website if you want to look at the report we submitted, the findings report that came back, and then also the presentation, that’s the place to be. It also has all the members who were directly involved with the effort, so that’s something else to look forward to. And then very briefly we’ll talk about what are the next steps in our journey with our accreditation.

So why is this important? It’s obviously important, I said, but internally it’s really important for us to be recognized well by our accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission. We were able to attest to the fact that we have an alignment of institutional priorities across the universities. So one of the things I want to tell you is that, when we created this effort, when it came to fruition, looking at the draft that was produced to be submitted, we looked at evidence from the past four years starting January 2, 2014 through December 31, 2017. So in that period, all evidence was created from then. So if you can recall where we were in those years, this is speaking to that. It’s giving the story to where we were and how we are coming along. So with that, it was really important internally to be able to show that there is that alignment of priorities. It was important for us to be able to be commended for our quality assurance and continues improvement throughout all our academic programs, all curricular efforts, and then also institutional functions and operations.

Externally it’s really big news for us, because a good standing obviously directly influences our Title IV funding. It also influences our transfer agreements for our students, our certifications, our licensure efforts, our enrollments, our partnerships, our risk management insurance and our programmatic disciplinary accreditation, that relationship as well. So all in all, it impacts all aspects of our operations and functioning, and directly students as well.

I wanted to give you a quick context on how we developed this. And why is this important. So we had a glowing result. Literally, I would use the word, glowing. We got a really glowing report from the accreditor – unheard of absolutely. In terms of the strategy, when I’m looking at these points, what comes to mind is we were able to constitute a strategy that spoke about NIU within our external and internal environment. It was a very systematic strategy. It was planned. We used a project management approach to keep us on track so that we were aware of our timelines. Shared governance was a very big deal. Voices of students, staff, faculty was a big deal in this effort. People were involved in the last time as well, and I see Doris sitting in the back. She was a great help in many different areas.

But what comes to mind is that we were trying to be efficient. All indications are that we were
effective. But we were also trying to be innovative. And yes, innovation is possible in accreditation if you don’t believe me. This was the first that I saw that. So with that we wanted to focus on demonstrating transparency. We wanted to be open. We wanted to communicate openly. You notice the number, 1,000. There were 1,000 pieces of evidence that we were able to put and attach with our assurance review. Why is that important? Because really every couple of statements was supported by evidence. And that is data and information that was gathered in that four-year window.

So a quick aside, it occurs to me this is a great time to thank you for people who were directly and indirectly involved, for people who got the data requests. Many of our senior leaders did that too. For people who knew someone that was involved in the effort in case it was, at times, frustrating. So thanks a lot for that. I also want to say thank you to EMMC [Enrollment Management, Marketing and Communications], because our website was a great tool to communicate. We were proactive. We heard from the peer reviewers that they were looking at our sites months before our actual submission. So they were looking at it – I mean when peer reviewers look – they certainly look for the [inaudible]. Are we in the papers? What’s going on? What are we showing on our website? So our public facing website showing assurance disclosures, giving the right information to students or community members, all of that, shared governance meetings and things. Everything was looked at. Our Blackboard system was looked at. Presidential goals were looked at. They were getting the sense of who are we, that they are going to evaluate. All of that really we were able to leverage, which is why I said we were efficient, we were effective, and we were innovative in that last point. This was the first time that I have done this or seen this where we were able to leverage on themes in a self study or an assurance review.

So I’ll speak about that very quickly, but the website, when the [inaudible] is posted, the website will take you to our NIU HLC website, which will show you the committee members and has all the reports in there. Those are the five criteria for HLC. We’ll talk about each one of them, but we can sort of move on to the themes.

When this narrative was being crafted, these were the five themes that came up, and that was earlier this year. The criteria groups that were working together were able to see patterns. And these were the patterns that were emerging. Of course, with conversations with senior leaders and other stakeholders, we were able to land on these five themes throughout the five criteria in the document.

So Program Prioritization process and outcomes, the connection to strategic planning, budget allocations; transparency, increasing efforts in that; diversity, student success; NIU PLUS; engagement within the context of what has happened within Illinois in the last several years at the state level was the story that was told.

So very high-level findings. Everything is a direct quote from the findings of what the peer reviewers gave us. The highlights or the bolded parts are just so they would pop out and I can allude to them right now. You will see that it came across very clearly that Program Prioritization, its implementation, the process of really looking at all our programs, academic and administrative, was that self-reflection exercise, that comparative analysis exercise and the outcomes of it, was something that the reviewers picked up on as tying the strategic planning and budgeting. This is going to be very important when I tell you about Criteria 5, because in 2014, when we had the ten-year review, we certainly had weaknesses in that area. And these were the reasons why we were
weak: We were not able to align our processes of strategic planning with our budget and resources. And we were not able to demonstrate it for sure.

The second thing that comes out in the overall finding is that we have improved on our transparency, the openness of budgeting processes, openness of involving shared governance in policy making and procedures, and so to strengthen those mechanisms as we are moving along.

Yet in our finding at a high level was, as you can see the second bullet point which says that issues that happened in the last review, the tenure review, they have been resolved through Program Prioritization and Planning as the first step. Now this report was submitted in July, and so it was talking about the last four years. It certainly is an exciting time at NIU as we are moving forward. This is the foundation, but so much has already happened in the last few months. So it’s going to be a fun time, I think, to be able to get a report together for the next time, because so many initiatives and things are happening that we are able to, hopefully, then show the impact at that point.

So moving along, I will say that at the criteria level, there are five criteria. This is my favorite primarily because our mission is driven by our vision and values, but also Mission is a very cute logo to have, so it sort of works. But you can see that we were commended for staying true to our purpose to do a public good within our region, within our state, through new initiatives, through organizational restructuring and improving the impact of our services. And having a very keep focus in doing that. I do want to bring you back to this step. This was not just academic programs. We’re talking about the entire university, every aspect of it, which is why I said thanks for providing the evidence and data at that point. We were also commended for having an expanded emphasis on diversity, engagement, transparency in alignment with the mission. So that was something that we got stellar reviews on.

In terms of the second criteria, we were able to again prove some things through our evidence. I said to you that almost every other statement had a piece of evidence attached to it, data as well as information. And that is something the reviewers looked at. The reviewers have a one-month window to come back to us and ask for more information. We did not get one question, not one. It’s unbelievable. I’ve been pinching myself. So again, speaks to how well the groups must have worked together to get this together.

So the point that I want to make here is that the shared governance came out very strongly. All decisions involving policies, procedures, our need through shared governance, starting with the board, senior leadership, going to shared governance committees across the university, before substantial changes are made. Examples included faculty credentials policy. It included the budgetary processes. It included other policies and procedures that have been changed recently.

We were also able to speak to the fact that we have a lot of positive results. We have accountability when something goes wrong. We have acted with speed, as well as done accountable things when issues have happened. So some of the examples, if you want to read that findings report, or look at the real actual submission, you will see the OEIG recent investigation and the consequences, or the property loss. Those kind of things were mentioned. And what we did was what was impressive to the reviewers. That things will happen, but what is it we are going to do and what is the speed with which we’re going to do it. Those were important things to them.
In terms of teaching and learning quality, resources and support, again it came out, I’m just going to read that quote up there, which sort of tells you the whole story – that we have a very strong collection of student support services, co-curricular education that enhance the prospects of student success and holistic learning. So within that, the idea that we have support for faculty, staff, students at all levels; the fact that we’re trying to engage our students by holistic experiences in and outside the classroom. NIU PLUS engages all aspects of that, the Academic Plus, the Engaged Plus, the Jobs Plus, creating that whole personalized how they want to be self-driven in their learning, that experience, those are all very much commended by our reviewers.

So I will say this to you, that every time we have this, it’s great to have a glowing report, but someone like me also thinks that’s great – we’re going to start collecting evidence now. We’re going to start collecting evidence on the impact of this. So that is the next step we look forward to being able to provide them with how this unfolded. So these are again the words used for us were “encouraged to see,” “commended,” “has done a wonderful job,” these are glowing things to hear from an accreditor.

In terms of evaluation and improvement, which is Criteria IV, we were certainly again we have a very strong culture of assessment on this campus. And I believe that in the four, four-and-a-half years that I have been here too, it is a culture that has continued over many, many years. I have seen that in different aspects. And when you compare it, talking to colleagues across institutions, that’s not always the case.

So what they were able to pick up on from their web searches, from looking around in Blackboard, looking at the meeting minutes online and our submission, was that Program Prioritization was the mother of all self-evaluations, self-reflection processes. But that was the only time. The structure, the framework of assessment at NIU is such that it is continuous. It happens across all units. Some are stellar, some are struggling, but there is never a unit which is not doing what it needs to do in terms of assessment and evaluation.

We were able to also be applauded for our intentional transparency in publicly sharing appropriate data. I mention that transfer policies, things that matter to students and staff and potential students, their families, are all available through our website. It’s very clear and in multiple format. Our modalities, our learning goals are the same whether you’re on campus or online. So there was this sense that was coming to the peer reviewers and that showed up in their reviews in the findings.

The most important part, which is pretty interesting and something different, was the last point. We were encouraged, and we were applauded for our efforts in collecting, analyzing, using data on retention and persistence and completion. But we were also encouraged to have more ambitious goals, have more metrics in these areas. They wanted us to set targets. They wanted us to see that we have all this programming and efforts that are coming – why not take that next step and also be more ambitious about our goals. Where do we want to be? So again, going with how our strategic direction is moving at the moment, it all aligns superbly, really well. And that’s something that the one recommendation that did come from the accreditor.

Finally, in Criteria V, which has to do with resources, planning and institutional effectiveness, the
biggest relief – and to some extent something that brought a little bit of pride for all of us – was the fact that what we had to prove in the past, what was a weakness, was now resolved. We were able to show that we have this holistic review of all programs, the fact that we are going in the direction of tying our budgetary resources with our strategy, that we are really moving in one coherent whole as a direction. And that was true at the senior leadership level. It was coming through the goals at the highest level. It was coming through programmatic goals, what the units were doing. That alignment was coming through. And they typically, many of you might be peer reviewers here, we typically as a peer reviewer, you’re looking for holes. You’re looking for gaps, where I’ll be falling down. And they were able to see that the story was pretty coherent and going in the right direction, which is a matter of pride, no doubt.

So with that, I said to you that I wanted to tell you about a strategy, which was effective, efficient and, I think innovative for accreditation, which is a big deal. It’s worth writing a paper on, I think. So that will happen. I actually did submit something for HLC, come to think of it. But this is where we are at. We are done with one to four years off our ten-year cycle. And the next thing we are going to do is move into something called a quality initiative. We are mandated to do this quality initiative, but it basically starts now, Year 5 through Year 9. We have a proposal. We’ve got to implement it. We have to get an impact and a report on it. And we do submit that to HLC.

So the next steps in our journey with HLC is something that we call the shots on. They allow us to choose something that suits our present concerns, our future aspirations or both. They certainly basically allow us to take risks. The content of it doesn’t matter, whether we do well, we do stellar, or we don’t quote meet our targets, is not of concern to them. What is of concern to them is, what do you want to do? Do something that’s going to be for your purpose. You’re doing it for yourself. They just make sure that the process is in place.

So with that, what I have heard – and I believe there are proposals that are out there – but there is certainly some sense from senior leadership to follow a project that is more based on student success, that is talking about retention, certainly addressing the equity gaps and such. So that has not been finalized, but certainly in that direction would make sense. Although, if you were to ask me, which you shouldn’t be asking me, I’m just one small part, I would say everything that is going on on campus is so exciting. It can be anything. But once a proposal does come through, it will come through shared governance. People will look at it. People will weigh in on it. And that will be something that we adopt and move forward.

So with that, I want to again formally thank you for being a part of this initiative and effort. My job is to make accreditation exciting. I’m surprised to know that I actually find it exciting. So I don’t know if that’s brainwashing or something. But there are some aspects and there are some positives. We did do a survey for people who were part of it directly, and overwhelmingly, the response was they learned more about the university. They learned more about different functions. They understood how things are connected. And that is one of the reasons we have shared governance structures, one of the reasons you involve faculty, staff and students in efforts like this.

So thank you. If you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them. And if I can’t answer them, I’ll look in the right direction. Somebody will answer them. Go ahead.
K. Thu: Well first of all, congratulations, Ritu, on the successful four-year accreditation. And not to put a wet blanket on it, but there is still a concern about over-assessment and the many ways in which we do assessment, particularly at the department level. And so, while the over-arching assessment for HLC has been successful and, hopefully, it will continue to be successful, we still have a lot of work to do internally in trying to streamline the many different lines of assessment that we do. And that’s still a problem, and it’s a problem for actually convincing our faculty to become unit heads. So I just wanted to throw that into the mix. Thanks.

R. Subramony: So that’s not a question, but if I may comment on it, Kendall, you are right. Assessment is not something one wakes up to, although, covertly we do know when you are teaching in the classroom, you’re teaching to students, and you somewhere do want to know are they learning what’s going on. It’s not that different in my life either. So what we try to do is we are trying to encourage departments either to learn certain practices that they already do and be more cognizant and more aware of it. Or we are also trying – Jenny Parker was here earlier. So Carrie Zack and I are trying to come up with some ideas where we can streamline assessment, so a department, if they are teacher educator, as well as they have an annual assessment, they don’t have to give us more reports than they have to.

However, I will caution us that these are essential in practice the activities or actions that make the foundation of a culture. So the idea is to always self-assess. So my unit has to look at what we ask people to do and say, is there a way to streamline. And if there is, what can we do? Don’t throw the baby out with the bath water. But at the same time, sort of not make the bath water to rise to the level that it’s a problem. So point well taken. And we are very cognizant, and we are trying to do as best we can on that. Thank you. And I speak only for the academic assessment. We do have a workshop, October 19. And I think someone from your department is coming. Yes, thank you.

Thank you very much for your attention [applause]

L. Freeman: I have acknowledged publicly Ritu and Carolinda and Doris and the entire team who worked on this at the Board of Trustees meeting. We had a celebration event, but I would be remiss if I didn’t add one more time here that this was a tremendous job. It was very collaborative. The work not only satisfied the requirements of HLC and ended in the positive outcome you’ve presented here, but it’s work that does help move the university forward by tying together themes and outcomes; and I really appreciate very much everything that was done.

X. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE – Linda Saborío – report
   IBHE Data Points – Transfer Success in Illinois – Pages 8-9

L. Freeman: All right, moving on the agenda, Item X, Reports from Councils, Boards and Standing Committees, I will be calling on the ones that are labeled as having a report, so if you are labeled as not having a report and you’re here, you’re going to have to yell when it’s your turn. And Linda Saborío, the Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE is already up for Item X.A.

L. Saborío: Good afternoon. For our September meeting, the FAC to IBHE, we met at Judson
University in Elgin. And the president welcomed us to his campus and spoke with us about the university’s mission, their RISE program, which is Road to Independent Living, Spiritual Formation and Employment, and their enrollment. The RISE Program is a newly-formed program that allows students with intellectual disabilities to live on campus for two years and includes connective internships that try to place the students in positions related to their goals.

Next we met with Senator Cristina Castro, who is from the 22nd district in Elgin. She’s a member of the Senate Higher Education Committee. She’s worked with higher education institutions and has four in her district: Elgin Community College, Harper College, Roosevelt University and Judson University. Many of the students from her district feed into NIU, and much seems to pit two-year and four-year institutions against each other, such as nursing, which we’ve heard come up several times.

What seems to reduce pressure, according to Cristina, is having a good partnership, such as the one that she has helped to establish with NIU. But places that don’t have that strong relationship are more interested in two-years being able to offer full nursing programs. The focus should be on how we solve problems to better serve our students and how we can take achievement, such as Elgin Community College’s success in closing the achievement gap to Hispanic students and translate those to other communities.

Several FAC members raised issues, such as requiring that dual-credit courses be offered if a high school wants them. Concerns focused on the ability to control the quality of what happens in classrooms and trying to insure that students are prepared for subsequent coursework at the university level.

Sen. Castro pointed out that there is a lot of pressure for college readiness, and there’s also a lot of frustration with high school graduates who are then placed in remedial courses.

Our IBHE rep, Jaimee [Ray], provided a report by phone. What to expect from the veto and lame duck sessions depends on what happens in the governor’s race. Please vote. The governor vetoed 47 bills, and only a few might come up during those sessions. But the others might be re-introduced during the next General Assembly. Among those likely to resurface, perhaps with variations, are the religious exemptions bill and the issue of bachelor of science nursing programs in community colleges, again. There is discussion about releasing money for emergency capital projects, and there’s also a focus on creating a base-funding formula with additional performance-based funding elements. But whether the performance funding would be from new or existing money is unknown. The working group is researching other states’ experiences with a deadline of mid-April.

From our FAC chair, Marie [Donovan] was invited by Al Bowman to be the lone faculty voice on the 30-member performance-based funding group. And she provided us with a handout of a presentation made in August by the group titled Transfer Success in Illinois. And this has been attached to your agenda so you can look at it.

This year the FAC members have decided to divide themselves among five working groups with cross-caucus membership. By the end of the year, or sooner, each group will produce at least one product. We’re going to look at a position statement, research articles, conference presentations and
more. The working groups are: Program Prioritization and Consolidation, which I forcefully said no thank you; P-20 Outreach; IAI; Dual Credit; Regional Dual Credit System; and “This We Believe.” What we are hoping to achieve from these working groups is a greater presence at the last IBHE meeting of the year, which happens to be at NIU this year in June (and I might be in Argentina) including more concrete input from faculty regarding the many salient issues impacting our institutions across the state.

So that ends my report. Our next meeting will be at Lincoln Trails in Robinson. From what I understand, that’s somewhere near Indiana. It’s going to be quite a drive, right? Are there any questions? Thank you.

L. Freeman: You do to see a lot of two- and three-star hotels while you’re on the IBHE meeting trail.

B. University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees – no report
   Holly Nicholson, Catherine Doederlein, Therese Arado
   Alex Gelman, Sarah Marsh, Kendall Thu

C. Academic Policy Committee – Vicki Collins, Chair – report

Lisa Freeman: Hearing nothing from the University Advisory Committee to the board, our next report comes from the Academic Policy Committee, Vicki Collins.

V. Collins: Good afternoon. The Academic Policy Committee met last week to begin the work of reviewing policies pertaining to distance education courses carrying undergraduate credit offered by NIU. At that meeting, we agreed on the process that will govern our work this year. And we’ll report back to this body as we progress through each step. Any questions? Thank you.

L. Freeman: Thank you.

D. Resources, Space and Budget Committee – Jim Wilson, Chair – report

L. Freeman: Resource, Space and Budget Committee.

J. Wilson: Good afternoon. I’m Jim Wilson, the chair of the Resources, Space and Budget Committee. We met last Friday, October 5, with the idea of an orientation into the budget process, what is going on to get us all on the same page with questions that we’re trying to derive for meeting with the president and the acting provost on November 2. And also they’re slated to meet with us on December 7. So with that in mind, our vice president for administration and finance, chief financial officer, Sarah McGill, gave us this presentation with a focus on budget and diving a little bit into the facilities. And I’m going to actually go through the list. There were questions and comments based on her presentation. And then afterwards, there was also from the rest of the committee, questions and comments that would be directed next month, next month’s meeting, to the leadership and our CFO. So with that, I’ll go through some of these and also give you the idea of the kinds of questions we’re working with. And if you hear from your constituents or have questions yourself, you can see the kinds of things that we’re talking about at our committee
meetings. So, several questions and observations were made during Sarah’s presentation.

- It is a goal of the administration to begin a multi-year budgeting scheme in fiscal year ’21. Currently, it’s just one year. We’re going to try for several years.
- The budget control process in which every transaction is reviewed by a budget committee has been eliminated for purchases under $25,000. So that’s probably a good relief there. Those purchases are now approved at the unit level. Every college has enacted its own structure for this process.
- Fiscal ’19 budget, expense categories. While the chart shows that 8 percent goes to capital repair, debt service and other, Sarah noted that most of this portion ($28 million) goes toward debt service.
- Less than one percent of the budget goes to plant maintenance.
- Positive opportunities for philanthropic revenue generation are being explored with the NIU Foundation.
- Questions were raised regarding cash on hand, sometimes called reserves, and whether that amount includes 41 funds. And apparently, they do. That just in.
- NIU should have a plant replacement value, PRV, of about two percent. But that goal is unmet.
- AVP for Facilities and Management John Heckmann and State Legislative Liaison Jenna Mitchell met with legislators last week to communicate the severity of structural failures on campus.
- NIU has been unable to address the topic of new facilities, which students expect to see when comparing institutions when they come for a visit.
- Major projects to celebrate include: Stevens Building renovation. Holmes Student Center renovation, Neptune Hall repairs and improvements, boiler replacement.
- The capital budget process – what is the process, not only for budget management, but how do projects get on the list? Who manages the list? How do we prioritize?
- A space needs survey will roll out to all divisions and colleges soon.
- Is NIU’s financial data publicly posted? Sarah replied that it is included in NIU’s financial statements and in the Board of Trustees materials.

Okay, so next we did come up with some questions that will, hopefully, be addressed. And again, I’d like to encourage people to send either their questions or comments that they have about this to myself or to Pat. And hopefully, we can get them on to our next meeting agenda. So several questions were derived.

- Decentralizing budget and hiring process to the extent possible.
- Allow colleges and departments to be responsible. Before it was at top-level, provost and on down.
- The flexibility in the use of the 02 funds (this came from two unit heads). Support student events and food for recruitment and retention. Can we do that?
- Any adjustment that occurs outside the college, such as promotional increments, base salary changes, retention adjustments, should be funded simultaneously, not after the fact. This creates budget failure inefficiencies based on, among other things, the need to make multiple contacts and fix things down the road. Some of that was brought up earlier.
• Separate cost center for base funded positions from operating budget activity. Personnel should be completely separated from 02 budgets.
• One person asked, what is the take on Program Prioritization from the leadership at November’s meeting.
• Not all collected lab fees have been returned to departments. There seems to be a backlog of several years. Although that money is rolling out, how much is left to deliver? So that is being looked at now.
• In light of the significant windfall of reduced tuition for out-of-state athletes, will NIU be able to reallocate some of the athletic fees to other groups.

Okay so that ends the series of comments, questions and observations. Also I’d like to note that I will, along with Sarah and others, be meeting with the IBHE’s fall budget meeting on Tuesday. Also if you have questions, there’s also a number of us who are on the RSB Committee; you could probably illuminate further what some of these things are about. If there any questions, comments?

L. Freeman: Hearing none, thank you, Jim.

E. Rules, Governance and Elections Committee – Richard Siegesmund, Chair – report
  1. University Council triennial faculty membership reapportionment – Lin Shi – Pages 10-11

L. Freeman: Our next item is Rules, Governance and Elections Committee. And I understand Lin Shi is here in place of Dr. Siegesmund for the report.

L. Shi: Good afternoon. As you may know, the NIU Constitution and Bylaws requires that every three years the ratio of regular full-time faculty members in each degree-granting college to the total number of such faculty in all degree-granting colleges be reviewed. That review was completed during September and is included in your agenda packet and on the screen. Based on that review and on behalf of the Rules, Governance and Elections Committee, I move that the faculty seats on the University Council be reapportioned as shown on the chart. Specifically, one seat is added to the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology, and one seat is eliminated from the College of Health and Human Sciences.

L. Freeman: So we have a motion from Professor Shi. A second is needed.

E. Fredericks: Second.

L. Freeman: Thank you.

Unidentified: [inaudible]

L. Freeman: To vote today actually.

K. Thu: So I want to understand how the total faculty are calculated. Are those from a single year is the third year in the three-year cycle? Or is it an average of the three years? Because that makes a
difference?

**L. Freeman:** Taken from September of 2018 in accordance with our bylaws.

**K. Thu:** Okay, I couldn’t find it in the bylaws how you derived the actual number of faculty that’s counted in this. Because if it’s taken from a one-year slice, then you’re subject to a greater aberration than an average of three years. It is in the bylaws? If it’s from a single year, I don’t know whether it is or not.

**L. Freeman:** I’m having our parliamentarians check this, because we’re certainly trying to do what’s in compliance with our bylaws.

**K. Thu:** Oh, it’s a specific date that you counted on? That might be even worse, to have. If it’s going to be a three-year review, if you take a specific date, again that’s subject to more potential aberration in the number, rather than taking. If for example, Health and Human Sciences suddenly had several faculty flee, you know, in a month or a week before the count was taken, then you’re going to have a not really accurate picture. And so I’m sure you’re following the bylaws, but I might suggest we revisit that calculation to avoid the potential of a single event aberration.

**L. Freeman:** So what I’m hearing is there are obvious drawbacks with a snapshot that’s looked at every three years in a particular window, and you might want to lead an effort to go to the Rules, Governance and Elections Committee with an appropriate modification to overcome that.

**K. Thu:** Okay, thank you.

**M. Haji-Sheikh:** [inaudible]

**L. Freeman:** Michael, we can’t capture what you’re saying.

**M. Haji-Sheikh:** I’m saying that one of the things that we have to remember is that Engineering has lost a significant amount of faculty over this last year too. I actually have no objections to the bylaws being followed. I think you would have to have a change in the bylaws for the next time around.

**L. Freeman:** Yes, I think we all agree that this may not be the optimal process. Yet it is the process that’s in our bylaws. I’m not hearing the accuracy of the numbers collected in account with the bylaws being challenged by anybody. And so in that case, we certainly have room for more discussion, but there is a motion on the floor for action. Is there additional discussion or comment? Let’s clicker vote 1, 2 or 3. Would you like us to re-read the motion? Do people understand what we’re voting on? Okay, then there’s no reason to re-read the motion. [pause] Okay, with 33 to pass, that passes. All right, thank you.

Yes-33
No-6
Abstain-5
F. University Affairs Committee – Hamid Bateni, Chair – no report

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

L. Freeman: There’s no report from University Affairs, so the Student Association report is next, Khiree and Tristan.

K. Cross: The things we’ve been working on so far. Coming up my director of student life, Devontate Johnson, he will be creating surveys related to what my initiatives are. So he’s going to have a survey based on student parking, just to get some poll about how students feel about parking, just so we can have some support when we go to Parking to make some changes. Making a survey about how students would feel about feminine products being offered in the dorm halls, just to insure that we do have the support of the students. And then also, finally, a safety survey, just to see if students feel safe on and off campus.

Also I’ve been working with Senator Naomi Bolden on Project Orange. We’re looking to launch that in November. The date is still tentative, due to location purposes, but we will definitely have a date by the next meeting. So the four subject areas that we are going to be focusing on in Project Orange are: violence on men, violence on women, hate crimes and gun violence. Violence has been an uproar in DeKalb recently. When I say uproar, I don’t mean to scare you. When I say uproar, I mean increasing in statistics with violence. I met with Chief Lowry. I’ve met with both chiefs of DeKalb and NIU, and they both agree that something needs to be done with the violence on campus. So I figure Project Orange would be a great way to step out as the Student Association president and say that violence is not okay, whether it’s physical or non-physical, mentally violent, I think that violence is just something that should be subdued.

Next, my director of environmental affairs, Hayley [Wegrzyn], she’s been working on Go Green NIU. So every home game she gathers up students to go before and after the game to set up bins for students to throw away their beers. And she’s collected over 120 pounds of aluminum. So her organization gets money for that, and then they use that money for further initiatives for Go Green NIU. So they’ll be out there this weekend. So if you see people around with these Go Green shirts, that’s who they are.

Also we’ve had the referendum approved, so Tristan’s probably going to touch on that as well. So we’ll be having an election on the 23rd, 24th, basically surveying students with the question: Do you support passage of the state law that will allow the use of institutional funds for the undocumented students in higher education? That’s just a survey the students to make sure our student body supports the passage of the [Student] ACCESS Bill.

I’ve also talked to President Freeman about Pizza with the President. I think that would be a great initiative for students to be able to meet presidents on two different levels. I think students will most likely love pizza, probably number one. And then, too, I feel like that’s going to be a great space to have open dialog and not to be in this big office, intimidating, to just be casual and be able to talk to us in an approachable manner.
Also, recently the Student Association has partnered with Active Minds about suicide awareness. So there was an event last week, and it’s called Send Silence Packing, where we placed 1,100 book bags out in the MLK Commons of students who have committed suicide. Not going to lie, that was probably the most intense thing I’ve ever done, and I just sat the book bags out. It was kind of like creating a graveyard for these students on our campus. And to see the people just walk and read these stories and walk away. Some were crying. Some students would walk up to me and just have personal conversations about suicide awareness. The Student Association decided to partner because we have the No Shame Campaign, which is a campaign fighting against mental health stigmas. And college students are afraid to come out and say, I’m depressed, or I’ve had symptoms of depression, or I’m not mentally okay. And you know, you’re shunned if you go see a counselor. Some of your friends may think you’re crazy, or you’re weird, or you’re different. So that campaign is basically to end those stigmas and make it okay to go see a counselor, encourage people to go see counselors and things of that nature.

Also we had an event yesterday called SameHere Sit-Down. It wasn’t the Student Association sponsored – we partnered with Counseling and Consultation Service. And pretty much that event was also about mental health awareness, essentially saying that people from different walks of life all face the same thing – Same here, let’s sit down and talk about it. You’re depressed; I also am depressed as well. ESPN was there, so I think that was great for the athletes as well. So it’s just showing that people, whether you’re a politician, whether you’re an athlete, whether you’re a teacher, whether you’re a student, we can all face the same issues. And saying the words, same here, can really [inaudible] someone, seeing that they’re not going through this alone.

And finally, next week on Friday, I set up the first high school visit for the Student Association. It’s going to be at Thornridge High School. I’m going to be going there just to empower students to come to college, give them, as I always say, the real spill about how to prepare for college, because I wish someone my age would come back and tell me, hey, you should do this and this and this. Because hearing it from someone who is of a broader age gap doesn’t really impact me. But if I see someone who was just at my high school a few years ago, it’s going to give me more of an impact. And I think that is a great thing to start with the Student Association. I think the Student Association should be a part in the recruitment for the university. So hopefully, that could create a direct pipeline between the university and NIU.

And then also finally, I’m going to be setting up another high school visit with Urban Prep. They’re an all-male school, but I think Urban Prep is a great school. And I think we should definitely have a direct pipeline with Urban Prep to get those males to come to NIU.

So I’ll pass it over to Tristan. Any questions?

**L. Freeman:** First I want to say that the event last night was absolutely fabulous. Our students and our staff from Counseling and Consultation Services shared the stage with an NHL athlete, an ESPN commentator and a sports information specialist. But Khiree took the stage to demonstrate integrated breathing. He snored into a microphone in front of a Duke Ellington Ballroom packed with his peers, and that was greatly appreciated.
K. Cross: Thank you [laughter]

T. Martin: Hi guys. Hope everyone’s doing well. In case you don’t remember me, my name is Tristan Martin. I am speaker of the Senate. It’s nice to be here again. So first off, to kind of touch on Khiree’s point with the referendum, we’ve had a lot of things going on with that. So first off, it’s been – in case you guys don’t know – it’s a collaborative effort between all branches of the Student Association. It’s not just from the president, not just from me. It’s from everyone. So it was started by DREAM Action, and it was something that they really wanted to work with us on, specifically. And it’s something that we worked a lot on over the past couple of months, something that we’ve really put a lot of effort into. In fact, I actually have sat down with a committee for undocumented funds as well, something that I didn’t know existed until I kind of got into contact with this. So we’ve kind of been doing things with that. To be honest, we had a lot of things going on so we pushed back the election, which was originally slated for the second and third, which would have been last Tuesday and Wednesday, well today. But we decided to push it back for reasons of giving us a little bit more time to prep for it. Not only that, but it would allow us a little bit more knowledge on how we would be able to publicize events, how we’d be able to work with DREAM Action to coordinate that as well. So that’s something that we had to kind of do.

The other thing that we worked on as well was the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court of the Student Association, in case you guys don’t know, they’re not really that active. So it was really exciting to see that I could – me and Khiree – we could kind of work together to have them involved on this, because usually we don’t really see too much action from them. So this is truly a Student Association initiative. The other thing, too, that Khiree kind of touched on as well, this month is Disability Awareness Month. So no matter what sort of disability you have, if you have any, there is no shame for it. We are continuing with the No Shame Campaign on that. We had a very, very important event for the Student Association, but not only for the Student Association, but for CCS, Helping Huskies Thrive and for Active Minds as well. And Khiree also touched on that. The president of Active Minds who was one of the coordinator for the events was actually here, but she had to leave, unfortunately. I kind of want to give a shout out to her. Cassandra Kamp really did a lot to help make this happen. As Khiree said, there were 1,100 back packs kind of set up in the MLK Commons, and it was a really, really powerful demonstration. I don’t think I’ve ever felt that sort of deep emotional trend, especially with a lot of the students that came by. And that’s something that I was really, really excited about. The CCS table actually had and saw over 300 people at their table. So I think that’s something really, really exciting to celebrate.

Past that, Khiree also talked about this – we had the #SameHere Sit-Down event. And our very own Christine Wang sat on that panel, which was really exciting. For the first time in her history, she shared her story with the public, and I think it was very, very moving for a lot of the people that were there. And I can certainly say within myself, it was very, very moving in myself as well. We had over 300, well the event had over 300 attendees, and I congratulate everyone, and I think everyone that came out.

We’ve got a couple of future events with the No Shame Campaign as well. The first one being October 13, which is sort of something that the Disability Awareness Month group, which is kind of
a grassroots movement that’s come out of the Disability Resource Center has started. And it’s actually going to be kind of inspirational – you’re probably going to giggle at this – but they’re going to be having a blind skateboarding session at 6 o’clock. So kind of cool. It’s actually really going to happen. His name is Dan Mancina. He’s been doing it for years and years. And it’s going to be really, really kind of cool to see how that pans out.

The other event that we have is the 16th, which will be the Disability in Song, Dance, Sign and Poetry event. It will be happening at the House Café at 8:30 at night. I would invite all of you to come out. It’s going to be a really powerful event to just kind of celebrate and kind of push for the diversity that we have here on campus and in DeKalb as well, because that is something that we pride ourselves on with the No Shame Campaign, and something that we want the public and the world to see as well.

Just a couple more things. We’ve been working on a 50th Celebration. Since the Student Association was founded in 1968, it is 2018, so that means the Student Association is in its fiftieth birthday. That’s something that I’ve been working with Student Affairs and a lot of staff members from SILD on. And I’m excited to say that we’re going to be having a committee on that specifically and, hopefully, getting the ball rolling on future events with that. So I’ll have something more for you, hopefully, next month, if not, the next after.

The other thing that we’ve been continuing to do is we’ve been continuing to meet with student organizations. One of my goals as speaker of the senate was to make sure that student organizations were more intact with the affairs of the Student Association, the affairs with the university as well. I know that one thing that we struggle within the university is student involvement and addressing it and trying to get students to come out to committee meetings, because I’ll be frank, transparent and honest, it is hard sometimes. But I want everyone here to know that we’re trying to work on that. We as students are trying to kind of connect with other students who may be busy, who may have things going on in their own lives so that we can show them how much they can better the university by being involved.

The other kind of things that we’ve been working on too are just some voter registration and getting people registered to vote and getting things prepped and set for early voting. Actually, I don’t have specific dates for this yet, but I know that there are some out. There’s going to be early voting in the Holmes Student Center, probably toward the end of the month. What was that date? I’m sorry Khiree.

**K. Cross:** October 13.

**T. Martin:** October 13 is when we’re going to be starting early voting in the Holmes Student Center. So please come out. It’s very, very important for you guys to vote. I’ve been seeing a lot of that around too. And actually we had something go live on Huskie Link, I think about a month and a half ago. It’s called TurboVote. If you guys log in to Huskie Link with your A-ID or Z-ID, I think you guys will find something that will help you to register to vote, whether it be proxy voting or not. Something that we’ve been trying to push for.

And then the other thing too, we’ve had a couple of set-backs, to be honest, about just kind of
bringing candidates out. But we have been working past that. Hopefully, in the next couple of weeks, we’re going to be planning for the candidates of the 70th representative district to come out and meet with the respective party groups on campus and maybe just have a kind of meet-and-greet with both candidates. I don’t know if we are planning to have some sort of formal forum like we were hoping to, but we’re still trying to get things worked out.

The last thing that I want to touch on is our collaboration with the City of DeKalb in recent weeks. So we had some of our first and second City of DeKalb student work group meetings, and I’m happy to say that we’ve been opening those up to student organizations that want to come and collaborate as well, and doing a lot of things. So if you guys don’t know, the City of DeKalb and NIU is currently in talks about, and contract negotiations with, merging mass transit and figuring out all the details of that, what it’s going to look like for the Student Association, what it’s going to look like for the City of DeKalb, etc.

And then the other big thing that’s going on too is there’s going to be an Annie Glidden North Corridor Plan meeting today at 6 o’clock in the University Village community room. Pretty much what they’re looking for is as much student input as they can as possible, as to what the students want in that area, as to what the students are looking forward to, within the City of DeKalb or not.

Does anyone have any questions for me?

L. Kruczinski: Hi, I am the alternate for the Graduate Student Advisory Committee to be here. I do have a question about what you are doing as an alternative to Huskie Link for students with disabilities who would like to get involved, because Huskie Link is currently inaccessible to students with visual impairments.

T. Martin: Absolutely. That’s something that we’ve been working on to have physical voter registration drives as well. I know that we’ve had actually have our director of student life working on that specifically, reaching out to different student organizations to see if they would like help, not only publicize it, but help staff it as well. That’s something that we’ve been working on in the MLK Commons.

L. Kruczinski: My concern is not in regards to voting, but in regards to, for example, if a student wants to be a president of a club on campus and if they’re trying to get a club established, which has happened with D.A.L.L.A.S. [Disability ALLy & Advocacy ASsociation], our student activist group here with disabilities. We’ve had a couple past presidents with vision impairments. They’ve been trying to get funding since 2010, and Huskie Link is still inaccessible. And I know they’ve had issues getting alternative arrangements to put the necessary paperwork in, because a student with vision impairment should be allowed to be able to do this. And currently we’ve had more than one student be basically unable to fulfill their duties as president because of that.

T. Martin: Right, and that’s a very valid concern. I’m going to pass it over to Khiree here in a second, but I wanted to address that. Thank you for that. So I know that deputy speaker Cassandra Kamp are going to be meeting with D.A.L.L.A.S. and some other organization. And I really hope that you bring those concerns to us. I’ve written that down so that we can specifically address it, whether we do meet with you guys or not, because that is an extremely important concern. Thank
you for bringing that to me, because this is the first time hearing it. I’ll pass it over to Khiree as well.

**L. Kruczinski:** And thank you. And before I forget, I know that there’s a spot for an SA member to join the PCPD, the Presidential Commission on Persons with Disabilities, and we would love to have you there. We meet every third Thursday of the month from I believe 3 to 4:30, or 3 or 3:30 to 4:30. Thank you.

**K. Cross:** I will also wanted to say I’m very ignorant to that. Thank you for bringing it up. As SA president, I will insure that our website does become disability accessible. I’m a definite advocate for equity, and I don’t think that is fair that they can’t view Huskie Link, because Huskie Link is a great tool for students. So thank you again.

**T. Martin:** Are there any other questions for us? Thank you.

**H. Operating Staff Council – Holly Nicholson, President – report**

**L. Freeman:** All right, last but not least, we have our two staff councils with their reports. H is Operating Staff Council, and Holly Nicholson.

**H. Nicholson:** Good afternoon. Last Friday, Oct. 5, I was privileged to attend the Council of Councils, which is probably my favorite name for a higher ed initiative ever. Basically, Council of Councils was started 21 years ago here at NIU, and it’s where all of the Operating Staff Councils from across the state get together for networking and professional development, to compare how shared governance works at other institutions. And I have to say I came away from that feeling very fortunate about how we operate here. It was at the U of I. That was the first time in 21 years that they’ve hosted it, so it was about time.

And then finally, we’re looking forward to having Vice President McGill at our meeting on November 1. And that’s about all.

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

**L. Freeman:** Cathy, go ahead.

**C. Doederlein:** Sure thing. The ongoing concerns from SPS as far as potential conversions to Civil Service continue. But I really want to just note great appreciation to the administration, including President Freeman, Provost McCord and Matt Streb, have all worked extensively with HR to craft some messages that have been sent out to all SPS, and then SPS that are known to be potentially impacted by this shift, as well as some messages to HR department heads for shifts within job – reviewing job descriptions, essentially. Additionally, the board – specifically Trustee Butler – has been very open to hearing our concerns as well, and will actually be engaging with us at our full council meeting tomorrow. So just wanted to say that, though there continue to be concerns, we really appreciate the extent to which the university, as well as the board, is hearing those concerns, and trying to help insure that, even if shifts to Civil Service need to happen, which may very well be the case, that they can be done in as equitable and employee-friendly a fashion as possible.
L. Freeman: And I will say that is a topic of a conversation going on among the presidents and chancellors right now with Jeff Brownfield from the State Universities Civil Service System. And our major request that we all agree on is the need for the universities to get consistent answers from the system, which doesn’t, unfortunately, always happen. And we’ll keep you posted as to the nature of those conversations.

XI. INFORMATION ITEMS

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, Supportive Professional Staff Council
M. Minutes, University Assessment Panel
N. Minutes, University Benefits Committee
O. Minutes, Univ. Comm. on Advanced and Nonteaching Educator License Programs
P. Minutes, University Committee on Initial Educator Licensure
Q. 2018-19 University Council remaining meeting dates:
   Oct 10, Nov 7, Dec 5, Jan 30, Feb 27, Apr 3, May 1
R. NIU liaison to State Universities Retirement System Members Advisory Committee
   SURSMAC sample meeting agenda
   SURSMAC Constitution and Bylaws

   NIU HRS is recruiting one academic and one non-academic employee to serve as liaisons to the State Universities Retirement System Members Advisory Committee. To learn more, contact Celeste Latham or Liz Guess.

L. Freeman: I’ll call everyone’s attention to the information items.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

L. Freeman: We are at the point where I can ask for a motion to adjourn. So moved, Nicholson. Second, someone?

K. Thu: Second.

L. Freeman: All right, we are officially adjourned.
Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.