

TRANSCRIPT

FACULTY SENATE Wednesday, January 20, 2021, 3 p.m. Microsoft Teams Meeting Northern Illinois University DeKalb, Illinois

*All Faculty Senate members will receive an Outlook invitation to this Teams meeting.
Others wishing to join the meeting, please send your request to Pat Erickson at pje@niu.edu.*

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Akst, Allori, Aygen, Berke, B. Beyer, Books, Borre, Buck, Carpenter, Chen, Cheyney, Chomentowski, Creed, Demir, Dmitruk, Doederlein, Duffin, Fanara, Fredericks, Furr, Glas, Grund, Hu, Hunter, Hua, Ito, L. Johnson, N. Johnson, Jong, Keddie, Kim (for Mayer), Konen, Kuehl, Lampi, Liberty, Maki, McCarthy, McGowan, Mellon, Montana, Nesterov, Onder, Palese, Penkrot, Petges, Qin, Reutsche (for Miguel), Richter, Riggs, Royce, Sharp, Sirotkin, Slotsve, Smith, Subramony, Sullivan, Surjadi, Tatara, Thu, Vahabzadeh, Valentiner, Whedbee

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Bujarski, A. Johnson, Kasper, Knoll, Laben, Mayer, Miguel

OTHERS PRESENT: Barnhart, Boston, Bryan, Douglass, Edghill-Walden, Falkoff, Frazier, Ghrayeb, Gorman, Groza, Halverson, Hunt, Ingram, Klaper, Nicholson, Parks, Rhode, Saborío

OTHERS ABSENT: G. Beyer, Jaekel, Marsh

I. CALL TO ORDER

K. Thu: I see it's 3 o'clock on my laptop clock, so I'm going to go ahead and call the meeting to order. Welcome everybody.

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

K. Thu: First item is to verify the quorum, and I'm going to turn it over to Pat to verify the quorum and also explain to us our new handy-dandy voting tool. So, Pat, quorum and voting.

P. Erickson: Hi Kendall. Yes, we do have quorum. Special thanks to those who check in about five, ten minutes early so I can count before we get to this 3 o'clock hour. So, we're there.

And now we're going to talk a little bit about how we're going to vote today. We want to continue perfecting our virtual voting methods. So, this afternoon, for the agenda adoption and the minutes approval, we found that it's been a bit cumbersome with everyone typing that yes, yes, yes into the chat box. As an alternative today, we're going to try a voting method that several of you have suggested in the past. And I think you might have tried it out at your November meeting, I wasn't

with you that day. When it comes time to adopt the agenda, please don't start typing yes into the chat box. Instead, please wait for Natasha, who is our chat monitor, to type three stand along phrases in the chat box. Natasha is going to type agenda-yes, agenda-no and agenda-abstain. And once you see those three separate statements in the chat box, just hover your cursor over the statement that matches your vote and click your thumbs up icon. In this way, Natasha won't have to go down a list of a whole bunch of yeses, but instead, we'll actually all be able to see in the chat that thumbs up number increase as our voting goes up. So, we'll try that in just a moment for the adoption of the agenda and the approval of the minutes.

Now, a little later in the meeting when we get to Item VII on the agenda, this is a bylaw amendment, so specific numbers and anonymity become a little more valuable to us. So, for that we'll be using a polling tool called Poll Everywhere. It looks a lot like Qualtrics, and for that balloting process, I will put a hyperlink into the chat. You'll click on it, and that will take you to another website, and you'll see the ballot. You'll see options 1 through 10 on the ballot. For our voting 1 will equal yes, 2 will equal no, 3 will equal abstain, and you'll just ignore the other numbers. There is no need to click submit; in fact, I don't think there's even a submit button on the screen. Once you click on the number that represents your vote, that vote simultaneously – we hope – is submitted to the Poll Everywhere report. And then I'll show that to you on the screen. Also, just keep in mind when you're using that poll, if you change your mind, you can click on the clear button at the bottom of the ballot screen and choose a different number, and it will automatically erase your first vote and put in your other one.

I'll remind you about the Poll Everywhere again when we get to Item VII, but for right now as we move on to adopt the agenda and approve the minutes, remember that you're going to wait for Natasha to put those three choices in the chat. Back to you, Kendall.

K. Thu: Thank you, Pat. I think this will be much a more efficient means of voting on big-ticket items.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

K. Thu: I'll entertain a motion to adopt an agenda.

C. Doederlein: So moved.

K. Thu: Thanks, Cathy. Do we have a second?

E. Fredericks: Second.

K. Thu: Thanks, Elisa. Any discussion? Okay, hearing none, let's go ahead to the voting in the chat box. And again, we wait for Natasha to put the yes, no or abstain in the chat box. And then you just put your like marker on top of it. Or you can put the love marker on top of it if you so choose. And Pat and Natasha, let me know.

N. Johnson: We have over [inaudible], so it passes.

K. Thu: Thank you very much; we have an agenda.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 18, 2020 MINUTES

K. Thu: Next, approval of the November meeting minutes. I'll, again, entertain a motion to approve.

E. Fredericks: Approve.

K. Thu: Thanks, Elisa. Do we have a second?

N. Johnson: Second.

K. Thu: Thanks, Natasha. Any discussion about the meeting minutes, which are on pages 4 to 6? Okay, hearing none, the same voting approach, and Natasha is putting it up now.

N. Johnson: We have more than enough.

K. Thu: Looks like we have approval of the minutes, okay.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

K. Thu: Pat, do we have any timely requests for public comment.

P. Erickson: I do not.

K. Thu: Okay, thank you.

VI. FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

K. Thu: Next we have Faculty Senate president's announcements. Now, we have a pretty full agenda today, as you can see; so, I'm going to keep this fairly brief. A couple things that I wanted to bring to your attention that you might already be aware of them, but just to underscore.

The Presidential Commission for the Status of Women has sent out a survey to everybody on campus. You may have already gotten it. I'm just encouraging you to please respond to it.

Also, some of you will be getting a survey. Actually, I think most senate members will be getting a survey from the committee that's reviewing the dean of students. And it's particularly those faculty members who have had experience with the dean of students. So, please keep an eye out in your mailbox for a survey tool from the Dean of Students Review Committee.

Just a few things to set the stage for what's going to be happening this semester and through the end of the year. We've got several big-ticket items coming down the pipeline. We have the social justice Faculty Senate committee that will be bringing its recommendations to the Faculty Senate during its March meeting. The Steering Committee will be getting it a week early. I know that that committee

and its subcommittees are working very hard, and I very much appreciate what they're doing. So, that's one item to look for.

We're also going to be working on creating a standing committee of the social justice committee. I've started working on that language. And so, that will come before the Faculty Senate for approval, as well.

We have assessment reform in the works, the kinds of assessment practices that we're engaged in at the university. We're trying to simplify and streamline assessment to lighten the burden on those who are involved in those processes. That will be coming to Faculty Senate, hopefully, by the end of the semester.

We have the student evaluation of teaching. We have to review our student evaluation of teaching policy every five years. So, that will be coming to Faculty Senate eventually, as well.

And also sort of the bigger picture of what's going on, you know that we revised our shared governance structure last year. We revised the constitution and our bylaws accordingly. This year, we're revising the APPM. Actually, we're blowing up the APPM, Academic Policies and Procedures Manual. It will no longer exist. That's underway, and the policies that we keep from the APPM will be parked in the Policy Library. So, that's going on.

The Board of Trustees is reviewing all of its regulations and bylaws, as well. And so, when you look at the bigger picture, we're trying to cleanse the bureaucracy of NIU to make it a better place for future employees, for future students, staff, faculty. Hopefully, this will make life easier.

K. Thu: With that, I think we're going to go ahead and move to unfinished business. Oh wait, one more thing, I forgot. I want to recognize Heidi Kuehl. Heidi, are you with us? Maybe not. I know we're losing Heidi, and I just wanted to acknowledge all of her work in shared governance and wish you the very best for the future. Do you want to explain to everybody where you're headed.

H. Kuehl: Sure. I am headed to an executive position with the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, managing the libraries in Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana.

K. Thu: Sounds like a great opportunity and, of course, you're the person for the job, no question about it.

H. Kuehl: Thank you.

K. Thu: Thank you for all your service to NIU and all your service to shared governance.

H. Kuehl: Oh, thank you. I appreciate it.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Proposed amendment to Faculty Senate Bylaws Article 4.9.1, Committee for Academic Equity and Inclusive Excellence Composition
SECOND READING/VOTE
Vernese Edghill-Walden, Vice President for Diversity
Tamara Boston, Program coordinator, Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

K. Thu: Okay, let's move on to Item VII, Unfinished Business. We have a proposed amendment to Faculty Senate Bylaws, Article 4.9.1, Committee for Academic Equity and Inclusive Excellence Composition. We already had a first reading. I don't know, Vernese or Tamara, whether either of you are here with us. You could briefly share with us what this amendment is all about. I think it's very simple.

T. Boston: It is. At the first reading, we mentioned that we were looking to add the seat of the instructor. The reason for this is because instructors, like faculty, assist students at the university in executing our mission, vision and values. Although they are not tenured or on the tenure track, they still provide a valuable service to the institution and to our students.

K. Thu: Thank you very much. It's more inclusive. So, this is a formal vote. This is a second reading. We do need a motion, don't we? I don't know if Ferald is with us or not, but I believe we entertain a motion.

F. Bryan: Yes, Kendall, you need a motion to approve this.

K. Thu: Okay, do we have a motion to approve?

K. Borre: I move that we pass this.

K. Thu: Thanks, Kris. Do we have a second?

B. McGowan: Second.

K. Thu: Thanks, Beth. Any discussion? Again, this is fairly straightforward. So, this is going to be a formal vote. We have to have the numbers. So, Pat's going to set up the polling device or mechanism.

P. Erickson: Thanks, Kendall. And first, I'm showing everybody, just so we have no confusion, this is our list of voting members. So, if you see your name there; or if you see the name of the person you are subbing for today – I know we've got a couple alternates here today – then you are voting members. And if you don't see your name there or you don't see the name of the person you are subbing for, then that means you're not a voting member. So, I'll let you look at that for a minute, and I'm going to open up the browser here and get that link for you.

K. Thu: Sounds good.

P. Erickson: And you should see that link in there now.

F. Bryan: And Kendall, I might also add that this requires a two-thirds vote.

K. Thu: Thanks, Ferald, yes. Just remember that 1 is yes, 2 is no, 3 is abstain.

P. Erickson: And there, you can see how the votes are coming in. I hope you can see that.

K. Thu: And, Pat or Ferald, if you can confirm that we've got enough votes to pass.

P. Erickson: We certainly do have two-thirds of those voting, and it looks like a couple more votes are coming in now.

F. Bryan: I also confirm that we definitely have two-thirds.

K. Thu: Okay, thank you. Always good to have it on the record. Thank you, everybody.

Yes – 47

No – 0

Abstain – 1

T. Boston: Thank you.

K. Thu: Thank you.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Proposed amendment to Faculty Senate Bylaws, Article 4.8.1, University Assessment Panel Composition
FIRST READING
Carolinda Douglass, Vice Provost, Institutional Effectiveness
Ritu Subramony, Director, Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation

K. Thu: That brings us to new business, Roman numeral VIII. The first item here is a first reading of a proposed amendment to Faculty Senate Bylaws, Article 4.8.1. This is the composition of the University Assessment Panel. There's no vote on this; this is a first reading. And I don't know, Carolinda or Ritu, are you with us?

C. Douglass: I'm here, Kendall.

K. Thu: Go ahead, Carolinda. I'll let you guide us through this.

C. Douglass: There are basically two changes that we're asking for to clean up the language in the bylaws related to the University Assessment Panel to reflect changes that have occurred in the composition, or that would affect composition of the group. The first is that, under 4.8.1.3, we used to have one staff representative from Student Affairs and one from underneath the vice provost for

undergraduate academic affairs. And those groups have joined together. There is no longer assessment solely under Student Affairs. So, we are suggesting that the one member from Student Affairs be removed and that the second one say, a staff member from either the academic support units or Student Affairs, since these are now in one area in terms of assessment.

The second item is under 4.8.1.6, that is 6 now. And that is the removal of (C), the associate vice provost for curriculum, ex officio, nonvoting member. That was the position that Ed Klonoski held, and that position is no longer current.

So, those are the two recommendations that we're asking for changes.

K. Thu: Thanks, Carolinda. Again, we don't vote on this, but if there are any questions or comments on this from anyone? Of course, the first reading is to try to clear up anything before we get to a second reading. So, if anybody has any concerns or questions? If not, thank you, Carolinda. We'll be entertaining a second reading at the Faculty Senate meeting in February.

C. Douglass: Thanks.

- B. Proposed amendment to Faculty Senate Bylaws, Article 4.6.2.1,
General Education Committee Composition
FIRST READING
Omar Ghrayeb, Senior Vice Provost

K. Thu: Item B under new business is a first reading of a proposed amendment to Faculty Senate Bylaws, Article 4.6.2.1. It's on page 10. It's the composition of the General Education Committee. And, Omar, I hope you're with us.

O. Ghrayeb: Yes, Kendall, thank you, I'm here.

K. Thu: Go ahead, walk us through.

O. Ghrayeb: Good afternoon, everyone. This is a simple amendment to simply reflect the current composition of the General Education Committee. The titles we are proposing to cross out, we don't have these titles anymore. The vice provost responsible for undergraduate education will be ex officio member to the committee. Of course, as you know, the committee is chaired by a faculty member. The General Education Committee is chaired by a faculty member. And we have a representative from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. And so, we are saying, in general, one designee of the provost from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. So, this amendment is to reflect the current composition of the General Education Committee.

K. Thu: Thank you, Omar. Again, it's a first reading. There's no voting. But if anybody has any questions or concerns or comments, this would be a good time to bring them up. Okay, if not, we will have a second reading at the February Faculty Senate meeting and, hopefully, pass it then. Thanks, Omar.

O. Ghrayeb: Thank you, Kendall.

- C. Proposed 2030-31 academic calendar
Beth Ingram, Executive Vice President and Provost

K. Thu: That brings us to page 2 of the agenda, Item C, Proposed 2030-31 academic calendar. When I first read this, it looked like a normal calendar, and I thought, oh my gosh, can we get back to a time when the calendar looks normal again? Beth, are you with us?

B. Ingram: I am. Ten years from now, Kendall, that's when.

K. Thu: Is there anything that you want to comment on about this?

B. Ingram: I thought I'd spend ten seconds telling you how we got here. Pat Erickson has been creating this calendar for us for many years and does a great job. I think she takes what we usually have and rolls it forward and then consults with HR to make sure we've got the right official holidays in there. We do this calendar quite a ways in advance. It can be changed after this, obviously, because we've done that before. But we do it well in advance just because there are so many things that depend on the calendar. Is this a vote, Kendall? That was the piece I wasn't quite sure about.

K. Thu: Yes, I believe we do vote on it. Just to point out that this used to be the purview of the University Council. But since it's the academic calendar, we've changed it to allow Faculty Senate to approve the academic calendar. So, I will entertain a motion to adopt the calendar.

E. Fredericks: So moved.

K. Thu: Thanks again, Elisa. Do we have a second.

D. Valentiner: I'll second.

K. Thu: Thanks, David. Any discussion? I think I heard Cathy Doederlein at one point saying that the reason we're doing this ten years out is maybe because, back in the day, we tried to coordinate calendars between the university and the public schools, but maybe that's just a myth, I don't know.

K. Thu: But in any case, we have a lot of lead time to get this together. So, if there are no comments or questions, let's go ahead and vote. We're going to take the official voting route again.

P. Erickson: Kendall, are you wanting a poll vote or just the yes, no, abstain in the chat?

K. Thu: I think the yes, no, abstain in the chat is appropriate.

P. Erickson: Okay, great. Natasha will help us with that then.

C. Doederlein [via chat box]: Not a myth.

K. Thu: Oh, Cathy is saying it's not a myth. That probably is why we have so much lead time to get the calendar together.

D. Valentiner [via chat box]: Coordination with local schools would be nice.

K. Thu: Yes it would be, wouldn't it?

P. Erickson: Okay, so I think we're going to wait and ask Natasha to write in the chat. Maybe, Natasha, you could write calendar-yes, calendar-no, calendar-abstain. And then we'll have people hover over with the thumbs up.

K. Thu: Feral, we only need a majority vote for this, is that right?

F. Bryan: That's correct, Kendall, it's just a majority vote.

N. Johnson: There are 41 yeses, so.

K. Thu: Thank you.

Yes – 44

No – 2

Abstain - 0

K. Thu: Thank you, everybody. We have a calendar adopted for the year 2030-31.

D. Annual personnel reviews per FS Bylaws, Article 8 – discussion

K. Thu: Next we have Item D under Section 8, annual personnel reviews per Faculty Senate Bylaws, Article 8. It's on page 14 in your packet. And this is something that really emanates from issues that Pat has pointed out to me. So, since she knows them better than I do, I've asked her to lead us through this conversation. And I'd like to spend a little bit of time having a conversation about it. Go ahead, Pat.

P. Erickson: Thanks, Kendall. As everybody can see, the bylaw language at the top of the page, each year Faculty Senate is required to conduct a personnel review of two people, the faculty personnel advisor, who happens to be Kinesiology Professor Steve Howell this year, and the Faculty Senate president, who we know is Kendall this year. And each year, a small group of faculty senators are selected by lot, usually at this meeting. They're drafted, in a way, to serve on these ad hoc review committees. And in recent years, there's been some thought in regard to the value of these reviews and how worthy it is to prioritize faculty time and energy on them.

There are some bullet points at the bottom that area meant to stimulate conversation, and I guess I'll just add a little bit to each of those. That first one

K. Thu: Pat, could you make it a little bit larger?

P. Erickson: Oh, sure, sure, thank you, yes. Thanks for telling me that. How about that? More? How about that?

K. Thu: That's just fine, thank you.

P. Erickson: I'm not 100 percent positive, but I suspect that these annual reviews were first instituted years ago when annual merit raises were a common occurrence. Of course, at NIU today, most faculty, including Steve Howell and Kendall Thu, are covered by a collective bargaining agreement, so there's some question as to whether these annual reviews done for the purpose of determining eligibility for merit increases is still necessary. Each year, we do provide the final approved review report to the Provost's Office, and I know they file it. And they've told me that, if a department chair were ever to request it, they would consider providing it to that department chair. I'm not sure the department chairs know that these reports exist.

Also, we've noticed over the years a diminishing ability on the part of these drafted faculty members to even participate in the activity. Faculty at NIU, in some cases, are already operating on a maxed-out workload, and it becomes more and more challenging for them to carve out time for this review exercise. And oftentimes, we have people on these committees who aren't able to participate at all because of that.

Additionally, the review survey completion rates used in the personnel review reports are low, especially for the faculty personnel advisor, two to six percent over the last year. It really almost calls into question the validity of the survey tool.

Also, the point has been raised that perhaps the personnel reviews of these two people might already be taking place organically through the balloting process. That faculty personnel advisor is elected for a two-year term, so every other year Faculty Senate is reviewing someone whose term is expiring. And the Faculty Senate president is elected annually, so every single year, Faculty Senate is reviewing someone whose term is expiring.

Also, it might be helpful to note that SPS Council and Operating Staff Council are both currently working toward codifying their own personnel advisor positions. And I believe that those councils do not intend to create any type of review process. But instead, I think they're looking at requesting an annual report from the personnel advisor to be submitted to their council. So, the questions come up, perhaps this would be a worthy alternative to the review processes currently in place in Faculty Senate. Maybe Faculty Senate could request an annual report or a summary of service during the spring semester instead.

So, this is just a little background for your discussion, and maybe there will be some interest on the part of Faculty Senate to take a pause in the review process that's currently outlined in the bylaw, and maybe embark on a pilot project where, oh say for the next year or two, instead of doing the status quo review exercise, maybe instead, we would ask for a summary of service. And after a year or two of doing that, we could come back to Faculty Senate and see if they wanted to reassess and bring forward an amendment to the bylaw.

When Faculty Senate Steering met last week, they had a discussion on it, and there did seem to be consensus in that group to suggest a pause, but I think probably that's more for your discussion now. That's all I've got, Kendall.

K. Thu: Thank you, Pat. I see this in the context of the president's call for simplifying our lives. And at the Steering Committee last week, there seemed to be support for – in my position, I would provide a two- maybe three-page bulleted list of accomplishments or things that need to get done, or things that are pending. I used to do this when I was a department chair. I'd provide the personnel committee with a two- to three-page list of bulleted items referencing the work that I had done, and they would take a look at it. They wouldn't vote on it, per se. But they would write up a report. Well, here, we're just suggesting that I could provide the senate with a bulleted list of accomplishments and related items. Then you could use that – if I were to run for Faculty Senate again, for example, that could be used as a way for you to evaluate whether I should be reelected, if I so choose to run. And then use this this year as a pilot to see how this might work.

So, I'll leave it there. We're not approving anything at this point. We're just discussing the idea. So, I'm interested in your take, particularly those of you who have been through this process. Comments?

C. Doederlein: I just want to thank Pat for her care in kind of highlighting the different pros and cons of how things have operated. And I can definitely speak as someone who has – because, historically, we only had two SPS involved at the University Council level, you had a 50-50 shot of which committee you've served on, so I've served on both, most recently the personnel advisor one. And definitely think that the time and work that gets put into it is not ultimately worth it for what we get as an output from it. And I really think that the key in my mind is the extent to which the election really serves as a way to express your opinion of the work being done. So, a summary of service, and then people can vote on whether that service has really met the level that's expected. Just some input from somebody who's done it a few times now.

K. Thu: Well put, Cathy. Thank you. Others?

D. Valentiner: I'm just wondering if the evaluations that are conducted have ever been consequential. What types of problems have been solved by them or not solved by them? I'm just trying to get a sense of whether they really matter historically.

K. Thu: Well, you've been around shared governance for a long time, David. So, you know this as much as I do. I haven't found them consequential. Most of the time when we get the Qualtrics survey results for the Faculty Senate president or for the personnel advisor, they're usually quite good. And I haven't seen any consequences to it, except, okay acknowledge the person's doing a decent job and they're eligible to continue if they so desire. I guess that's the best way for me to respond. If there's no merit involved, obviously, like we used to do with personnel reviews in departments, it becomes, I think in a way, busy work. I don't want to dispense with it altogether, but I think we want it to be more manageable and a better use of our time.

D. Valentiner: Yes, so that's my impression, that the few times that I've seen these conducted, they just seem to be a foregone conclusion before they're started.

K. Thu: I remember, I think, Beth last year, when you got my review, you might have asked what to do with it. But it gets put into a file cabinet and there it stays. Other comments? I guess what I want to know, maybe we should take a straw poll vote in the chat box, is this a direction that you

want to try by doing a pilot this year. And I would provide you with a report, see how it works, and then we can do this next year, if necessary.

F. Bryan: Kendall, if I might also interject, and I rarely do. Is this something that you want to refer to a committee to have them study it?

K. Thu: Possibly. It would probably go to Peter Chomentowski's committee. Peter, something else for you to do. I just wanted to get a sense of whether this is something that Faculty Senate thinks, okay, why don't you give it a try. So, Natasha, could you put in the chat box.

N. Johnson: It's already in there.

K. Thu: Okay, thank you. So, if you want to say yes to give this a try, just hover above yes. And then no or abstain. This is just a straw poll vote. It doesn't have any policy meaning to it, except to say, let's give this a try and see how it works.

A. Keddie [via chat box]: Sounds good – the trial year.

K. Thu: So, it looks like there's enough sentiment that we want to try this and see how it goes. And then Faculty Senate can revisit to see how it works. Thank you everybody. That concludes Roman number VIII.

Yes – 28

No – 3

IX. ITEMS FOR FACULTY SENATE CONSIDERATION

- A. Fall Survey on Teaching with Technology and Support
Jason Rhode, Executive Director
Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning

K. Thu: Next we have Roman numeral IX, Items for Faculty Senate Consideration. I want to welcome Jason Rhode and Matt Parks to Faculty Senate. They're going to tag team a presentation. The first part of it will be on the fall survey on teaching with technology and support. I've seen some of the results; it's actually quite fascinating. Then, on top of that, Matt will join us and talk about the learning management system review. So, Jason, welcome to Faculty Senate. I'll turn the virtual podium over to you.

J. Rhode: Thank you, Kendall, for the invitation for Matt and I to join you all. And good afternoon, everyone. Matt and I thought we would truly tag team on this. It's going to be a bit informal here. I'm going to put in the text chat the link to this survey results that Kendall is referring to.

[Fall 2020 Survey on Teaching with Technology and Support](#)

I'm going to go ahead and share my screen as well, so that those of you that have the ability, you're going to be able to just follow along here from my screen, if you'd rather. As Kendall mentioned,

these results are something that we shared with the deans and with Kendall and a few other senior leaders before the holiday break. And Kendall invited us to come and share it with you all. Really, the impetus behind this was, as COVID hit and over this past nine months or so, we've kind of retooled our support on campus for teaching and learning. And we've really focused in the mission of what was formerly our Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center that we've morphed and kind of revolutionized into our Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning. You know, we've done a lot over the spring and summer and into the fall in supporting our faculty in teaching in the various modalities that we've had through the pandemic here. So, as we got through the fall, we really wanted to just get a pulse of where our faculty and instructors, really anyone that was teaching a course in the fall, where they were at. And in particular, try to get a sense of their support needs so we could better understand the kinds of services and supports that they found most helpful, but also would be helpful for us to focus in on as we headed into the spring semester.

So, we invited a total of about 2,400 individuals, anyone that was an instructor of record in a class got an invitation. We had about a 15 percent response rate, which we thought was pretty good considering everything that folks have going. And for the sake of time, I'm not going to walk through all the aspects of this. I've shared the link with you all. We did put the results into more of a dashboard that colleges, departments, you can actually drill in by your area. Also, you can drill in by classification, as well, if you wanted to see those results.

Just a few interesting take-aways for my center and as we think about supporting faculty, we asked some questions. As you're looking at, if you're following along on the screen, in the red, you see the proportion of yes responses to these questions. So, we asked some things like, were they aware of the services and supports that we provided in support of teaching. And overwhelmingly, our communication is working. We had about a 94 percent agreed that they were aware of the teaching and learning opportunities and supports that we provided. Really, about two-thirds confirmed they had attended some sort of a workshop or a seminar or institute prior to the fall. And about a third committed and said that they then had attended some training throughout the actual semester.

We also asked questions about – trying to get a sense of – did faculty change their mode of delivery during the semester. From across the respondents, about 38 percent had, which is interesting to know. We really wanted to get a sense, ultimately, did faculty, instructors feel supported as they were teaching in maybe a hybrid or online format here? Did they feel equipped to be able to do that? And we were really pleased close to 80 percent said yes. So, we thought that was a good validation of the types of support that we've offered.

Another big push that we had going in to fall was really about teaching in the classroom and thinking about those classes that were going to be meeting in person or in some staggered attendance modality, those that taught in that environment. And only about 16 percent in the fall actually taught in the classroom, which we knew that and helped us understand that we would probably, as others are doing to be teaching in classrooms for the first time in the spring, we need to be sure we provide training and support for that.

I'm going to skip down for the sake of time, down here to a couple of questions that we asked about meeting tools. I think as everybody's aware, we licensed zoom campus-wide going into the fall. We really wanted to get a snapshot of what tools faculty were using for their synchronous meetings with

their students. And there are really top three platforms being used currently: Blackboard Collaborative followed by Zoom and Teams. And those really were the three that you can see faculty responded that these were their primary tools. And we were interested heading into spring if that would change. And really the order remains the same. Really Collaborate, Zoom and Teams in that order were still planned on being used by faculty.

Armed with that information, that was really helpful, as we thought about setting out our planning for support for spring, I just want to mention just quickly a couple of items that we focused on and we've shared out with faculty across campus as a result. The first was something that was really faculty-driven, we just helped curate. And this was a set of [recommendations for increasing student engagement in online courses](#). And so I'm going to drop the link into our chat for our Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning site where you can get into these links that I'm going to pull up.

[Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning](#)

This first item is a curation of suggestions from across our faculty and staff. We really asked the question, what are tips that you've come across for increasing student engagement in these remote type online courses. We saw kind of [five key clusters of suggestions](#) that surface: Setting expectations and modeling engagement up front. Things like then building engagement and motivation using a variety of course content, course activities. The importance of initiating interaction and creating faculty presence in the course. Fostering interaction between students and creating a community. And then finally, making sure you're creating an inclusive environment. And so, here on this guide, these recommendations are available and kind of clustered, really practical, tips that faculty have shared and allowed us to pass along and share with others. Thank you to those of you who maybe are here today that were a part of providing input and sharing this. We've compiled and we've shared this as a creative commons, openly licensed resource, for other institutions as well, so faculty can make use of this and share this with colleagues if they so wish.

The other quick support that I do want to quickly mention, and then I'm going to pause and, Matt, let you jump in with any other insights you might want to add. Our course design partnerships. Many of you may know that amongst the support that we offered heading into summer and fall were these three-week online course design academy boot camps, if you will. They were really intended to help jump start that transition of quickly moving a course into this emergency remote delivery. But what we sought to do is, how do we take that idea now, but really go to the next step of helping faculty who maybe made that initial push, but now want to take their course to that next level. They want to polish it. They want to really refine the approaches, incorporate more active teaching and learning strategies into their course. So, what we've done, and the feedback we've received from faculty, is that the partnership, the opportunity to work side by side with one of our instructional designers, and someone who can be a partner through that process and balance ideas and share insights, has been really helpful. So, what we've formalized is a [course design partnership](#) opportunity for faculty. And we're really pleased to see that we're getting some positive responses and requests already from faculty for this type of service.

Really, there's three types of partnerships, one being just to design an in-person, hybrid or staggered attendance course. So, somebody who's thinking about a new course for the coming semester, to

really unpack some opportunities, thinking about active teaching and learning in those courses and how do you infuse technology with that.

Then, secondly would be building an online course from scratch. There are faculty, for whom the online teaching bug has bit them, and they're actually thinking about maybe somewhere over this coming fall already, starting to think about designing a new course to be delivered in the online format. If that's the case, we're available, as well, to partner with them through that process.

And then thirdly, what we've actually seen the most uptick initially has been this idea of partnering to improve an online course. These would be those courses that initially were moved to this remote, online format, but now how do we take that to the next level. And so we find that we're able to partner with faculty, either on a one-on-one basis or in small groups if perhaps there are multiple faculty within a department that would like to work together and share ideas amongst one another. But to be a partner through that process of improving their online course.

So, just a couple of resources that I want to throw out that we've initiated as a result of the feedback that we got through the survey and that was really helpful.

Matt, I'm going to pause and see if there's anything else from the technology-specific side of this survey that you wanted to add. I know you've taken a look at this with your team. And given the nature of the support that we provided this year, technology was a big part of it. So, we did ask some questions about technology in this survey.

M. Parks: Good afternoon, everyone. Thanks again for the invitation to speak to a few of these items with you today. Jason, compliments on the review that you've done here. Really good, and I just want to extend my appreciation to you and our ongoing partnership with all things classroom technology and the support for faculty in the classroom and for our online capabilities. 2020 was a year of tremendous challenge as it relates to getting technology into the hands of faculty, instructors and staff across the university. And so, when Jason and I were talking, he indicated he was going to kick this survey off before the end of fall semester to get input from faculty and instructors about what the experience was like in fall of 2020, it was really exciting to know that that was going to happen. I was, frankly, scared about what some of those results were going to be. And as Jason reviewed the data, really impressed by number one, how well faculty and instructors were prepared for what was an unbelievable year in terms of the transition in the classroom, that we had technology in place for faculty and instructors to be successful. We have Blackboard Collaborate for that collaboration two-way capability. We've had Teams for a bit of time. And now the implementation of Zoom right at the beginning of fall was good to see that the combination of those channels of communication for the classroom were heavily utilized and continue to be for the spring. So, all good stuff, all good stuff. And appreciate people who take the time out to complete these surveys. This data is helpful in creating a road map of what we need to be focused on for the future for what we need to do in the classroom, both in the classroom, but also virtually.

- B. Learning Management System Review
Matthew Parks, Associate Vice President and Chief Information Officer
Division of Information Technology

J. Rhode: So, Matt, for the sake of time, should we jump right into the LMS review? Do you want to talk about that, and then we can open it up for questions?

M. Parks: Yes, Kendall, is that okay with you?

K. Thu: Yes, by all means.

M. Parks: Okay, great. I'm going to paste the link to this wonderful LMS review website that, thanks to Jason and his team, along with EMMC [Enrollment Management, Marketing and Communications], has put together.

[Project Overview – NIU – LMS Review](#)

So, LMS, what do I mean by that? Learning Management System, that is our [Blackboard Learn](#) enterprise application suite that the university has had in place for close to 15, 20 years. It dates back to 1999. So, long, long history of relationship with Blackboard. If you look at some of the usage stats on this website, I encourage you all to peruse at your leisure, you really see real heavy use amongst faculty and instructors and amongst our students. So, the usage profile of Blackboard Learn at NIU exceeds the average if you talk to Blackboard about their normal customer profile. That's a testament to Jason and his leadership, to the DoIT team that supports the application and certainly all of our faculty and instructors who have embraced this platform as a primary means of providing communication for classrooms.

We've had this long-standing relationship with Blackboard. It's a rich relationship, but it's also, from a contractual standpoint, we've entered the final year of a three-year contract. And so, it's appropriate, as we engage with NIU's Board of Trustees, and we engage our leadership about how we manage and engaged our vendor community, to look at the marketplace of learning management providers. Knowing full well that we've been with one provider for somewhere in the neighborhood of 20 years, it's time to go out and look at the market to see what others are doing in that space, and bring a cross section of the NIU community together to conduct a review.

And so, Jason, if you want to jump in to the task force, itself. We formed a couple different committees as part of that. And, Jason, feel free as I go here, to chime in with anything else you want to add. Jason and I are co-partnering. We're partners in crime on this project overall leading the executive committee that is setting the parameters with regard to this LMS review that will be conducted this spring. The project, itself, is being supported by Susan Smith out of the Institutional Effectiveness team. Susan has joined the team here over the last several months, has been doing a fantastic job keeping us on the rails from an overall project standpoint. The [executive committee](#) is made up of Jason, myself, several technical leadership members of the DoIT team, of the CITL team, along with Therese Arado and Antoinette Bridges, Antoinette out of our procurement shop and then Therese out of the College of Law, who we wanted someone from the faculty ranks to co-chair with us on our next committee, which is really a big cross section of our faculty community across the colleges. So, Therese and Stephanie [Richter] will co-chair this committee, which is

really going to be the basis of the review in terms of developing the criteria, conducting a number of virtual sessions with the provider community that we engaged. You can find, from your own respective colleges, members that are represented on here. We do encourage you, to the extent that you talk with colleagues at other universities, get input from your colleagues about what they use for LMS providers and feel free to share your feedback of other opportunities, other options that they've experienced with this review committee with your representatives from this review committee. We also have a small technical committee that's really going to look at some of the foundational platform elements of the platform. Blackboard Learn is a large environment with multiple different components. And so our technical committee will evaluate different aspects of each of the providers out there.

We have recently, as we closed out 2020, received some good news from Procurement. NIU is a member of [Internet2](#), a higher education consortium. And because of that membership, Internet2 has a whole host of services they provide via what's called a NetPlus Program. They offer three LMS providers through that program. One of them is Blackboard, which is good. One of them is a D2L Brightspace, which is their product. And then a third one is Canvas.

If you look at the marketplace of LMS providers, you'll find that those are the top three providers in a significant way of learning management platforms. And so, because of our membership with Internet2, Procurement tells us that allows us to leverage the NetPlus Program for this review, which allows us to really streamline our review process, really expedite the review in a much more aggressive way so we can get after it. And it, frankly, optimizes the NIU resources that we've got focused on the right thing, which is the actual products that are out there, the technical requirements that we've got. So, we're very excited about that good news of being able to leverage the Internet2 services.

In addition, Internet2 claims to have from each of those three providers best class pricing of the products. We know that their price point for Blackboard is slightly under what NIU's price point is, so it's somewhat of a validation that the pricing we'll get out of the platform, whichever we go with, will be best in class for higher education. And so, very much looking forward to that.

The quick run through and the timeline: We kicked things off in 2020. The provost asked both Jason and I to come together and form this executive committee that has led to the development of this important advisory committee. As we look at January now, we're working on reviewing criteria, a stakeholder's survey is in the works. As we look at the course of the rest of spring semester, this thing's going to go fast, we're going to have vendors doing demonstrations for our advisory and executive committees as early as February, and then compiling results in March and April. We'll do some trial of some of the technology solutions that we want to pursue to validate their environment and so forth, both from a feature capability standpoint, but also from the technical side. And then in May, June, we'll wrap up our findings, make recommendations and move forward with a communication plan to campus that will either reiterate our staying on with Blackboard if that's the choice of the committee, or pursuing an alternative path. While we are in the third and final year of our contract with Blackboard, we are pursuing a sole-source justification with Procurement and the state to approve a one-year extension of that relationship to allow us enough runway so that, if we do select an alternative LMS provider, we've got the time and the space to do the contract work, migrate the data, train our user community, which, obviously, is quite large when

you think about our faculty, our instructors, our staff and then the student population. And then to be able to cut over that new LMS system in time to be able to shut the Blackboard system down.

I'm going to pause there. As you peruse the website, you'll see there's a project documents page and then campus communications, so you can reflect back. You'll see in the status reports section updated project documents as they come up. And then the campus communications, this is just a reference back to the communications we've already put out to you. If you had seen NIU Today back in mid-December, you saw some announcement about this evaluation we are conducting. And so more of that communication will come out as we go.

So, I'm going to pause there. Jason, anything else you think you'd like to hit that I didn't touch.

J. Rhode: I just want to throw in that you mentioned that we're going to have some demonstrations. We really want as wide swath of input from the campus community as possible. We want to hear from students. When we have these demonstrations, we will publicize the availability of these. We really encourage anybody to participate, to attend and to share your feedback after the fact. Just encourage all of you to echo this sentiment to your colleagues to participate in these opportunities to let your voice be heard as to what are the features that you value most and to actually give us a chance to take a look at the alternative platforms that are out there and to let us know your thoughts.

M. Parks: Jason, there's a good question that's just come in from Ferald Bryan. Many of us who were on campus before Blackboard, how do we know what other platforms are even available? How can we compare other platforms Will only members of the task force have access to these other platforms? I'll take the first part, Jason, if you want to speak to the second. With regard to the platforms that we are going to review, the Internet2 NetPlus Program allows us a very seamless, efficient way to evaluate what I would say the top three LMS providers. When you get down into the fourth and fifth providers that are out there in the marketplace, what you find is that those are systems that require significant amounts of system administration and local development support of those environments, and really not suitable how we've evolved our LMS architecture at NIU. So, we really feel with our ability through the NetPlus Program, to evaluate Blackboard, Canvas and D2L's Brightspace product, we're getting the top three platforms out there. Jason, can you speak to the second question: How can we compare other platforms. Will only members of the task force have access to these other platforms and vendors.

J. Rhode: Yes, that's a great question, Ferald. Thank you. Absolutely, we want everyone to have an opportunity to participate in evaluating these platforms as to their ability. I know when we have these demonstrations that Matt mentioned, those will be available across campus. We'll widely publicize the availability. Thanks to the working environment we're in right now, these are going to be virtual Team-type sessions like this, so everyone will have an opportunity to attend or view recordings. We are going to ask each of the vendors to provide us with some type of a sandbox environment. We're not sure what that looks like yet in terms of how we could grant access if faculty wanted to get in and actually try out some different platforms. I know our technical team will be working through those details with the various vendors as we move forward. But, as Matt said, this is going to move really quickly here in the spring. And we're really dedicated to being as transparent through this process, communicating. As we have details, we'll be sharing that broadly.

Everything will be archived on the LMS review website, as well; so, you can get back to that at any point in time, as well.

K. Thu: We have a lot left on the agenda, and I hate to cut this useful discussion off. But there's one more question from Jason Akst in the chat box. If I could ask you both to briefly respond to that, and then we are going to have to move on.

M. Parks: Sure, Kendall. I did respond in the chat box.

J. Akst [via chat box]: With either Blackboard or a different vendor, what's the thinking on how long a new contract would last? If we pick a different vendor and it doesn't work out, how easily (or not) could we get out of it?

M. Parks: We haven't ironed out the term on the contract yet, though we have spoken about it. Where my head's at is in the neighborhood of a three- to five-year term. It can't be ten, we won't go that far. We don't want to do a one or a two for obvious reasons. Five feels right to me, but we'll work that out as we go. And clearly, we're going to have to have appropriate contractual language in the contract that allows for termination for cause in the event that the campus community is unhappy with the alternative product.

K. Thu: Thanks, Matt.

K. Furr [via chat box]: I am taking a course at Waubensee, and they have recently switched to Canvas. So far, it seems pretty user friendly.

T. Sullivan [via chat box]: I would love to play with the grade books of these LMS systems.

J. Rhode [via chat box]: We do have an email address where you can direct questions: lms-review@niu.edu.

K. Thu: Obviously, if you have other questions of Matt or Jason, please contact them directly. This is a very important platform, obviously, for our faculty. And we want to make sure that we get the best platform possible, whether it's Blackboard or something else. You all have the experience with it, so I think they need to have your input. Thank you for the presentation, for virtually visiting us this afternoon, and I look forward to hearing more about the work ahead. Thank you. I see in the chat box where Jason is providing the email address contacts.

C. Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee update
Ismael Montana, Chair

K. Thu: I'm mindful of time for those of you who are still with us. I'm going to try to get us through everything and be done by 4:30. We have next a report on the work of the Social Justice Committee. Ismael, I wonder maybe if we can just skip over that for the time being? Because your committee is in the middle of its work, we're going to get a report in March. Maybe you can provide us with a little bit more insight in February. Does that sound okay? I'm not even sure Ismael is with us right now. Ismael, are you with us? Well, if not, we'll just plan on getting an

update in February from the Social Justice Committee and then, of course, the full report in March. That will save us a little bit of time.

I. Montana: Sounds good, thank you.

K. Thu: All right, thank you, Ismael.

- D. The Bob Lane Faculty Advocacy Award – call for nominations
Submit written letters of nomination to Faculty Senate President Kendall Thu no later than noon Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021.

K. Thu: Item D, the Bob Lane Faculty Advocacy Award. The deadline for that is coming up on February 10. It's simply an award that the Faculty Senate provides to faculty members who have made outstanding contributions to the campus. There have been a number of people who are on this call, who have been past winners. What you get is a letter of recognition and then your name is placed on a plaque in perpetuity in the Holmes Student Center.

The letters of nominations can be very simple, as George Slotsve knows. They can be simply a page, page-and-a-half long. And please contact the person you're nominating to make sure they're okay with it. That's due to me by February 10. And if you have any questions about it, please feel free to contact me about it. Any questions about the

X. CONSENT AGENDA

K. Thu: Okay, if not, we do not have a consent agenda.

XI. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

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

IBHE board approves higher education budget requested focused on equity
IBHE News, January 13, 2021

K. Thu: That brings us to reports from councils, boards and standing committees. And Linda Saborío has some important updates for us, and I'm going to turn it over to Linda. Go ahead, Linda.

L. Saborío: I have a report from the last FAC meeting. We met last Friday virtually, of course, through Zoom. I've decided to share three items with you. One is the report from our legislative liaison. The second is a budget update. And then the third is just some discussions we had regarding the IBHE Strategic Plan for Higher Education.

First, the report from our legislative liaison. Rep. Chris Welch is the new speaker of the house. This is good news, right? Is known for being a strong advocate for higher education and is actually the former chair of the Higher Education Committee. Our faculty legislative liaison seems to think this is a really good move for all of us in higher education.

There was a higher ed reform bill that passed recently, just in this past month. It's a really long bill, but if you have time to read it, it's 200 pages. Great news, right? The only thing I wanted to pull out of the bill for you is the language regarding dual credit. It was changed on the bill due to some push back from the FAC. The old language said that a student entering grade 12 the next most rigorous level of [inaudible] coursework under this subsection shall be a dual credit course as defined by the Dual Credit Quality Act. And this made it sound to us as if high schools would be required to offer dual credit courses. So, we fought back and they changed it to say that the next most rigorous level of advanced coursework under this section may include a dual credit course as defined in the Dual Credit Quality Act, an advanced placement course or an international baccalaureate course, an honors class, an enrichment opportunity, a gifted program or another program offered by the district. So much better than that original language. I think that was all for the legislative.

For the budget update, I think I sent Pat a document that she's going to share with you. Thank you, Pat. There's a link to the full IBHE budget presentation that's available on the [IBHE website](#). So, if you want to look at the entire presentation, you are welcome to. But in a nutshell, like it says on this document that Pat is sharing with you, there's a two percent increase in funding for higher ed. That means a \$23.2 million increase for public universities from last year; \$50 million increase for MAP grants. There's a \$1 million for public universities to enjoy the [Common App](#) if they haven't already. And there's maintained funding for our [AIM HIGH](#) program. Anything nowadays where you see that it says budget and increase in the same sentence is usually a good thing, so we'll take it. At least it's not a decrease. I think this is probably good news for us, considering the situation we're in.

The IBHE Strategic Plan for Higher Education update, this is the third item. Again the working priorities, if you recall, were: 1) to increase post-secondary degree and credential attainment, meaning that only post-secondary degrees, but also any credentials for non-four-year institution-type credential. Close the equity gaps – that was number two. And three was improve affordability, increase access and manage costs. There's a lot there in that third priority. They've decided to organize this Strategic Plan for Higher Ed, the advisory committee, into six design work groups. And our FAC faculty rep was on the work group that was referred to as the state workforce group. Some items discussed regarding the strategic plan at our last FAC meeting, in particular, for the member who is on this subgroup, it's called the design work group, the business model. He had a lot of issues with the business model and not having business be the driver of this work. Also suggested putting students at the center, which may not be ideal either. Sometimes when you ask students what they want, the reply is a good-paying job, so they might not be the ones to be asking to be at the center of this. I talked with Kendall about it, and Simón [Weffer] had a chat the other day. And I think we really need to push faculty as being central to part of this process. We also talked about a workforce is broader than business. It includes advanced degrees, non-profit work, leadership and civic responsibilities, particularly important nowadays. Another item that was brought up was, what does success look like? I need more options in the rural communities. And what success looks like for community college might not be the same for a public institution or a private, proprietary institution.

Third item, there was a big push for more asynchronous courses, believe it or not. And yes, as faculty, we understand that hybrid learning, online learning is most likely here to stay, but it's not ideal for all students and it's not ideal for all faculty either. So, a little push back there.

And then the fourth item was the dual credit. Yes, it can increase degree attainment, but we need to maintain quality of instruction. And so we've decided on the FAC that, instead of pushing back against this idea of dual credit, that it's probably going to happen, we're going to try to be more involved in the framework and the policy building for dual credit as it moves forward through the system. We are asking our legislators once again to please contact us with any questions they have about items that they're putting in their amendments or that they're discussing in their committees, to please contact us if they have questions about what it is that they want to include.

And I think that's it for now. Thought I'd try to keep it really succinct, because I know that we're pushed with time today.

K. Thu: Thank you, Linda.

L. Saborío: And next month Simón is going to step in and speak. He's on this advisory committee for the strategic plan, so we've asked him to report to – is it next month, Kendall?

K. Thu: He's going to report out to University Council next week. And then he'll come back to Faculty Senate, and I'm expecting a fuller report from both of you. I'm sure a lot will have happened between now and that meeting. And we want to make sure the faculty voices are clear and central to that process. It's a 30-person committee. We have two representatives from NIU, President Freeman and Simón Weffer. And as Linda mentioned, Simón and I and Linda met, I think it was yesterday actually, to look at the composition of the committee. I'm concerned about some of the private consultant representatives on the committee. But most importantly is to get a clear faculty voice in the mix to make sure that faculty demand that their voices be heard.

L. Saborío: And Simón mentioned something about different committees being formed, perhaps these working groups, and trying to get as many of our faculty represented on these groups as possible.

K. Thu: When I ask about the process and who has the final say so, apparently, that's not clear yet. And they have this very aggressive timeline. So, I appreciate the work that Simón and Linda and President Freeman are doing for this work. It seems so removed from what we do here at NIU on a day-to-day basis, but it's so very important that we have our voices heard.

L. Saborío: [inaudible] plan exist supposedly going to establish higher ed for the next ten years, as long as we put some accountability measures in there. So, we do want to be part of this plan and part of the development of this plan.

K. Thu: Thank you, Linda, appreciate it.

L. Saborío: You're welcome.

- B. University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees – report
Natasha Johnson, Cathy Doederlein, Kendall Thu
Katy Jaekel, Sarah Marsh, Greg Beyer

K. Thu: Next, University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees. I'm going to keep this short. There was a board meeting since our last FS meeting. They met on December 10. It was a jam packed meeting. I can't possibly summarize all the things that took place. I would encourage you to go to the Board of Trustees website and scan through the reports from the various committees and what the full body approved. They did approve some budget items, the budget, in general. They approved money for COVID testing and related issues. They recognized faculty and staff awards. There were a number of other items that I just can't go through today, but again I encourage you to attend those meetings if you can and also to take a look at the meeting minutes so that you know what's going on. I'm sorry that's such a brief report, but I think that's all we really have time for.

- C. Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee – Peter Chomentowski, Chair – report
 - 1. Proposed instructional and research employee definitions

K. Thu: I want to next turn to Peter Chomentowski and the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee. I think this may take a little bit of time. I charged the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee with coming up with clear definitions of various instructor and faculty classifications. And the reason for doing that is twofold. One, are issues that have emerged from the School of Nursing. And secondly, to ensure that we have consistency in the way we use this language throughout, not only our constitution and bylaws and the BOT bylaws and regs, but that we have a common understanding of what these categories are. The committee spent the fall semester reviewing these categories, reaching out to stakeholder groups, comparing us to other institutions. And so, with that, I'm going to turn it over to Peter. And then, eventually, I'm going to talk a little bit about the process here. So, Peter, do you want to take it away at this point.

P. Chomentowski: Sure. Basically, what we did was we started reviewing the NIU Bylaws, the constitution and Faculty Senate Bylaws to see where there were definitions. Most of them, there was a simple definition of just faculty. There wasn't too much of a bigger definition of breaking it down. And according to the Board of Trustees, the instructors, which is in Section 2, is something that was just redone as a definition by them of instructors.

And so we reached out across the university to several associate deans, HR and other people to inquire about positions that were held at the university, such as clinical faculty, research faculty, what they actually do, what their jobs entail, does anyone in other departments have definitions. So, like clinical faculty, we reached out to Health and Human Sciences. And from that, we used basically the definitions from different departments, from different people we talked with, and looking at sister universities and how they had it defined. Most of the universities that we looked at had at least them broken down into four or five categories. Most of them had four, which was faculty, instructors, clinical faculty and research faculty.

And so, with that, we sat down and, like I said, started to put some language together on what would be defined as these four categories for what Kendall was looking for. And that's kind of where we're at right now. And this is, I guess, a first reading to the Faculty Senate.

K. Thu: Let me explain, provide a little more process clarity. What I'm looking for from the faculty today is, of course, whether you approve of this or not. And then whatever the faculty decide would be sent as a message to the University Council, which meets next week. If we approve this, and this is something that is a direction that the faculty want to move in, then it would require a constitutional change. The Faculty Senate does not have the ability to recommend a constitutional change directly. It has to go to the University Council.

So, it is on the University Council agenda, provisionally, for next week. And we'll talk about it tomorrow at a planning meeting for the University Council meeting. This doesn't change how faculty or instructors identify themselves. It's just provided as guidance to colleges and departments. With that, I will open it up for discussion, and I see that Jason Akst has his hand up. So, Jason, go ahead.

C. McEvoy [via chat box]: I would recommend including language about visiting faculty. Potentially emeritus faculty, as well.

T. Sullivan [via chat box]: I do not see applied artists here.

J. Akst: Yes, thank you. I only saw this language a few days ago, I think on the 15th, when it was distributed. And I understood this was a first reading. I didn't know about the discussion and/or vote next week, I think you said. But as an instructor and as a member of the Faculty Senate, I strongly oppose this language, and I would further ask for a bit more time to caucus with instructors to see if they're aware of this and convey their assessments.

K. Thu: Other comments? No other comments?

B. McGowan: Can I just ask for some explanation of why you oppose it? This is really informational. I just want to know. Thanks so much.

J. Akst: That question was for me?

K. Thu: I believe so.

J. Akst: Well, the NIU Constitution currently, right now, Article 6.1.1 defines faculty as all full-time staff members holding the ranks of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor or clinical faculty. So, according to the current NIU Constitution, instructors are considered faculty. This language, despite what I'm hearing as rhetoric that nobody would be considered any differently, in my interpretation, at least on first reading, explicitly seeks to remove instructors from the concept of who is faculty and who is not. In fact, looking at this document, in the title of each section, where it says instructors, instructors are the only category explicitly missing the word, faculty, from that title. There are a few other things. I want to try and respect the time. The language about full-time faculty, 50 percent or more, that's been in our collective

bargaining agreement for some time. But I'm concerned a little bit. Faculty assistants and lecturers are basically non-existent at NIU, and they haven't been for a long time. I have several concerns, but the concept of defining us as non-faculty would probably be the chief concern.

B. McGowan [via chat box]: Thank you for that explanation, Jason.

K. Thu: Let me comment on that. I appreciate your input. The very first sentence of Section 2 refers to instructors as teaching faculty. So, it does respect the faculty status that instructors have. Also, we have an instructors union, the UPI. It's separate from the faculty union.

J. Akst: I'm the grievance officer for the instructors union and a member of the negotiating team.

K. Thu: So, I just want to be clear that those distinctions are already out there in the way unions are organized. This is not meant to further marginalize contingent faculty or instructors. It's meant to provide clarity, and it's meant to respond to issues that emanated from the School of Nursing. I don't know, Nancy Petges, are you with us? Would you want to comment on that?

N. Petges: Yes, I'm here. The issues that arose from the School of Nursing is that it's very confusing as far as voting and issues within our School of Nursing, because we have so few tenured/tenure-track faculty members.

J. Akst: Could I comment on that?

K. Thu: Well, the issue there is that, in the constitution for the School of Nursing, the tenure-track faculty do not have control over the curriculum or academic policy. And this is the only unit on campus where that's the case. I've checked with other units that have lots of instructors. None of them have anything similar to the School of Nursing. So, this is really what the School of Nursing tenure-track faculty want to see happen, so that it can help them out. I will also remind them, I know we added instructors to Faculty Senate, but Faculty Senate is still primarily the voice of tenure-track faculty. So, we want to listen and get consultation with instructors and students and staff, but once again, we still are the Faculty Senate that represents tenure-track faculty. So, a couple other comments and then we're going to have to move on.

E. Nesterov: I want to speak a little bit to Section 4 about the research assistant, associate and other professors. I'm kind of opposed to including post-doctoral scholars in this category, because this is completely different than a research associate, assistant or research professor. Those categories are considered, or should be considered, faculty. And usually, if a department, usually this is in STEM departments, if a department wants to appoint an assistant or associate or research full professor, that's usually a pretty significant selection process. Those candidates have to present at seminar, the entire faculty [inaudible] the department has to vote for this. So, that's pretty sophisticated. Post-doctoral scholars, on the other hand, are just hired by an individual professor. There's no selection process except by the selection of the individual professor since they have found them. So, this is not really a faculty, so I don't even understand how post-doctoral scholars got included in the category of faculty. They are not faculty and should not be faculty.

K. Thu: I appreciate those comments. We've discovered a lot of nuances, but this section really comes from Jerry Blazey. He's the one who gave us the various categories of research faculty, and he included post-doctoral scholars in there. I'm certainly willing to go back to Jerry, or Peter can go back to Jerry, and ask whether or not that should be included or moved to a different category if that's something that you would prefer.

E. Nesterov: Yes, I agree that you talk to Jerry Blazey. Again, I don't think there are any universities, which include post-doctoral scholars as faculty. So, I don't know where Jerry really came up with that.

K. Thu: We'll be in a meeting with him tomorrow, so I'll ask him about it then.

P. Chomentowski: Kendall, you can ask him, but it was actually in emails that we got from Jerry that he had post-doctoral considered as research faculty. I really don't know why, but he did address that.

K. Thu: Yes, we deferred to Jerry for this section.

E. Nesterov: I have two post-doctoral scholars. Should I treat them as faculty. I mean this is crazy.

K. Thu: Well, research faculty, it's a special category.

E. Nesterov: I'm not really faculty; they are training me. They are post-doctoral scholars to get training to continue in their profession, so why would they be faculty?

K. Thu: Understood. Well, Peter and I will touch base with Jerry just to make sure that that piece of it is still okay, and give him your concerns.

E. Nesterov: Thank you.

G. Chen [via chat box] Can we simply rename Section 2 as "Teaching Faculty," instead of "Instructors"?

M. Berke [via chat box]: Maybe the title of Section 2 should say Faculty Instructors. It is in line with the other section titles.

K. Thu [via chat box]: I'm okay with that.

J. Akst [via chat box]: Instructional Faculty

T. Sullivan [via chat box]: Professional Faculty for Section 1?

K. Thu: What I'd like to do is, I would like to have a vote to see whether faculty would like to move ahead with these definitions. There would still be discussion about nuancing certain pieces of this. Somebody just suggested changing the title of Section 2 to say Faculty Instructors. I'm okay with that. I don't know, Peter, whether you'd have any objection to that.

P. Chomentowski: I have no objection. We actually talked about that, about either teaching faculty or faculty instructors or instructor faculty. This was just a way we started, but I have no problem.

K. Thu: We can call them instructional faculty? That's what Jason is suggesting. Can you make that change, Pat, for us in the Section 2 heading?

P. Chomentowski: I like that. That's something we were talking about.

K. Thu: Yes, we talked about that a couple days ago, I believe. Okay, thanks, Jason. I see we're losing people. Pat, could you put up a poll. Answering yes would be to recommend moving ahead with this via University Council, where there will be, again, more discussion. Number 2 would be not move ahead. And number 3 would be to abstain. So, we'll wait for Pat to put that up.

P. Erickson: Okay, you should see it there now.

K. Thu: Okay, so the poll is up. Feel free to vote. Again 1 is yes, 2 is no, 3 is abstain.

K. Borre [via chat box]: I would like it noted that, although Peter made attempts to talk about the instructor category with many sources, the instructor's union was not consulted. That body is concerned about the effect of the "soft power" of these language changes. It could have future impact on how instructors are considered by HR and colleges.

K. Thu: Okay, so it's very close. Obviously, it's a two-vote difference. I'm sure there's going to be more conversation about this going forward. So, thank you everybody. I appreciate it. This doesn't lock us into anything yet. I just wanted to get the sentiment of the overarching Faculty Senate.

Yes – 21

No – 17

Abstain - 7

- D. Rules, Governance and Elections Committee – Ben Creed,
Liaison/Spokesperson – no report

K. Thu: Okay, with that, we have no report from Rules, Governance and Elections.

- E. Student Government Association – report
Antonio Johnson, President
Bradley Beyer, Speaker of the Senate

K. Thu: Is Brad here? I got an email from Antonio that he couldn't make the meeting today, but he didn't have a report anyway. So, Brad, is there anything that you want to report on if you're still with us?

B. Beyer: Yes, nothing huge. I'd say real quickly, it's been a busy start to the semester already, and for those that also sit on University Council, I'll probably have a more substantive report next week.

But, I did want to say that we're looking into doing a similar shared governance restructure in the Student Senate. That's still something in the works. Maybe next time around in February, I can give a little bit more detail on that. But, basically, the point is to start to include colleges and resource centers a lot more in the Student Senate, rather than a physical district model that we currently operate with. But I think that really does it for now for me.

K. Thu: Thank you.

F. Operating Staff Council – Natasha Johnson, President – report

K. Thu: Natasha, Operating Staff Council?

N. Johnson: I would say the main thing is that we are starting a Civil Service emergency fund. So, we got through a lot of tape with that. And we'll be soliciting donations from any and everyone. So, I'm sure if you all are here, you'll probably get a letter. Feel free to be generous if you're able. It always goes a far way to help. And everyone is just looking forward to hearing from the CFO. She's going to be coming and speaking at our next meeting. That the gist of everything. Thank you.

K. Thu: Thanks, Natasha.

G. Supportive Professional Staff Council – Cathy Doederlein, President – report

K. Thu: And last but never least, Cathy Doederlein. Cathy, are you still with us?

C. Doederlein: Thank you so much. Just really an update that we are still seeking nominations for the different SPS awards, including our presidential awards. We did go ahead and extend our deadline on that, because unfortunately, at the time when we extended it, we hadn't received any nominations. I believe we now have at least received a couple. And just really want to make sure that we can be recognizing our fellow SPS colleagues for their hard work. So, appreciate your time in considering people for nomination. We had the provost come to our most recent meeting, which was very helpful in just kind of getting to talk through different issues and items of note for SPS. And we're looking forward to having Matt Streb come to our next meeting as definitely a lot of questions were surrounding COVID-related matters. That's the main update there.

K. Thu: Thank you, Cathy.

XII. INFORMATION ITEMS

- A. [Policy Library](#) – Comment on Proposed Policies (right-hand column on web page)
- B. [Minutes](#), Academic Planning Council
- C. [Minutes](#), Athletic Board
- D. [Minutes](#), Baccalaureate Council
- E. [Minutes](#), Board of Trustees
- F. [Minutes](#), Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee
- G. [Minutes](#), Comm. on the Improvement of the Undergraduate Academic Experience
- H. [Minutes](#), General Education Committee

- I. [Minutes](#), Graduate Council
- 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. FS 2020-21 dates: Sep 2, Sep 30, Oct 28, Nov 18, Jan 20, Feb 17, Mar 24, Apr 21
All 2020-21 FS meetings will be held via Microsoft Teams. The Teams meeting link and the agendas will typically be sent via email on the Friday preceding each FS meeting.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

K. Thu: That brings us to the end of the agenda. All that's left are the informational items at the very end. So, at this point, hearing nothing else, if there's a motion to adjourn, we can all get ready for dinner.

C. Doederlein: So moved.

K. Thu: Do we have a second.

N. Johnson: Second.

K. Thu: Any discussion? If not, why don't we do a yes, no or abstain in the chat box with the thumbs up. While you're doing that, I want to thank you all for your service. Have a great semester. I look forward to three more Faculty Senate meetings for the rest of the year. And as always, if you have things that you want to bring to the attention of Faculty Senate, we're certainly willing to entertain proposals. So, it looks like we have sufficient votes for adjourning the meeting.

N. Johnson: Yes.

K. Thu: Take care, everybody. Have a great evening.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.