

TRANSCRIPT

FACULTY SENATE
Wednesday, March 24, 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, B. Beyer, Blomquist, Books, Borre, Buck, Carpenter, Chen, Chomentowski, Creed, Dmitruk, Doederlein, Duffin, Fredericks, Furr, Glas, Grund, Hu, Hua, Ito, A. Johnson, L. Johnson, N. Johnson, Jong, Kasper, Keddie, Konen, Lampi, Liberty, Maki, Mayer, McCarthy, McConkie, McGowan, Mellon, Miguel, Montana, Nesterov, Onder, Palese, Penkrot, Petges, Qin, Richter, Riggs, Royce, Sharp, Sirotkin, Slotsve, Smith, Subramony, Sullivan, Surjadi, Tatara, Thu, Vahabzadeh, Valentiner, Waldon (for Berke), Whedbee

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Berke, Bujarski, Cheyney, Demir, Fanara, Hunter

OTHERS PRESENT: Boston, Bryan, Edghill-Walden, Falkoff, Frazier, Ghrayeb, Gorman, Groza, Hendricks, Hunt, Ingram, Jaekel, Klaper, Matuszewich, McEvoy, Mills, Moyer, Saborio

OTHERS ABSENT: G. Beyer, Klaper, Marsh

I. CALL TO ORDER

K. Thu: I think we're going to go ahead and get started. I'm going to call to order the March 24th meeting of Faculty Senate, the second to the last Faculty Senate meeting of the year, if you can imagine that. Time flies when you're having fun, right?

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

K. Thu: I'm going to turn to Pat to verify a quorum. Pat, do we have a quorum?

P. Erickson: We do have a quorum.

K. Thu: Thank you.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

K. Thu: Thirdly, I want to get a motion to adopt the agenda. Do we have a motion?

E. Fredericks: So moved.

K. Thu: Thanks, Elisa.

G. Aygen: Second.

K. Thu: Thank you. Any discussion? I will say before we adopt the agenda that it's a very full agenda. We've changed things around a little bit, because it is so full. So, my comments and public comment will be at the end so that we can ensure that we get through everything else in a timely fashion. And, as I mentioned last fall, the early fall Faculty Senate agenda is not so busy. But in the spring, it is busy. So, I'm going to indulge your patience as we get through the agenda today. I'll try to keep us on time. But at the same time, being respectful of everybody that's been invited to participate. So, we have a first and a second to adopt the agenda.

P. Erickson: Kendall, do we want to make a quick reminder about the voting? That's my bad, there. I was going to do that, and then I was too slow. Just for a reminder and also for anybody who's maybe subbing today, for our less controversial votes, such as what we're going to do now, approve the agenda, remember to not type yes, yes, yes into the chat. But instead, wait for Natasha, our chat monitor. She's going to type agenda-yes, agenda-no, agenda-abstain. Looks like she's already done that. And you are going to hover your cursor over the statement that matches your vote and click on your thumbs-up icon. Later on in the meeting, I think we'll be using a poll, a web-based poll for voting, but we'll go over that when the time comes.

K. Thu: Thank you, Natasha, for once again being our chat box monitor. So, Natasha has entered yes, no and abstain in the chat box. So, hover your cursor over one of those three.

N. Johnson: There's already 22 yeses.

K. Thu: And rising, okay. So, we have an agenda that's adopted. Thank you, Natasha.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 17, 2021 MINUTES – Pages 4-8

K. Thu: Next, we have approval of the February 17 Faculty Senate minutes. Again, do we have a motion to approve those minutes?

C. Doederlein: So moved.

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

B. McGowan: Second.

K. Thu: Thank you, Beth. Any discussion, corrections, edits, deletions? Okay, once again, Natasha is entering a yes, no and abstain for the meeting minutes. So, please go to the chat box and hover your cursor over the response that you choose. Sometimes it's a little difficult to navigate, because you have to hover while other things are popping up. Natasha, you let me know when you think, you and Pat, that we're there.

N. Johnson: Yes, at 23 now and rising.

K. Thu: Thank you, Natasha. So, we have approval of the February Faculty Senate meeting minutes.

V. ITEMS FOR FACULTY SENATE CONSIDERATION

- A. Presentation of the Bob Lane Faculty Advocacy Award to William J. Mills, III –
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K. Thu: So, let's move on to item V on your agenda, Items for Faculty Senate Consideration. First of all, we have presentation of the Bob Lane Faculty Advocacy Award. Dr. Bill Mills, are you with us? I know that Bill has to teach at 3:30.

B. Mills: Yes, I'm here.

K. Thu: Thank you, Bill. I'm very pleased to present to you on behalf of Faculty Senate, the Bob Lane Faculty Advocacy Award. This is an award that's bestowed to a faculty member for service above and beyond the call. As many of you in Faculty Senate know, Bill has played a pivotal role in keeping safe higher education and public school systems in Illinois during the course of school re-openings in the pandemic. He is an expert in bioaerosol exchange, biohazards, community safety, epidemiology, and the list goes on. Among other things, he was appointed by the Governor's Office to the Campus Reopening Committee of the IBHE. He has advised, not only NIU, on how to reopen safely, but other public higher education institutions, including Chicago State, Northeastern and others. And he's also played a pivotal role in the safe opening of the public school system in Chicago.

So, we are very, very pleased to have Bill amongst our ranks. And we want to thank you and express our appreciation for your efforts, and want to bestow upon you the Bob Lane Faculty Advocacy Award, which in addition to the letter of recognition, your name will be emblazoned on a plaque in the Holmes Student Center. Hopefully, it will be safe enough for all of us to go see it at some point. That plaque will have your name on it, along with past recipients.

So, Bill, with that, I want to give you a minute or so to say something if you'd like before you have to move along to your 3:30 class.

B. Mills: Thank you, Kendall. And I really appreciate that I could help, first of all, and that there's recognition for working of mine and other people at NIU, for NIU stuff, and elsewhere. I want to say that I do feel my 35+ years of professional experience has really set the stage and prepared me for what's happened, such that we were able to respond and identify what some of the major issues were going to be much sooner, perhaps, than the rest of the country. And issues that we had flagged, both when I was on the Reopening Committee, but even in the negotiations for the fall, have turned out to be quite true. And the standard of practice almost has evolved to what I had recommended back in July when people were saying no way, no how. And that's actually what we're doing. It is gratifying. It's taken a while. And I'm also very glad I got my first vaccination on Monday, and I

look forward to getting the second one. I think that's going to be key to reopening in the fall in a more regular manner. I don't think we're ever going to go back to normal.

K. Thu: Whatever that is.

B. Mills: Yes, whatever that is. Thank you very much for the recognition.

K. Thu: Well, thank you, Bill. We truly owe you a debt of gratitude. Those of us who are getting back in the classroom, you can be reassured that the safety of that classroom, in no small part, is because of Bill's work. And again, we appreciate it, and thank you so much.

B. Mills: Thank you.

K. Borre [via chat]: Congratulations Bill!

B. McGowan [via chat]: Hurray!

P. Chomentowski [via chat]: Congratulations!

S. Richter [via chat]: Congratulations Bill!

A. McCarthy [via chat]: Congratulations! Very impressive!

B. McGowan [via chat]: Thank you for all your work.

O. Ghrayeb [via chat]: Congrats Bill!

V. Edghill-Walden [via chat]: Congratulations!

L. Liberty [via chat]: Congratulations!

E. Fredericks [via chat]: Congratulations!

T. Boston [via chat]: Congratulations!

C. McEvoy [via chat]: Thanks for your work, Bill.

E. Miguel [via chat]: Thanks Bill. We are grateful you are at NIU.

B. Mills [via chat]: Thank you, everyone, for the kind words. Keep safe!

- B. Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee recommendations
Ismael Montana, Chair
Kendall Thu, Faculty Senate President

K. Thu: Let's go ahead and move on. Item B under Roman numeral V is the recommendations and report from the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee. And my colleague, Ismael Montana, and I are going to tag team this presentation. And I'm going to wait for Ismael to put up the PowerPoint. I'm going to talk mostly about the process. And then I'm going to turn it over to Ismael to talk about the work of the committee and the content. And then he's going to turn it back over to me to talk about the path forward from the report. With that, I'll wait until Ismael, and maybe with the help of Pat, will pull up the PowerPoint presentation that we're going to use as a reference point to talk about – there we go.

Not actually beginning last summer, but continuing last summer, a lot of activity occurred in the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd. And that included the continuation of the Black Lives Matter. Black Lives Matter didn't just start last summer, but it gained more notoriety and attention. And that included attention by many folks at NIU, including shared governance. Among the activities that occurred last summer were the Black Student Town Hall Meeting where students developed recommendations for what NIU should do in response to issues facing our BIPOC students, but in particular our Black students. And those recommendations from the students were forwarded to Faculty Senate in the fall. In addition, last summer, there were a number of letters that were written to returning students, letters that came from President Freeman, Dr. Vernese Edghill-Walden and a letter from me, as well as my Faculty Senate compatriots. And there were a number of conversations with faculty that followed in the late summer of last year.

As a result of all of that activity, as the Faculty Senate president, I convened an Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee at the end of the summer, beginning of last fall. And I was very pleased that my colleague, Ismael Montana, who is a professor of history, agreed to chair the committee and has played a central role in the activity and the report that follows. And I want to say a couple things before moving on to the next slide and then after that turning it over to Ismael. I know everybody in Faculty Senate got a copy of the draft report as of last Friday. I want to underscore the point that this is not a final report. Even after we get your feedback on the report, it will not be a final report. It is just one point in time where we want to sustain and continue the work going forward. So, we recognize that what we're providing today and what we're going to provide going forward is simply part of an ongoing effort at NIU. We're certainly not starting from scratch, and you will hear a lot more about what's going on in the Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Division from our leader, Dr. Edghill-Walden, later in the agenda.

With that, the next slide, if I remember correctly. I'm going to turn it over to Ismael, but before I do that, I want to – and we're going to thank them afterwards as well. But I want to thank all of the committee members for all their work over the last six months, especially the subcommittee chairs that you're going to hear Ismael talk about. When we first came together, we were a little bit challenged to know how we were going to do this, how we were going to structure it, what it was going to look like. But I can say, over the last six months, that the report and our efforts have come together, and we've really felt the weight of responsibility, especially over the last couple of months as we assembled the final – not the final product – but the interim product. So, you can see the

members of the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee up on the slide. And so, with that, I'm going to turn it over to my colleague, Ismael Montana, to talk a little bit more about the committee, its work and its recommendations. So, Ismael, I'm going to let you take away the virtual podium.

I. Montana: Thank you, Kendall, for providing this contextual to the draft report. Before I start, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge my colleagues and to express my deep gratitude to all of the committee members for so generously giving their time and making this ad hoc committee's work a priority, especially given their work and limited time available. In what follows, I will describe the process that underpinned the work of the Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee, discuss the timeline and the scope of our activities. And then I will conclude by presenting a list of our key recommendations. After my presentation, chairs of the subcommittees will join me to answer questions, if any.

After the Faculty Senate tasked the Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee with the charge to assess and identify current policies, procedures and practices that perpetuate institutional racism at NIU, the ad hoc committee took to work and began by seeking to establish clear definitions, identify and prioritize issues around the parameters of our charge. Instead of centering the conversation on anti-Blackness as a register for institutional racism, the ad hoc committee sought to re-focus the conversation more broadly on NIU BIPOC community and by BIPOC, I mean Black, indigenous, people of color community as a step toward antiracism and equity for all Huskies. This initial conversation around definitions, scope and parameters of our charge proved vital in establishing the guiding principles, as well as the goals and objectives the committee sought to accomplish.

Consistent with our charge from Faculty Senate, one of our first and primary goals was to conduct review of the policies, practices and procedures contributing to institutional racism at NIU. And as members of the Faculty Senate, we sought to leverage Faculty Senate as a shared governance body, to work with the administration and stakeholder groups to address the root causes of the inequitable disparities stemming from the institutional biases in policies, procedures and practices that privileges white and disadvantage our BIPOC community.

We also took into consideration existing resources. And key among these existing resources was to work in concert with NIU's presidential goals to foster commitment to social justice, equity and inclusion in order to eradicate inequitable practices for all NIU community. We also wanted out of our main goal, not just to conduct this review, but to lay the groundwork for sustainable development so that Faculty Senate could work with the administration and stakeholder groups to address the systematic barriers and social inequity stemming from institutional racism. And last, but not the least, to make actionable recommendations to hold ourselves and NIU and our community accountable.

In terms of the timeline and scope of the work, our work and timeline followed three distinct and inter-related time frames. During the first phase, we focused very much on putting ourselves or laying our hands on institutional policy documents and conducted initial assessment of these documents as they became available to us. We also reviewed existing reports and resources. And in the course of that, we conducted discussions among ourselves and prioritized issues that we deemed very important. Through these issues, we formulated three subcommittees along the line of

Institutional Racism subcommittee; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee; and the third being Academic Affairs Subcommittee.

During Phase II of our timeline, we engaged in targeted data requests, evaluation and analysis, and worked with offices such as Office of Institutional Effectiveness, NIU Policy Library and other institutional data that came to our attention that we used. In the course of the second phase, we also collaborated with stakeholder groups, and key among these groups is the Antiracist Coordination Committee, as well as Affirmative Action and many more that we worked with. During this phase, one of the key and hallmarks of our work also constituted our engagement with NIU community, in particular focus group conversations that was conducted with Black faculty. And I must stress here that the initial plan was to conduct much broader. But given the scope of the work and the time frame, we were able to conduct focus group conversations with NIU Black faculty tapping on existing resources available to us.

The third phase was one of the critical and culminating of much of the work that was done during the first two phases. And during the third phase, we engaged in internal deliberations leading to the development of our report and making our preliminary recommendations. The whole group then came together, discussed these preliminary reports and recommendations, appointed task force from each of the subcommittee chairs that led the way to revise and consolidate the draft reports and recommendations into the current draft report that is before the Faculty Senate today.

So, that is the timeline that guided the scope of the work. And what I would like to do now is just take a little bit of time and then go over and provide an overview of each of the subcommittees' work. The first of these subcommittees, the Institutional Racism Subcommittee, undertook a detailed and thorough investigation of the root causes of the processes which produced racial disparities and racism affecting NIU's BIPOC faculty or community disproportionately. And with a charge to create a path to correct how racism and other oppressions are encoded in NIU's structures, this subcommittee calls for an acknowledgement that we cannot dismantle what we do not understand. And we cannot understand the institutional racism we wish to dismantle unless we come to terms honestly with our own history and be the change we wish to see happen. From this acknowledgement, the operating memorandum of this subcommittee, therefore, stresses that promoting social justice will not only disrupt institutional racism, but also it will lead to improvement in our institutional in efficiencies. To achieve this objective, this subcommittee reviewed the racist history of NIU and our local community in order to understand the context that contributed to the design of our institution. And upon analyzing President Freeman's goal statement, the Institutional Racism Subcommittee found that these goals coincide with the promotion of social justice. Furthermore, this subcommittee adopted a framework for examining and addressing institutional racism at NIU that can align seamlessly with the presidential goals. And I will call your attention to review the report and look at the section covering the specific recommendations, and you should be able to go over the key findings of this subcommittee.

While the Institutional Racism Subcommittee undertook a thorough investigation of the structural underpinnings of racial disparities and racism affecting NIU's BIPOC community, they also reminded us, and I quote from their report that "history of the university [and here they are referring to NIU] attests to many examples of courage and foresight among students, faculty, staff and

administrators. And among members of the surrounding community, who have wanted to broaden and diversify our student body.”

Yet, as the work of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee revealed, much more needs to be done before NIU can truly claim these examples of courage and foresight on our student, faculty, staff, administrators in our broader community. By narrowing their charge to target factors hampering equity and inclusion, and after reviewing current practices on diversity, equity and inclusion at NIU, this subcommittee studied the best practices of select institutions at the forefront of higher educational institutions around the U.S. and Canada for implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion, and made a number of recommendations, which I call your attention to review the specific recommendations proposed by this subcommittee found in the report. And on the basis of the research and engagement with BIPOC faculty and students, they made specific recommendations that will help NIU to measure and achieve some of the example and foresight that will make our community fuller.

The third and last subcommittee focused primarily on policies shaping the hiring, tenure and promotion system, itself. And secondarily, on the impact of the hiring, tenure and promotion system on faculty retention, particularly for NIU BIPOC faculty. This subcommittee, Academic Affairs, its work indicated that, while the hiring, tenure and promotion system is only one component of the university, it represents a key system which cuts across various domains identified by the Institutional Racism Subcommittee. And clearly, there is no doubt as the work of this subcommittee shows, that the hiring, tenure and promotion system directly shapes the faculty who come to NIU. The [inaudible] grows and ultimately, the retention or not, as well. Among the core findings of the Academic Affairs Subcommittee is that our hiring, tenure and promotion system is neither aligned internally, nor with the university goals. And, therefore, a number of their recommendations are calls for alignment and call for a number of reforms in order for the Academic Affairs propositions and goals to be achieved and aligned with the broader university goals and make our institutions, as well, antiracist oriented.

I know time is of essence, so I want to jump now into the list of key recommendations drawn from the work of the three subcommittees. And we have a notation system. So, where you see the letters, IR, that refers to Institutional Racism Subcommittee recommendation; AA will imply Academic Affairs; DEI, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

At the top of our recommendations, which is also the hallmark of our recommendations, because we want this work to be a sustainable work, is that Faculty Senate should create a standing Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee in order to move the work forward. And, again, given the limited time scope for the Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee work time, we were only able to do that much. Much work remains to be done.

Recommendation number two. The Faculty Senate in response to the president’s first goal calling for empowerment and shared responsibility, should institute an ongoing critical process to examine the domains of the university, recognize those that reproduce traditional oppressions, and then dismantle them.

Recommendation number three. NIU administration should facilitate the development of new kinds of data and new analyses of data to better understand how institutional racism functions at NIU.

The Faculty Senate should work – this is recommendation number four – with the administration to set measurable goals toward the alignment of faculty diversity and student body diversity.

Recommendation number five. The Faculty Senate should work with the administration to create a unified policy document, which addresses faculty hiring, tenure and promotion, and aligns each component with the others and with university goals and embeds equity and social justice principles throughout these documents and processes.

Recommendation number six. The Faculty Senate should work with the administration to develop a university-wide principles of inclusivity, which encompass NIU's ideals reflecting a culture of belonging, a sense of value, respect, acceptance and encouragement by the entire Huskie community.

The administration should establish a five-year diversity, equity and inclusion strategic plan process.

And finally, but not the least, the administration should develop a one-page statement of diversity, equity and inclusion for NIU to be distributed and posted work spaces.

These are only a sample of key recommendations drawn from the draft report of the three subcommittees, Institutional Racism Subcommittee; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee; and Academic Affairs Subcommittee. These are by no means all the recommendations that are contained within the report authored by each of these subcommittees. I am going to stop now and turn it over to Kendall, who is going to talk about the communication process moving forward, as far as the draft report is concerned.

K. Thu: Thank you so much, Ismael, for that concise and well-presented overview of the committee's work. That was no small task, and I very much appreciate it. As Ismael indicated, there is much more in the 100-page-plus report that we can't possibly include in today's presentation. And we're not going to be able to field everybody's questions today. So, I want to talk a little bit about the process going forward and then open it up to a few questions from Faculty Senate members first and foremost.

First of all, just a reminder of where we've come from. I mentioned we started some of this work last summer. On March 17 a draft of the report that all of you have was provided to the Faculty Senate Steering Committee. And then last Friday, the report was sent to Faculty Senate members. And we also sent a copy of that report to key stakeholders campus-wide; and some of you, who are in that group, are with us today. Then, of course, today you heard a summary from Ismael concerning the report and the work of the committee, and then a little bit of overview of the process that I'm talking about. As a next milestone in our work, we would invite you to share the report well beyond your division or your department and solicit feedback. We'd like to get feedback from all of our stakeholder groups by April 7. And I once again realize that that's a short deadline, but again, just a reminder that that's just one stepping stone on the path ahead. There are some things that we

can do as a Faculty Senate, that we can do internally, because we have the authority to do so. There are other things that we can't. At the April 16 meeting of the – I'm sorry, I believe that's the Steering Committee meeting on April 14, a revised draft will be provided based upon the feedback that we received. And then the revised report that we create as a result of the feedback will be sent along to the Steering Committee. And then the revised report will be provided to the last Faculty Senate meeting on April 21. And then at that time, we will develop a set of options for the Faculty Senate to vote. Maybe they want to reject the report. Maybe they want to accept it. Maybe they want to accept with certain caveats going forward.

As mentioned, there are certain things that we can do as a Faculty Senate. That includes creating a standing Social Justice Committee, which is on the agenda for today. Tenure and promotion is in the purview of Faculty Senate. That's something that we can do, but there are other things that we will be working with our collaborators, including ADEI, the coordinating committee and others. And our effort is going to be to help foster what's already taken place, but leverage Faculty Senate as a body that should take responsibility for playing our part.

So, that's where we're headed. We're looking for your feedback on the report as a whole. We're looking for you to distribute the report to others on campus. And we look forward to the work ahead. I wanted to give a special shout out to the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee members, many of whom are with us. I want to, in particular, thank our subcommittee chairs, David Valentiner, Elisa Fredericks and Ben Creed. I know all of you are here, so if you want to open your video and just say hello. I'm going to give a chance for folks to ask questions of you if they would like. But please wave your hand at us at this point if you wouldn't mind. And while you're doing that, I also want to thank Pat Erickson for her work in helping us navigate the process, but also keep track of the report and keep track of all of the meetings and correspondence. Thanks also to Jeff Reynolds in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Special acknowledgment to Janice Hamlet who led the focus groups among our Black faculty. And just a reminder that we have a lot more focus group work to do amongst a broader constituency of BIPOC faculty. And then last but not least, before I open it up for questions, I want to extend a very special thanks to Ismael Montana for his leadership as committee chair. I know when I spoke with Ismael last fall, and I said I would try to lighten the load as much as possible for the work ahead, I don't think either one of us realized how much effort this was going to take. And while all faculty do research, teaching and service, this really constitutes mega-service. And I want to thank everybody on the committee. And I think the report, itself, with all of its shortcomings, reflects the commitment and the recognition that faculty have for the importance of this work. And we are committed going forward to working with others on what may well be the most important work many of us are engaged in at NIU.

N. Johnson [via chat]: Yes, thanks. Thank you all.

E. Fredericks [via chat]: You go Ismael!

A. Glas [via chat]: Yes, thank you for all of this work, Ismael and the members of the committee.

B. Ingram [via chat]: Fantastic work! I'm excited to get started in partnership with Faculty senate and other groups.

G. Aygen [via chat]: Impressive work! Thank you all.

P. Carpenter [via chat]: Thanks – a great deal of work!

K. Thu: So, with that, I want to open it up for a few minutes. I know we have a heavy agenda going forward. And here are the contact emails for the subcommittee chairs. Let me spend a few moments. As a first priority, of course, Faculty Senate members, those of you who want to comment at this point, please raise your hand. Elisa, I see your hand's up.

E. Fredericks: I just wanted to say that this was a very open process to learn about what we're doing good and how we should improve. And I'm hoping that everybody embraces the information that was provided and really critique, because one of the things we have to do is we have to work together. Even though we're in subcommittees and all that, that's great, but we need to work together to make us even better than we are. And I had a good time, and I learned so much on this committee. Thank you.

K. Thu: Thank you, Elisa. You can imagine trying to put together – essentially, this is a master's thesis-like document with 12 authors. So, trying to create the document in six months is commendable. But as Elisa points out, we recognize that the report has many shortcomings, many of which we're not aware of. And that's why we need your honest feedback going forward. Tim Sullivan, turn to you and then I think we have another person with their hand up. Go ahead.

T. Sullivan: Thank you. Have you thought about including the instructional faculty in the report?

E. Fredericks [via chat]: We included instructional faculty in some recommendations.

K. Thu: Yes, we have had conversations about that. It's one of those areas where – and I'll let my colleagues speak to this – is we only had so much time. We recognize the important role that instructional faculty play at NIU, teaching, as I understand it, roughly 25 percent of our courses. And they're going to play a pivotal role in carrying the ball in terms of pedagogy and classroom instruction. One of the things that you'll see in the report and that we heard from the students is decolonizing our curriculum. And instructional faculty ought to play a central role in that. So, yes, we did consider it, Tim. Like many other aspects of the report, we just had limited time to deal with what we could.

T. Sullivan: And I would say to that too, in places they are included in our definition when we present data on the faculty body, it's an inclusive definition. So, instructional faculty are within that category when we look at those numbers.

K. Thu: Thanks, Tim. Thanks for the clarification. And thanks also for your note, Elisa. Other questions or comments? I guess we've exhausted you. I'll ask David or Ben – oh, Todd, go ahead, and then I'll let David or Ben add comments as subcommittee chairs.

T. Buck: Thanks, I'll be brief. I was thinking about it for a while. I wasn't sure if I wanted to ask it or not. I was contacted by one of my students today with an email. And she's a Black student. She's exceptional bright and talented. But she's really struggling with living with fear, basically, of just as

being a Black person on campus. And I'm wondering is there a place for students to safely voice their pain and concerns. I know there's counseling on campus, and she's tried to make appointments with counseling, but it hasn't had success, because it feels like there's not enough counselors available to meet her needs. And so, there are a lot of things going on. I'm just thinking, I'm sure she's not the only one that feels this way. I hate to read the whole email, but it's pretty heart-wrenching, what she's going through that's keeping her from meeting her full potential. So, I guess my question would be, is there a place where she can go to voice her concerns and maybe feel like some of it's being addressed, at least at NIU as best as possible?

K. Thu: It's a very good question. And we heard a good deal of this in the community town hall meeting. After the racial epitaph was painted in front of the Center for Black Studies, Black students and BIPOC students were scared to go to the polls and vote. I know that Vernese is with us, and, Vernese, if you would like to respond to that with a few words or others in your office?

V. Edghill-Walden: Thank you, Todd for raising the question and to bring that forward. There are several different ways students can reach out or find some comfort in hearing or from other affinity groups. Our Center for Black Studies often has programs and sometimes town halls where students are able to voice their concerns. Or they can make individual appointments to speak with any of the staff for the Center for Black Studies or even at the Gender Sexuality Resource Center. Our resource centers, that's what they specialize in. This is what they do, and they are here to really help students get connected, find some sense of belonging and to offer programming in which they can see themselves. In addition to that, if you would like to share the student's name with us. You don't have to do it, obviously, in the chat, but you can email me, either myself or Tamara Boston will reach out to the student to find ways that we can connect them to a resource that may be helpful beyond counseling. I think the program tomorrow night that we have, which I was actually going to talk about in my presentation, is about understanding race related trauma for people of color, might be something that she may be interested in attending or you may be interested in attending to perhaps help understand or have some kind of glimpse into what she might be feeling, if she's feeling some type of trauma – I don't want to make that assumption. But I think that conversation tomorrow will be very helpful. And there are several other events and other programs and other ways to do that, but I'm just giving you some now. And, hopefully, maybe in my presentation, you'll hear a few more recommendations.

K. Thu: Thank you, Vernese.

T. Buck: I really appreciate that. Thank you.

J. Akst [via chat]: A reality check: The draft report Pat sent out and asked us to hold – now that the presentation has been made, this is the same report we should seek feedback on, correct? I just don't want to send something out prematurely.

K. Thu [via chat]: Yes, you can now send out. Thanks, Jason.

E. Miguel [via chat]: Is there a link to the report that we can include in disseminating it to the others in our departments?

K. Borre [via chat]: Thanks, Todd. Indeed, there are many students who are in fear of just being their authentic selves and counseling services are extremely limited. I am glad the student was able to share her concerns with you and look to you for support.

T. Boston [via chat]: tboston1@niu.edu

X. Hu [via chat]: Just adding to Todd's comment, one of the future steps may be also to share concrete steps with our students. Our students shared their concerns in the town hall meetings, etc., and they are heard. But beyond that, we need to make sure actions will be taken to address their concerns – not just lip services, token, gesture.

B. Creed [via chat]: Edward, I do not believe we have a link yet. If not, we can put this together if it is something which would facilitate the dissemination of this draft report.

E. Miguel [via chat]: I think it would help, Ben, if that is possible.

K. Thu: I think I saw Linda Saborío, your hand was up? And I think this is going to be our last question or comment. But I don't want it to end here. As Ismael and I have both mentioned, we want you to follow up with us and other committee members for the work ahead. So, Linda, did I see your hand up.

L. Saborío: I'm here. I had to step away for a moment; so, if you addressed this already, Ismael, I do apologize. In addition to addressing the processes for hiring more diverse faculty, will you be looking at hiring more diverse leadership?

I. Montana: Good question. Absolutely. The work of the Institutional Racism Subcommittee in looking more broadly at the structures and domains of NIU, I would say more broadly would kind of touch on that. And maybe I will defer to David if there is a way – I'm not sure if I'm getting it right in terms of we thinking that implicitly [inaudible] by calling for this more holistic kind of reform that needs to be done, that, in terms of administrative leadership, that is not something specifically that I would say we addressed. But at the same time, it is implied. And I will defer to David.

K. Thu: That's a good segue to letting our two remaining subcommittee chairs say a couple things. Then we're going to let Vernese have the final word before we move on in the agenda. So, David, you and then Ben and then back to Vernese.

D. Valentiner: Thank you, Ismael. I think that was spot on. In the Institutional Racism Subcommittee report, we identified – we break it down into – eight domains that we think need to be addressed. One of which is the composition of the personnel here at NIU. And I don't want to neglect that, but I don't want to be so hyper-focused on that that we don't look at the other domains as well. And I think that's what Ismael was saying when he said something about a holistic response. So, we want to look at that in the full context. Sometimes institutions get preoccupied with changing the players, and they don't change the game. And we think that both need to happen. So, I just refer you to the report. I think we have to take a long view at how we're going to bring

about changes across all eight of those domains. And clearly, having greater diversity within our leadership needs to be part of that.

K. Thu: Ben, would you like to say a few words as chair of the Academic Affairs Subcommittee.

B. Creed: Sure, I'll be brief. First, I would echo what Elisa said before. It was a really collaborative environment, and I think the thing that everybody was attuned to was the idea is that what we were doing is focused on what we can do, what's in our control as Faculty Senate. But we also saw, and hoped for, as Provost Ingram mentioned in the chat, the collaboration with the other units across campus, other folks across campus, working on these issues. And we were seeing this as our contribution as Faculty Senate to that. So, we look forward to working with our partners across campus, to seeing some of our recommendations come to fruition, the ones that are out of our direct control.

K. Thu: Thanks, Ben. And thanks again for your leadership in your subcommittee. Vernese, I think you wanted to respond to the question about leadership diversity.

V. Edghill-Walden: Yes, I was just going to say that, though it may not have been in the initial scope for this particular report, leadership and diversifying our workforce continues to be a university presidential goal beyond faculty. So, it's faculty as well as staff, which obviously includes leadership. And I think that we are making some strides in developing ways that we can be more proactive in that now that we perhaps see a light at the end of the tunnel with COVID perhaps. And we're able to develop some best practices around affirmative action recruitment and hiring in HR. So, I think the collaboration between ADEI, HR, Faculty Senate, the Provost's Office and all of my colleagues on senior leadership, I think that the commitment and the goal is there for us to also address the leadership piece.

K. Thu: Thanks, Vernese. I think we do have to move on, because we have quite a few remaining agenda items. I'm a little bit reluctant to do so, because this is so important to talk about. But again, this conversation, this is another stepping stone for the work ahead, and all of our committee members, welcome your input on the report. Please note again that we would like to get your feedback in to us by April 7 so that we can incorporate it into a different draft and re-present it to the Faculty Senate at its remaining meeting in April. So, thank you again, committee members, and we look forward to the work ahead.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Nominations for 2021-22 FS president/UC chair – Pages 10-11
Ben Creed, FS Liaison/Spokesperson, Rules, Governance and Elections Committee

Nominations will be taken from the Faculty Senate floor during the March 24 Faculty Senate meeting.

Letters of acceptance of nomination are due by Friday, April 9, and can be emailed to Pat Erickson at pje@niu.edu.

Letters of acceptance of nomination will be provided to Faculty Senate members via email by Wednesday, April 14, and also will be included in the April 21 Faculty Senate agenda packets.

Election of the 2021-22 Faculty Senate president will be held during the April 21 Faculty Senate meeting.

K. Thu: Okay, we're going to move on to Item VI, Unfinished Business, in the agenda, nominations for president of Faculty Senate, chair of the University Council. And as a prelude to that, as many of you know, I am not running for Faculty Senate next year. This term will be my last. June 30 will be my last day. And so, we need to go through a process of receiving nominations for the president, which will start taking place, at least today in this session. And then the Faculty Senate will vote on those nominations at its remaining meeting in April. So, with that, I'm going to turn it over to Ben Creed, who in addition to being a subcommittee chair for the Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee, is also the liaison for the Rules, Governance and Elections Committee. So, Ben, the virtual podium is yours.

B. Creed: As was mentioned, it's now time to take nominations for the position of Faculty Senate president for the 2021-2022 academic year. On the screen is the list of members eligible to be nominated. I will now accept nominations from the floor. We do ask that you unmute your microphone and identify yourself and then make your nomination.

D. McConkie: I have a nomination. This is Daniel McConkie from the College of Law. I nominate Peter Chomentowski as president of the Faculty Senate.

B. Creed: And we would need a second for that.

V. Books: I second that.

B. Creed: Thank you. Are there any other nominations? I'm trying to practice my good wait time. Hearing no more nominations, I now close the nominations. Letters of acceptance of nomination noting your qualifications and desire to serve are due in the Office of Faculty Senate by Friday, April 9. Those letters will then be provided to Faculty Senate members via email by Wednesday, April 14. And they will be included in the April 21 Faculty Senate agenda packets. The election will take place at the April 21 Faculty Senate meeting. Thank you.

K. Thu: Thank you, Ben. And thank you for the nominations. We look forward to the vote in April.

B. Proposed amendment to Faculty Senate Bylaws, Article 3,
Standing Committees of the Faculty Senate – Page 12
Kendall Thu, Faculty Senate President
SECOND READING/VOTE

K. Thu: Next, we have Item B, proposed amendment to the Faculty Senate Bylaws, Article 3, creating a standing committee of the Faculty Senate. This is the second reading. This is the creation of a standing Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee. This is one of the recommendations that

came out of the Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee report. And so, I will entertain a motion to approve.

N. Johnson: So moved.

K. Thu: Thank you, Natasha. Do we have a second?

Y. Ito: Second.

K. Thu: We have a second. Any remaining discussion? Since we've already seen this before and not hearing additional discussion, Pat I will ask that you put together in the chat box our anonymous voting procedure. Maybe repeat how that's done again, because we do need to record this vote.

P. Erickson: First, I'm putting up again the list of the voting members so you know who you are. So, if you see your name on that list, or you see the name of the person you are subbing for today, then you are a voting member. And now, while you give me a few minutes, I'm going to give a link and put that in the chat. Okay, you should see a Poll Everywhere link now. If you're a voting member, we ask you to click on that link, and it will take you to the ballot. You'll see a poll that has options 1 through 10. One equals yes. Two equals no. Three equals abstain. And you can just ignore the other numbers. There's no need to click any kind of submit button. Once you hit that number that corresponds with your vote, that will go right to the report. And next I'm going to bring that over so that you can see the voting. We need two-thirds in order to pass this amendment, two-thirds of those voting.

K. Thu: Ferald and Pat, it looks like we already have two-thirds.

P. Erickson: Yes, I see we've got a total of 48 votes. I think that we have about 58 voting members in the room right now, but I think that would still be our two-thirds threshold. Do you agree, Ferald?

F. Bryan: Yes I do. We are certainly at two-thirds.

P. Erickson: Okay.

YES – 44

NO – 1

ABSTAIN - 4

K. Thu: So, the amendment passes. I think if you are so inclined if you want to open up your video and your mic, I think this deserves a round of applause.

- C. Grades and the pandemic for the spring semester
Survey Report – Page 13
Beth Ingram, Executive Vice President and Provost

K. Thu: Next on the agenda, grades and the pandemic for the spring semester. As you remember, we started this conversation in February – how we're going to handle grading this semester. And we

sent out a Qualtrics survey to Faculty Senate members asking them their preference for handling grades for the spring semester. And if you look at what Pat has projected, you'll see that – I don't think the percentages are really as important as the absolute numbers, because the over-arching n is so low. But nonetheless, you'll see that normal grading came in third, automatic substitution of U for F was first, allowing individual students and faculty to decide on U substituting for F was second. My interpretation of these results is that it's not a clear consensus. But my interpretation is that faculty and students want a range of flexibility in dealing with grades. So, I know I've had conversations with Brad Beyer and Antonio. And, Brad, I know you've brought this before the Student Senate. If you're with us, I would invite you to share the student take on all of this. And then we'll ask, maybe Beth and Omar, to chime in as well. So, Brad, are you with us?

B. Beyer: Yes, I am with you. That actually was something that was brought up by Antonio Johnson at the executive

K. Thu: Sorry, Antonio.

B. Beyer: But I don't know if Antonio is on the call.

K. Thu: Antonio, are you here?

A. Johnson: Yes, I am.

K. Thu: My apologies for getting the correct body referenced.

A. Johnson: It's okay. [inaudible]

K. Thu: You are breaking up, Antonio.

A. Johnson: Okay, give me one moment.

K. Thu: Sure.

A. Johnson: Yes, we did host a town hall about a week back. And we did have a few questions come up from students about the grading policy and how it will affect them this semester. A lot of students didn't like how we did things last semester. But some students who take courses that they have to pass that course with a C or higher, they didn't really like that you had to get an F in order to receive the U, because they still failed the course if they received a C. So, those students who have to receive that C, if they could receive a U instead of failing the course and have to retake it, and it still affects their GPA. That was one of the biggest things that I heard.

K. Thu: Anything else, Antonio?

A. Johnson: That is all, thank you, Kendall.

K. Thu: Okay. I know that Provost Ingram may still be with us. And Omar Ghrayeb from the Provost's Office is, I believe, with us as well. So, why don't I first start with Provost Ingram. Beth,

do you want to add anything to the survey results and the conversations that you've already been a part of.

B. Ingram: I don't know that I have anything else to add. I think Omar knows the logistics of what we've done in the past better. I think there were sort of mixed feelings about what we should do this spring. And when there are mixed feelings, you stay with what you already have. And I think that's what you're recommending, if I am hearing you correctly, Kendall. But if there are questions about other options, I think Omar is here, and he's probably in a better position to talk about those logistics of what that means.

K. Thu: Go ahead, Omar.

O. Ghrayeb: Thank you, Kendall. Actually, I'm not surprised by the results of the survey, because that reflects the feedback I personally got from all the stakeholders I talked to. It's a mixed feeling. Now, each option that you had on the survey has consequences. The most serious consequence is what we did last spring, which is to offer students the option to change their grade to S/U. And the reason for that is because, especially programs that have licensure, while students might have consequences because it is, for example, not sure what they will be doing next semester. They were more sympathetic before during the last spring. I'm not sure if this spring would be the same.

Now, the U, it has an advantage that it saves, or it does not impact, the GPA for students. Now, it will not have any impact on the financial aid, because the financial aid is calculated using the original grade. If it's an F, that won't be factored into the GPA calculations for financial aid purposes.

The other group who are not supportive of changing the F grade to U grade, their argument – I'm just presenting this to the Faculty Senate – their argument is, if we are changing the F to U, we are extending the stay of some students; and eventually, they might leave with larger debt. And that will impact the dismissal decision.

So, there are pros and cons for each option you have on your survey. According to the feedback we collected through the advising community, the advisors, based on their communication with students, students gave feedback that they already knew what they were signing up for. If the course is online, they knew the course was online, and they are prepared for that vs. that semester or the previous couple semesters where we had to make changes to the modality in the middle of the semester. So, this semester is different, right? From that angle, the recommendation is not to change the grades. So, this is where we're at, and I'm willing to listen to any other argument from the Faculty Senate.

K. Thu: So, with that, I think I want to open it up to Faculty Senate members. Peter, I see your hand was up first.

P. Chomentowski: We talked about this in the steering meeting the other day. This was just a question I had brought to me by some of my students. They understand the F. But in our department, we have several courses where D does not even pass a course. So, the question they're

really asking is, regardless, if they get a D, what about that, because that's the same thing, because, like I said, because that's still going to count against their GPA. And they were just curious, how come a D wasn't added in, especially if you have courses where D doesn't pass the course.

A. Johnson [via chat]: That was the concern I heard as well.

J. Akst [via chat]: We have similar issues. A D might pass the course, but might not satisfy prereq requirements.

B. Ingram: Can I just make a clarification? A D does pass the course, and the student will earn credit. But it may not be enough for them to move on to other courses. And so, a D is still a passing grade, but it may not be sufficient for students to progress in a major. And so, there is a little bit of a difference there, because the credit would count toward graduation credits.

P. Chomentowski: Okay, that's what I was wondering, because, like I said, it counts toward graduation credits, that's what they were asking. But it's not enough for them to move on to another higher course.

B. Ingram: Right, right.

P. Chomentowski: Okay. That's what I was trying to explain to them too. Thank you.

K. Thu: Other questions? Linda?

P. Chomentowski [via chat]: Thank you very much for that answer.

L. Saborío: Sorry, I'm not exactly a Faculty Senate member, but I do have a lot of questions, don't I? Would it be possible to give students the option of having that D convert to a U? I think that might be what Antonio was trying to suggest.

B. Ingram: One of the pieces that we haven't talked about very much are the best practices that the registrar's office follows. And there are national standards for how you manage grades. And so, a piece of this is making sure that we're consistent with that, as well. And I think that's what prevents us from letting students say, well, I got a B and I really wanted an A, so let's convert that to a U, because they did earn the B. The registrar has an interest in maintaining an accurate record of what actually happened in a class, which is probably why it's difficult to convert anything other than an F to a U, because Fs and Us aren't equivalent in the sense of not earning credit in the class, having failed the class. Omar knows much more about the registrar's office than I do, so if I said anything inaccurate, please

O. Ghrayeb: No, I totally agree. Also, another feedback, just to share with the Faculty Senate, the fact that the majority of you are faculty members, so I don't know what you think about this feedback I got from faculty members through the associate deans and the colleges that many faculty members think that they already take the COVID situation, the fact that the modality is online into consideration when they decide on the grading policy in the course. And some faculty members were not happy that we did change the grading last couple semesters, because they thought that, if

they already took under consider, why are we taking a second measure. So, that's another feedback we got from some faculty members.

K. Thu: Thanks, Omar. Again, I've heard that as well. I also heard from students who were dissatisfied with the way faculty handled their remote learning experience. That was in the distinct minority, but it was also out there. So, I'm going to turn to Kris Borre and then Laura and then back to Antonio. And then we're going to have to wrap this up.

K. Borre: Thank you, Kendall. I just wanted to respond to the comment by the advisors. Yes, when the students sign up for an asynchronous course, for example, or a synchronous course, they know what they're doing. However, they don't exactly know what's going to happen to them during the semester in terms of a variety of different things that affect their lives. For example, problems with Internet, failure of their equipment, changes in employment schedules so that they can't meet certain requirements. And they also don't know how every faculty member is doing to respond to their issues and their needs. As far as advising goes, I'll have to say that in one of my classes, I referred, I think, it was like 13 students to the Navigate system, because of their inability. They started out fine in the class, and then they disappeared. Their inability to complete that. And I found that the Navigate system was not effective in contacting those students for a variety of reasons, or reaching any kind of conclusion with them. And very few of them got back to me about problems. So, I don't know what's going on with them, and I don't know that they necessarily got in touch with their advisor. So, I think that we have to consider that there's a lot of different variation in what happens to students due to COVID and our unusual circumstances this semester.

K. Thu: Thanks, Kris. So, I saw Antonio's hand, and there's one other, I believe, before we get back to Omar. Then we really do have to wrap this up.

A. Johnson: I just want to make a quick comment, just to follow up on what you mentioned about joining courses and not having the support. I actually heard a few cases this year through Student Conduct, for example, of students who may have not followed the syllabus, and they want on to external sites and found answers, and they were penalized for that. And the students' excuses were, it was asynchronous, I didn't have the support, the class was fully online, I didn't know it was going to be that way in the beginning, because it did state that this class was going to be one way, but we only actually met once or twice throughout the semester. As well as, when you sum it up, I feel as if students may have one option when it comes to taking a class that's in their major, and you may not have another course to take. And that may be the only option you have in order to graduate. I know this year, I only had a few options of certain classes, and I needed those in order to graduate this year, so that's all for me. Thank you.

K. Thu: Good points, Antonio. Thank you. I saw somebody else's hand up, maybe, before Omar's. Laura, go ahead. Laura, are you with us?

L. Johnson: I am. I wasn't called on, and then there was a delivery and I'm going to type it out, because it's rather long.

K. Thu: Thanks, Laura. We'll look forward to your typing in the chat box. And then, Omar, do you want to make one final comment, and then I'll say something, and we're just going to have to move on.

O. Ghrayeb: Absolutely. I hope I did not come across as being against accommodating different grading standards. Actually, I'm very supportive, and I've always said this about myself: I have soft spot for students. So, I'm not against that. I'm for anything that helps you. But at the same time, we need to measure the consequences. I just want to say something about Navigate. Absolutely, this time of year, we opened the referral system through Navigate to faculty members to give us feedback about students who don't show up. And I just want to assure all faculty members that your referrals, advisors take them and open cases and follow students and try to reach out to students. And some students, they just simply don't respond. Now, putting myself in your shoes, I submitted 13, I did not hear anything, what's going on. The new change we will make, we will give you access to Navigate so you can log in and see the status of the cases that you submitted. So, you don't have to wait for advisors to reach back to you.

K. Thu: Thank you, Omar. That's good news.

S. Vahabzadeh [via chat]: Students who want to join the graduate program prefer the actual grades, because they believe they are doing better as compared to early courses they took as freshmen or sophomores.

L. Johnson [via chat]: I want to echo previous comments that there are many contextual factors that students are dealing with that impact their success in courses (and there is still so much uncertainty due to COVID). Faculty have been afforded more flexibility in terms of use of evaluations – I think students should be afforded additional flexibility when possible.

T. Sullivan [via chat]: I was one of the two people who voted “other” and it was along Beth's reasoning. If they take the final exam, they earn the grade they get.

K. Thu: Just as a few wrap-up words, I think there's no clear consensus here. We're still in COVID period. We still have an altered semester in terms of the length of the semester, in terms of altered modality, although, as Omar points out, we now have experience with it. It's not like the previous spring semester where we had to turn on a dime and figure it out. We now have a full semester and a half under our belt. And so, we have more experience. Back to what my interpretation of what I've heard and the survey results is that faculty and students want maximum flexibility to deal with the various contingencies and circumstances they're dealing with. And I think that that's the kind of approach that we need going forward. So, we're not going to have one size fits all. It might make Omar's life a little more difficult, although, I don't know if it could be any more difficult than what it already is, Omar. And I trust that the Faculty Senate will allow the Provost's Office to try to develop an approach that is flexible to the different contexts and contingencies that you're dealing with. I think that's where we're left with it. Thank you, everyone, for contributing to that conversation. It's a tough one, and I appreciate the willingness of the Provost's Office to listen to students, staff and faculty on this front.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Motion to approve Mahesh Subramony to serve as faculty representative on the Chief Human Resource Officer Search Committee

K. Thu: We're going to move on to new business, item A, motion to approve Mahesh Subramony as a faculty rep to the Chief Human Resource Officer Search Committee. And the University Council has approved Mahesh to serve on that committee, but we also need the Faculty Senate to sign off. Mahesh, I guess, has already been serving on the committee, if I understand it correctly. He has expertise in this area. So, I'll entertain a motion to nominate Mahesh to serve on this very important search committee for the new chief human resources officer. Do we have a motion? And Pat, correct me if I've got this process wrong.

P. Erickson: No, I think that's right, we take a motion and a second. And if there is discussion, then a simple vote.

D. Valentiner: I'll make the motion.

K. Thu: Thank you, David. Do we have a second?

P. Chomentowski: I'll second it.

K. Thu: Thanks, Peter. Any discussion? I think this can get a general vote in the chat box if Natasha will help us with yes, no or abstain. And while we're doing that, I want to thank Mahesh to step up and fill this role.

M. Subramony: Thank you.

N. Johnson: We have over 23 and counting, 27.

K. Thu: Great, thank you. So, Mahesh will serve in that position.

- B. Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Initiatives, Accomplishments and Action
Vernese Edghill-Walden
Vice President for Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Chief Diversity Officer and Interim Chief Human Resources Officer

K. Thu: Next, we have a special guest, the vice president for academic diversity, equity and inclusion, Dr. Vernese Edghill-Walden, is with us. You've already heard from her earlier in the meeting. She also serves as the interim chief human resources officer, maybe not for too much longer. But I want to invite Vernese to provide a presentation and share with us her thoughts on what her office is doing and comments that may be related to the report that you heard about earlier. So, Vernese, the virtual podium is finally yours.

V. Edghill-Walden: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for the opportunity to present. I wanted to have the opportunity to share a little bit more about what our division is doing. And maybe for some of you who may not know about our division at all, so to use this as an opportunity to update you on who we are and also what we've been doing. I want to first start by saying that I welcome the partnership of the Faculty Senate on working on social justice issues. It is a breath of fresh air to see the recommendations, and I am excited about the level of interest that the faculty have expressed in moving this very important and necessary work forward. So, I look forward to that. Next slide, Tamara, please.

I came to NIU in 2015, and there was a diversity and inclusion task force report, which some of you may have been involved in. And there were recommendations to move the institution forward around access, recruitment of faculty and staff, how to really create a sense of belonging and inclusion for the faculty, staff and students. Very broad goals, some of which had some actionable items to it, and we were able to accomplish those things. After the first three years of really using that report as a guidepost for how we were going to move forward with developing a university strategy for diversity, equity and inclusion, we agreed, along with the senior leadership, that it would be important to not do a stand-alone diversity, equity and inclusion strategic plan, but to really embed the goals of ADEI, Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, align it with the mission, vision and values, integrate it into existing plans. There are many best practices across the nation where it shows that, if you create separate goals and not integrate them into university goals, that it sometimes becomes a marginalized agenda. The leadership was very clear, as was I, especially when I took the job, that it was really important to align what we were doing as an institution with what our goals were for diversity, equity and inclusion. The goal has always been to build a framework for NIU's commitment to social justice, equity and inclusion. And I think we've come a long way, though, as you heard earlier, we have so much more to do. And it really requires all of us and each of us to hold ourselves accountable to that important work. Next slide.

Many of you might have heard me in the past, one of the things that we've been able to do since COVID, or I should say right before COVID, was to create an equity statement. What does equity look like at NIU? And so many of you came before the Faculty Senate, University Council, many shared governance groups at the college level, as well as the university level, to vet a definition for equity. This is our definition for equity. And it really, I believe, helped to guide the work that we did when we entered into our pandemic, because it really helped to provide a framework for how we saw eliminating barriers for students who may have been, as we all have been, impacted by the pandemic and even before that.

Just to share a few other accomplishments that we've been able to accomplish since 2015. Again, right before COVID, we were recognized nationally by the National Association for Diversity Officers in Higher Education with an institutional excellence award for the work that we had done up until 2019 on our strategies for closing equity gaps and making NIU a more inclusive environment. Actually, the week that I was supposed to go receive the award in California was the exact week that we closed down and did the stay-at-home order. But when everyone is back on campus, as Kendall said about the other award, you will be able to see that award proudly on the walls in Altgeld.

I'd also say that, because of the hard work that we have done as ADEI, the Provost's Office, as well as the deans and the departments, and the work that we've done with closing equity gaps, the president has been able to really make productive and effective presentations to the Illinois Board of Higher Ed, as well as the IBHE Public University Trustees Conference, where we have been applauded for the work that we have begun and continue to do on advancing equity and student success. I think that that's a win that we all share. Next slide, please.

In addition to that particular work, let me just stop a minute and share with you – and I think one of the faculty members asked a question, and I guess I need to just say a little bit more about who is part of ADEI, because I think that will inform the rest of this presentation. Under Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, our division, is our cultural resource centers. That would include the Center for Black Studies, the Asian American Resource Center, that Latino Resource Center, the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center, as well as the Office for Undocumented Student Support. These centers and offices play a tremendous role in helping students outside of the classroom and complement the academic support, as well as the student engagement in Student Affairs. Many of our students see these free-standing centers as a place of refuge, a place where they can see themselves and a place of belonging. And many of our students have missed those facilities, now that we have gone through COVID. But as we have been able to open up, we have opened up within the CDC guidelines and looking forward to the fall. But even in the midst of the pandemic, I have to say that we continued to work on advancing social justice education. The other office that reports to me besides Affirmative Action and Title IX Education is our Social Justice Education area, where it's led by Monique Bernoudy and our director of social justice education, Jocelyn Santana. Many of my team have been working tirelessly since the pandemic and even after the senseless murder of unarmed Black people in this past summer, not just George Floyd, but to really create an online atmosphere for us to build community and for us to be able to create platforms for people to come together.

This summer we launched the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion website. This website provides up to date information on CODE trainings and events that may be happening on and off campus related to social justice activities. I know that you all probably have also seen the work that Athletics has been doing to support social action and freedom of expression. We came together around the Black Lives Matter art project, which was sponsored by the College of Visual and Performing Arts. We've also developed a comprehensive disability resource website, and well over 500 of you participated in a community conversation on belonging and what that really means. We are also partnering with the Center for Teaching and Learning on developing inclusive teaching and learning opportunities and professional development for, not just faculty, but for graduate students as well. So, all of the work that we have been doing is pretty comprehensive. And really at the center of our work, it's how do we build an inclusive community? How do we cultivate equity? And how do we create an opportunity for us to do this important work together? Next slide.

As you all know, we can't do this work alone, and really need financing and resources to do it. So, not just human resource, but financial resources. We've been able to get a Healing Illinois grant, that would help us to advance the work that we're doing around belonging. We're developing a belonging council between the city and NIU and other not-for-profit organizations and agencies in the city. We're partnering with Outreach. Jennifer Groce and Monique Bernoudy are the leads on that. We're actually entering into a second term of our Office of Violence Against Women grant,

and have done a lot in terms of alumni outreach and donor engagement to really engage alums that, quite frankly, may have left NIU with not necessarily the best feeling about being at NIU, based on their experiences. But we want to re-engage them, because we know that the work that we're doing, they thought it was important when they were here, and we're trying to re-engage them to show them the work that we are continuing to do in this area. Two corporations that have also expressed interest in our work around social justice education and our cultural centers have been Target and John Deere. Next slide.

Some of the events I wanted to just mention to you. I've talked about how my team has risen to the occasion. They've created podcasts and town halls. And our center directors have really worked to support students. This past week, with the rise in anti-Asian hate and violence, our team and our director of our Asian American Resource Center, along with Sherry Fang, who is the coordinator for the Asian American certificate, have really come together to create opportunities for us, as a community, to come together. So, I wanted to highlight – this says Friday, the 27th, but it should be the 26th. Tomorrow, there will be an opportunity for us to show our support to the Asian American community from 4 to 5:30. It's not on this slide, but we can get that information out to you. Students are really asking that we show our support for them and the Asian American community. And it will be a Teams invite that we're asking people to come and support. Students want to know that the Huskie community is concerned about them and that we have their back. In addition, we are hosting, as I said, an Impact on Race Related Trauma by Dr. LaVonya Bennett tomorrow evening. These are events that, in addition to the cultural centers and the facilities and the programming that we do, these are programs that I wanted to highlight for you today. We also create reading lists and resources. We have CODE workshops that some of you may have attended, and we continue to do social justice education through our Zoom and Teams meetings to handle everything virtually. I want to commend my team for doing this work in the midst of a pandemic and racial unrest. And I hope that you will be able to participate in some of these activities as we support our Asian American community members. I also want to call your attention to the Hateful Things exhibit, which is still at the Pick Museum until April. You'll have the ability to have this information, this presentation, so you can take advantage of this information. Next slide.

This is just additional information that we've been working on. As you heard earlier, we were able to launch our Anti-Racist Coordination Committee. That was really important, because there are a lot of people, a lot of different offices wanting to do more around how do we make NIU a more inclusive environment; how do we create more policies and procedures that are inclusive and consider an equity lens and are less rooted in institutional racism. And so, it was really important to coordinate that at our level. So, ADEI is leading the coordination committee. Many of my colleagues that are on this call are on that, as well. One of the things I want to call to your attention is that in the next week or two you'll hear more about some definitions that we are developing around what it means to be an anti-racist institution at NIU, as well as what we mean about the significance around anti-Blackness, as well as other groups. It is really important for us to define and operationalize what we mean by these terms, and the committees have been working on those things. I also have been added to an anti-racist framework task force, a national task force. And hoping to bring that information back to NIU as well. And the president is developing a DEI accountability website, which I think is really important because of all the work that we are doing. How do we stay on track? How do we hold each other accountable to the work that we say we are going to do to move the needle as an institution? And really I also want you to know that in the next

couple of weeks we're going to be rolling out a feature in PeopleSoft that will allow all of our employees to self-report on gender identity and sexual orientation in PeopleSoft.

These are things that we have continued to commit to, and we are leading, and sometimes we're partnering. But these are a lot of the activities that I wanted to bring to your attention. There are so many more things that we are working on, but these are highlights that I wanted to share with you today. And I look forward to participating in further conversation. And as John Powell said in his discussion, "Co-creating with others ... that is truly belonging." And it's something that we must do together. Thank you.

K. Thu: Thank you, Vernese. We have a couple minutes if there are questions and comments for Vernese. Ismael, go ahead.

I. Montana: I think that was last time.

K. Thu: Okay. Other questions or comments.

V. Edghill-Walden: I also want to say something about Friday. Friday is a national day to speak out against Asian hate. And I know that Michelle Bringas and Sherry Fang are also trying to work on something for a short vigil on Friday to just memorialize the lives that were lost in the senseless killing last week in Atlanta. As we get continued information on how this plan is evolving, which is what happens when things like this happen nationally, we try to respond locally. And I will continue to keep everyone up to date with what's happening.

K. Thu: Thank you. Thank you very much, Vernese. You're always welcome at Faculty Senate.

V. Edghill-Walden: Thank you.

J. Jong [via chat]: I appreciate your much efforts on the issue and relevant information. I'm encouraging my students to attend those events/discussion programs related to DEI held at NIU. Other than sharing the website of events and registration with my students. I'm wondering if there are any resources/opportunities in NIU that our students can also learn more about DEI such as DEI training programs.

T. Buck [via chat]: Thanks, Vernese.

B. McGowan [via chat]: Thanks, Vernese. Can we have copies of the slides?

P. Erickson [via chat]: I'll send the slides, yes.

I. Montana [via chat]: Thanks, Vernese, for this informative presentation.

V. Edghill-Walden [via chat]: Here is the link to the [CODE trainings](#). Here is the link to the info on the [cultural and academic diversity centers](#).

J. Jong [via chat]: Thanks, Vernese.

T. Boston [via chat]: Here is the information on the DEI website: [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at NIU](#).

T. Boston [via chat]: [Hateful Things](#), Pick Museum of Anthropology

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

IX. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

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

K. Thu: Let's move on. We have no consent agenda, so we can move on to reports from councils, boards and standing committees. Linda, do you have a report from the Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE?

L. Saborío: I can be really quick, Kendall, because we did meet on Friday, and we spent a good amount of time talking about the Strategic Plan. Colleagues who are on the working groups to the Strategic Plan Committee reported out, but asked that we not share this information with our shared governance groups yet, because it's still a work in progress. So, that makes my report really short.

K. Thu: You're going to dangle that in front of us and then let us go.

L. Saborío: And then let it go, I know, right. I'm so sorry, but they did ask that – asking us to censor what's being shared today. We did have Illinois State Rep. Katie Stuart, and she's the chairperson of the Higher Education Committee, so it was nice that we had the opportunity to meet and talk with her. And I think my colleagues on the FAC would all agree with me when I say that we are looking forward to working with her. She seems like she is going to be a strong advocate for higher education, and she worked as a math instructor in the K-12 system and also at SIU-E. Good to hear that.

K. Thu: Thanks, Linda. I assume we'll hear more at the April Faculty Senate meeting.

L. Saborío: I'm hoping, yes, that they move forward with their ideas very quickly. Thank you.

K. Thu: Thanks, Linda.

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 is the University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees. The board did meet. Just a couple of highlights. One, there were 35 sabbatical proposals that were approved by the Board of Trustees, so the board continues to be supportive of sabbaticals and, I think for the most part, understands the reason for sabbaticals, as well. In addition, as you've already heard, the board unanimously voted to extend President Freeman's contract, and we are, I think, most of us are

pleased to see that happen and glad to see that the board fully supports her work going forward. There are lots of other things that were in the report that the Board of Trustees provided. As always, I encourage you to take a look at the board packet on the Board of Trustees website if you're interested in learning more.

- C. Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee – Peter Chomentowski, Chair – no report

K. Thu: Moving on, Peter Chomentowski, you do not have a report from Faculty Rights and Responsibilities.

P. Chomentowski: Nothing.

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

K. Thu: Okay, Student Government Association. Antonio and Brad, is there anything else that either of you, or both of you, would like to add?

A. Johnson: Thank you, Kendall. I don't have a long report. We will have a president-elect for SGA, along with a VP, a treasurer, hopefully, and a student trustee. Our student treasurer slot is still open, so if anyone knows any students who are interested in running for treasurer for the Student Government Association, that is available. And that's all for me. Thank you.

K. Thu: Anything else you'd like to add, Brad?

B. Beyer: No, I think the elections, that's the biggest piece going on right now with SGA. I did want to say, we do have a speaker-elect. My deputy, Dallas Douglass, was elected speaker last Sunday, so I'll slowly be introducing him as I move out of my term. But, honestly, there's not a whole lot to report on my side. I have been talking about finance policy and how SGA supports students orgs on campus. I know I've talked about that in shared governance. That is going up this weekend for a vote, regarding closing equity gaps with how SGA supports different student orgs around campus. And so, once that, hopefully, passes and we kind of move forward with the remaining weeks of my term, I'll have more to report on that. But that's really it for me.

K. Thu: Sounds good. Thank you, Brad. Thanks to both you and Antonio for your leadership in SGA.

- E. Operating Staff Council – Natasha Johnson, President – report

K. Thu: Natasha, do you have a report from Operating Staff Council?

N. Johnson: Sure do. We'll be awarding the Dependent Scholarship Award winners at our next meeting. And then John Heckmann will be there presenting and answering some questions that many folks seem to have. And also, we'll be doing elections coming up. I think, maybe the first,

second week in April, we'll take nominations. Then we'll go from there. Other than that, we're working on bylaws, trying to solidify a lot of things since, during the time of COVID, it's a great time to get everything in order. That's it.

K. Thu: Thank you, Natasha.

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

K. Thu: Cathy sent me an email earlier this afternoon indicating she wasn't going to be able to make it, unless you're suddenly with us, Cathy, we'll move on.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

P. Erickson: Yes, we have one request from Rod Moyer.

K. Thu: Rod, the virtual podium is yours for five minutes.

R. Moyer: First of all, let me give everyone a round of applause.

T. Sullivan [via chat]: Hope you were parked while clapping!

R. Moyer: This is an amazing meeting. I wonder how many other universities in the state of Illinois, in the nation, are announcing accomplishments such as the ones that have been announced today. And those accomplishments, though they are just the start, they have been accomplished only because leaders have done a lot of work up to this point in order to arrive where we are today. So, I think it's awesome, great.

What I want to say, as I start my stop watch here, we're going to have a new Faculty Senate president. And as a Black and Puerto Rican – now I'm a graduate – I want to tell the next Faculty Senate president, to me, what I notice and what stands out about Dr. Kendall Thu that I hope whoever that individual is will do the same thing. And number one, you noticed today, Dr. Thu, he told you that this, referring to the social justice work, might be the most important work that you do in your careers. He said that. And you all are the highest level of knowledge and professionals in your various areas. So, that's a powerful statement to say that, number one. But the point is, he said it. Last meeting or at one of these meetings, I heard him say, George Floyd was murdered. A lot of times you don't hear people say the word, murdered. You say killed, he's dead. But Kendall Thu said George Floyd was murdered. So, I want to tell you that that's something that sticks out to me. And that's something that I notice and that I recognize. He also has said Black lives matter. He has said systemic racism at NIU. So, I want to ask the next Faculty Senate president, should the NIU students and community expect to hear these words come out of your mouth? Will you say these words the way Dr. Thu does? And I just wanted to share that's something that sticks out to me.

I'm speaking today – my original comments I've amended. And I wanted to speak today, because I find it important to be an example for students that anything that you want to make a difference in,

you can do it. And you have here a collective of the most prominent, successful, influential people at NIU, in the state of Illinois higher education, in your area. And any student, any person can come and speak to you and share with you their concerns. Todd Buck brought to you the issue today of a student that brought an issue to him. And I'm glad to Dr. Edghill-Walden is going to reach out to this individual. That student can come here him or herself and, for me, I like to be an example. And I hope with this Social Justice Committee, as we move forward, we figure out a way to market and to encourage more students to come and take advantage of this amazing platform.

And number three, I always say that I love Karen Whedbee. And I want to tell you why. I want to tell you why today. I know she's on this line. And I believe that she has an ingredient that is necessary to make all of this work. She was my professor. I did not know her before she was my professor. I'm just going to share my screen here so I can show you. If you look at the bottom here, I first contacted her May 1, 2019, then 10/3/2019. That was to ask for a syllabus, because I like to speak to my potential teachers in advance, to look at potential syllabi, to evaluate them, so I can figure what's going to be the best fit. That's one of the techniques that I do. But I want to come over here. We were having a discussion regarding freedom of speech, regarding words, and regarding the N-word. And even teaching and having the discussion and conversation in class, is it appropriate to say it while having the conversation? You can say these are basic questions, but I was so taken back in a positive way by Professor/Dr. Whedbee's ability to converse in a way that really felt like she wanted to learn. It didn't feel like she was preaching. It felt like she was open, and there was a really genuine search for the truth. And this email here I want to highlight, I believe that highlights that, I actually sent her a video off of WorldStar Hip Hop that I thought was appropriate pertaining to our conversation. And if you look at her response, let's look at this, because this is, to me, what being a great professor is all about. It says, well, just watched the clip. It did look to me like he probably deserved that, but when you get time, I'm going to need you to explain the context to me. Thanks. She asked. She's searching for more information. She's searching for more understanding. And as you all go through this very, very important process, I want to ask you to be open to searching for understanding. You may not use mayonnaise to dip your French fries. You may use ketchup. But, you know what, there's a lot of people who use mayonnaise and use these different things. Be open to learning and understanding as opposed to maybe having preconceived notions and ideas about what something means. That's what Professor Whedbee embodies. I thank you, Professor Whedbee, for being the professor that you are. And I thank everyone for their service to Huskie Nation.

K. Whedbee [via chat]: Thank you, Rod. If you have time, DM me.

R. Grund [via chat]: Thank you, Rod.

K. Thu: Thank you, Rod. And thank you for your patience in providing the comments at the end of the meeting versus the beginning of the meeting. Appreciate it.

XI. FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

K. Thu: So, lastly, we have Faculty Senate President's Announcements. I do not have anything that I really want to share in addition to what we've already talked about today. There was a good comment in the chat box about providing a link to our Faculty Senate Social Justice report. We will do that. I'll look to Pat to help us put it together. Also, since we now have created a standing Social Justice Committee, that's open to Faculty Senate members. So, if you're interested in being a member of that, please let me know. I believe I've been contacted by existing Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee members, and I'm hoping that most, if not a good share of those members, will continue in that role.

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.

K. Thu: The remainder of the agenda are information items. Before I entertain a motion to adjourn, is there anything else that anyone would like to add. At least this afternoon you weren't feeling as though you needed to get outside in the warm weather and the sunshine. Anything else?

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

K. Thu: I want to thank you all for your time and patience in getting through a long agenda. And I look forward to seeing you again in April when the weather is warmer and progress continues to move ahead. I think we all share what's happening with our Asian American and Asian colleagues in Atlanta and in the Bay Area, these social justice issues cannot go unnoticed. We have to speak up and speak out. And I look forward to the work of this body and others going forward. So, thank you, everybody. I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

T. Buck: I move we adjourn.

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

N. Johnson: Second.

K. Thu: Please open your microphones and all those in favor say aye.

Members: Aye.

K. Thu: Good to hear your voices. Any opposition? Any abstentions? Have a great evening everybody.

Meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.