

## TRANSCRIPT

**FACULTY SENATE**  
**Wednesday, November 18, 2020, 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](mailto:pje@niu.edu).*

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

**VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT:** Akst, Clark, Demir, Grund, Hu, Royce

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Barnhart, Boston, Bryan, Douglass, Edghill-Walden, Falkoff, Groza, Ingram, Isawi, Klaper, McCord, Rhode, Saborío, Schwartz, Stoker

**OTHERS ABSENT:** G. Beyer, Ferguson, Jaekel, Marsh

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

**K. Thu:** Okay, I have 3 o'clock on my laptop clock, so let's go ahead and get started. I'm going to call the meeting to order at 3 p.m.

### **II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM**

**K. Thu:** And I'm going to turn to our parliamentarian, Ferald Bryan, to verify that we have a quorum.

**F. Bryan:** Hi Kendall. By my count and my friendly helper, Cathy Doederlein, can verify that I believe we definitely have a quorum.

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

**C. Doederlein:** We do.

### **III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

**K. Thu:** I'll entertain a motion to adopt the agenda. Do we have a motion by somebody?

**D. Valentiner:** I'll make the motion.

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

**E. Fredericks:** Second.

**K. Thu:** Thank you, Elisa. Any discussion or comment? If not, the way we're going to vote this is in the chat box that Natasha Johnson is maintaining. So she's going to put a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down, and I don't know how you do abstain.

**N. Johnson:** [inaudible] and everybody can just hover over which one they want to agree to. There will be three for each one.

**K. Thu:** So, you have three choices in the chat box. Either it's yes, no or abstain. And you let me know, Natasha, when you get the necessary votes.

**N. Johnson:** It seems to be overwhelming amount of yesses.

**K. Thu:** Sounds good. We now have an agenda.

### **IV. APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 28, 2020 MINUTES**

**K. Thu:** Next approval of the meeting minutes from October. Do we have somebody who wants to make a motion to approve the minutes?

**C. Doederlein:** So moved.

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

**E. Fredericks:** Second.

**K. Thu:** Thanks, Elisa. Any discussion, comment, questions? Okay, hearing none, we're going to use the same format to approve the minutes in the chat box. And, Natasha, you just let us know when you're ready.

**N. Johnson:** For the next one, since people are actually typing it in, for the next one, if you could just hover over it and give it a thumbs-up. And that way it will be easier for me to be able to see the counts.

**K. Thu:** And are we there yet?

**N. Johnson:** Yes.

**K. Thu:** Okay, so we have approval of the minutes.

## **V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**K. Thu:** We have no timely requests for public comment.

## **VI. FS PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**K. Thu:** So, we move on to Faculty Senate President's Announcements. So, as some of you know, and as some of you have noticed, Pat is not with us today. Pat Erickson is not with us today. She's had a family issue that she's had to attend to. She will be out of the office until November 30. I don't want to share in public forum what exactly is going on. But, if you know Pat, and you want to email me – or several others in the senate who know what's going on, because Pat reached out to them, please send me an email and I'll let you know and you can reach out to Pat if you so desire. I have already reached out to her and wished her and her family well. And so, as you can tell, we are already missing Pat. It's kind of embarrassing how many things that she does and my ineptitudes in certain ways, because, as I mentioned to the senate before the meeting started, I didn't even know how to arrange a Teams meeting. I don't know how to vote in Faculty Senate. So, it's amazing how much she does for us, and not just what she does, but what she means to us as well.

I have a few other announcements that I want to share with you. You've all seen the announcements coming from the president and the Provost's Office about us moving more toward remote learning, because of the spike in COVID cases. And we have about 200 sections or 200 classes that are in-person. And about a third of those come from music. That 200 also includes a lot of sections where there's only one person, so 699 class or 799 class where you have a dissertation section for one student, that's also included in that count. So, we're already very low in terms of the number of in-person classes. Hopefully, we can increase the number of remove classes, as well, to reduce the risks. As you know, there's going to be free testing for all employees of NIU next week, next Monday through Wednesday. So, you might know your results when you get back for Thanksgiving. So, please take advantage of that if you are so inclined.

**N. Johnson** [via chat box]: Testing is happening now at Anderson Hall.

**V. Edghill-Walden** [via chat box]: Testing is this week. Today is the last day.

**K. Borre** [via chat box]: Yes, it goes until 5 p.m. today.

**K. Thu:** Oh, it's happening now? Okay, thanks.

I hope you all had a chance to listen in to the president's State of the University address late yesterday afternoon. You learned a lot about what's going on, and I believe that video is still available if you haven't heard of. She gave a 30-minute speech followed by Q&A. And there's a lot of important information in there, particularly about the president's goals for the university. And there are five or six general goals for the university. And I would urge you in your department

planning, in your senate planning, to use that framework going forward. We're already using it in our Social Justice Committee.

Also wanted to let you know that every five years, we have to review our student evaluation of teaching. We're in that year this year. I have asked the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee to do that. And there are a number of you who are on that committee. I've sent to Chad McEvoy, who chairs that committee, all of our materials from five years ago. And I suspect that it's going to be a broader conversation this year, given the change in the modality of teaching that is probably going to persist, to some extent, even after the COVID period. But I wanted to make you aware that that was going on. And, of course, we will get a report from the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee.

**C. McEvoy** [via chat box]: The FSPC just discussed this yesterday.

Something else that's come up that I wanted to make you aware of. Student recording of lectures has been an issue in a couple of instances. I checked with the General Counsel's Office. A paragraph that says you don't want your class recorded, you can't control that necessarily, but that can be done. This has come up because there is an organization on campus that is affiliated with a watch list of faculty. So, they may record classes, and then if they think the content is of a particular political persuasion, they might put you on their watch list.

It's also a copyright issue. So, taking your class material and using it for something else could be a copyright violation. So, you can do what you want as instructors and faculty, but I just wanted you to be aware that those are a couple of options that you have if recordings are happening in an unwanted way. How we can actually control it in this day and age beats me. But I wanted you to be aware.

**K. Thu:** So, that's all I have for Faculty Senate president's announcements. Any questions on any of the stuff that I just shared?

**N. Johnson:** There is a question in the chat box.

**K. Borre** [via chat box]: What about the asynchronous recorded lectures/presentations?

**K. Thu:** I don't believe those will change. But I don't know for sure about that. It's something you might want to check with Leila Porter on, Kris, the department chair.

**K. Borre:** Okay. I just wondered if they could be accessed by people who are not in the class.

**K. Thu:** Oh, I see what you're saying. No, no, they can't. No, it's just the people that are enrolled in class. Okay, do we have another hand up? I see a hand up, but I don't know who it belongs to. Okay.

**L. Johnson** [via chat box]: But someone could share these recordings?

**K. Borre** [via chat box]: I am not sure, but will find out through working with my TA.

**G. Aygen** [via chat box]: Yes, if a student in our class plays the recording on BB and someone else video records the screen.

**K. Borre** [via chat box]: Thank you.

## **VII. ITEMS FOR FACULTY SENATE CONSIDERATION**

- A. Advancing Administrative Efficiency  
Chris McCord, Senior Advisor to the Vice President, Administration and Finance

**K. Thu:** If not, let's move on to Section VII, Items for Faculty Senate Consideration. Chris McCord, are you with us?

**C. McCord:** Good afternoon, Kendall.

**K. Thu:** Good afternoon, Chris. So, the first item in items for Faculty Senate consideration is a presentation by Chris McCord, who is currently a senior advisory to the vice president for administration and finance, Sarah Chinniah. And he and I met a couple weeks. He gave me an update on what's happening with trying to advance administrative efficiency. And I thought it would be worthwhile to have him do a presentation so that the broader community can learn what's going on and perhaps help him in what he's doing. So, with that, I'll turn it over to Chris. And I believe, Chris, you're going to do your own slides?

**C. McCord:** I will do my best.

**K. Thu:** Okay, so, take it away.

**C. McCord:** Good afternoon, everyone. First, before I go into the topic, let me say, this is my first time joining since Faculty Senate and University Council were revamped. And I'd like to congratulate Kendall and everybody else, who was involved in that process for a very welcome and, dare I say, long overdue effort. So, I'm very pleased to see the new structure. Glad to have a chance to speak with you as part of it.

You may have heard in President Freeman's State of the University address yesterday. She spoke about this project. And this grew out of a larger effort that President Freeman initiated a million years ago, that is February, charged to streamline the university. And she had four areas that she had directed people to tend to. One of them, she charged Sarah Chinniah and Bryan Perry with looking at administrative practices and policies and procedures that can be transformed, simplified or eliminated. This was something that was not just a top-down. This was something that very much grew out of requests heard across faculty and staff, across the university, to find ways to make things work smoother, make things work quicker, to make the burden of work easier on people. So, that was February when President Freeman issued that charge.

Then in March, the pandemic reached DeKalb. We became familiar with phrases, such as remote teaching and work from home. And this very naturally put a focus on moving paper-based processes to digital, and moving manual processes to automated. That was very coherent with the original

charge to streamline the university, because there were pre-COVID of any number of requests to move toward less paper, more automation.

I joined this effort in July. Since then, I've been supporting Sarah and Bryan in this investigation, looking at what are the opportunities to automate or digitize processes, and what are the issues that need to be addressed in order to do so. In any number of conversations, I've talked with many people, talked with some of you, thank you for your contributions to date. I've looked at a number of existing reports and recommendations that have already been generated, feedback from Sarah and Beth, meeting with all of the colleges, among others. And, some of the themes – we have in any number of specific projects that have surfaced – I have a list of 40 to 50 specific projects that have been cited. But there are some clear themes that run across these.

There's a clear desire to eliminate paper and, in particular, to eliminate paper by moving to more digital forms, more electronic signatures. There's been a desire to improve workflow, where a process not just needs one person to take a step, but multiple people to initiate process, approve a step before it can be fully transacted, move to improve these workflows by streamlining where we can, by automating where we can, those approvals.

And we have a lot of places where data needs to flow, information needs to flow from one place to another, sometimes from one computer system to another. A lot of our processes still involve manual transfer of data from one system to another. There's a lot of opportunity for error. There's a lot of opportunity for paperwork to get lost. There's a lot of opportunity for time to be wasted. So, we have been looking for opportunities to address all of these. Some of these projects are things that have already been completed. Some are things that are in progress. Some are nearing completion. And some are really, at this point, just an aspiration, a gleam in somebody's eye, something they'd like to see happen.

As you heard President Freeman stress in her State of the University presentation yesterday, it's really important that efforts are grounded in the university's mission, vision and values. Even when we're engaged in a somewhat tactical exercise, such as looking at opportunities to automate an approval chain or an HR process, it's still important be grounded in the mission, to look at what really impacts our mission and operation, to look at what provides a positive impact to student employees and clients, to look at what makes best use of NIU's resources.

In the moment we're in, it's very natural that these guiding principles are leading us to look at digitization and automation opportunities. But there's an important consequence that comes from that. Focusing on digitization and automation. And let me clarify the use of those two words. Taking a paper document and moving it to a computer form might be considered digitization, but it's not necessarily automation. If I take a form, I load it onto my computer, I type in the information, I print it out, I sign it, I scan it, I attach it to an email, I send it to somebody else, they download it, they add their signature, they scan it, they reattach it, they forward it on – that might pass as digital, but it's certainly not automated. So, we want to look at opportunities, both to digitize and automate.

That puts the focus on IT solutions. That, in turn, puts the focus on programmers, developers, project managers in DoIT, partners in the functional units, such as the registrar's office, human

resources, administration and finance. There are some great projects that are very local in nature on their own. I'd like to particularly tip my hat to the work that Jenny Parker and the Office of Educator Licensure and Preparation. They and all the people who work in teacher licensure have done great work a lot of processes into common platform. They've done that pretty much on their own. They're doing great work; we're just getting out of their way.

But many of the high-impact transformations involve central resources. They involve DoIT. They involve the PeopleSoft enterprise system or the OnBase management system. I mention we've got 40-plus projects. Even when we focus on the ones that are high impact and it involves central resources, there are still 20-plus projects that we could consider for action at this point.

And that points to the need to prioritize. We need to prioritize at the university level; that is, what is in the best interest of the university as a whole for DoIT and the corresponding teams to invest their efforts in. We're working on a leadership process that will set university priorities for action on the various opportunities, and those prioritizations will be driven by the criteria you see: contribution underlying business process to the mission, goals and operations of the university. The breadth and depth of impact on the community. Is the process we're digitizing something that only one or two offices are engaged in or is it something that's widespread across the university? And, of course, we have to look at the practicality of ease/speed of implementation. What can we get done? What can we get done within our existing resources? What can we get done without new cost?

There are a few key points in this process that I just want to signal to you. I already mentioned prioritization. There are a lot of things we could wish to see happen. Prioritization inevitably means making choices, moving some forward, postponing others till later, potentially deciding some things, however worthy, are just not going to get done. So, there's been great progress. A lot of projects have moved forward, but university leadership is going to have to select, hopefully soon in the coming year, select which projects have the best impact, have the greatest value, prioritize those. And then we're going to have to ask patience as that report gets execute and other projects eventually queue up behind them.

That's going to be driven, in a large measure, by the staffing resources. But it's also driven by the ease with which projects can be implemented. And one thing that really drives that is the ability to streamline or standardize; that is, particularly when we have an approval flow work where multiple people have to sign off on a process. If every office has their own unique way of moving that approval process forward, that gets really burdensome, really challenging, to implement in an automated system. And some intelligent compromise, some reasonable balance between the needs of an individual unit to manage itself as best it can, together with an overall good of a process that works smoothly and flows from one level to the next in a systematic way, a reasonable intelligent compromise is a key part of streamlining or standardizing processes.

So, some of you may find yourself in roles where you're in these discussions. I know there's a lot of good work already underway here, as well. A number of teams have been looking at these processes, have been finding ways to streamline. Some of these are going to touch shared governance and come forward as shared governance proposals. I hope if you are involved in those, you'll give thought to the benefit from finding reasonable compromises for standardizing processes, making them work smoothly and more efficiently.

We are going to do our best to keep the campus informed as we proceed. We're going to continue to seek feedback, both on what needs or opportunities could be met and how well solutions that are being implemented are working. We know that that's key to making the process work in the long run. As projects go live, we'll want to know the information about what's working, about how well training and feedback are being provided to make sure that we're really finetuning the processes.

And finally, we walk a lot about sustainability in different contexts. In this context, the sustainability we're really thinking about is the ability of our staff to sustain their work in a very challenging environment. We recognize that there's been a lot of staff loss. A lot of people are doing more than one person's job. This is not about eliminating positions. This is about streamlining processes, about taking tedious, repetitive work away so that people can manage the jobs that they have better, focus on the more high-level aspects of their job and not be burdened by the routine. And we hope that, in that spirit, that this will benefit the entire campus.

So, that's all I wanted to present. Happy to answer whatever questions I can.

**K. Thu:** Well, thank you, Chris. I think this body this year can appreciate diving into the thicket of things that may seem mundane, because we went through the thicket of shared governance changes last year. So, I really appreciate what you're doing and how important it is for the campus community. I'm reminded of when I was chair, peering out my office door, and there was the office manager with piles of paper on the floor surrounding her chair. So, the more we can do this, the better off we're going to be. With that, are there questions or comments for Chris?

**N. Johnson:** I'm also looking at the chat box, at least not yet.

**K. Thu:** If not, thank you again, Chris. It's good to see you; and, hopefully, this won't be the last time that you'll join us.

**C. McCord:** Thank you, it's a pleasure.

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

**K. Thu:** So, that brings us to item B. under Items for Faculty Senate Consideration. We want to get an update from Ismael Montana on the work that the Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee. Ismael, if you are there and can turn your screen on and open your mic, and give us a brief report?

**I. Montana:** Yes, thank you. I actually sent you an email just to let you know that I'm there and waiting to provide an update. I want to start off by acknowledging the members of the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee for their hard work and dedication that they put in the work of this committee.

The committee held regular bi-weekly meeting on November 10 to discuss ongoing progress and also revisit the charge from the senate. The charge was to identify factors, contributing to institutional racism at NIU, particularly policies, procedures and practices, and take actions to



correct them. When I briefed the senate last month, I reported on the three-phase work plan we devised to lend a structure to facilitate our task. I also reported on the creation of three separate subcommittees: Institutional Racism; Academic Affairs; and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion subcommittees. Each of these subcommittees is now fully functional and focuses on different aspects of the ad hoc committee charge from the senate.

During our November 10 meeting, the ad hoc committee met with Jeff Reynolds from Institutional Effectiveness. Jeff has previously supplied the committee with two categories of NIU and EEOC data on faculty diversity count over five-year period cover the year 2015 to 2019 that many of our committee members, in fact all of them, felt the need to hear directly from Jeff. And Jeff thankfully responded to our call and joined us during the November 10 meeting during which we had a very spirited discussion about the data and also made additional requests, which he also kindly continue to work with us.

Another important development, I wish to report relates to phase two of the ad hoc committee's work plan regarding coordinating with existing bodies working on antiracism issues across campus. On November 11, we had an opportunity to do just that through an antiracist committee coordination meeting that Vernese Edghill-Walden, VP Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, organized by bringing together the various antiracist initiatives underway across NIU. The goal of the meeting was to inform these various bodies of an antiracist agenda that is being developed by President Freeman, who will soon be unveiling a website to capture the ongoing antiracist agenda and to work with NIU community to implement the recommendations.

During that meeting, Vernese also informed us of the soon-to-be unveiled, which is what Kendall alluded to, the president's goals for the fiscal year 2021 for NIU. This was brought to our attention, because a number of the president's goals align with some, but not all, of the issues the ad hoc committee is working hard at identifying. One take away from that meeting, the antiracist coordination meeting, as I reported back to the ad hoc committee, was the question being raised, particularly concerning data. It was highly recommended that qualitative data [inaudible] interactive process of information gathering, as well, would enable us to gain insight of the issues we are examining, not only from institutional data standpoint, but also from community narrative, particularly experience of BIPOC faculty. I would like to say that this sentiment reinforces discussion that we're already underway internally between the larger group and within the subcommittees, as well. In fact, all the three subcommittees are exploring ways, as we speak, in which we can efficiently account for this crucial dimension in our task. I'm also happy to report that all three subcommittees are currently reviewing a draft of the president's goal for the fiscal year 2021 for NIU to determine gaps, alignment or complement in goals. And Kendall has also mentioned this exercise that we are engaging in.

My final points pertain to progress report of the subcommittees. The three chairs of these subcommittees – Elisa Fredericks, Ben Creed, and David Valentin – are all leading our work within these subcommittees. And I report that, in addition to bi-weekly regular meeting of the ad hoc committee at large, each subcommittee meets almost on a bi-weekly basis to conduct their work among them and then report to the larger group.

The academic subcommittee, for instance, has already met twice and will be meeting from now on, almost on a weekly basis. This subcommittee has gone through the process to identify the focus area within academic affairs, and its work centers on types of issues that have been identified: Number one, hiring; two, tenure and promotion policies; and three, procedures and practices. In terms of measures, preliminary goals have been identified that include recommendation to ensure that hiring, tenure and promotion are antiracist and align with social justice goals and one another. Along the same line, the institutional racism and diversity, equity and inclusion subcommittees have also identified their goals to gather concerns about institutional racism and equity matters. And in the coming weeks, I will be learning a lot more from these committees, as well.

And finally, I'd like to conclude by reiterating the ad hoc committee is mindful of the scope of our charge and, most importantly, to show a timeframe in which we are working to arrive at recommendations by March, 2021. So, a lot of these issues that I mentioned, whether dealing with these issues within the larger ad hoc committee or within the subcommittee level, there are a lot that we're working with that the timeframe is one thing we're also very mindful about.

So, I'm going to leave it here, and will be happy to answer any questions. And also, if I missed anything crucial, I'd like to call on the chairs of the subcommittees to please feel free to chime in. I should also thank Kendall for being a wonderful resource person for the committee in terms of things that we need data set and all that. So, we very much appreciate the help we've been getting from Kendall, as well.

**K. Thu:** Thank you, Ismael. And thank you for that update. I also want to express my gratitude once again for your leadership and your willingness to take this one, as well as all of the social justice committee members, including the subcommittee chairs, David, Ben and Elisa. It's asking a lot of you, especially with a deadline of next March, I certainly recognize that. But I think what I have seen witness is a lot of dedication and recognition that this is work that's so important that we just have to do it. Do any of you have comments or questions for Ismael or for any of the committee members?

**N. Johnson:** I don't see any comments in the chat, or any hands raised.

**K. Thu:** Okay. So, you covered everything Ismael. Thank you. We look forward to getting additional updates and eventually getting to the recommendations from each of the subcommittees of the committee as a whole.

**T. Buck** [via chat box]: Yes! Thank you, Ismael.

## **VIII. CONSENT AGENDA**

**K. Thu:** There is no consent agenda, so we can skip over that.

## **IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- A. Proposed amendment to Faculty Senate Bylaws Article 3.3, Faculty Senate Personnel Committee  
SECOND READING/VOTE

**K. Thu:** We have some unfinished business, one item of unfinished business, which is the proposed amendment to the Faculty Senate Bylaws concerning the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee. And I don't know, Holly, if you can move to that document and project it. It's pretty simple, but just for the sake of completeness, if you could project page 7 in the packet, and I'll give you a few moments to do that. Just as a reminder, this proposal is a second reading, so we will be voting on it. And this simply specifies who chairs that committee, which is the vice provost. The rationale is up top in the box; so, it's simply designating the vice provost for faculty affairs, which is Chad McEvoy these days, to be the nonvoting chair of that committee. And that's really at the behest of the provost, herself. So, I think this makes sense that the chair of that committee – it's changed a little bit over the years – but just to inscribe it in the bylaws I think is a good idea. So, do I have a motion to approve this amendment to the Faculty Senate Bylaws?

**B. McGowan:** So moved.

**K. Thu:** Did we get that recorded correctly? Who was the first.

**N. Johnson:** Beth can be the first and then I'll second.

**K. Thu:** Okay, so we have a motion and a second. Do we have any discussion, questions, comments? Again, this is a fairly low-hanging fruit to deal with. So, as I mentioned earlier, this is the committee that will be reviewing our student evaluation of teaching policy. So, if there are none, how are we going to vote? Shall we do the thumbs-up again, Natasha.

**N. Johnson:** Yes, I'm putting it in.

**K. Thu:** If you go to the chat box, you'll see the yes, no or abstain. And I'll give you a few minutes to vote. I suppose you could use the heart to show you love the policy change. So, we need two-thirds of the voters present to pass it, and I'm going to rely on Cathy and Ferald as our vote counters and possibly Natasha, as well.

**C. Doederlein:** We have 60 voting reps present.

**K. Thu:** So, we need 48 yes votes, correct?

**F. Bryan:** Yes.

**K. Thu:** So, did you see in the chat box, someone isn't able to click on the yes, but is voting yes.

**N. Johnson:** Yes, it looks like 40 or 41, but they're still voting.

**K. Thu:** All right, if you haven't voted, keep voting. We may move on here shortly, but the bylaw change passes, so thank you everybody.

**F. Bryan:** I can verify that we met the two-thirds threshold.

**K. Thu:** Thanks, Ferald.

Yes – 49

No – 0

Abstain - 0

## **X. NEW BUSINESS**

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

**K. Thu:** Moving on, we have a couple items under new business. We have the first reading of a proposed amendment to the Faculty Senate Bylaws concerning the composition of the Committee for Academic Equity and Inclusive Excellence. And I don't know whether Vernese or Tamara, are either of you here?

**T. Boston:** Tamara is here.

**K. Thu:** And I'll wait for Holly to project page 8. Again, this is not a complicated change. I'll let Tamara explain it.

**T. Boston:** Vernese was approached over the summer about the committee in light of all the events that have been taking place in our country. And an instructor asked her why we don't have instructors on the committee. And after some discussion with Vernese and Pat, we proposed to add a voting seat for an instructor, because the instructors do support faculty and the execution of the mission, vision and values of the institution. They play a very active role in the development and growth of students. And so, that's why we are proposing to add the seat for an instructor to the committee.

**K. Thu:** Thank you. Does anyone have any questions or comments for Tamara at this point? It's kind of like what we did in shared governance. We're trying to give broader stakeholders seats at the table, and instructors play an incredibly important role. And this is just to give them a seat at this table. At the next meeting, we'll have a second reading where we'll actually vote on this change. And thanks, Tamara, for coming to the meeting and speaking with us.

**T. Boston:** Thank you. Thank you for having me.

**K. Borre** [via chat box]: Thank you all for considering adding an instructor!

- B. Proposed Field Work Safety Policy  
Shannon Stoker, Director, Research Compliance, Integrity and Safety  
Josh Schwartz, Lab Manager, Dept. of Geology and Environmental Geosciences

**K. Thu:** Item B. under new business, proposed field work safety policy. As many of you know, I serve on the Policy Library Committee. And where it's relevant, I flag policies that I think should be approved by this body, by Faculty Senate. So, when I saw this come through the Policy Library, I immediately thought this should be something for Faculty Senate consideration, because it touches on research and academic policy. So, I'm going to invite either Shannon Stoker or Josh Schwartz to explain what changes have taken place and why we have this policy. And then I'd eventually like to vote on it, because I think both Josh and Shannon would like to see faculty endorsement of the policy too, because that lets you know that what you've put together has the support of faculty. So, Josh or Shannon, do you want to say a few words about this?

**J. Schwartz:** Yes, I can say some things about the policy. And I will say, Kendall, that our goal was to try not to be too onerous on the involved parties, so it wasn't just more paperwork that had to be done, and it was actually something that could provide safety to the participating people. In general, this policy, we didn't have anything in place before. There was no policy or rules in the department for if you're taking students or staff out into the field, whether it be locally, into another country. We didn't have anything in place, policy-wise, that provided what you need to do and how you need to take care of those things. And, so the goal of this policy is to implement a risk assessment form that is to be maintained and gone through with participating people, done by the PI or the leader of the research or the teaching class. And then it also outlines the definition and provides the supporting documents for us so there's also the actual document of the risk assessment form and the other things that are down further, the field tactics and safety strategies, emergency and medical form and things like that that are all provided here. I don't know – I can go into more detail – or how much you would like to hear about.

**K. Thu:** Thank you, Josh, for that summary. There are many departments, many faculty, that do field work. In my department, anthropology, we all do field work, some of it local, some of it around the world, although it's been suspended, obviously, these days. In part, I wanted to make the faculty aware of this. Do you have any questions for Josh or Shannon? I think it's well laid-out. It's coherent. And it's good to have a resource like this that we can reference when we need it.

**A. Keddie** [via chat box]: Does this apply to study abroad courses? Does this apply to internships?

**J. Schwartz:** My intent would be, if it was an NIU study abroad, that was actually under our institution, yes it would.

**N. Petges** [via chat box]: Does this apply to clinical courses?

**K. Borre** [via chat box]: Does it apply to students doing local fieldwork for a class?

**J. Schwartz:** Clinical courses. Local fieldwork for a class.

**K. Thu:** I can field that one. The answer is yes, it does apply to local fieldwork.

**J. Schwartz:** The clinical courses, I'm not too sure. I'd have to actually look at those classes, how they're actually defined, as to whether or not it falls under this policy. But for the doing local fieldwork, one of the things in here that it's not, this can be applied for a single class or doing a large field trip like in geology we have like a multi-week field class that we do. Only one assessment needs to be done for that trip, or it can be broken down. But it's not like, or if I know that Holly Jones does a lot of work out in Nachusa and having her students go out there routinely, this isn't a form that needs to be filled out every single time. It needs to be updated and maintained and not something that is continually just being, just blandly re-filled out and filed away.

**S. Stoker:** Also I want to add, this is really pretty specific to research. So, if you're having a clinical course or an internship is required as part of the coursework, we would assume that this would be covered in the syllabus, and that would be kind of a governing document there. So, this is more meant for research-based activities. I do believe, though, that it is correct, it would be required for local fieldwork in a class, especially if it was collecting data or information.

**K. Thu:** I think we have one more question or maybe two.

**A. Keddie** [via chat box]: Does it apply to internships?

**J. Schwartz:** For internships, if it's under NIU, so if we have somebody working for another company, then no. It references here that, if they have a field safety policy in place, use theirs. If they do not, or if it's less stringent, then use ours as a guideline for that. But it's not a requirement. We can't really force another institution or another company to follow our policy.

**T. Buck** [via chat box]: Have signed waivers been required?

**K. Thu:** I think we have time for maybe one more question.

**N. Petges** [via chat box]: For clinical courses, we do collect this information? It is in a different form.

**S. Stoker:** This isn't meant to take over anything that is already being done. This is more meant for people who – we had a request for this that wanted some guidance for when they were taking students out into the field. So, I think that, if you're saying that you're already doing this in the clinical courses, I wouldn't think that this would be an extra step that you would have to take.

**K. Borre** [via chat box]: Does it apply to virtual fieldwork/research, say for studying social media? Okay, just in a natural environment, physical environment.

**K. Thu:** Thank you. Nancy, is your hand still up? Oh, there we go. Well, this is not a bylaw change, but I do want faculty to vote to approve it. So, Natasha, I guess we'll use the thumb again, right? So, in the chat box.

**F. Bryan:** Kendall, could we have a motion?

**K. Thu:** Oh, I'm sorry, thank you, Ferald. Do we have a motion to approve?

**E. Fredericks:** So moved.

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

**N. Johnson:** Second.

**K. Thu:** Thank you, Natasha. Any further discussion? Hearing none, go ahead and move to the chat box and cast your vote.

**Y. Ito:** I'm on the Lab Safety Committee. Should I abstain?

**K. Thu:** Is there a conflict that you can think of?

**Y. Ito:** I don't know, because I already voted for this proposal in the last safety committee.

**K. Thu:** You're in a different role now, so I think you can represent yourself in this different setting.

**Y. Ito:** Thank you.

**K. Thu:** And we just need a simple majority for this.

**N. Johnson:** Looks like at least 37 yesses so far.

**K. Thu:** So, it passes unless my math is off. Okay, thank you everybody. And thank you, Shannon and Josh, for joining us and explaining the policy. Another important step forward.

## **XI. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES**

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

**K. Thu:** That brings us to Roman numeral XI., Reports from Councils, Boards and Standing Committees. First, Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE. Linda, are you with us?

**L. Saborío:** Yes, here I am. I don't have a report regarding the Faculty Advisory Council, because we meet this Friday. I did want to say briefly though, that the IBHE, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, met on Monday, Nov. 16, to discuss further their core principles and priorities for the strategic plan. And I was very pleased to see that a few items had been added, a couple bullet items had been added to their strategic plan. It looks like they're taking feedback and trying to incorporate it into their plan. And a couple of those items were an added bullet point that stated racial injustice can no longer be ignored. And also they added a statement about the importance of research in higher education. So, I just wanted to recap to everyone who either provided feedback to me or maybe submitted feedback on the IBHE site, and say thank you for doing that. It seemed as if they are listening to us. And they're listening to higher education presidents. And they're listening to

other individuals who are providing input. And they're trying to incorporate those ideas into the plan.

Thank you. And I do not have anything else for today, because, like I said, we meet on Friday.

**K. Thu:** Okay. We'll look forward to the report after your group meets. 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, University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees. The board met last Thursday. Just a couple of highlights. Most of the meetings last Thursday were the various committees of the board. The board, as a whole, did meet for a brief period. But just a couple of highlights. There was a budget report. As you know, if you've been paying attention to the news or you listened to President Freeman's presentation yesterday, the state is still facing significant budget challenges. The fair tax did not pass, and so as a result, those budget challenges for the state are going to be the budget challenges for higher education. I know we've been through a lot, but we have challenges on the horizon, and we're going to have to deal with them in some way. As President Freeman reported yesterday, we're facing a \$37 million structural deficit. And, while increased enrollment does help a little bit, it doesn't offset the cost of expenses such as dealing with the COVID virus. Whether or not we're going to get some form of federal relief is unclear, and so, we have to hope for the best and plan for the worst. What that exactly means is going to play out as the budget comes together more formally in the spring. And certainly Sarah Chinniah and the provost will be visiting with University Council members to talk about the budget priorities.

Some good news, though, we received a report from Jerry Blazey in Sponsored Programs. Our external funding to NIU is actually up at this point this year, compared to the same point last year, which I think is quite remarkable given the challenges that we're facing. Our faculty and staff, we continue to do our work. We continue to do our research, despite the challenging times. And I want to just tip my hat to all of you for making all that happen.

Otherwise, there are a number of things that are in the board packet if you want to go to the board's website and wade through it all. There's a lot of very good information there. I don't know whether any other advisory committee members want to comment on specific things that occurred in the board meeting last week. I certainly want to give you the chance to chime in.

- C. Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee –  
Peter Chomentowski, Chair – report

**K. Thu:** If not, let's go ahead and move on. Next is Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee. Peter had to leave early, so I'm going to be the Peter-proxy. The Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee met last week. For those of you who are on the committee, make sure I get this right. And the committee's been working on clarifying categories of faculty on campus and aligning those with language in other documents. So, we want a clear definition of what faculty is, instructor, clinical faculty, visiting faculty, and so on. Peter played a pivotal role in putting together a draft



document that the committee considered last week. We got a lot of very good feedback, a fresh set of eyes on it. And it looks like the committee will be ready to vote on it on Friday and then send it to the full senate for consideration at our next meeting. So, keep your eye out for that. You'll be seeing it, hopefully, fairly soon, once it gets through committee. And I want to thank the committee members for their work on this front.

I will also add that I had a meeting with Eric Wasowicz, one of our trustees, earlier this week. And the board is working on revising their regulations. He and I had a conversation about making sure that we are in concert when it comes to changing the APPM, for example, and when it comes to defining faculty employment categories. We want to make sure that we're hitting on all cylinders and that we're on the same road.

**T. Sullivan** [via chat box]: There are some different categories in the music department.

**B. McGowan** [via chat box]: Thank you.

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

**K. Thu:** With that, we're going to move on to Rules, Governance and Elections. And, Ben, are you with us?

**B. Creed:** I am, yes. No update or report.

**K. Thu:** Okay, good.

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

**K. Thu:** That brings us to the Student Government Association. Antonio and Brad, are you with us?

**A. Johnson:** Hi everyone. I know I can speak for all students right now. We're excited to end this challenging semester. This week I've been trying to appoint students to the LMS Review Committee. [inaudible] for that, but it's been a challenge to find students. By the end of this week, I'm hopeful that I'll find students. I've also been working with the students from the Center for Black Studies to assist them with making sure their demands reach the appropriate people, and they're heard, and there's a plan in place to meet those demands, as well. The executive branch of SGA, we're planning for next semester at the moment. We have a full cabinet, so we don't have any open positions, thankfully. It took us some time to fill those slots, but we did get students who were interested in working with the SGA for the remainder of the year. And I think that's about it. Thank you all for a great semester.

**K. Thu:** Thank you, Antonio. And good luck with the rest of the semester. Brad, are you with us?

**B. Beyer:** Yes, I am. Hi everyone. It's good to see you all again. In terms of a report for SGA, what we've been up to, I think Antonio pretty much covered it. Our last Student Senate meeting is this Sunday, and then we go into recess until January. So, I'm looking forward to a little bit of a break. This has certainly been challenging in more ways than one. But I have also asked Kendall to come to our Student Senate meeting on this Sunday to update the senators on some of the work being done, specifically as it relates to Faculty Senate's social justice committee. And that way, they're staying informed that there is work being done behind the scenes. I don't think very many students understand a lot of the behind-the-scenes work that's happening, particularly in shared governance. And so, I wanted to be able to get some student representatives up-to-speed, if you will, on that end. So, I'm looking forward to Kendall coming on Sunday.

**B. Beyer:** But honestly, really just looking forward to a little bit of a break, then planning for the spring, SGA elections. Now that we know what the virtual college experience is like, we're hoping to plan for a little bit more of a proactive spring semester rather than a reactive semester that this has been in terms of how to take an organization that's been around since the '60's, the SGA, and then turning it virtually. I think that's it for me.

**T. Sullivan** [via chat box]: Antonio and Brad, would you send me an email? I have a student issue or two I would like to bring up with you and the SGA.

**B. McGowan** [via chat box]: Thank you, Brad. Thank you, Antonio.

**I. Montana** [via chat box]: Thanks, Brad, we appreciate student reps' input in the Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee.

**K. Thu:** Well, thank you, Brad. I also want to draw everybody's attention to the very last page of the packet, because Brad deserves credit for putting this together for all of us. So, Holly, I'll give you a minute to scroll to the very end. What's there are potential statements or language for your syllabi if you so choose to include it, concerning mental health resources on campus. And Brad drafted this, I think with the help of Kelly Wesener Michael. So, please be advised that you can copy and paste this into your syllabus, make whatever changes you deem necessary. But I just wanted to make you aware that this was available to you. I again want to thank Brad for taking the lead in putting this together. So, thanks again.

**K. Borre** [via chat box]: Thanks, Brad.

**S. Richter** [via chat box]: Is the syllabus statement on mental health posted on the website somewhere for other faculty to use?

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

**K. Thu:** Now we move on to our chat box wizard, Natasha Johnson, with a report from the Operating Staff Council.

**N. Johnson:** I'll share the same thing that I shared at the Board of Trustees. The Operating Staff Council is currently working on our bylaws, trying to get the president's term to two years, so it can

be more consistent. And staff are really grateful to hear that, as of November 15, if you hadn't gotten a layoff or bumping or anything like that, then you were safe at least through the end of the year. That was really relieving for people to know that they could probably do some things that they need to get done. We did have President Freeman. She came and spoke at our meeting this month. She was able to clarify for staff the difference between the deficit versus the debt. And so, that also helped relieve some of the staff to understand, well, it's not that we owe all this money to someone else. We still have debt service, but this \$30-something million, it kind of helped to say that's why the numbers are fluctuating, because it's a living document. We may have some more savings here and there. And then they kind of just wanted to find out about furloughs. Nothing was confirmed. So, I did make the statement to people since nothing was off the table for people, to do their own due diligence to really take a look at their budgets right now, maybe not do any extra spending that you don't need to do right now, just in case something does come down the line. All in all, things have been looking up. People were really happy to hear President Freeman and her statement yesterday. And I'm grateful too that they had the whole transcript out there, so people can look through it and read through. I thought that was really nice. That's pretty much it for the Operating Staff Council. We do have Pulchratia coming, the director of Human Resource Services, to let everybody know about the bumping rights December 3. Once we get that done, that will be it through the end of the year.

**K. Thu:** Great work. Thanks, Natasha. Appreciate hearing that.

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

**K. Thu:** Last, but certainly not least, as always, Cathy Doederlein with a report from SPS Council.

**C. Doederlein:** Thank you. This will be my routine reminder over the next meeting and possibly one more in January to remind people of the SPS awards. We have the request for nominations coming out soon for our presidential awards, as well as our other SPS awards for excellence. So, please keep an eye out for that, and I definitely encourage you to nominate your colleagues who are SPS. And, actually a couple of the awards, you don't have to be SPS to be considered for. Really appreciate people taking the time to recognize staff for their contributions.

I also had the opportunity to discuss some of the concerns most recently that staff have faced with regard to with the layoffs, bumping rights, and how that is impacted by specialty factors. So, we are going to be reaching out to HR to see about potentially having some trainings conducted to help people across all classifications with job description writing to ensure that appropriate specialty factors are baked into job descriptions as needed so that people, who are potentially considering bumping into a position, definitely meet the criteria that are specific and special to individual positions and areas.

We're also going to be doing some other work to try to help promote the work from employee assistance to increase supervisor training opportunities to ensure that folks who are supervisors have the ability to be the best supervisor they can be. We're going to be bringing that up in the coming weeks and months.

And that's about it. Thank you very much.

**K. Thu:** Thanks, Cathy. Just one more item here. I neglected to mention in my presidential announcements is that we're continuing to make progress in revising the APPM. So, as a reminder, there's a core group that includes myself, Becqui Hunt and then reps from the Provost's Office and Brad Bond, who are working through the whole document with the goal of actually getting rid of it, and parking the individual policies in the Policy Library. We had a meeting earlier this week, and I think we're making a little bit more progress than we actually thought, because there are sections in there that are redundant or that are just completely out of date, and we can just get rid of them. But they're going to have to be approved by the appropriate body. Some will have to be approved by Faculty Senate. Some will have to be approved by the Graduate Council, for example, and so on. But we are making progress and hope to do the whole thing by this spring semester.

## **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.
- R. Potential mental health resource syllabus statements

## **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**K. Thu:** So, with that, if there isn't anything else, I also want to remind you that, if you are interested in contacting Pat, to pass along your best wishes, I'm happy to share more information by email if you'd like to reach out to her. While she's gone, if you need anything from Faculty Senate or the University Council, please ... We all want to have Pat and her family and friends in our wishes and our prayers and hope for the very best for them. So, again, if you want more information, send me a private email, and I'll let you know.

So, with that, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

**D. Valentin:** I'll move to adjourn.

**B. McGowan:** Second.

**K. Thu:** Any further discussion? How do you want to do this, Natasha. Should we do the thumbs-up again?

**N. Johnson:** Yes, that's fine.

**K. Thu:** So, once again, in the chat box, hover over the yes, no, or abstain. And have a great week everybody. Stay safe and have a great Thanksgiving. And I think it's pretty clear, Natasha, that we have.

**N. Johnson:** Yes, we made it through.

**K. Thu:** Thanks, Natasha and Ferald and everybody else for helping me out.

**F. Bryan:** You're welcome, Kendall.

**K. Thu:** Take care, everybody.

Meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.