

PUBLIC NOTICE AND AGENDA

**Faculty Senate-University Council Rules, Governance and Elections Committee
Friday, May 6, 2022, 10-11 a.m.
Altgeld Hall 125
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois**

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

IV. APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 22, 2022 MINUTES – Pages 2-3

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Discussion/Feedback – President Lisa Freeman and RGE Committee members

1. Cyberbullying report/recommendations – Pages 4-6

2. Cyberbullying and Online Harassment [website](#)

VII. NEW BUSINESS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MINUTES

**Faculty Senate-University Council Rules, Governance and Elections Committee
Friday, April 22, 2022, 1 p.m.
Altgeld Hall 125
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois**

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Chen, Collins, Creed, Gorman (for Sharp), Hunter (for Penkrot), Martin, McConkie (for Timko), Mellon (for Cripe), Nicholson, Olson, Rogers, Staikidis (for Maki)

OTHERS PRESENT: Chomentowski

OTHERS ABSENT: Hill

I. CALL TO ORDER

FS-UC Rules, Governance and Elections (RGE) Committee chair, **H. Nicholson**, called the meeting to order at 1 p.m.

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was verified.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

It was moved and seconded to adopt the agenda. Motion passed.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 22, 2022, MINUTES – Pages 2-4

J. Olson moved to approve the minutes, seconded by **B. Creed**. Motion passed.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A brief review of the charge to, and work of, the committee on the cyberbullying resources project was provided.

A. Finalize definition of cyberbullying

RGE Committee members reviewed the current working definition for cyberbullying: a form of harassment that occurs in digital spaces, such as websites, email, social media platforms, texting and apps. A persistent behavior intended to cause harm, it affects everyone differently.

B. Website feedback and additions

RGE Committee members reviewed the draft Cyberbullying and Online Harassment website and provided feedback.

C. Recommendations for President Freeman

RGE Committee members reviewed the draft recommendations and provided feedback.

Feedback on all of aspects of the project is still welcome, keeping in mind that the recommendations will be provided to President Freeman in advance of the May 6 RGE Committee meeting, which she will attend.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

D. McConkie moved to adjourn, seconded by **D. Gorman**. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 2 p.m.



Memorandum

To: President Lisa C. Freeman

From: Holly Nicholson, Chair of the FS-UC Rules, Governance and Elections Committee

CC: Brad Cripe, Kevin Martin, Janet Olson, Matt Timko, Shane Sharp, Gary Chen, Ben Creed, David Maki, Devlin Collins, Andrew Rogers, Brian Penkrot, Cassandra Hill, Peter Chomentowski, Patricia Erickson

Date: May 2, 2022

The charge of the FS-UC Rules, Governance and Elections Committee for the 2021-22 academic year was to explore how the recommendations of the Cyberbullying Policy Working Group could be implemented. The recommendation to develop a resource to integrate into NIU's web presence was a primary focus.

Three working groups were developed: a data collection group, a policy review group, and a resource development group.

The data collection group, led by Professor Shane Sharp, surveyed students, faculty, and staff to determine the scope of the impact of cyberbullying on the NIU community. The results of the survey demonstrated that only a small percentage of students, faculty, and staff have experienced cyberbullying. The results also showed that victims often knew their bully, who was usually not affiliated with NIU. The most common form of cyberbullying reported on the survey was nonconsensual sexual content.

The policy review group identified three policies that should be revised to reference cyberbullying. Recognizing that their policy review may not have been comprehensive, the group identified additional stakeholders who should consider reviewing their websites, policies, and other documentation for needed updates on cyberbullying.

The resource development group created a definition of cyberbullying that complements a proposed definition to be added to the Student Code of Conduct sometime this calendar year: *Cyberbullying is a form of harassment that occurs in digital spaces, such as websites, email, social media platforms, texting and apps. A persistent behavior intended to cause harm, it affects everyone differently.*

Some examples include: Fear of harm to yourself, your belongings or your home; negative effects on your physical or mental health; interference with your education or job; and reduced ability to participate in or benefit from NIU services, activities, or privileges.

The group also created a [web resource](#) that includes examples of cyberbullying and guidance on what to do if it occurs, including who to contact on and off campus for support. In addition, the site includes information on internal and external research, links to additional information, and other resources.

As a whole, the committee developed the following recommendations on communicating with campus about cyberbullying, developing training, and revising policies and other resources.

Communication

- To reach the most people, [website resources](#) should be communicated to the campus community in multiple ways.
 - o Posters and other signage that refer to the website.
 - o Department and/or school print and/or digital communications.
 - o Campuswide and collegewide print and/or digital communications.
 - o Digital signage.
 - o Social media accounts and groups.
 - o Syllabus language and verbal reminders from professors to students.
- Request that Institutional Communications create an article about [Professor Sharp's research](#) to be published in the NIU Newsroom and/or NIU Today.
- State explicitly on the NIU website and in other communications that the university does not approve of cyberbullying and that it doesn't align with our values.
- Engage Student Affairs, Institutional Communications, and Web and Internal Communications to identify other ways to effectively communicate cyberbullying information.
- Continually communicate to students, faculty, and staff about the mental health resources available on campus.
- Create communications that focus on digital sexual harassment, the most common form of cyberbullying experienced at NIU.

Behavior

- Strive to normalize appropriate online behavior throughout the campus community.
- Provide encouragement to members of the campus community, especially students, who may not feel entitled or motivated to make use of [resources to seek help](#).

Repeated encouragement across multiple channels, especially via face-to-face interaction, is important.

Training

The committee acknowledges that training may already be in place that we are not aware of. With that in mind, we have the following recommendations.

- Create virtual, hybrid, and/or in-person workshops for students, faculty, and staff.
- Include discussions of [appropriate online behavior](#) and [cyberbullying resources](#) in new student orientation, UNIV 101, and residence hall floor meetings. Students receive a lot of information during orientation, so it's important that the messaging is reinforced throughout their time at NIU.
- Train faculty and staff members how to communicate with students about [cyberbullying resources](#) and help students who may be experiencing it.

Reporting, Policies, and Other Documentation

- Align [reporting resources and platforms](#) to ensure that patterns of cyberbullying aren't overlooked.
- Review and revise the Nondiscrimination, Harassment and Retaliation Policy and Complaint Procedures and the Sexual Misconduct Policy to include language about cyberbullying. The Student Code of Conduct is currently under review.
- Ask the following stakeholders to consider reviewing and revising their websites, policies, and other documentation for needed updates on cyberbullying:
 - o Student Affairs
 - o International Affairs
 - o Ethics and Compliance
 - o Human Resource Services
 - o Division of IT

I am happy to partner with any of the above-identified stakeholders to provide more information on these recommendations. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Holly Nicholson
Chair, FS-UC Rules, Governance and Elections Committee 2021-22