TRANSCRIPT – FACULTY SENATE

**Wednesday, January 22, 2025, 3 p.m.**

**Altgeld Hall Auditorium**

**Northern Illinois University**

**DeKalb, Illinois**

**VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:** Akst, Alex, Arado, Barrett, Bender, Books, Boswell, Brain, Burton, Campbell, Chomentowski, Corpuz, Creed, Finch, Fotovat, Hartenhoff, Jong, Kushimo, Lampi, Liberty, Luo, McKee, Mellon, Mills, Naples, Novak, Nyunt, Palese, Qin, Rajabi, Sabio, Salimi, Schmidt, Sharp, Sirotkin, Slagstad, Stalcup, Thomas, Vahabzadeh, Valentiner, VanTilburg, Wang, Whedbee, Wheeler, Woods, Yamprai (for McGowan), Yang

**VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT:** Atkins, Bohanon, Cain, Demir, Duffin, Ito, Libman, McGowan, Nyunt, Ross, Sibley, Slotsve, Staikidis, Van Wienan

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Bennett, Bryan, Elish-Piper, Falkoff, Henton, Hughes, Middlemist, Pitney, Puckett, Tovar, Sumner, Velazquez

**OTHERS ABSENT:** Cripe, Garcia, Notebaert, Skuzinski, Strid

**I. Call to Order**

**B. Creed:** I would like to call to order our first meeting of the semester for the Faculty Senate here on Wednesday, Jan. 22. I have 3:01 on my clock.

**II. Verification of Quorum**

**B. Creed:** Pat, can you verify that there is a quorum?

**P. Erickson:** We do have a quorum.

**III. Adoption of the Agenda**

**B. Creed:** Our first action item is adoption of the agenda for today’s meeting. If I could have a motion to adopt the agenda. Pete, thank you. And a second?

**T. Arado:** Arado.

**B. Creed:** All right, we have a second. All in favor of adopting the agenda, please say aye.

**Members:** Aye.

**B. Creed:** Opposed? Great, our agenda is adopted.

**IV. Approval of the November 20, 2024, minutes**

**B. Creed:** Next up is the approval of our minutes from November 20, 2024. Can I have a motion to approve the minutes. All right, thank you, Karen. A second? All right, thank you, Cynthia. Any discussion on the minutes? I know that’s been two months since, but. Seeing no discussion, all in favor of approving the minutes for the November 20, 2024 meeting, please say aye.

**Members:** Aye.

**B. Creed:** Opposed? Abstain?

**R. Wheeler:** Abstain.

**B. Creed:** Thank you. We’ve got one abstention. And the minutes are approved.

**V. Public Comment**

**B. Creed:** Pat, do we have any requests for public comment.

**P. Erickson:** No public comment today.

**VI. Faculty Senate President’s Announcements**

**B. Creed:** That brings us to my announcements. First of all, I know it’s a bit delayed, but welcome back. Hopefully, your year ended on a good note; and as the new calendar year gets started and the semester’s in full swing, hopefully, things aren’t too far off course from where you had them planned for your classes, activities and related efforts at this point. I’m going to try to keep my announcements relatively minimal today as we have two presentations that I’d like to save time for and preserve that time for that conversation.

My first set of updates – I want to update this group on the work of the four working groups that faculty senators raised their hand or volunteered for to become a part of this past fall. I want to first say thank you to those who have agreed to serve on the four working groups: the one on the AI task force; the one working with PEO, which we have guests from today; the one working on faculty service; and the one looking at our promotion and tenure. I really appreciate your willingness to continue to serve beyond just the faculty senator role.

The AI working groups have begun meeting, and as updates become available, I will either ask them to come and share those updates or I will be presenting, on their behalf, the reports or updates that they make. I know they’ve started to think about deliverables for this semester, is the hope for a number of those efforts. But as we know more, I’ll make sure to share back with this group.

For the four faculty senators who volunteered to serve as a resource to our colleagues in Prevention, Education and Outreach, some of those from that office are here today to share a presentation with us. We have four volunteers who have begun to coordinate and communicate with each other to serve as a resource to that group, and we will learn more as the semester goes along and makes sense.

There is the group that has volunteered to think about service on campus. We’ve met once, and now it’s my job to find another time to meet as I had to cancel our last meeting. But we are starting to think about how we bring a lens to service and the allocation of service across campus and equitable allocation of service across campus.

Finally, there is a group that has volunteered to review the Faculty Senate Bylaws related to promotion and tenure. And that’s in alignment with those changes to every five years to review our policies related to promotion and tenure. The group of four of us have met and concluded the work of that group to review promotion and tenure. We have shared recommendations with the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee for updates and changes. The FSPC now has those and is considering them and considering how to respond and which ones to move forward. Any recommendations will come before this body later this semester, likely.

Next, I want to share my appreciation for – there was an email that went out on Sunday, I believe it was, that shared information about guiding principles as well as clear steps for how we can ensure, as a campus, that we are in legal compliance, while also protecting the rights and privacy of students, staff and faculty; and that we are also in compliance with FERPA and HIPPA regulations if immigration and customs enforcement does come to campus. It’s a way to be a resource to campus, to understand what is our action, what are we supposed to be doing. I know it was something I was wondering if this were to happen, what am I supposed to do. And I appreciate that that guidance went out, that there is a clear set of principles and steps to take. If you have not had a moment to review that, please do. And as you engage with faculty, staff and students, who may interact with any future requests or interactions with folks coming to campus, I would consider sharing that document so that folks are acting in compliance with the law, as well as regulations and policies.

Finally, please be aware that the recruiting campaign has started for university committees. Those will start coming out. Those will be ones extending beyond just serving on various Faculty Senate committees in the upcoming academic year, but other university committees. As those opportunities come before you, please do consider the opportunity to see if you could contribute to it. Or, if you know somebody else who can contribute to those efforts. Having strong voices, representing faculty, staff and student perspectives on the various bodies across campus is essential to the health of NIU now and in the future. So, as those come in front of you, do take the time to consider: Would I be a good fit? What could I contribute, or who do I know who might be able to serve in that capacity?

Those are my announcements…

**VII. Provost’s Announcements**

**B. Creed:** And with that, we will turn it over to Provost Elish-Piper for her announcements today.

**L. Elish-Piper:** Thank you. Good afternoon, and I also echo Ben’s comments to welcome everyone back. And, hopefully, your semester is off to a good start.

I want to let you know that our 10-day count for the spring will be drawn after Monday’s classes wrap up. And so, if you have any students who are attending your class but are not officially registered, not officially enrolled, please encourage them to do so. We do still have a number of students, who are eligible to re-enroll, but have not done so. So, if you see any of those students, we would appreciate that follow-up.

I want to let you know that we have a bunch of Navigate online workshops that will be available through the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning (CITL). They focus on things like Navigate alerts, how to set up a system in Navigate to be able to have students sign up for appointments with you, different ways to be able to support student success using features in Navigate. If you’re not currently a Navigate user and you’re interested in that, I encourage you to go to the [CITL website](https://www.niu.edu/citl/index.shtml) and look for those workshops.

I also want to let you know that it was interesting today in the Inside Higher Ed edition, there was an article about how institutions that use an alert system – doesn’t have to be Navigate, but any type of alert system – reported having lower course withdrawal rates, higher course grades and, within that, more students earning a passing grade. I thought that was really quite interesting. If you aren’t currently a Navigate user, those workshops will provide some good information.

I also want to let you know that our group that’s focusing on general education – it’s called EDGE, which stands for Enriching the Design of General Education, has a number of meetings scheduled this semester. If you teach in general education and you’d like to become part of that professional learning community, those meetings are open to anyone. If you don’t teach in general education, you’d just like to learn more about it, or you’re interested in it, all of those sessions are also listed on the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning under the Programs tab. And again, they use that abbreviation, EDGE, for that particular group.

I also want to let you know that, in [Career Services](https://www.niu.edu/career-services/index.shtml), all students, graduate and undergraduate, are assigned a career counselor. That’s available in Navigate. Many students don’t take advantage of that and don’t meet with that career counselor. If you have students who are trying to figure out what career path makes sense for them or they are seeking additional guidance or information about how to pursue that particular career path, please do encourage them to meet with a career counselor in Career Services.

Also, I want to let you know that ‘tis the season of career fairs. We’re kicking off career fairs. I’m going to read them to you, but these are all on Career Services. February 14 – the Department of Accountancy Career Fair; February 15 – College of Business Career Fair; February 18 – College of Engineering and Engineering Technology Career Fair; February 19 – All-Majors Internship and Job Fair in the Convocation Center, that’s the big one; February 24 – Education Job Fair. Again, if you have students who are at that point of looking for jobs or pre-looking for jobs, encourage them to attend those career fairs. It’s a great learning opportunity. And if they conflict with your courses, please consider ways that you can support student engagement in those career fairs if that makes sense for them.

That’s the set of announcements I have for today. Thank you.

**B. Creed:** Thank you.

**VIII. Items for Faculty Senate Consideration**

A. Prevention, Education and Outreach & Social Justice Education

Rose Henton, Director, Prevention Education and Outreach

Junelle Bennett, Program Director, Prevention Education and Outreach

Ana Velazquez, Director, Equity and Justice Education

Amber Giffin, Assistant Director, Inclusion and Equity Education

**B. Creed:** Moving along, we have items for faculty senate consideration. We have two presentations today. The first will be from [Prevention, Education and Outreach](https://www.niu.edu/prevention-education-outreach/index.shtml) & [Social Justice Education](https://www.niu.edu/social-justice-education/index.shtml). So, I’d like to invite up Rose Henton, Ana Velazquez and Junelle Bennett, who will be giving the presentation.

**R. Henton:** Thank you all for having us here today. I’m going to go ahead and let us all introduce ourselves at once so that you know who we are. I’m Rose Henton. I’m the director of prevention education and outreach; and that is under the Division of Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

**A. Velazquez:** Hi everyone. My name is Ana Velazquez. I use she/her/ella pronouns, and I currently serve as the director of equity and justice education, which is also under the Division of Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

**J. Bennett:** Good afternoon everyone. My name is Dr. Junelle Bennett, and I’m the program director for prevention education and outreach.

**R. Henton:** Our introduction here about Prevention Education and Outreach. This is what we do. This is kind of our mission. We’re in the works right now of making some adjustments, like many of you are making adjustments to your websites right now. We educate and support, empowering the campus community to prevent violence and harm related to sexual misconduct. And that sexual misconduct falls under sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. And then we also have the bystander intervention program where we teach our students and staff how to intervene in situations they feel like are uncomfortable for certain people. We’ve been doing this for quite a while. We’ve been Prevention Education and Outreach for probably about three-four years now. We changed our name from one name to another name just to really focus in on the prevention aspect of what we want our campus to focus on as prevention, rather than intervention, but more so prevention.

**J. Bennett:** So, as a demonstration of our interactive programs that we put on in Prevention Education, I’m going to pose a question then, if I can, to the forum. What is one of the VAWA crimes? Is anyone familiar with one of the VAWA crimes? I’m also an instructor, so I will wait patiently until our wheels are turning. Do we have any examples of one of the VAWA crimes? They’re listed on the slide. There we go.

**Unidentified:** What is the word you’re saying?

**J. Bennett:** I’m saying, can you name one of the VAWA crimes where they’re listed. So, violence against women. Yes.

Unidentified: [inaudible]

**J. Bennett:** That’s okay. What they are is domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and sexual assault. So, we’ll pose another question: What about active bystander? Rose talked a little bit about what that is. Is anyone familiar with one of the Ds of active bystander intervention? Distract, who said that? What’s your name?

**J. Burton:** James Burton.

**J. Bennett:** James, Distract, awesome. Do we have another one? That’s okay. Our institution describes the three Ds of active bystander. We do Distract, Delegate and Direct. And those are just different roles that students can play when they’re trying to intervene when they are observing harm. So, something that we do in prevention education is speak to different student populations, whether it is a student group or a classroom, working with University101 instructors, coming in and helping them understand what sexual misconduct is, how do we report it, and how do we seek resources for someone who experiences sexual misconduct or how do we advocate for someone who understands or knows someone who has experienced sexual misconduct.

In addition to doing so, we also do a lot of programming during a lot of awareness months. January is Stalking Awareness Month; February is Teen Violence Awareness Month; and then we go to April, which is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. So, we’ll be doing a lot of programming in preparation to educate our students on what that is, how we can seek resources and support our peers in that.

I have a gift for James.

**R. Henton:** Dr. Bennett loves to reward people for participating; so, James you get a reward today, so great, woohoo, woohoo! Our students love rewards. They don’t care exactly even what it is, but they do love the water bottles. I don’t care how many we give out, they’ll take as many as we have.

We also do some assessment and we really want to hear the students’ voices. So, we have our Share Survey. Our share survey is sexual harassment and relationship experience survey. We do that every year. We are a leader in the state with this, because we’ve been doing this every other year for many, many years, and we’ve called it our Share Survey for a long time. It really guides us and helps us understand what our students’ experiences are on our campus. We used to do it biannually. Right now, it’s an annual survey, because now it’s a state-mandated survey that all of our higher education institutions do. So, there are certain guidelines that we have to do in presenting this information and putting it on our website and all the certain particulars we have to go through to even administer the survey. So, that’s one way we thought about, especially for you all helping us, is because just to get that word out to students, so we can get as many students taking this survey as possible. The more they’ve taken, as you all know with research, the more students who take it, the more data we have, and the more likely we are able to really provide some really good programming for our students.

Students’ experience with social misconduct, we are launching it in March of 2025 this year. And our goal is to increase student response rates. Last year, we increased it by eight percent. This year, we’re looking to increase it much more than that. And we offer incentives, which as I said, our students love incentives. This year, we’re going to offer different incentives. Last year, we did Huskie gift cards, and they could use their Huskie Bucks anywhere they wanted to. This year, we’re going to do some Huskie Bucks and then we’re going to do some t-shirts and sweatshirts and things like that, which students also love.

And then we would provide you all with a slide for your courses, just one slide that you can put up, which shows what the Share Survey is, a QR code to get to that Share Survey and why it’s important for students to take the Share Survey. It usually takes them about 20 minutes to take it, so it’s not a very lengthy survey. They can take it on their phones; they can take it on their tablets or their computers. So, we’re looking for as many students as possible that we can get. And you helping us would be really, really good.

I really want to thank Ben, because we’ve seen each other a lot in our little squares on our monitors. This is the first time we’ve seen each other actually in person. I appreciate you inviting us.

**A. Velazquez:** I’ll move over to healthy relationships. When it comes to healthy relationships, something we really want to talk to students about is oftentimes they think about healthy relationships as being romantic. In our area in Equity and Justice Education, we are working to move beyond that narrative and talking about platonic relationships, but also professor-to-student relationships, as well, and also familial relationships. Oftentimes, we forget that sometimes students don’t end up going home because that might not be the safest place for them to go to. And so, they stay on campus. They have friends here, they have faculty here that support them. So, making sure that they’re aware of what healthy relationships consist of, how we can change that narrative, but also what signs to look out for for students, faculty and staff. If there might be some sort of domestic violence that’s taking place, making sure that we’re connecting them to those resources, because obviously, they’re in a lot of extra curriculars, as well. But if you notice that there’s a pattern of change in their attendance and the student is really active, and all of a sudden, they shut down and they’re closed off. Making sure that you’re checking in with them. Are there any resources that you can point them to. That’s what we’re here for, as well.

And then when we talk about healthy relationships, also talking about cross-cultural norms and how that has an implication in communication. Because some of our international students, there might be some norms that are not “normal” to them because they’re an American norm. And so making sure that we’re also having that dialog of, hey, that might be misconstrued here, but I understand what that means for you in your culture, and I just don’t want someone to take the wrong idea. And that can happen with students, faculty and staff, as well.

And then we do have a partnership that we’re working on with the University of Galway for active consent. They have an array of different programs and trainings that they do. We had the opportunity to go through their digital intimacy training, and that was super interactive. We had a couple of students – I know the Center for Black Studies had a great amount of students show up for that. So, making sure that our students are even aware of. And I really appreciated the University of Galway incorporating some laws that are in place that particularly impact residents in Illinois. So, making sure that students are aware of that, what to do, but also how to prevent that. And that goes back to PEO with the prevention piece as well.

One of the programs that our area is going to be doing is this Barriers to Safety program so that students can have the opportunity to also talk about why in their communities may not be actually talking about domestic violence, dating, stalking. These may be taboo topics for them, but also allowing them the space to ask those uncomfortable questions that they might not have the opportunity to ask maybe their parents, guardian, siblings, but hopefully, have that opportunity to do here.

Another way that we do this is through inclusion and action. Has anyone ever participated in inclusion in action? Dr. Giffin, who, unfortunately, is sick, could not make it, but she is in charge of our inclusion in action program. And that works to create facilitated programs by faculty and staff, for faculty and staff. And so again, this is this notion around cultivating these relationships, making sure that we’re having those healthy dialogs with one another and making sure that we are informing you all of what are best practices. Some previous topics have been discussed: accessibility and inclusion, empathy in the workplace, sexual harassment, suicide prevention, and healthy communication.

She has an array of topics. I’m actually working with her to discuss sort of a strategic plan for getting that out there for anyone who might not be familiar with them. So, I would love to continue that conversation with Faculty Senate, as well, if there is an outlet that you all prefer.

And then for development of new programs, again, Dr. Giffin is working on a Teal Allyship program. We’re in the very, very planning curriculum-planning stages of this. It’s not solidified, but she’s been working on this curriculum. And it’s going to be focusing on educating folks regarding the community of care to support survivors of sexual violence. And, obviously, continuing that with building empathy and covering trauma-informed processes and approaches for support. If a student, faculty or staff can endure this. And then also working with several faculty to develop the content. And so, it’s really important for us to realize and incorporate the scholarly research that’s attached to this and how students get [inaudible] or they might have some hardships and barriers in the middle of the semester. And again, if you notice that change in behavior, what are some intervention strategies that you can incorporate then, as well.

And that is us. We wanted to allow for questions and opportunities.

**B. Creed:** I think, first of all, in framing things, I just appreciate the willingness to collaborate. Last year, one of our faculty senators approached me with: What can we do to better support our faculty as supports for our students, but also how do we learn more as faculty about all these concepts and issues, and be better stewards of campus and of each other. I appreciated the connection and the willingness to collaborate, and that’s a lot of what we’re hoping to continue to do with that working group in partnership. I think one question that I would have – and I know we’ve talked a little bit about with Dr. Bennett – is: What are the resources that are available to faculty? Like, we can use you all to support us when we – I’m thinking of coming into a course or something like that – if you wouldn’t mind sharing that with the group.

**J. Bennett:** That’s a great question, Ben. Something that Ben and I talked about is, in the event that you have to cancel class or you’re away at a conference or a sickness comes up with a family member, you can invite us into your class. And what we will do is our full tailored presentation on how to prevent and report sexual misconduct. So, in the event you have a conference coming up in April and you’re like, you know what, I don’t want to cancel class, I need a resource to come in and substitute. We’ll be essentially your substitute teachers for the day and teaching them all about the resources that the university has available to them to help support them and advocate for them as they experience this type of harm and how to prevent it in the future. So, that’s a great question.

In addition to our annual training that we have, it launches generally every July, if you can remind students to take the training that is online, virtual through Blackboard, that would be tremendous for us, because that will help us with our completion rate and help with understanding what their resources are on campus.;

**R. Henton:** I’d like to add on to that a little bit with the Share Survey. That’s what our Share Survey gauges. When our students do have issues on campus with sexual misconduct, where do they go for help. Would they go to a professor? Would they go to a fellow student? Typically, it’s to a friend or family member that they go to. So, how can we kind of move that narrative a little bit over so that we are the more welcoming and knowledgeable folks, because a lot of times their friends and family don’t know what the resources are on campus, and we’d like to come train you all on what the resources are on campus so you know that. And you get some of that from your annual training in October, but just to reinforce that with the in-person kind of presentation would be very helpful, I think, for students, because sometimes you’re the person they see all week long. They don’t have so much contact with a lot of other people. They certainly don’t have contact with us every week. And it’s important what you can do and what you can’t do when somebody comes and says, hey I think something happened to me last night.

**B. Creed:** Thank you for joining us today. Thank you for the presentation. Thank you.

B. NIU Football – Mountain West Conference

Courtney Hughes, Faculty Athletics Representative

George Middlemist, Chief Financial Officer

**B. Creed:** Next up is a presentation on NIU Football’s move to the Mountain West Conference. We have with us our faculty athletics representative, Courtney Hughes, and our chief financial officer, George Middlemist, to share a presentation and answer questions.

**G. Middlemist:** Good afternoon, everybody. Happy new year. Courtney and I didn’t prepare any slides or anything. We thought we could use this to answer questions and share a little bit about the finances and share a little bit about the student athlete experience by the move to Mountain West. I don’t have the finances to share, because we promised the Mountain West that we’ll keep a lot of the information confidential, but I have looked at all the finances with Athletics in terms of the revenues that we’ll gain by going to the Mountain West, in addition to some of the additional expenses. Travel will be a little bit more for the football team. Overall, the finances for this deal are a pretty strong net positive, primarily driven by the TV revenues that the Mountain West has in their deal. And so, those are numbers that are concrete and that we can count on. They’re significantly more than what we get in the MAC. I won’t share anymore on the financials. Happy to answer questions as I can about those. And, Courtney, I don’t know if you want to talk about the student athlete experience.

**C. Hughes:** Hi everyone. I’m the faculty athletics representative, and I’m also on faculty in public health. So, I was thinking about how this move, what it means to us as faculty and questions that we may have. A couple things I just wanted to mention: One being that the Mountain West has a lot of strong academic institutions, so we’re talking like Air Force, New Mexico, UNLV, Hawaii. They’re really good schools, so I think that’s good for us to think about as faculty.

Something else that comes to mind is just travel. I know George mentioned travel expenses, but also we think about travel in terms of student athletes missing class. You may be familiar with the games how they are currently in the MAC. The MAC has MACtion, which are these mid-week games. And maybe you have football players in some of your classes. But those week games that happen on a Wednesday, they cause the athletes – they need to fly, or they often usually now with the MAC are bussed, so get on a bus on Tuesday, play on Wednesday, get home like Thursday at 4 a.m. So, it’s really that mid-week kind of crunch, and then they’re missing class. With the Mountain West move, even though some of the schools are out west, there are flights and they’re on the weekends. So, from a missed-class perspective, I think that’s a good thing to keep in mind. Other than that, the football team has been playing at a high level for a long time, so in terms of opportunity for the student athletes, I think it’s a good thing.

I guess I’d open the floor to questions unless you have any, Ben?

**B. Creed:** This would be the time, if anybody did have questions, to come up and ask them, as it is important to this conversation. One question that’s out there that I know of, has been brought up before is: How does it impact our other athletics on campus? Is there a plan for our non-football sports? Or, how does this place football comparatively to the other sports and athletes on campus.

**G. Middlemist:** I can handle it from the administration standpoint, and, Courtney, I defer to you on the student athlete experience. Athletics is committed to the other programs, I mean, they’re not secondary programs. We are actively exploring options in terms of another conference to go to. We most likely won’t be staying in the MAC, but looking at a couple other options, weighing the location, so keeping it closer to NIU or to northern Illinois. And then the finances. So, it won’t cost us a significant amount of money to move the other sports to a different conference. And actually, in a couple cases, will save us in expenses, because the travel will be much closer, won’t necessarily be going to Ohio or New York, Buffalo. And then, the competitive salaries for some of the coaches are a little lower in a couple of the conferences, so it might relieve us a little bit in terms of costs with the salaries.

**C. Hughes:** I think I would just also add that, when we think about the options for conferences, also factors that come into consideration, I think, are just like our fan base, being able to support the student athletes and come out to games. And then, too, rivalries sometimes when it’s more in the region, you can experience that. So, we’ll see. There are so many factors to take into consideration, I’m not sure what will happen, but I know all of those are aspects that are thought about in the decision.

**T. Arado:** I have a couple of questions. One is directly related to this, and one is tangential. Is there a cost to leaving the MAC?

**G. Middlemist:** There is an exit fee to leaving the MAC. Mountain West, through our contract negotiations, is going to cover that exit fee.

**T. Arado:** Would there be an exit fee for all the other sports, though, not just the football one?

**G. Middlemist:** The main exit fee, Therese, is with the football.

**T. Arado:** Football, okay. Scary that you know my name, though.

**G. Middlemist:** No, I think that’s good, right?

**T. Arado:** This is a tangential question. What happens with our conference, it is what it is. But in getting news coverage lately, I noticed there have been two football coach hires very quickly. And this is among a constant barrage of information to all of us that we have position control, we have to go through a process. One position was replaced in less than a month, I think, and the other in less than two. And I’m pretty sure there are a lot of people in this room that can’t even get a position description approved. I get it, I’m going to be told football is different, but I’m teaching things I haven’t taught before because we had to spread out what people do. So, from an optics point of view, regardless of switching conferences, that is very frustrating from an optics point of view, regardless of benefits or what happens from it. And I just wanted to say that.

**G. Middlemist:** I appreciate that, and I certainly understand.

**D. Valentiner:** Thank you. David Valentiner from Psychology. I haven’t done an exhaustive evaluation of budgets and things like that, and I also recognize that I think that you may anticipate the type of question that I’m going to ask. When I took a look at Mountain West schools’ athletic budgets, they were on the order of two to four times what the typical MAC budget is. It looks to me like you’re saying that there’s going to be a great increase in revenue. I’m concerned that there’s also going to be a great increase in expense and I think that, from what you said earlier, that’s numbers that you’re not prepared to talk about in a public forum. Or, is it?

**G. Middlemist:** I think that I can address the concern that you’re raising in terms of expense. Negotiations with the Mountain West, we promised to keep certain things – we won’t talk about the exit fee, because they’re trying to negotiate that to get a better deal as we exit from the MAC. But, in terms of salaries and in terms of programs, I also looked at the other Mountain West schools. And there are a couple that drive the average up pretty significantly. UNLV devotes a lot of money to the athletic program. So did, if I remember correctly, New Mexico State was one. And then, there was one other one, I can’t remember exactly which school it was, it might have been Nevada-Reno. Outside of that, their programs were pretty close in alignment with where we were. So, the other schools weren’t necessarily devoting all the resources. And there were a couple, and they were driving the average up when we looked at the averages.

**D. Valentiner:** Well, I only looked at a handful of them, like four or five of them. And the lowest budget that I saw in the athletic programs was $46,000, and the highest was over $100,000.

**G. Middlemist:** You mean $46 million and $100 million.

**D. Valentiner:** $46 million and $100 million, compared to our $24-$25 million.

**G. Middlemist:** $28 million, yep.

**D. Valentiner:** Which is kind of typical for MAC. And so, it just looked like it was an order of magnitude, two to four times what our budget was.

**G. Middlemist:** Yeah, you’re looking at the total athletic program, where I was looking at the football program, because that’s the only comparison that we really have for the Mountain West. We’re only moving football to Mountain West. We’re not moving the other sports. So, we won’t see the same drivers for basketball and some of the other sports that Mountain West has, that drive those costs up.

**D. Valentiner:** So, you don’t anticipate a dramatic increase?

**G. Middlemist:** No. The increase I really anticipate is in travel. And maybe a little bit in some assistant coaches’ salaries. But otherwise, it was pretty much in alignment.

**D. Valentiner:** Okay, well, I’d love to see some sort of detailed analysis of that.

**G. Middlemist:** Sure.

**D. Valentiner:** Thank you.

**V. Naples:** I’m Virginia Naples from Biology. I have a somewhat related question. I echo David’s concern about not having details about the finances, but a couple of related questions maybe you can answer for me. I’ve always been curious as to how many student athletes have been, and are presently, involved in the football program; and do you anticipate that they are going to increase or decrease in numbers? And the other thing is, also, what is the visitor-ship and attendance at either home games or away games; and has that remained stable or increased or decreased; and do you have any projections for that?

**C. Hughes:** I’ll do part 1, and then George can do part 2. Part 1, really the number of football athletes – the NCAA has rules about that and, actually, across the NCAA right now, they’re putting roster limits. So, when you see change in football squad size, that’s just due to the change that’s happening across the nation for football. That won’t impact – the league won’t impact – like the conference we’re in won’t impact the number of players on the team. That answers that question.

**G. Middlemist:** And then, Virginia, I don’t have specific numbers in terms of the attendance at the games. I can tell you what I built in, in terms of assumptions. The attendance on Saturday football games is pretty good. I wouldn’t say the stadium is full, but it’s pretty strong. The Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday night games in the middle of November, not quite as well attended. So, we’re anticipating that the attendance will grow because the games will only be on Saturdays. So, we’re hopeful that the home attendance is a little bit higher. In terms of the away attendance, I couldn’t answer that. And then I can also say for the home attendance, we didn’t build in – one thing we didn’t do is to say, we’re going to get X dollars more, because we think that there’s going to be more attendance. What we stuck with is what we had in the past, in terms of the revenue. And then I can see if I can work with Athletics to get the attendance numbers for you for what that looks like on Saturdays versus the weekday games.

**S. Sharp:** I understand that we’re leaving, because of the nice TV contract that the Mountain West currently has, and that’s great. But the current TV contract with the Mountain West is based on having tent poles like Boise State, Colorado State, San Diego State, who are leaving for the PAC 12. For one, how long does this current TV contract go for? And, given that so many tent pole institutions are leaving for the PAC 12, what assurances do we have that the amount of revenue that we’ll get from later contracts will be the same or perhaps even more? Thank you.

**G. Middlemist:** Sure, I think that’s a great question. I’m from Colorado, so I’m keenly aware of the Mountain West and Colorado State and Boise State and the role that they play. When we were working with the Mountain West, we had pretty strong assurances that the TV contract, that they’ll be extending, we’ll get at least the amount of money that we have in the contract now. I don’t have a crystal ball that says this is a perfect thing. But college football is changing. I think that one of the reasons the Mountain West came to us is because we can also be a tent pole for them. And so, we expect that the TV revenues will continue to be strong for the Mountain West.

**B. Creed:** Not trying to cut off, but I don’t see anyone standing up and moving toward the mic, so I appreciate both of you coming and sharing information and answering the questions, so appreciate it.

**G. Middlemist:** And we’ll get a couple of those data points.

**B. Creed:** Great, we’ll look for those data points. Thank you, George. Thank you, Courtney.

**IX. New Business**

A. Bob Lane Faculty Advocacy Award – Call for nominations – Page 6

Submit written letters of nomination to Faculty Senate President Ben Creed

no later than noon, Wednesday, Feb. 12.

**B. Creed:** That moves us to new business. We have one item and that is a call for nominations for the Bob Lane Award. You’ll this item on page 6 of the packet. The Bob Lane Faculty Award recognizes an NIU faculty member for special service to the faculty. Written letters of nomination should be submitted to me or to Pat no later than noon, Wednesday, Feb. 12. And there’s a list of past recipients on page 6, as well. If you want to nominate somebody but don’t know what a letter looks like, what should be included, we do have examples that we can share so you can model it off of what those nominations look like, if you don’t want to go back through Faculty Senate transcripts or packets.

**X. Reports from Councils, Boards and Standing Committees**

A. Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE – report

Tiffany Puckett, NIU representative to FAC-IBHE

**B. Creed:** That brings us to reports from councils, boards and standing committees. First up is the Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE, and Tiffany Puckett is our representative and will give us a report.

**T. Puckett:** Good afternoon and happy new year. I do have a few reports from our FAC meeting, which was held on December 20 through Zoom. We did have a couple of updates from IBHE representative Jill Gebke. She talked about the hiring and funding bill that will be re-introduced in the spring, that the community college funding group is still in discussions regarding making recommendations for a potential bill to be proposed bill sometime during this upcoming session. There are currently three open positions at IBHE, in case you know folks who might be interested in it: assistant chief accountant/procurement officer, a capital analyst and a director of higher education finance policy.

She also discussed that IBHE has received FAC’s white paper on AI. That white paper is titled, The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: The Use of AI in Higher Ed. If anybody is interested in reading that, you can get that off the [FAC-IBHE website](http://www.facibhe.org/).

FAC is still in the process of developing a letter in support of the Western Illinois University librarians to provide to the IBHE.

And then coming out of our working groups and caucus reports, the technology group has spent some time talking about ADA compliance issues and the difference between what the public institutions are doing versus the private institutions. And there has been some discussion on how Aurora University is outsourcing to [Risepoint](https://risepoint.com/) to look at their online courses to see if they’re compliant. So, there was discussions about using in-house versus outsourcing.

The four-year college caucus and the two-year college caucus continue to talk about the rise in advocacy for two-year colleges to issue bachelor’s degrees. And so, the four-year caucus continues to be concerned with this and opposed to it. Some of you might be aware, in March of this past year, FAC issued a position statement to the IBHE saying that they were strongly opposed to two-year colleges being able to issue bachelor’s degrees. But there has been a lot of activity in other states, including California, in which a bill was vetoed in the fall by their governor, that would have allowed create a pilot program where community colleges would have created a bachelor’s program in nursing. So, the four-year caucus continues to be opposed to that. The two-year caucus group is having discussions on what’s a better answer than letting two-years develop four-year degrees to deal with some of the shortages that we have.

Our next meeting is going to be hosted by Olney Central College, and that is going to be this upcoming Friday, Jan. 24. Does anybody have any questions? Thank you.

**B. Creed:** Appreciate it, Tiffany.

B. University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees – report

Felicia Bohanon, Natasha Johnson, Ben Creed

Brad Cripe, Larissa Garcia, Tom Skuzinski

**B. Creed:** Next up is the University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees report. I will be giving that, and others can add if I miss something. Since our last Faculty Senate meeting in November, there have been two Board of Trustee meetings. At the December 12, 2024, meeting, the main action item was the consideration and ultimate approval of the 2025 university goals. Of note is that all goals have embedded within them a fiscal responsibility component. I recommend folks to take a look at that university goals document as it informs and guides decisions during the upcoming year.

The other meeting of the Board of Trustees was a special meeting on January 7, that was called in relation to what we have just heard about, about the move of football to the Mountain West Conference. That was the only item taken up at that time, and that was an approval of the Board of Trustees for the expenditures related to that.

The Board of Trustees will meet in its committees on February 20. As always, do feel encouraged to join those in person, or click in to the various committees that are of interest to you. There will be action items related to the budget, particularly around tuition and student fees. There will also be updates on the federal and state contexts as we learn more about what the changes in administration will mean for higher ed, generally, as well as NIU, specifically, and updates, as they’re available, related to our state context.

That is the end of the report for that.

C. Baccalaureate Council – no report

Alicia Schatteman, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

**B. Creed:** We have no report from the Baccalaureate Council,

D. Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee – no report

Therese Arado, Chair

**B. Creed:** Or from the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee.

E. Social Justice Committee – no report

Ben Creed, FS President

**B. Creed:** And the Social Justice Committee has not met since the last time we convened.

F. FS-UC Rules, Governance and Elections Committee – no report

Emily McKee, FS/RGE Liaison/Spokesperson

**B. Creed:** Faculty Senate and University Council Rules, Governance and Elections Committee, there is no report from.

G. Student Government Association – report

Ja’kobe Jones, SGA President

Manny Corpuz, Speaker of the Senate

**B. Creed:** I think I saw Manny. I don’t know if there’s a report from SGA. No.

H. Operating Staff Council – report

Natasha Johnson, President

**B. Creed:** And then, Operating Staff Council, there is no report.

I. Supportive Professional Staff Council – report

Felicia Bohanon, President

**B. Creed:** Supportive Professional Staff Council, I do not see a report for that either.

**XI. Information Items**

A. [Policy Library](https://www.niu.edu/policies/) – Comment on Proposed Policies

B. [Minutes](https://www.niu.edu/university-council/committees/minutes/apc/index.shtml), Academic Planning Council

C. [Minutes](https://www.niu.edu/university-council/committees/minutes/athletics/index.shtml), Athletic Board

D. [Minutes](https://www.niu.edu/university-council/committees/minutes/bc/index.shtml), Baccalaureate Council

E. [Minutes,](http://www.niu.edu/board/meetings/index.shtml) Board of Trustees

F. [Minutes](https://www.niu.edu/university-council/committees/minutes/ciuae/index.shtml), Comm. on the Improvement of the Undergraduate Academic Experience

G. [Minutes](https://www.niu.edu/university-council/committees/minutes/gec/index.shtml), General Education Committee

H [Minutes](https://www.niu.edu/university-council/committees/minutes/gc/index.shtml), Graduate Council

I. [Minutes](https://www.niu.edu/university-council/committees/minutes/hc/index.shtml), Honors Committee

J. [Minutes](https://www.niu.edu/operating-staff-council/meetings/index.shtml), Operating Staff Council

K. [Minutes](https://www.niu.edu/spsc/meetings/index.shtml), Supportive Professional Staff Council

L. [Minutes](https://www.niu.edu/university-council/committees/minutes/uap/index.shtml), University Assessment Panel

M. [Minutes](https://www.niu.edu/university-council/committees/minutes/ubc/index.shtml), University Benefits Committee

N. [Minutes](https://www.niu.edu/university-council/committees/minutes/uciel/index.shtml), University Committee on Initial Educator Licensure

O. [Minutes](http://www.facibhe.org/meetings/minutes.php), Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE

P. 2024-25 FS meeting dates: Jan 22, Feb 19, Mar 26, Apr 23

**B. Creed:** That brings us to informational items. The standard ones are there. You’ll see the upcoming dates. Our next meeting is February 19, so, I look forward to seeing you all there.

**XII. Adjournment**

**B. Creed:** And that brings us to adjournment. Can I have a motion to adjourn today’s meeting. Thank you [Hartenhoff]. And a second, David. All in favor of adjourning the meeting?

**Members:** Aye.

**B. Creed:** Thank you.

Meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.