

## MINUTES

Faculty Senate-University Council Resources, Space and Budget Committee  
Friday, February 1, 2019, 10 a.m.  
Altgeld Hall 125  
Northern Illinois University  
DeKalb, Illinois

**VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:** Doederlein, Duffin, Grund, Johnson, Martin, Millhorn, Monteiro, Nelson, Nicholson, Slotsve, Surjadi, Thu, Wilson

**VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT:** Boughton, Moraga, Riley, Pietrowski

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Freeman, McCord, McGill, Peterson

### I. CALL TO ORDER

RSB Committee Chair **J. Wilson** called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.

### II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was established.

### III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

**J. Wilson** noted the agenda, as issued, would be slightly modified to move President's Comments (VII. C.) ahead of the Budget Planning discussion (VII. B.). In addition, some of the questions on page 6 would be covered under the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan discussion and the rest would be addressed during or at the end of President's Comments. **G. Slotsve** moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by **K. Thu**. Motion passed.

### IV. APPROVAL OF THE JAN. 11, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

**G. Slotsve** moved to approve the minutes, seconded by **K. Thu**. Motion passed.

### V. PUBLIC COMMENT

### VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Strategic Enrollment Management Plan/Online Initiative

Acting Provost Chris McCord

**C. McCord** noted that this presentation was given to the leadership meeting last week and will be presented to the Board of Trustees and to other leadership bodies in the near future. Due to weather-related cancellations in January, the presentation to Faculty Senate and University Council will take place during their February meetings.

Points raised during the presentation included:

- State funding has declined from a high of approximately \$109 million to around \$84-\$85 million.
- Enrollment trends:
  - NIU faces competition from other schools who have been aggressively recruiting students, including institutions from out of state.
  - UIC has been increasing as competition. There seems to be student preference for an urban, walkable environment.
  - The number of high school students overall is declining, with a steeper decline anticipated around 2025.
  - Well-qualified students apply to NIU and are accepted but then do not attend and do not attend elsewhere either, not even at community colleges (e.g., about 37% “go nowhere”). The data on this phenomenon comes from Student Clearinghouse, but we don’t yet know the reasons behind the data. We know finances play a significant role, as well as being first generation college students. The process of applying and attending college may seem daunting, and any bump in the road may throw applicants off track. The increased FAFSA verification now being done may also seem intimidating to students and families.
  - Our current student population is showing an increase in Hispanic population, both in percentage and absolute terms. There are tangible benefits to being ranked as a Hispanic-serving institution (at least 25% FTE).
  - The on-campus undergraduate population will decline even if enrollment plans are successful. To compensate, we need to grow the online population in graduate and undergraduate programs for an adult learner population that would never come to DeKalb anyway.
  - We have to accept we will be at 17,000-18,000 for the foreseeable future, but we won’t get there by coasting. Thus, the need for the plan.
- Enrollment plan: (more details in slides and at <https://niu.edu/enrollment-plan/>)
  - Plan is grounded in authenticity, honesty and what is realistically achievable. It is intentionally not aspirational.

- Enrollment plan is motivated by both sustainability and our mission to serve the region's population. Our enrollment mirrors local/national demographics. That's a strength for us. Students work with others in their classes that will reflect who they will work with after graduation.
  - Three goals and related strategic imperatives. Specific tactics are not yet detailed but will be derived from the objectives, with defined accountability for actions.
  - Recruitment process will be targeted and focused and includes retaining and graduating as well as recruiting.
  - "Improving access" includes finding out the reasons why students who were accepted didn't come, and breaking down those barriers to attending.
  - Northeastern & Governors State are seeing similar issues with "go nowhere" students. There may be a statewide initiative to figure out where else students applied if they didn't end up going anywhere. IBHE is interested but may not have the capacity to investigate.
  - There are moral and social justice reasons to ensure students we accept succeed. We recruit a diverse population but do not retain the diversity through graduation – that is the equity gap and achievement gap. There seem to be other issues at play in retention besides students being prepared for college-level work. These need to be investigated and addressed. If we can address equity and achievement gaps, we can address the retention issue.
  - Brand penetration involves communicating our values to the community, targeting new markets, and engaging help from experts (e.g., Wiley Education marketing/recruiting/concierge services for online programs).
  - We need staff that is competent to deal with differing populations, especially staff who are bilingual in Spanish.
  - Advising needs to be ramped up and specific pathways defined to ensure retention and graduation. The advising process needs to be data- and technology-informed and enhanced.
  - We need to think differently about financial aid. Are we over-rewarding/under-rewarding certain students? Pilot alternatives such as income-share agreements, loan-forgiveness programs.
  - All of these efforts will require investments: in staff commitment, time, money. Supporting efforts need to be coordinated (e.g., implementing a Chatbot requires coordination across several units such as Enrollment Management, Procurement and DoIT).
- Comments: **K. Thu** noted there is historical skepticism among faculty over large initiatives, but "not doing anything" is not acceptable, so we need to try. Current searches in their department are reflecting the importance of diversity. It has been helpful to work with Vernese Edghill-Walden in the Office of Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to obtain support for bringing certain candidates to campus.

- **K. Thu** asked for clarification regarding Questions for Discussion #3 regarding the control over online course content and intellectual property issues now that the Wiley contract has been approved.
- **C. McCord** clarified that the Wiley contract is for marketing, lead generation and student support services, and excludes program delivery. NIU retains control over course content, delivery and technology. Intellectual property remains with NIU, not Wiley. An instructor's course content remains his/hers unless there is another agreement.
  - Other aspects of the Wiley contract:
    - Wiley's marketing is able to target students in a way we simply can't, e.g., the ability to contact someone who makes an inquiry within 15 minutes. We are not outsourcing staff. It just is help in getting the word out about our good product.
    - The \$20 million is the maximum we are authorized to spend. It's not what we intend to spend, which is closer to \$7 million.
    - Over the course of the Wiley contract, a return of \$2.50 gross on \$1.00 investment is expected. The original estimate was a return of \$3.00 gross to \$2.00 net; this is more realistic.
    - There may be unforeseen obstacles that will affect the pace at which we will be able to grow the online programs. For example, we just discovered we need to obtain state-by-state licensure to offer nursing programs online in each state.
    - Emphasis in marketing "ensembles" of multiple programs in health and business of multiple programs. This has more impact than marketing a single program. Students may come looking for a specific program and then see the others that are also available.
    - All of the programs marketed by Wiley will have differential tuition.
- **H. Nicholson** noted that a comprehensive FAQ on the enrollment plan and the Wiley contract has been posted by Web Services (available at <https://niu.edu/enrollment-plan/wiley-faq.shtml>).

B. President's Comments  
President Lisa Freeman

President Freeman commented that we haven't always been intentional about tying budget to mission or strategic imperative, and have been focused on one-year budgets. We need to tie these to a long-term budget so we can build in the things we need and want to do and develop a budget that lets us get there. We've spent a lot of time treading water (e.g., waiting for state appropriation to go back to previous levels). It's now clear that ship is not going to pick us up, so we need to swim on our own towards a destination. This budget plan is much more intentional than others have been.

C. Budget Planning Discussion  
President Lisa Freeman, Acting Provost Chris McCord, Chief Financial Officer Sarah McGill, RSB Committee Chair Jim Wilson

We are now beginning the process for FY20, with projections through FY23, to identify what we need over the course of several years instead of just spending any leftover money each year. This includes needed investments in initiatives, facilities, financial aid, etc.

There will be a gap between revenues and desired investments due to several factors (fewer students and lower tuition; lower state participation; losses due to the budget impasse that may never be able to be made up). The shortfall is pretty consistent from year to year and needs to be addressed structurally over the course of several years instead of reactively every year. Budget information will go to divisional heads the week of February 4, with planning to take place over the month of February. Group will meet March 1 to hear what proposals look like and recommendations will be sent to President Freeman.

No rescissions are projected for this FY. The focus is on FY20 and beyond. A tendency in the past to over-project revenues has been identified.

Faculty, staff and GAs will have incremental salary increases going forward. We must do that. **J. Millhorn** commented that Wiley has staff increments built into their contract. **C. McCord** noted that our costs to Wiley will go down in the future, because there are one-time costs with starting up. Investing in Wiley will give us positive revenue growth, and that will lead to ability to fund salary increases.

**Responses to Questions for Discussion:**

Question 4, Update on HR working group: **C. McCord** responded. A survey has been distributed to anyone involved in hiring to walk through the hiring process for their unit and comment on how they experience each of these steps. Due to the complicated and varying processes for different types of positions the survey is time consuming to fill out but the response rate has been good so far. There is a lot of anecdotal evidence about issues with the hiring process, but the survey responses will provide evidence in more detail on what specific changes are needed – to technology, processes, procedures, etc. When survey responses are in and analyzed a further update will be provided to the leadership forum in March.

**President Freeman** noted there was a productive meeting with Jeff Brownfield of SUCSS and others recently about the ongoing challenges in the conversion of SPS positions to civil service, especially in regards to high level research positions that aren't faculty. Some tools have been identified that may help with frustrations and carving a path forward. Opportunities for solutions have been identified even though specific solutions aren't yet nailed down.

Question 5, Clarification on exemptions to maximum tuition waiver guidelines: **C. McCord** responded. The current policy indicates full time employees are entitled to a tuition waiver for up to 8 credits. If the employee takes more than that, the employee is to pay for anything more than 8 credits. There is a rumor that employees are getting waivers for more than 8 credits. Employees need permission from their supervisor to take more than 6 credits, so supervisors should be aware of any employees taking 8 credits or more. A list has been generated of those employees enrolled for more than 8 credits; this list needs to be cross-walked with the bursar's office to see if these employees are paying for the credits over the 8-credit tuition waiver limit. **C. McCord** reiterated that under the current policy employees should not be receiving waivers for anything over 8 credits. However, he also noted that it is sometimes hard to tell who is an employee who is also a student, and who is a student who is also an employee.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**G. Slotsve** moved to adjourn, seconded by **K. Thu**. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 11:14 a.m.

**Future RSB meeting dates:** No RSB meeting on March 1. The one remaining RSB meeting date is April 5.