

TRANSCRIPT

University Council
Wednesday, January 29, 2020, 3 p.m.
Altgeld Hall 315
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Arado, Barnhart, Bateni, Block, Bolden, Bond, Burton, G. Chen, J. Chen, Collins, Demeros, Doederlein, Farrell, Freeman, Gau, Ghrayeb (for Ingram), Hanley, Hines, Johnson, Kassel, Lang, Ledgerwood, Littauer, Martin, Millhorn, Nelson, Newman, Owoeye, Park (for Rajagopalan), Pearson, Penrod, Polansky, Powell (for Scherer), Rau, Rigertas, Royce, Schatteman, Schraufnagel, Shi, Skarbinski, Staikidis, Tahernezehadi (for Peterson), Thu, Villanueva (for Siegesmund), Walker (for Elish-Piper), Weffer, White, Wilson, Woodruff, York (for Koss)

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Beyer, Binderup, Branch, Chmaissem, David, Elish-Piper, Feniza, Ingram, Koss, Mooney, Peterson, Rajagopalan, Scherer, Siegesmund,

OTHERS PRESENT: Bryant, Chinniah, Clay, Dawe, Falkoff, Hayden, Jensen, Klaper, Miner, Wesener Michael

OTHERS ABSENT: Blazey, Ferguson, Gelman, Groza, Hanna, Kortegast, Marsh

I. CALL TO ORDER

L. Freeman: In deference to our very ambitious agenda today, I'm going to start right at 3 o'clock with the call to order.

Meeting called to order at 3 p.m.

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

L. Freeman: And I'm going to ask everyone to make sure that, if you're a voting member, you have a clicker so that Pat can do the magic verification of a quorum. Pat, do you want to re-issue the typical instructions about using the clicker to verify quorum, please.

P. Erickson: For any newcomers, remember that – or maybe you're just hearing it – no need to turn the clickers on or off. They do that all by themselves. For quorum, we're going to ask everybody to click 1 or A, and that will tell us that we have the needed 30 for quorum.

L. Freeman: Okay, great.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

L. Freeman: In that case, we'll move on to Roman numeral III, Adoption of the Agenda. May I have a motion to adopt the agenda.

C. Doederlein: So moved.

L. Freeman: That was Doederlein. And a second?

T. Arado: Second.

L. Freeman: Second by Arado. All in favor?

Members: Aye.

L. Freeman: Any opposed? Any abstentions? All right.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 4, 2019 MINUTES

L. Freeman: Moving on to Roman numeral V., Public Comment. Parliamentarian, have we received any requests for public comment, or is there anyone in the audience? Oh I skipped the minutes, never mind.

Roman numeral IV, Approval of the December 4, 2019 Minutes found on pages 4 to 7 of the packet, may I have a motion to approve?

I. Pearson: So moved.

L. Freeman: Okay, so moved, Pearson. Second?

S. Farrell: Second.

L. Freeman: Thank you, Farrell seconded. All in favor?

Members: Aye.

L. Freeman: Opposed? I should have said any discussion, corrections, but I didn't feel the group coming forward with that.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

L. Freeman: So we'll now move on to Roman numeral V, Public Comment. Have requests been received, or is there public commenters in the audience? Great.

VI. PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

L. Freeman: Hearing none, we will move on to the President's Announcements. Good afternoon, everybody. Kendall asked me today to provide, as part of my comments, a few updates on activity related to the Illinois Board of Higher Education and Springfield, and I was happy to oblige. And I want to mention two items of interest to the group: appointment of a new IBHE executive director as well as the IBHE approval of their budget recommendations.

I'll start with the new IBHE director. In early January, the Illinois Board of Higher Ed, or the IBHE, named as their new executive director Ginger Ostro. She brings extensive finance, policy and higher ed experience to the role. She served most recently as the interim chief financial officer at Chicago State University. And before that in a variety of finance, budget and planning positions at ISAC, which is the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, the people who bring you MAP; Governors State University; Chicago Public Schools; and also the Governor's Office of Management and Budget. Ostro is also known for serving as the executive director at Advance Illinois during the period when that organization played a significant role in crafting the K-12 funding formula for the state of Illinois. And that's something that was an important factor in her selection, from what we've heard from the board chair.

Ostro has been charged by the IBHE board, to whom she reports, with developing a strategic plan that engages leaders from the public and private sectors, that emphasizes improving college attainment and closing gaps in outcomes for low-income students, students of color and rural students. Improving graduation rates and closing equity gaps is a strategic priority for the IBHE as well as for our university.

And on that front, I'm going to pause for a moment and share some encouraging news about our fall to spring retention rates. Yesterday was the spring 10-day count, and we pay attention to the spring 10-day count, largely because of our interest in fall-to-spring retention. And I'm very happy to report that our fall-to-spring retention rates were 90 percent for new freshmen and 92 percent for transfers. And this is an increase over last year of two percent for freshmen and one percent for transfers. And the underlying data showed narrowed equity gaps. And this is the first time since 2007 that both the freshman and transfer numbers were at 90 percent or above. We generally do better in transfers than in freshmen, so this is an impressive increase in the new freshman retention. And I just want to say I'm very proud of everyone who's working to execute the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan and to bring life to our commitment to supporting student success and eliminating unnecessary barriers to degree attainment. And there is not one thing, single thing, that we can point to, but I think the cumulative effect of paying more attention to the issues and carrying out playbook that we've set forward for ourselves. It's always nice to be able to see some progress and early indicators, and I'm very excited about that. [applause]

Now the budget recommendation. The IBHE met on December 10, 2019, and in that meeting, they approved their fiscal 20-21 higher education budget recommendations for operations, grants and capital improvements. And this is an annual process. The very lengthy document is available on [their website](#) but I'll just provide a few highlights.

The recommendation for public universities is a 5.9 percent increase over last year. This would add

\$68.3 million over the FY20 appropriation for a total of \$1.2 billion, and that's for all public universities, not just NIU, in case you were getting excited there. For context, this is a two percent increase over our fiscal '15 appropriation without adjustment for inflation. And actually a 4.7 decrease over fiscal '15 when adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index. Nevertheless, it is a second year that they're recommending an increase.

For NIU specifically, the fiscal '21 recommendation translates to an appropriation of about \$92.9 million. And this is relatively consistent with the fiscal '21 state budget request approved by our Board of Trustees in September. That number is \$93.6 million. For reference, our fiscal '20 appropriation was \$87.8 million.

Other notables in the IBHE budget recommendation: an additional \$50 million for MAP, an additional \$10 million for AIM HIGH, and \$20 million to resurrect a previously funded program, HECA, the Higher Education Cooperation Act. And this is something that the Faculty Advisory Committee to the IBHE advocated for, the presidents and chancellors advocated for. The purpose of the HECA program is to foster innovation and collaboration among public universities. And I'm going to quote here: "By providing grants to help the schools recover from the budget impasse and help the state reimagine how it delivers education that is more responsive to students today, particularly the growing portion who are non-traditional, minorities, first-generation, PELL-eligible, and older students." If this program is, indeed, ultimately funded, I would expect NIU to be very competitive for funding, giving our focus in these areas and our good relationships with the other public universities. So, let's stay tuned on that.

It's important to understand that the IBHE budget recommendation is just that, a recommendation, a non-binding suggestion. Between now and the passage of a state budget – Gov. Pritzker is giving his state-of-the-state address today. He'll deliver his budget address on February 19. After that, NIU and the other public universities will testify at appropriations hearings; and, if things go well, There'll be a budget passed by the general assembly and signed by the governor before July 1. All signs indicate that the governor is supportive of increasing the appropriation to public higher education. And all signs also indicate that it will be challenging to create a balanced state budget. So, stay tuned.

I will miss our next University Council meeting, actually, to be in Springfield with the other university presidents for a higher education advocacy day. And we will have the opportunity for a joint meeting with the new senate president, Don Harmon, as well as a joint meeting that includes Deputy Governor for Education Ruiz, Deputy Governor for Capital Mitchell, and the Capital Development Board staff. This will afford the public university presidents to discuss with that group the capital timeline and process regarding funding releases and project information. So, I'm very much looking forward to that meeting. I think it will help all of us get clarity on how things will be released and how plans can and should evolve on our campus and others. And I'm sure that you'll understand the value of my being there while the provost sits in my place at this table with the University Council executive secretary.

Finally, I want to just say a few words about today's agenda. I am really impressed with the important issues on today's agenda and the very thoughtful work that has gotten us to this point. We are considering changes to our shared governance structure to ensure that we have appropriately

shared responsibility and cooperative action among the components of our academic institution. This is in keeping with time honored principles of university governance that have been endorsed by organizations such as the American Association of University Professors, AAUP; the Association of Governing Boards, AGB; and the American Council on Education, ACE. These principles recognize first that important areas of action involve, at one time or another, the initiating capacity and decision-making participation of all institutional constituencies – governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students. The principles also recognize that the weight of each voice in any manner should be determined by reference to the responsibility of each constituency for the matter at hand. And traditionally, faculty has had primary responsibilities across higher ed institutions for areas such as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life, which relate directly to the educational process.

For example, the AAUP Principles of Shared Governance state that faculty should have a meaningful role in establishing institutional policies with regard to student admissions, including the setting of standards for admission. And today we are also considering eliminating the use of the ACT and SAT in general undergraduate admissions to NIU, and this consideration is based on recommendations that have been made to this body by the Baccalaureate Council and the Faculty Senate after significant deliberation.

So we're talking about making sure that we do shared governance appropriately to honor all voices appropriately. And we actually have a great example of meaningful shared governance in action on our agenda today. And this is a very important meeting. I want to say that our willingness to engage around these issues is proof that we live our values as an institution, that we employ inclusive decision-making processes, and that we act in a manner that's transparent and accountable to stakeholders. And it's great to see a full room today, and I look forward to the discussion.

And at this point, I'm going to turn the agenda over to Kendall to go through our very length items.

K. Thu: Thank you, Lisa. Welcome back everybody. Welcome to the spring semester. As President Freeman mentioned, we do have an ambitious agenda, not only for today, but for the next three UC meetings. And so as I indicated at the outset of our Faculty Senate meeting, I'm going to beg your indulgence in longer meetings than what we had in the fall. Usually got you out of here at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon for our fall meetings. This time around, the target is going to be about 4:30. So I just hope that you'll stick with us and stick with the important conversations that we're going to have on the issues that President Freeman raised.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

K. Thu: Roman numeral VII., we do not have anything on the Consent Agenda, correct, Pat?

P. Erickson: Correct.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Proposed amendment to NIU Bylaws 2.6.1: Resources, Space and Budget Committee –
Composition
SECOND READING/ACTION

K. Thu: So, moving on to Roman numeral VIII., there are three unfinished business items. The first two are second readings of amendments to our bylaws. The first one, A., is on pages 8 and 9 of your packet, your very voluminous packet that you have. This is the addition of two students to the Resource, Space and Budget Committee that we talked about the last time. So I would entertain a motion to approve.

J. Royce: So moved.

K. Thu: Do we have a second?

I. Pearson: Second.

K. Thu: Ian. That's appropriate, Ian. Discussion. Any further discussion on this item? Hearing none, I think we should – that's right – Pat is reminding me that we're going to vote first on just whether you're here, present, so that we can establish a quorum. And then the next vote will be the actual second reading of the proposed amendment.

Okay, are we good to go? Has everybody clicked? I don't know what would happen if you clicked two. Okay, so we have a quorum.

P. Erickson: Well, in this instance, it is not a quorum that we need. We need to know how many people are here to vote.

K. Thu: Oh, voting so that we can establish whether we've got two-thirds – got it. So, we've got 43 and we need two-thirds of 43, which is

Unidentified: 24

K. Thu: 24, okay thank you. Are we ready to go? Okay. So just to clarify, this vote is on the proposed amendment to the Resource, Space and Budget Committee. So go ahead and vote. One is yes, two is no, three is abstention.

S. Schraufnagel: [inaudible]

K. Thu: Well, we have to have it for the record, right, Scot? Okay, I think we're good to go.

[At this point, there was a discrepancy when 46 votes were registered, even though, just moments before, only 43 voting members had clicked in to establish how many voting members were present.]

P. Erickson: My notes tell me, from the bylaws, that we need to have either 50 percent of the entire

voting membership, whether they're here or not, which would be 30 votes to pass it. Or we need two-thirds of those of you who clicked in just a moment ago. And I believe two-thirds [of 43] is 29; I think somebody else shouted out a different number. But if somebody wants to check my math – what two-thirds of 43 is.

K. Thu: But we have 46.

Unidentified: [inaudible]

P. Erickson: Well we need to know who voted yes.

K. Thu: Oh, we haven't voted for it yet?

P. Erickson: ...30 people who voted yes.

K. Thu: And we have not yet taken that vote?

P. Erickson: We're taking it now.

K. Thu: So, I guess – I thought we took the vote.

Unidentified: Yes, I thought we did as well.

P. Erickson: A few minutes ago, right after we had the motion and the second, we asked everybody to click 1, and that was to tell us how many voting members are in the room, because your bylaws that govern how you amend them give us an equation. And the equation is that there are two different ways to approve a motion to amend the bylaws: One way is to have 50 percent of the entire voting membership of University Council, whether they're here or not. That figure is 30. The other equation is two-thirds of those of you who are voting here now have to vote yes. And we base that two-thirds equation from those of you who just clicked in a moment ago where we got to 43, where we asked you all to click in and vote 1.

K. Thu: So, let's go ahead and vote.

Unidentified: Maybe we should vote again?

K. Thu: Let's redo the second vote. We know there's a quorum. We know how many members are present.

P. Erickson: Well, we don't really now, because it's changed.

K. Thu: So, this is the easy part of the agenda, folks.

L. Freeman: We're going to get all the bugs out now.

P. Erickson: Do we all agree that there are now 47 voting members in the room?

Members: Yes.

P. Erickson: So, two-thirds of 47 is?

K. Thu: Thirty-one.

Unidentified: Thirty-two.

P. Erickson: Thirty-two, we have to round up. So that's how many then we need, because that will be more than that other equation that's 30.

K. Thu: So, let's take a vote when you're ready, Pat.

P. Erickson: Okay, so I'm going to have to show these results in order to start the program over. So now, if you liked the motion, you're going to vote 1 for yes. If you didn't like the motion, you're going to vote 2 for no. If you want to abstain, that's 3.

K. Thu: Okay, go ahead and vote now. And the next vote will be quicker. Everybody done?

Unidentified: [inaudible]

K. Thu: Presumably, I think so. There we go.

Yes – 43 votes

No – 1 vote

Abstain – 1 vote

K. Thu: So the proposed amendment passes.

B. Proposed amendment to NIU Bylaws 19.7.1 Performance Reviews – The President
SECOND READING/ACTION

K. Thu: The second item under Unfinished Business is the proposed amendment to the bylaws that changes a word in the performance review for the president. You may remember, the previous language stipulated an exact number of years when this performance review would occur. And rather than having a precise number, because presidential contracts may change, although I guess there's a state law about that now, we're just inserting "penultimate year" rather than an ordinal number. So that's the change being proposed for a second reading under Item B. So I'll entertain a motion to approve.

T. Arado: So moved.

K. Thu: Second?

V. Collins: Second.

K. Thu: Vicki. Any discussion? Okay, so let's hope it's less painful this time. We're not voting on the number present right now; we're voting on the actual amendment. So, one is yes, two is no, three is abstain. All right, and the amendment passes. Thank you.

Yes – 41 votes

No – 2 votes

Abstain – 2 votes

C. Restructuring Shared Governance
FIRST READING

K. Thu: Okay, Item C. under Roman numeral VIII. is the first reading of the proposal to restructure shared governance. And before I talk about that, I want to just say a little bit about the process that's gotten us here to this point. Last fall, I did a benchmarking exercise where I looked at shared governance structures at our sister institutions in Illinois. And I put that together in a PowerPoint. It was presented to both the senate, and it was given to the University Council as well. I also spoke with my counterpart at each of the sister institutions in Illinois, which showed how odd our shared governance system is; namely, that the academic side of the equation is not put in the Faculty Senate side of the shared governance equation with the power to affect educational policy at NIU.

So, some of the feedback that we got last fall to that was incorporated into a proposed change in our shared governance structure. That's the reason you have such a mammoth packet, at least in part. So, in your packet is the entire set of proposed changes that are imbedded with tracking commands. So, everything's transparent; everything's there if you want to go through it all. Of course, most people aren't going to read the proposed changes word-for-word. And when I brought this to the Faculty Senate Steering Committee, I asked them, how do you think I should present this? At what level? Because not everybody is going to wordsmith the entire document.

So, what I did is to present a one-page overview of what those proposed changes look like. So, we have what I think of as three documents. We have the Constitution. We have the bylaws, which are really the bylaws for University Council. And then we have the bylaws for Faculty Senate. So, we have a one-pager in your packet that summarizes the changes in each of those sections of the Constitution and Bylaws. It's actually fairly simple, conceptually. What we're doing is we're moving academic matters over from the University Council and authorizing or giving authority to Faculty Senate to deal with academic matters.

What that means is a lot of cutting and pasting in the actual documents. So, that's not only what's taking place; but basically, the reporting lines of many of the committees have been changed. So, Pat, if you will go to the next slide, this is Pat's attempt to graphically portray what our current shared governance structure looks like. And it's very difficult to see, I understand; but the point of this is that we have a very hierarchical ladder where Faculty Senate is sort of excluded from the authority for dealing with academic matters in the committee level.

So, the proposed change would look like the following slide, where many of the committees that exist currently that deal almost exclusively with faculty, tenure-track faculty issues, would be moved over to Faculty Senate. The University Council will retain its authority under the current

Constitution and Bylaws to deal with budget recommendations, capital improvement, building plans and the like.

I neglected to mention that a first reading only means that you're put on notice that these proposed changes are on the table. It doesn't mean that anything automatically triggers at the second meeting or the third meeting or the fourth meeting. So, we have plenty of time to go through this. I see it as a didactic process. We presented the proposal to Faculty Senate last week. There wasn't a whole lot of discussion at Faculty Senate last week, but there has been discussion in the Rules, Governance and Elections Committee that I want to share as well. Usually, Richard Siegesmund is here helping me out with all of this, but he's out of the country right now.

So, there is a parallel proposal in the works primarily through Rules, Governance and Elections that would change the structure of the University Council, make it much smaller, and make it much more equitable in terms of stakeholder representation. So, that proposal will, hopefully, come forth at the February meeting.

So, going forward, we have the Faculty Senate reviewing the proposal. It's now come to the University Council. And then whatever feedback we get, we'll put on the table, and we'll show you what we've done in response to your feedback at the February meeting. So, the February senate meeting, then the February University Council meeting, and on we go until everybody's comfortable enough – if we get to that point – to actually vote on it.

So, that's sort of the 36,000-foot description of what we're doing here. Most of the changes are simply changing the reporting lines of the committees. So, for example, the University Council Personnel Committee – that becomes a Faculty Senate Personnel Committee, and so forth. It doesn't change the composition of those committees, although we could put that on the table. It just changes the reporting lines so that the Faculty Senate is the penultimate reporting body. Nothing changes up or downstream. Once the Faculty Senate makes a decision, it'll go up to the provost and the president eventually at those junctures.

Going back to the one-page slide, Pat, if you would, just to summarize, in the Constitution, what's been changed is that the Faculty Senate has authority on academic matters. And there was one comment about defining what that means, which we're going to take seriously. I'm going to work on that for the next meeting.

So that's the Constitution. The changes in the UC bylaws, that you see bulleted here in the middle, are primarily changes to reporting lines moving those University Council committees over to Faculty Senate. So things like personnel procedures, personnel process that involve tenure-track faculty, that's moved over to Faculty Senate.

And then at the very end, we have some changes in the Faculty Senate as well. Now overall, the University Council has the authority to make changes to the University Council bylaws, and we have the authority to make changes to the Constitution. But University Council doesn't have the authority to change the Faculty Senate Bylaws. Faculty Senate has the authority to change its own bylaws, but no authority to change University Council bylaws or the Constitution. So, it has to be a contingent process. If and when we get to the point of voting on these changes, they have to be

contingent on each other. So, if at a second reading at some point, someone makes a proposal to accept the changes to the Constitution and the University Council bylaws, the proposal should be framed in such a way that it's contingent on what the Faculty Senate does, if that makes sense. It's really glamorous stuff to read through the Constitution, I gotta tell you.

With that, I'll just open it up for feedback, questions. Simón?

S. Weffer: I have a question about composition and equity. If we're talking about input on curricular issues, 25 percent of our classes, more or less, are taught by our instructors. And looking at Section 2.2.2, which is easy enough to remember, it states: "Non-tenure track and/or clinical faculty may be elected at the discretion of colleges." And I think from an equity point of view, that's really problematic, because you could get some colleges that are empowering and getting feedback from their instructors, and others that are not. In my opinion, that should be just a blanket statement of instructors being elected.

K. Thu: I put that sentence in there as a placeholder to deal with exactly this issue, Simón. I had a meeting with the president of the instructors' union last week, and we went over that language together. We weren't at a point where we could get those changes incorporated into this version, but we will. You're right, 25% of our classes are taught by instructors. There are 200 instructors in the instructor union. So, what we decided to propose, which will come out in the next version, is to use the instructors' collective bargaining agreement language that specifies what an instructor is, and then put those in Faculty Senate. And we're proposing about ten instructors to be added to the Faculty Senate body. I can say that the instructor president was very gratified to be asked to come to the table, because, unfortunately, instructors too often are treated as second-class citizens. And we have to make sure that, since they're such an important, vital part of our instruction, that they be at the table for academic matters. So, we're in the process of developing language that deals with representation by instructors, as well as making sure that the Constitution doesn't preclude instructors from being included as well. So, thank you for bringing that up.

Also, we've added student members to the Faculty Senate. I think – Ian, you correct me if I'm wrong – but the working proposal that I believe is in this draft – if not in this draft, it will be in the February draft – consists of ten students on Faculty Senate, because when we're dealing with curricular matters, it needs to be the instructors and faculty and students at the table to talk about things. So, that includes seven undergraduates and three graduates selected by the Student Government Association. Do I have that right? It's close enough? Okay. And then we also added two SPS and two OSC staff members to that group, but it didn't make it into this draft. We've got a lot of feedback that we need to collectively put into the next iteration of this. Other questions?

One faculty member asked me, well what do you expect faculty to do with this gargantuan change? And my response was, well just understand it at a conceptual level. Some people are going to look at it more closely, like Simón and Ian, I know. But just understanding at a conceptual level what we're about here, I think is important. Other questions? Yes.

D. Block: Besides the instructor issue and the SPS issue, we have whole units where there are also many people that were SPS and now have been moved to Civil Services. And these people are teaching, to some extent. And previously, they would have, like SPS, been considered quasi-faculty. And I don't see that addressed here at all.

K. Thu: So, we're certainly open to accommodating the changes in the classification of personnel. So we know what's going on with SPS and moving over to Civil Service. It's a dynamic process. Dean Block, if you have suggestions, concrete suggestions about what sort of language we could use to make sure that they're included, I'm all ears. And I think the people that are working on this are all ears too. This is exactly why we have these meetings, is to get this kind of feedback and make sure that we incorporate it into the overall plan. When I spoke with the president of the instructors' union, we talked about clinical faculty, and we just couldn't figure it out. So I would be open to your ideas for how to deal with actual language changes.

Other comments? Okay, we will continue our work on this, and we'll come back to University Council in the February meeting. We'll let you know what changes we made. We'll let you know what Faculty Senate says in their February meeting. And we'll just continue to work on this until we might get to a point by the final meeting in April, where we might want to vote on it. I hope so. That's my hope.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Proposed Admissions Policy Related research articles

K. Thu: That brings us to items under Roman numeral IX., New Business. This is the proposed admissions policy change that President Freeman alluded to in her presidential statements. This is on pages 235 to 246. And so what's in your packet are those proposed catalog changes that I'm going to go through. I'm going to go through the highlights. And then also in your packet are a series of research articles that supports the notion that admission policy should be based upon high school grades, to a certain extent, rather than scores on ACT or SAT.

So, by way of bringing you up-to-speed or reminding you of where we've been with this process, the idea of going to a test-less admissions policy came before the Faculty Senate last fall. We discussed it there. The Faculty Senate voted to support the concept of going to a test-less admissions policy, but wanted the Baccalaureate Council to operationalize it. So, we handed it over to the Baccalaureate Council. They worked hard on creating catalog language that would accommodate and change the admissions policy. They approved it overwhelmingly with no dissenting votes. And then I promised Faculty Senate that I would bring back the Baccalaureate Council vote and language back to Faculty Senate. We did that last week. So, the Faculty Senate went through the proposed catalog changes just in the same way that we're going to do. And the Faculty Senate voted overwhelmingly to endorse it as well. But, of course, Faculty Senate has no specific authority. It's just the faculty voice of sending a clear signal to the University Council that this is the direction they want to go.

So, that's the process. Now what are the actual changes. These are proposed catalog changes, so

they don't require a first reading or second reading. Under our bylaws, a substantive change in policies that are under the jurisdiction of the Baccalaureate Council, can be brought before the University Council. This is a substantive change, so it has to come before you. And then University Council has two meetings after the Baccalaureate Council approval to approve it or disapprove it. So, this is the first meeting. There could be a second in February. I'm not sure whether we're going to need the February meeting, but we'll see. If the University Council does nothing in either of those two meetings, then by default it becomes policy. So, Pat, hopefully I got that right, and Ferald.

So, with that, I'm going to go through the yellow highlighted sections, because those are the important ones. And then I want to turn to Naomi Bolden, who is the president of the Student Government Association to weigh in on this as well. I should also mention that Omar Ghrayeb and Quinton Clay and Sol Jensen are here to respond to questions, because I'm not an expert on admissions; they are. So help me out if I stumble in highlighting the changes.

The biggest changes is to simply do away with the testing requirement for admissions, doing away with ACT and SAT scoring. If you've looked through any of those research articles that we included in your packet, you'll see the preponderance, the overwhelming preponderance of evidence indicates that high school grades are better predictors of success and graduation than either SAT or ACT scores. And we know that the data from our institution – and Greg Barker's hiding in the back over there – shows exactly the same thing, that high school grades are better predictors of success.

Go ahead and go to the next. So, we're saying that ACT and SAT scores will not be required for admissions. Next section. What are we going to do instead? Well, instead of looking at test scores, we are going to raise the bar for automatic admissions from a 2.75 high school GPA, to 3.0.

Q. Clay: [inaudible]

K. Thu: What? Oh 2.5 to 3.0, thank you. So, anybody who has high school grades of above 3.0 or above, that's automatic admissions, correct? Anybody from 2.5 to 2.99 will undergo what's called a holistic review. And that should be one of your questions, right? And that holistic review is conducted by the Admissions Office, correct? Anybody with a GPA – help me out – 2.0 to 2.49 can be eligible for a holistic review by a university-wide committee. Is that correct? And then anybody below a 2.0 is automatically denied acceptance, but they can be eligible for an appeal to have a holistic review. And that happens very rarely.

So, that's the long and the short of it. Now what's included in the language are aspects of the holistic review. And if you'll scroll down just a little bit, you'll see that it's an individualized process. It looks at academic course rigor pursued to compared available courses at a particular high school. It looks at academic performance and grade trends in core courses in high school. It looks at seventh semester high school academic performance, which is the fall semester of the senior year, is that correct? And then, for select applicants, additional information can be requested.

So, in order to sort of short-circuit what are going to be the inevitable questions, what is a holistic review, maybe, Quinton, could you say a few words about what entails, and your experience dealing with it?

Q. Clay: Certainly. To many in the room, I'm probably a new face. With 18 months at NIU as director of admission. Prior to NIU, I worked at Cornell University in New York, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, DePaul University, Cornell College in Iowa. So, over the course of 14 years, I've been engaged in application review, holistic admission review. While I was at U of I, I also chaired the admission committee for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, which by itself reviewed almost 12,000 applications. And in comparison, NIU receives about 15,000 applications total. So, this is certainly been the course of my career.

The holistic review – and I think you did an excellent job, so I'm also just echoing some of the information you shared. But it is a really, really individualized and flexible process that takes a look at the most critical components of the application, because by far and large, with this kind of volume of applications, you're not going to see just a cookie-cutter situation. In some instances, you can look at a student's transcript and identify red flags right away. And in many other instances, you can see academic strength represented and positive trends. And in those instances, you can zoom into the pieces that you need to sort of resolve to have confidence in the decision either way. So, that highly individualized process is really important.

The other thing that underscores the holistic admission review with some of the examples of what's factored in there would be something that you don't want to prescribe, because the wide range of circumstances, again, vary from student to student. And also you begin to run into conflicts with school systems. I think this is the way to go. Many of the most selective institutions and many of the most diverse institutions, as relates to applicant pools, do this at an incredible level. I think it also helps us to gain familiarity with the students in a way that allows us to identify targeting areas of support. So, even on the retention side, I think this is a huge step forward.

And then, finally, this does put us in a great position to build relationships with the schools and communities that students are coming from by us executing this additional review. In many instances the Office of Admissions will reach out to the high school, to the guidance and college counselors, get additional context. And when we make that decision in confidence, not only are we building that relationship with the student and displaying the faith that we have in them individually, but also the schools have confidence that the students NIU is taking are students that we are going to support, we are acutely familiar with. And then also we are keeping that line open as there's new information, changes, curricular changes, structural changes, that we need to know in deepening those relationships, I think, is equally important to the actual decisions we're making.

So, hopefully, that's an overview that brings people up to speed here.

K. Thu: Thank you. I think that's a good segue into inviting Naomi Bolden up to the podium here to say a few words, because in many ways, she's a student leader, but she embodies some of the values and principles this proposed change is all about. So, Naomi.

N. Bolden: Thank you, Dr. Thu. As Dr. Thu said, I'm Naomi. I'm from the Student Government Association. And I definitely can say that, on behalf of the SGA and myself personally, that we support this admissions policy. I think it definitely gives NIU a different purview to people who are possibly applying, coming in the fall. Definitely from my experience, I believe firmly that a

standardized test doesn't really determine your capabilities or how intelligent you are, how successful that you might be in college.

From my own experience, I took the ACT three times. And the first time I took it, I got a 21, which is the national average. But I didn't feel like that was good enough, so I took it two more times. And my score actually went down a point. And that could be for a number of factors. It could be because of stress. It could be just because the fact that I, you know, hey I'm going to take it again, you know, I'm expecting my score to go up. And then expectation was not it.

So I say this all to say that, even with having an ACT score of a 21, I still got accepted into some really good schools, NIU included, as well as the fact that I was still able to come to college and succeed. Even having not taking the ACT back then, if we were not accepting it, I still feel as though it would have been a good indicator for myself and for NIU to see that, you know, just based off of grades and the things that you do in high school, can actually prepare you better for college than the ACT can. I can't even tell you a question from the ACT that I can remember. And the fact that the ACT, we've all heard that, you know, sometimes standardized tests can, you know, affect other groups more than others. And that can be because of the fact that, you know, some people want to go out and get the extra tutoring services. Some people may want to take multiple tests, and they simply can't afford it, and they're stuck with the score. So I think that the fact that we're doing away possibly with this new test-blind, I believe is what it's called now, that we're going test-blind, I think, opens a new door for newer students, people maybe who have been discouraged from applying to NIU in the past possibly can revisit the idea of coming here.

So, I think that if we vote on this today, I see it as a great step forward for NIU. Thank you, Dr. Thu.

K. Thu: Thank you. So, with that, I think what I'd like to do is to entertain a motion to approve. I'm not cutting off discussion; I'm just getting it into a formal motion. So, a motion to approve, a second, and then we'll have more discussion.

J. Burton: Move to approve.

K. Thu: James. Do we have a second?

J. Royce: Second.

K. Thu: Royce, okay. Now, discussion. Gary?

G. Chen: First of all, I would like to say this is a very wonderful initiative that we are doing right here. And I was happy to show my support last week in the Faculty Senate meeting. As a member of the Faculty Senate and the council, just like last week, I had some questions regarding the process of the holistic review done by the admission office. My concern is that in the admission office, we have a limited number of staff, or limited number of resources. Given the number of potential applicants within the range between GPA 2.5 and 2.99, I cannot remember last week, what was the number?

Unidentified: 2500.

G. Chen: Yes, about 2500 applicants going to be holistically reviewed with the flexible majors, but limited number of staff inside of the admission office. So, my major concern is about the process of consistency. How the staff in the admission office with their busy working agenda to keep up with the consistency. For example, will there be part of the process that any students who are unfortunately been rejected within that range, 2.5 and 2.99, will there be [inaudible] of the notes that indicating the reason why they are rejected, unfortunately, so that we can learn a lesson from it? And that may also help to build up the qualitative majors within the admission office so that amount of staff that we are able to improve our consistency label.

So last week I asked the question. I did not receive a clear answer from you. So over the last week, I was thinking, my key point is that, if we want to be fair to students, or for example if a student is, unfortunately, rejected, based on some of the holistic review, qualitative, characteristic, or majors, would there be a possibility or a chance that another student with the similar qualitative range who is accepted. If that is the case, we are not consistent. So, this kind of process that is still unclear to me, but as a member of the council, I'm not asking the admission office to come up with this kind of consistent major or process, but I think it's in the continuous improvement process so that my main point – sorry I take too long – my main point is that in the future, can we do this as more like annual review, end of the year, from your office that you can generate a report. I don't know which committee is going to help with the review of this kind of report to keep us in the loop of continuous improvement. So that my key point is we don't want to get a student's parents to complain, oh my next-door neighbor's kid was accepted, but you know, they are pretty much all the same for whatever the flexible majors they would consider. So I hope – that was my main point. I didn't make it too clear. Thank you.

K. Thu: Thanks, Gary. I'm going to give you an opportunity to respond. And then I want to make sure there's enough time for other questions or comments.

Q. Clay: Absolutely. And there's multiple layers in there, and I hope that I can concisely respond to address those many different layers. First as an industry, the application review is one of those things that it's extremely personal and it's contextual. And what you'll always find to be the case is, across institutions, no one spells out the criteria and why we said yes or no, right. Institutions first must manage space. And a result of that space management, they decide to sort of prioritize and make decisions in a way that's standardized within their protocols as a practice. But is it outwardly communicated? And again, we benchmarked. In addition to my own direct experience, we benchmarked a range of institutions, and you're not going to go to a website – you could go to U of I, you could go to any other selective school or any school using test optional admission, and they're not going to prescribe this is why we said yes, this is why we said no. So the one thing I can guarantee you honestly is people will say, your student was accepted. I think my kid was better than the next kid. And no one will ever be satisfied with – oh yeah, you explained that pretty good, I'm glad you didn't take my kid. That's never going to happen. And I say that with sincerity and a sensitivity.

The other thing to understand about the process is within the university review committee. Any applications that go through there, that committee will be responsible for an annual audit and reflections. That's the part of the process. That's a part of what we benchmark. And that's a part of what we're prepared to do so, you can evaluate the decisions and adjust the way that you make those decisions regularly.

The other piece to think about within that holistic review: I think there's a lot of misperception that's important to address. For example, I worked at Cornell University, which received about 50,000 applications a year. The admissions staff was smaller than the staff that I have here, and we receive 15,000 applications. So, the perception is how many staff you need to manage the process is probably to underscore and illuminate. I've already prepared, based on national averages, clearly I'm a member of our National Association of College Admission Counseling. I have been an officer with the state affiliate. And there's a lot of information and professional development and trainings that we continually go through. But on average, based on the pace of reviewing applications by volume of applications, I prescribed out how many staff we need, how many readers, how much time to allot the committees.

The other piece to understand within this process is, although we're talking about a volume of applications, if we per se have 5,000 applications go through this process, 70 percent would go through the Office of Admissions. But they're already at an academic level that we know quickly how to identify those red flags. Then also underscore the fact that these applications are not even being reviewed in our current process. If you have the test score, 2.5, you're in, no one looks at it. 2.75, you're in, no one looks at it. So, at the 3.0, those students will be automatically admitted, and the data supports why they should be automatically admitted. And then the students from the 2.5 to 2.99, I'm doing something that wasn't done on any level last year with the staff and with the university review committee.

The other piece to sort of underscore is that, as we're going through that process, one of the most important things that we can do is protect the integrity and the privacy of that process. So, again, any sort of level of analysis that we conduct, it will have to stay extremely internal and a need-to-know basis, because now you run into FERPA and student records and privacy issues. So, there are many different things that impact the way that the process will look. But we have more than enough staff. The university review committee is going to be a huge bonus to review these applications. And from the application opening on July 1 until essentially two or three weeks before the fall semester starting, we have a huge runway to make all of these decisions many times over.

K. Thu: Thanks, Quinton. And for people like me, I used to think of applications coming in at one point in time, right. And you have to do them all at once. And that's not the case. They're spread over time. Other comments or questions? I saw a couple hands. All the way in – and then I'll come to you, James. All the way in the back.

N. Johnson: One of the questions I had was, we know this will affect the CHANCE program. So have they decided how or what measurements they will use for that program, since they'll be changing up everything?

K. Thu: I'm going to punt this one over to Omar. Omar, you're the CHANCE person.

O. Ghrayeb: Well this is a great question. The CHANCE program is staying and will continue serving students and helping students to be successful and persist and graduate. Let me step back and talk about the CHANCE program. Fifty-one years ago it started to serve two purposes or two goals. One is access, to grant access to students who cannot be admitted to NIU without coming through the conditional admission, through CHANCE. And the second goal was to help those students that we admit through the CHANCE program to become successful.

Now the proposed admission policy is guaranteeing the access and actually, not only guaranteeing the access that traditionally given to traditional students, but actually it's improving the access. We looked at last year numbers. About 150 students [inaudible] 500 will have a chance at scholarships. Actually, about 160 students will have a chance to be university honors students. So not only they are admitted like everyone else, but actually the access is improved. So that part of the mission of the CHANCE program that started 51 years ago is preserved and actually is improved.

The focus is now on retention. How can we help the students persist and retain and actually graduate? So we are working closely with the CHANCE program to identify those services to help students. And not only actually, it will not be only one-year program. It will be throughout helping CHANCE students throughout their tenure at NIU.

So, actually, the CHANCE program is staying; and it will be even more focused on its mission. I hope that helps.

K. Thu: Thanks, Omar. James?

J. Burton: Yes, thanks. As you know, I'm a big fan of this. But a friend of mine raised a question for me I had not even thought of until I looked at it today. And that was regarding the home schooled and GED students. Just a question. I'm not sure it's clear, do they go to the undergraduate admission office for a holistic review or the university review committee for a holistic review? Thank you.

Q. Clay: It's based on their GPAs. So home school students would be evaluated in the same sense. If their GPA falls within that 2.0 to 2.49, they would go to that university review committee. If they're above that, then there's the automatic admission.

J. Burton: Perfect. What if they don't have a GPA. I think that's what that previous paragraph talked about.

Q. Clay: Right. Then if we run into an instance where there's not a GPA, the great thing about the university review committee is the Office of Admissions sits in there, and we can contextually review in that instance.

K. Thu: And that was the same questions that the Baccalaureate Council had. So they actually changed the language here to accommodate home schooled students and GED students. I'm mindful of time, but on the other hand, I don't want to cut off discussion of a very important issue. But if there are no other questions or comments, remember this is not just one-and-done. Next year, this will come back before the University Council for review, so we can see how it's going, basically.

So, we have a motion and a second. If there's no discussion, I think we should go ahead and take a vote. This is important enough where we do need to use our clickers. Now that we've learned how to efficiently use our clickers, Pat do you want to walk us through it again. If you haven't gotten a clicker, please grab one. We have a motion and we have a second.

P. Erickson: This is a simple majority. One or A for yes. Two or B for no. Three or C for abstain. And a new tip I want to share. As long as that poll is open, if you vote in a certain a way and a few seconds pass by and you change your mind, you can click another number. Your first number will be erased, and your updated number will come into the system.

K. Thu: Maybe we shouldn't know that. Tell us when we're ready. Okay. I think so. Fred, did you vote. Or do you vote? I think we're good. Okay.

Yes – 43 votes
No – 3 votes
Abstain – 1 vote

K. Thu: I want to just recognize Omar's team, Quinton, Sol, for all of your hard work on this issue. I also want to commend the shared governance process that we've thoroughly vetted this proposal, starting last fall and into the spring. And now you have a little more time, Sol, to implement it. His deadline for us was March, but I'm glad to see us give him a little more daylight.

L. Freeman: I actually have like tears in my eyes, because I am so proud to be a Huskie right now. We expect our students to develop and use critical thinking skills, to challenge things that don't make sense, to try to create a world with few disparities and more equity. And we should expect the same thing of ourselves. And today we have just really proven that we are a values-driven institution. So thank you very much.

K. Thu: Thank you, Lisa.

- B. All In Campus Democracy Challenge
Matt Streb, Chief of Staff, Liaison to BOT
Ian Pearson, Speaker of the Senate, Student Government Association

K. Thu: Matt, you're going to be up next. I'm inviting Matt Streb up to talk about the [All In Campus Democracy Challenge](#), which is all about getting the vote out in the next election. And Ian is going to join him as well. I think you're going to have to come around this way, Ian.

M. Streb: Good afternoon, everybody. It's tough to top that – that truly was a historic moment for our institution in our 125th year, right. I know it's late. We'll be very quick. I want to give Ian most of the time to talk about the exciting things that our students are doing with this.

But I wanted to make you aware of an initiative that we have on campus called the All In Democracy Challenge. The All In Democracy Challenge is a national program designed to

encourage healthy habits among college students. It's something that President Freeman learned about and said, we need to be active in this organization. And so we got engaged, because it's consistent with our mission, our vision and values.

Again, what the idea here is you want to make sure that you're developing good civic habits, right, civic engagement habits. One thing that we know from the voting literature is that, once we have you in the voting booth, there's a good chance that you're going to continue to return, right? And so it's really important that, at the college-age level, 18 to 22 usually, that we develop good habits.

Let me tell you this very quickly about what it is, and then Ian will walk through some of the things that we're doing. So again, by joining the challenge, we commit to trying to increase our student voting rates – I'll talk about that more in a second – help students form the habit of active and informed citizens and make democratic citizenship, make democratic participation a core value on their campus. We already do that in many of our classes, not just in political science, but in N-GOLD, in a variety of other places throughout campus.

The other thing we have to do is we have to participate in the [National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement \(NSLVE\)](#) data set in order to measure student participation rates. I'll talk about that briefly in just a second.

We had to convene a campus-wide committee. I chair that. Ian is a member of it. It's made up of faculty, staff, students, community members. We have a steering committee, and then we have several subcommittees.

And we had to develop and implement an action plan. Our action plan is incredibly detailed. I like to note that it's far more detailed than Illinois State's action plan. It is available online. I'm not going to go through that today. But I do encourage you to go through and look at it. Ian will talk a little bit about it in his comments. If you just go to our niu.edu website, you type in [Huskies Vote](#), it will come up there.

And then we have to share our campus action plan and our NSLVE results on a website. And it's all there.

So let me talk just quickly about the NSLVE, and I can tell you, as a political science professor who studies voting behavior, this is one of the coolest things out there. I will say it would be even cooler if the data was individual level data instead of aggregate level data. But to participate in the Democracy Challenge, we have to be part of the NSLVE. And what that essentially does is that means that are giving [Tufts University](#), which is where the research project is funded, access to our students. And whether you vote is a matter of public record – not how you vote, we don't know that – but we certainly know whether you actually pulled a ballot. In elections, you'll probably see a candidate running against somebody else who says, so-and-so can't be elected; they didn't vote in three of the last four elections, or whatever. That's all public record. And so that's what Tufts is doing. And they're able to put together – I know you can't see this – this is all available on our website if you want to look at it. They're able to put together a data set for us and tell us in 2018, 38.5 percent of our students actually voted. That number next to it is 19.9. That is the increase from 2014 in voting. That was actually a pretty huge increase. And that was not just NIU. That wasn't

something we were doing specifically – I’d love to say it was. But college age students, in particular, voted in significantly more numbers in 2018 than in 2014. And then the last thing is where we are. Are we above? 39.1 is the mean turnout at all colleges. And you’ll see that we’re slightly below that.

Well what you can get is, we have a bunch of information that can be broken down into a variety of different ways. We can look at our students’ voting based on absentee votes. Are they voting early? How are they breaking down based on age or gender, race? Are there differences between undergraduates or graduates, or by the undergraduate class year? Do seniors vote more than freshmen? Enrollment status – are they full-time or part-time. And one of the things I think is actually cool is that we can get a very clear sense of field of study. Where on our campus are our students participating? Where are they not? Dr. Schraufnagel will be happy to know, and I as a political science professor, maybe it shouldn’t come as a surprise, but our political science students are doing a very good job participating. Some of our other fields of study, maybe we have a little work to do there.

But it really is a great data set. And so from that data, what we did when we developed our action plan is we created three goals that we want to hit. We want to increase the percentage of our students who are registered to 80 percent in 2020. It was about 72.6 percent in 2018. You’ll notice, I hope you’ve seen all the “I can help you register to vote” signs and things like that on campus. We’ve really pushed that an awful lot. We have 40 people right now, a little bit more than 40 people on campus who actually went out and trained themselves to be deputy registrars. And that’s something that I think is really exciting.

We want to increase the percentage of students who voted from about 50 percent – that’s wrong – that should be 50 percent in 2016 to 55 percent in 2020 – I’m not sure what happened there.

And then lastly, we want to make sure – I noticed I said earlier we weren’t above the mean in 2018, we weren’t above the mean in 2016 either – so we want to be above the mean.

The last thing I want to mention very quickly before I turn it over to Ian is that this has been a true campus and community effort. And it’s really been exciting for me when we started this to see the number of people that want to be engaged in this initiative. As I said, we have more than 40 people who went through deputy registrar training. This slide here is purposefully made so you can’t read it. And the point is because these are the numbers of divisions and units on campus that have helped us in some way, been in part in some way, in this initiative. And things that you wouldn’t even think about. Just on Monday, for instance, our Intercollegiate Athletic Department actually held a voter registration drive. So there’s a variety of different people that are engaged. And that really, really is exciting. Not surprisingly, or something heartens me, is the group that has been really, really engaged on campus have been our students. And that’s why we’ve asked Ian to come up and talk a little bit about some of the things that our students have been doing to help promote civic engagement on campus.

I. Pearson: I wanted to do a quick overview of what student efforts have been in the past. We don’t always do a very good job of communicating that to the campus community. And so for the last two years, the Student Government Association has worked on your typical voter registration drives and

get-out-the-vote tabling. But we've also hosted gubernatorial town halls. We drafted and passed a list of student legislative priorities, and then went down to Springfield and advocated on those priorities. We've held town halls with members of Congress and co-sponsored an event where state legislators came and talked about the state budget, as well as had a student rally to discuss student issues. So trying to learn what are the issues that matter to students and how can we be better advocates.

The problem with all that is that it was all very de-centralized. It was based a lot on the officers that were in charge and individual ideas. And so, the benefits of joining an initiative like this are that it really helps us build capacity. It centralizes our efforts. It allows us to collaborate with campus partners, many for the first time. I've met a huge number of people across campus that have offered support, that have offered resources. It's been truly humbling.

And lastly having institutional resources. Students are creative, but we don't necessarily have the professional skills to come up with really good designed fliers and things like that. So, having institutional support and learning how to do that has been really helpful as well.

And so, a summary of our involvement: President Bolden and I will be writing a letter to students about the importance of registering and voting ahead of the March primary. Students from across campus, not just in SGA, are serving on three subcommittees for communication events and voter registration, each of which has goals detailed in the action plan on the website.

And the last thing we've really been doing is helping share the action plan and facilitate student engagement across groups, not just within our organization. And beyond that, we're trying to come up with some companion efforts. So how can we supplement this with programs that SGA is uniquely able to put on. One of those are like public service focused events. For example, on February 12, we're having what's called a Life & Local Government Panel where we've invited local elected officials to talk about transitioning into public service from careers that may not have been in public service, so private sectors careers transitioning into that sector.

We have a goal to increase NIU Advocacy Day student participation. That will be on April 1, and there will be more information coming out around campus about that. And then lastly, passing a new set of student legislative priorities that's reflective of the goals of the current student population.

We're really, really excited, and I want to thank Dr. Streb, as well as all the members of the campus community that have really jumped in and gotten this effort going.

K. Thu: Thanks, Ian and Matt. We have a couple minutes for questions or comments? Any? I think this is a fantastic initiative. I think – Scot knows this better than I do – national interest among college students in getting involved in voting has increased significantly in the last period of time. So the fact that we're sort of leading the way is important for the campus.

M. Streb: Just one thing I wanted to add very quickly. As somebody who does this for a living, it's comfortable for me to talk about voting and civic engagement in class. You may be wondering: Well this is not something – I'm a chemistry professor – how can I get engaged? How can I get my

students engaged involved? If you go to the website, we actually have a resource that talks about how you can talk about some of these issues with your class and things like that. So again, if there are ways that you want to get involved, certainly send me an email. We'd be happy to work with you on those types of things.

K. Thu: Sounds good. Great. Thanks you very much.

X. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE – Linda Saborío – report (Kendall Thu)

K. Thu: Turning back to our agenda, we're on item Roman numeral X., second page, Reports From Councils, Boards and Standing Committees. The first report is the Faculty Advisory Council to IBHE. Linda was not able to make the last FAC meeting, so I took her place at the same meeting where the IBHE met that President Freeman referred to. My report's not nearly as colorful as Linda's, but just a couple of items. The Faculty Advisory Council, which is created by the subset of bylaws that create the IBHE. So basically, the advisory committee is just that – Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE. And so we were able to meet – was it the chair of the IBHE – John Atkinson, and talk to him about the future of higher education, including what's going on with this new master plan that President Freeman talked about.

The Faculty Advisory Council consists of representatives from each of our sister institutions, including community colleges. And a couple of things that stood out in those conversations: One, continuing conversation about dual credit. That is getting college credit for certain high school classes. And there's a lot of concern expressed by faculty about controlling the quality of those classes that are taught in high schools. And that's certainly something that needs to be attended to.

On the flip side, affordability and being able to graduate on time is the other countervailing pressure. So some sort of balance needs to be worked out, but that's certainly something that our colleagues are talking about around the state.

The issue that I brought up to the IBHE chair was, in this master plan, can we have tenure-track faculty be referred to as sort of the backbone of what higher education does. And that question to the chair sort of sparked a lot of conversation from not only other four-year institutions, but the community colleges, which are trying to maintain tenure-track faculty as their core. So, that came up as well.

Otherwise, the rest of the conversation had to do with the Faculty Advisory Council wanting to be listened to, similar to the Faculty Senate in our shared governance system, and getting assurance that, as this master plan unfolds, that faculty input will be clearly incorporated.

So, sorry I don't have any jokes or colorful side stories for my Faculty Advisory Council report. Any questions about that?

- B. University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees – report
Jeffry Royce, Catherine Doederlein, Kendall Thu
Alex Gelman, Sarah Marsh, Jason Hanna

K. Thu: If not, the next item on reports is the report from the University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees. Just a few highlights from the board’s meeting on, I believe it was December 5 of last year. The board approved, I think, two new degree programs, including a Ph.D. in kinesiology and physical education. So if anybody is here from that department, congratulations. They also approved a new degree as B.A./B.S. in women, gender and sexuality studies, which got a round of applause from the BOT room. So those two programs have gotten approval.

There was a report on increased success by the NIU Foundation in fundraising for the first quarter of this year. A report that tuition is being held flat once again. I don’t know how many years we’ve held it flat.

L. Freeman: About six.

K. Thu: About six years. Overall fees were reduced, although there’s a variation from one fee to the next.

Recognition of faculty from the faculty and staff awards from last year. And then a list of programs that were into the normal cycle under review. And then there was a budget report as well. That’s all I have. There’s a lot more in the complete board proceedings if you’re so inclined. It’s all available online.

- C. Academic Policy Committee – Vicki Collins, Chair – no report
- D. Resources, Space and Budget Committee – Therese Arado, Chair – report

K. Thu: With that, we have no report from Academic Policy Committee. Therese, report from Resource, Space and Budget.

T. Arado: Yes. The Resources, Space and Budget Committee actually met twice since the last meeting of this body, once December 6 and once Friday, January 10, 2020. At the December meeting, the committee was provided an update on the then upcoming moves related to the completion of the Holmes Student Center renovation. And connected with that were changes within the Campus Life Building. Several of those moves already took place over break, including the relocation of the DRC [Disability Resource Center] to the first floor of the Campus Life Building, which the committee was excited to hear about.

Also at that meeting, proposed changes to the university fee review committee process were discussed, and the proposed changes include starting the process earlier to help the divisions that function off of these. And to no longer require a non-disclosure agreement. And those changes are intended to allow for additional time for review and to have clarity in the overall process.

At our January meeting, President Freeman was a guest, and she shared with the group that the Capital Development Board had very recently – it was actually that week – confirmed a \$7.7 million allotment for the planning process of the health IT building. The release of the funds for this purpose is now going to allow a thoughtful and inclusive planning process for the facility. Early this semester, information on potential sites should be communicated. And the president shared her goals with respect to the building: first being to co-locate the disbursed health professions programs. She also views this as an opportunity for significant interdisciplinary collaborations. In development of the facility’s philanthropic opportunities and community and external partnerships, those are going to be encouraged while the building is being thought about and developed.

And then at that point, the RSB had a very good conversation with President Freeman regarding possible cross-collaboration uses for the facility. Many committee members shared ideas on ways to ensure the facility is inclusive of research and engagement efforts by all colleges and departments on campus. And the committee is really looking forward to a continued discussion and hearing more feedback on the new facility. Maybe even next week? Well, President Freeman won’t be there, but our next meeting is a week from this Friday. And that’s all.

K. Thu: Thanks, Therese. Any questions for Therese?

E. Rules, Governance and Elections Committee – Richard Siegesmund, Chair – report

K. Thu: If not, the next report on the agenda is from Richard Siegesmund. As I mentioned, he’s out of the country. I attended the Rules, Governance and Elections Committee meeting the last time they met, which I think was a week or two ago, something like that. So, I’ve got Ian and Scot up front here so they can chime in if I get it wrong. Most of that meeting, I think, was just trying to learn about the proposed changes to the shared governance structure. Many people don’t really know what the Constitution is or what the bylaws are. So, just understanding it from that foundational level is important.

An additional part of the conversation had to do with conceptualizing changing the structure of the University Council. And we came up with a draft concept that we’re not providing here yet, but will be presented, hopefully, in the February Faculty Senate meeting and the February University Council meeting.

So that’s my very short report from RGE. I don’t know if either of you want to add to it?

F. University Affairs Committee – Hamid Bateni, Chair – report

1. Proposed 2029-30 academic calendar

K. Thu: If not, I’m going to turn it over to Hamid, who’s going to talk to us about the proposed 2029-30 academic calendar. Hamid, take it away.

H. Bateni: Well it’s going to be very short. In your packet, you see the proposed calendar for 2029-2030. I believe it’s page 438 to 440 in your packet. I move to approve the proposed calendar for 2029-2030.

K. Thu: Do we have a second?

T. Arado: Second.

K. Thu: Who seconded it? Did you get that, Pat? Okay. Any discussion? I'm always curious about how many years out we actually do this. I just hope I'm alive by the time we get around to that. If there's no discussion, I think we can voice vote on this one. All in favor, signify by saying aye.

Members: Aye.

K. Thu: Opposition? Abstentions? Thanks, Hamid. So, we now have the 2029-2030 calendar in place.

G. Student Government Association – report
Naomi Bolden, President
Ian Pearson, Speaker of the Senate

K. Thu: And we have reports from the Student Association, Naomi, and then Ian.

N. Bolden: Hi again. I'm going to try to keep this a little short so we can be respectful of everybody's time. A few things that we are planning to work on this semester or already have begun addressing. Going off of the democracy challenge, SGA is actually going to be having some voter registration drives coming up in the next couple of weeks. Our director of governmental affairs, who's in the audience, is going to be out tabling, trying to advertise to students to make them aware of the Illinois primary that will be coming up in March, that is March 17. So, we are aiming to get as many students registered as possible. I think we all know how important it is and that college students typically don't vote. So, we are working on that, and you can see Victor, or email him, after the meeting if you'd like the specific dates.

Another thing that came up, actually within recent weeks, some students have been emailing me, students with disabilities, concerning accessible rooms on campus to reserve for their organizations. So, myself and SIOD are actually working together to compile a list of rooms that are considered fully accessible on campus. Currently, a list doesn't exist; and we were actually asked if there is a list that has those rooms. It's kind of difficult trying to go out and search to see where you can accommodate a full group of people. So, we are trying to compile a list of rooms on campus that could be reserved through SIOD with the permission of the building, because there are some rooms that we don't have control over. So, that will be coming in the coming weeks. And if anybody has any suggestions or knows of any spaces on campus that are considered fully accessible, you can let me know after the meeting.

Thirdly, I'm also going to be going to different organizations and meetings or general body meetings, as well as trying to conduct a survey of the campus. This semester I really – it's actually going to be a transition period – at the end of the semester we'll be welcoming a new president and a new speaker into the SGA. So, what I would like to do is to see what they need or what they want to see from SGA this semester or for in the future. Kind of the reason why I want to do this is just to

get a little bit more personal with the student organizations, as well as the student body; and to bring those concerns or any good or bad things, I guess you could say, to the university so we can see how we can work through shared governance to address those things. I would like to take those things, I have monthly meetings with Dr. Streb, Ian and I, so those would probably be some of the things that we would be discussing, how the university and the SGA can work together to address those things.

Another thing we're looking into, which is something that I think we all try to address and target every year is textbook affordability. So, my director of academic affairs is actually trying to work to see if we can create an SGA library. And what this would entail is any textbooks that aren't being returned or aren't eligible for buy-backs, things of that nature, would be donated or given to the SGA. And students coming into the next semester would be able to check out those books and return them once their classes are over. Now we don't really quite know what that looks like yet. We're trying to see if it's actually possible for us to do this, because we do know that the library has a reserve system. But the problem with that is that you can only use those books at the library. You're not able to take them to your class or at home. So, we're trying to create another affordable option for students. I know a lot of times they go to the bookstore, or they might go to Amazon, but you kind of have to pay for those. So, this will be another affordable option for students to look into if it's possible for us to get that done.

And then lastly, we have a couple of upcoming events. So, on January 30, which is actually tomorrow, we are going to be having a rededication ceremony. For those of you who do not know, there was a student a while ago, he passed away, his name was Steven Agee. We have a conference room in the SGA office that is actually dedicated to him. He was a student leader. Now that we have moved, we actually moved the conference room with us. So, if you can make that, it's going to be 5:30, Ian? I think so. It's going to be at 5:30 tomorrow. There will be light refreshments. It's going to be in the Holmes Student Center in the Oasis Commons, so kind of across from the Starbucks. So, if you can stop by, a few of his family members will be there, definitely his mom. If any of you have had the chance to meet her, she's a good woman, she'll be there as well, just to stop by and pay your respects; he was a good guy.

Then also on February 5, we're going to be having our Spring Involvement Fair. Now we have one in the fall that is hosted annually, but there's usually not one in the spring. So, SGA felt that it was important. We do have new and transfer students that come in the spring that may not know about the organizations on campus. So, we're going to be hosting that. It's going to be in the Holmes Student Center again, the Regency Room. And that will begin at 5 p.m.

Then lastly, and on March 21, that's a Saturday, we are going to be having the first ever, the Future is Female Leadership Conference. I came up with this idea a couple of months ago, around June, July. And I thought about when I transition out of this position, what is something that I would want to leave the campus with? What is something that I feel would be important enough to have the next president continue on? And I feel as though sometimes there's a lack of attention, especially for undergraduate young women, as to how to transition out of college life into life after graduation. So, that's kind of what the point of that program is going to be about. We're going to have some entertainment, some guest speakers, panelists. And also we're going to have some food, which is always nice. So, if any of you all in the audience are able to make it, I would really appreciate it. It's

open to faculty and staff, as well, and it's free for the campus. And again, that is March 21. More information will be sent out about that soon to.

Thank you.

K. Thu: Thanks, Naomi. March 2, it'll be spring then too. Ian?

I. Pearson: I've been focused all on shared governance reform and democracy challenge, so I'll push my report to February.

K. Thu: Okay. And I have to give kudos to Ian, because he has the read the entire Constitution and Bylaws, all of the proposed changes. And he's provided some valuable feedback. So, if you have any questions about the proposed changes, you can come to me or you can go to Ian, as well. So thanks, Ian.

H. Operating Staff Council – Jeffrey Royce, President – report

K. Thu: That brings us to Jeffrey Royce. I saw Jeffrey back there somewhere. Jeffrey?

J. Royce: But, of course, I have a comment, Kendall. Those folks leaving early don't know what they're missing. For the most part, the Operating Staff Council has continued to pursue those priorities, which I've discussed at previous UC meetings. We're looking forward to hosting many members of our senior leadership team this semester. And I'm glad to report that every administrator I've reached out to this year has clearly made it a priority to respond to our requests and questions, and I continue to be grateful for that.

Even though there's been no vote yet here on the matter, I'd like to express my gratitude toward Kendall, once again, for spearheading shared governance restructuring effort. There has certainly been no shortage of differing opinions, and you've truly made every effort to include everyone's voice and ideas each step of the way. Our 400-page agenda packet is a testament to the monolithic nature of the project, and everyone involved deserves credit, specifically those members of the Rules, Governance and Elections Committee and, of course, Pat Erickson, without whom all of shared governance would collapse. So, thank you. [applause]

I lastly wanted to remark on the new admissions policy. I've heard it referred to as test-blind admissions, and I hope that our holistic review process takes into serious consideration that GPA is, of course, based on class grades, which can be overwhelmingly based on tests. And based on Quinton's comments, I'm sure that it does take those things into consideration, and I look forward to seeing what the next barrier to fall will be. So, congratulations.

K. Thu: Thank you, Jeffrey. And here, here about the comment concerning Pat. We would fall apart without her.

I. Supportive Professional Staff Council – Catherine Doederlein, President – report

K. Thu: And last, but not least, Cathy Doederlein. Cathy, I saw you back there somewhere.

C. Doederlein: Yep, I'm back here also. And definitely would echo about Pat as well. We have just closed out our awards nominations for the presidential awards, which are going to be reviewed by our awards committee. But thank you to any of you who happened to have the opportunity to nominate an SPS colleague for some of that recognition, and look forward to being able to report back on the recipients soon.

Also just wanted to stress that we will be starting to send out information about our election process for SPS Council, as well as this is a presidential election year. So, if you have SPS colleagues that you think would be interested in serving in a shared governance capacity, we would really appreciate you encouraging them to self-nominate or nominate their peers additionally service on committees. As we have more people transitioning from SPS to Civil Service, it's been a bit of a moving target and has been challenging to have SPS consistently on university-wide committees. Obviously, we want to make sure that representation remains strong. So, again, any assistance you could provide in encouraging your SPS colleagues, nominating them, or encouraging them to self-nominate for committee service is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

K. Thu: Thanks, Cathy.

XI. 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](#), Graduate Council Curriculum Committee
- K. [Minutes](#), Honors Committee
- L. [Minutes](#), Operating Staff Council
- M. [Minutes](#), Student Senate
- N. [Minutes](#), Supportive Professional Staff Council
- O. [Minutes](#), University Assessment Panel
- P. [Minutes](#), University Benefits Committee
- Q. [Minutes](#), Univ. Comm. on Advanced and Nonteaching Educator License Programs
- R. [Minutes](#), University Committee on Initial Educator Licensure

- S. 2019-20 Faculty Senate meeting dates:
Sep 4, Oct 2, Oct 30, Nov 20, Jan 22, Feb 19, Mar 25, Apr 22

- T. 2019-20 University Council meeting dates:
Sep 11, Oct 16, Nov 6, Dec 4, Jan 29, Feb 26, Apr 1, Apr 29
- U. [Positive picture for state higher ed funding](#) – Inside Higher Ed
- V. [NIU Social Media Policy](#)

K. Thu: Before I entertain a motion to adjourn, just a couple items in the information packet. I volunteered at some shared governance meeting previously to create a link for our NIU Social Media Policy, so that's in the packet under Item V.

- W. University procedures for translation of merit ratings into merit salary increases

K. Thu: And then under Item W., those are the procedures for translating merit ratings into merit salary increases for tenure-track faculty. So, that's there and available to you as well.

Maybe a reminder that the kick-off event for the 125th anniversary is going to occur tomorrow starting at 3, and I can't remember exactly where it's going to be held.

L. Freeman: It's in the Holmes Student Center, and I don't exactly know where either at the moment. Ian and I will both be speaking, so you can come and hear us.

K. Thu: Anything else?

XII. ADJOURNMENT

K. Thu: We didn't quite make 4:30, but it's pretty close. So, a motion to adjourn?

J. Burton: So moved.

K. Thu: Do we have a second.

J. Wilson: Second.

K. Thu: All in favor?

Members: Aye.

K. Thu: Opposition? Abstentions? Thanks, everyone. We'll see you next month.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.