

TRANSCRIPT

University Council
Wednesday, January 27, 2021, 3 p.m.
Microsoft Teams Meeting
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois

All University Council members will receive an Outlook invitation to this Teams meeting. Others wishing to join the meeting, please send your request to Pat Erickson at pje@niu.edu.

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Arado, B. Beyer, G. Beyer, Borg, Brinkmann, Chinniah, Collins, Conderman, Costello, Cripe, Doederlein, D. Douglass, Freeman, Garcia, Ingram, A. Johnson, N. Johnson, Martin, Monteiro, Narayanan, Nicholson, Olson, Rhode (for Boughton), Royce, Scheibe, Stange, Teso-Warner, Vaughn, Weffer

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Boughton

OTHERS PRESENT: Barnhart, Blazey, Boston, Brady, Bryan, C. Douglass, Edghill-Walden, Elish-Piper, Falkoff, Frazier, Ghrayeb, Hendricks, Jensen, Junco, Klaper, McEvoy, Miner, Pitney, Rogers, Saborío, Thu, Walker, Walther, Wesener Michael, Wickens, Wright

I. CALL TO ORDER

L. Freeman: Good afternoon, everybody. It's 3 p.m. on my computer's clock, so I'm going to go ahead and call the meeting to order.

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

L. Freeman: The first agenda item after that is to verify that we have a quorum. Pat or Ferald, can you do that for me, please.

P. Erickson: I can verify that we have a quorum. And, President Freeman, did you want me to do a quick refresher on voting now?

L. Freeman: You took the words right out of my mouth. I have a note to say, before moving to adoption of the agenda, I want to ask Pat to walk everyone through the voting mechanism. So, great minds think alike. Please, Pat, go ahead.

P. Erickson: Thank you. We're going to spend just a few minutes refreshing our memories today about the two voting methods that we use in University Council meetings. First, for the less controversial votes, such as adopting the agenda or approving the minutes, remember that we are no longer typing yes, yes, yes into the chat box anymore. Instead, we are waiting for our chat monitor, Jeffrey Royce today, to type three phrases into the chat box. For example, he might type Agenda-yes,

Agenda-no, Agenda-abstain. And once you see those three separate statements in the chat box, then we'd like you to hover your cursor over the statement that matches your vote and click your thumbs up icon. And in this way, Jeffry won't have to down a lot of yeses one after another, but instead, we'll see that thumbs up count go up in the chat.

For more significant votes where maybe numbers and anonymity are more important to us, we're going to use a tool called Poll Everywhere. I think we used it at our last meeting, but just as a refresher, when the times comes, I will put a hyperlink into the chat, and you can click right on that and go to a web-based tool called Poll Everywhere. It's a lot like Qualtrics, but, hopefully, a little quicker. And on that ballot, you'll see numbers, 1 through 10. And for most of our voting in University Council, 1 will usually be yes, 2 will be no, 3 will be abstain. And then we'll just ignore the other numbers. There's no submit button to click. Once you click on the number that represents your vote, then that vote is instantly submitted to the Poll Everywhere report, and we'll see those votes tallied up on the screen when we get to that part of the meeting. And then also, I should mention, if you change your mind while we're voting, you can click on the clear button that you'll see at the bottom of the ballot screen and then just choose a different number. And, if you do that, your original vote will be immediately removed from the tally and replaced with your new.

So, those are our two voting methods, and that's all I have.

L. Freeman: Thank you, Pat. That was a very clear explanation. And thank you, Jeffry, for being a chat monitor par excellence. I know that you'll keep us all on track.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

L. Freeman: And now actually at Roman numeral III, we have our first opportunity to test this out. I do also want to remind people that, when they make a motion, to provide their last name, because it's just easier for the folks keeping track to know what's going on. And so with that, may I have a motion to adopt today's agenda.

T. Arado: So moved.

C. Doederlein: Second.

L. Freeman: What a surprise, Therese has made the motion, and Cathy has seconded it. And we will now vote using the mechanism in the chat box.

J. Royce: Notifications just about covered my screen. I would say with 19 that I see, that should be enough to adopt the agenda.

L. Freeman: And it appears to be 20. Kendall has owned up to accidentally voting not to adopt the agenda.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 2, 2020 MINUTES

L. Freeman: All right, in that case, we're going to try this all over again. And we're going to say, can I have a motion to approve the minutes of December 2, 2020. They're found on pages 3 to 5 of your packet.

T. Arado: So moved.

L. Garcia: Second.

L. Freeman: Thank you. And again, it looks like we have enough votes, a sufficient number of votes to adopt the agenda.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

L. Freeman: That allows us to move on to Roman numeral V. This is the time in the meeting when anyone who has requested the opportunity for public comment has the opportunity and privilege to do so. Have we had any requests for public comment?

P. Erickson: Yes, we have one request today from Corrine Wickens.

L. Freeman: Professor Wickens, the floor is yours.

C. Wickens: Thank you for this opportunity to speak. I am Dr. Corrine Wickens. I am associate professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. I want to provide some much-needed context about a situation that has been developing and escalating over the last 14 months, some of which you may be familiar with, some of you may not. But you may have received at some point in time over the last year what appeared to be a random email addressed from a former student named Rod Moyer, who was originally also scheduled to speak today. In each email and many other subsequent communications, Mr. Moyer has portrayed himself as a social justice lawyer, endeavoring to dismantle ongoing racial injustice.

Anti-Black racism remains virulent in our society – racial profiling, disproportionate incarceration of Black and brown men and women, excessive use of force, police brutality. On that we stridently agree. However, social justice always, locally and [inaudible] situated and demands full understanding of the context. However, that context has until recently largely remained cloaked, which I hope to undo a bit today.

So, I want to take you back to November 20, 2019. The day before, November 19, there had been a lot of robocalls, you may recall, of bomb threats to school districts, community colleges and other universities nationwide, including NIU. With that in mind, I'd like to read just a brief portion of two student emails that were originally written and dated September 8, 2020, nearly a year after the incident. These emails were written in support of their instructor, Michele Duffy, and which I've been given permission to share.

The first student writes, “During the fall of 2019, after a shooting threat that circulated NIU, my LTRE 190 class with Michele Duffy was disrupted by Roderic Moyer. Roderic Moyer stood in the door of our classroom holding a candle screaming at my instructor about how she was ruining the future of this country. I felt extremely uncomfortable and unsafe. Ms. Duffy asked us what we wanted to do, and we told her to call campus security, which Michele did.”

And then another email also dated September 8, 2020 from a student says, “I was in Michele Duffy’s LTRE class in the fall of 2019. November 20, 2019 will probably be a day I will never forget. I was a first semester freshman. So, everything about college was impressionable to me.”

The student goes on to describe the classroom activity they were doing that day and how the door was open, like normal. “About halfway through class, a man walks up to our door and just stands there with a lit candle in his hands. He was more or less, one more step from being in our classroom. As the class caught notice, we told Duffy, and she promptly and politely walked over and explained that he was in the wrong place, and he needed to leave, and she shut the door. After she closed the door, he promptly started to yell. Then he began to start videoing while yelling.”

The class Michele Duffy was teaching was one of our developmental reading courses that serves students from low-performing schools, mostly from Chicago. Ninety-five percent of the students in those classes are students of color and mostly Black. The two students who emailed in support of Michele were, themselves, Black.

The other important point of the context, that I also have been given permission to share, is that Michele Duffy was a survivor of the Las Vegas shooting, still recovering from the trauma and PTSD of that shooting. And as we approach the anniversary of our own active shooter, the drama unfolding becomes all the more poignant and complex.

No, this is not the simple scenario of a white woman suggesting the mere presence of a Black man as an immediate threat. Like so many such young Black men and women in her classroom, she was trying to do everything in her power to protect.

Rod Moyer submitted a grievance to the university, and his grievance was found to be without merit. And so, a hearing was never convened, and these emails submitted in support of Michele Duffy never read. Despite the grievance being denied and Rod Moyer having graduated, the story and saga continues, because administrators of different levels have allowed him to monopolize their attention. So, his narrative, for the longest time, was the only one they heard. But where is the social justice in that?

More recently, in an email dated January 8, he circulated an email that included an attachment by me in which I critique the institution as administration was handling the situation. In this framing, I was called the issue of social justice “crap” rather than the process in which the specific situation was handled and/or, more accurately mishandled. But a few days later, January 12, Rod Moyer uploaded a section to his website that highlighted me, except the picture he uploaded was an image of my niece, Jordan Schneider, who died almost ten years ago at the age of 18. The second image

was of my face, cropped from a photo with my spouse and our two boys at a Troop 33 Boy Scout ski trip. Now a number of issues that have been raised with this situation are too numerous to address at this point in time, and I hope to do so later.

But in conclusion, I want to extend here a formal apology in this public forum, first to Michele Duffy and then to Dr. Becky Vaughn. We, as faculty, left you hanging on a limb alone. Then [inaudible] Dr. Lampi did all she could to let you know that you were supported, but it wasn't enough. It should have come from the department, from the college, from our upper administration, from somewhere. Your efforts to protect your students was not recognized, and for that, I want to say I am deeply sorry. Thank you for your time.

L. Freeman: Thank you, Professor Wickens, for taking the time and having the courage to come and address this body during the public comment segment. NIU strives to be a university where every voice is heard and respected, and where every member of our university community feels a sense of belonging and feels supported by the Huskie family, including members of the administration. And I am deeply sorry that you and your colleagues have not felt that way. Thank you for sharing that here today. I want you to know that my door is always open, and I am available to continue this conversation with you and your peers.

VI. NIU PRESIDENT LISA FREEMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

L. Freeman: And, with that, we will conclude Roman numeral V. Public Comment and move on to Roman numeral VI., the president's announcements.

Good afternoon, everyone. Happy new year. And, as Dean Brinkmann said, happy third week of the semester. For fun before this meeting, I looked back at the comments that I made about a year ago at our January 2020 University Council. Therein, I covered a few topics that will be revisited today. And today I will also cover a few that weren't on our radar at that time. Notably, at last January's UC, I did not mention the COVID-19 pandemic, masks, testing, tracing, quarantine or vaccinations. And I did not talk about fall-to-spring enrollment. I know that there is interest in those topics today, so let me address them very briefly before moving on to the more typical shared governance items. And I'm going to thank you in advance for your attention and patience to remarks that are a little bit longer than usual today.

So, let's start with testing and vaccination. COVID-19 is still with us, although we all wish that that were not the case. Fortunately, we do have some new tools at our disposal now, and we will have more in the foreseeable future. For the spring 2021 semester, the university is using the Shield Illinois saliva-based COVID-19 test. It was developed by the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign for surveillance testing. You may have seen the new collection site that's been set up in the Duke Ellington ballroom. Switching to this test provides NIU with a couple of advantages, including more rapid turnaround on results, and this is very important for effective contact tracing, isolation and quarantine.

In addition, an agreement between the state Department of Health and the University of Illinois has provided the public universities in Illinois with \$20 million worth of tests. We were allotted 130,653 tests at no cost to us for the test to support surveillance testing. Our surveillance testing pool

currently includes students who live on campus; students, faculty, instructors and graduate students that participate in classes held in person; and employees who work in a variety of areas, such as residence halls, retail dining, our Child Development Center. In addition, student athletes and athletics staff are tested in accordance with the NCAA and MAC guidelines.

To date, this spring, in the third week of the semester, the positivity rates for our gateway testing of students prior to residence hall move-in and our surveillance pool rates have been under two percent. To keep rates low and to protect the pack, it's really important that the folks in the surveillance pool cooperate and continue to test. I'm going to ask you, please, to encourage those that you know to do just that.

With respect to vaccines, it's understandable that there's great interest in how vaccines will be distributed in our state and communities and how NIU employees will be prioritized and provided access. On January 14, the university sent out a message that summarized the plan established by the [Illinois Department of Public Health](#), along with the university's plans for keeping students and faculty informed. Since sharing that information, we've heard from a number of employees who believe strongly that the higher education workforce should have received a higher priority in the Illinois plan. I agree. And I want you to know that I, along with the presidents of our sister higher ed institutions and our legislative liaisons, have been advocating for this. In fact, Matt Streb is not here with us today, because at this very minute, he is representing NIU on a phone call with the public university presidents where this is one of the major agenda items. If you want to add your voice to advocate for higher prioritization of the higher education workforce for vaccine eligibility and distribution, you can take the following actions: You can write to the governor's office. You can write to the Illinois Department of Public Health. Or you can call your state representative. If things change and as things evolve, we will certainly keep you informed the way we have to date.

I'm going to move on now to talk about fall-to-spring reenrollment. And I'm going to ask Pat to show a table with those data. Pat, if you would be so kind. I'm not going to go through each column and each number, but I'm going to say that, for what should be obvious reasons in the middle of a pandemic, we were more concerned about fall-to-spring reenrollment of undergraduates this year than in any previous year. And I'm pleased to share good news. Fall 2020 undergraduates have reenrolled for spring 2021 at only slightly lower rates than previous undergraduate cohorts. This is a tribute to the incredible, actually heroic, efforts of NIU faculty and staff. And so this is my opportunity, on behalf of the university leadership and on behalf of our students, to say thank you for caring, for going the extra mile. And the numbers up on this chart are truly reason for celebration. When you think about the only experience our new freshmen and new transfers have had with NIU has been in this very bizarre virtual world, the fact that so many of them came back for the spring semester is amazing. And it's because of you.

All right, I think we're done with that item, and we're going to move on to more typical shared governance topics and activities. Talking about what's going on in Springfield, at [IBHE](#) and also here at NIU. Last year, in January 2020, I alerted you to the appointment of Ginger Ostro as the new, at that time, IBHE executive director. And I shared that she'd been charged by the IBHE, by the board, with developing a strategic plan that emphasizes improving college attainment, closing gaps for low-income students, students of color and rural students. These are equity gaps in achievement, in retention, in completion.

In fact, the strategic planning process that was just mentioned last January is now in progress. And NIU is well represented, not only on the [IBHE Strategic Planning Advisory Committee](#), but also in another statewide effort, whose work will inform the IBHE plan. That latter group is the Equity Working Group for Black Student Access and Success in Illinois Higher Education. The group is co-chaired by Chicago State University President Z Scott, State Senator Elgie Sims, Chicago Urban League President Karen Freeman-Wilson and the IBHE board chair, John Atkinson. NIU is represented on the Equity Working Group by me, as well as John Shelton, a faculty member in the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology, and TKeya Hicks, a graduate student in higher education and student affairs. The Equity Working Group will be wrapping up their work the first week of February, and their recommendations will inform, not only the IBHE strategic plan, but also the Illinois legislative policy agenda, P-20 Council efforts, some institutional level programs and corporate and philanthropic efforts.

Later, on today's agenda, my fellow member of the IBHE Strategic Planning Advisory Committee, Simón Weffer, is scheduled to report on that process. And I know he'll do an excellent job. He and I were not in the same break-out groups at the last meeting of the advisory committee, so if I have insights to add to his report, I'll do so at that point in the meeting.

Right now, I'd like to transition again and make some comments regarding the IBHE budget recommendation that you have in today's packet; and do that while also providing some institutional background to set the stage for today's presentation on budget by Vice President Chinniah and Executive Vice President and Provost Ingram. Last year at University Council, January 2020, we discussed last year's fiscal year IBHE budget recommendation. And though it's probably hard to remember at this point, we did so with significant optimism, as a result for recommendation for increases to our appropriated funds, to MAP, to the Monetary Assistance Program and to AIM HIGH. Yet, even then, pre-COVID, I cautioned this group that the IBHE recommendation is just that, a non-binding suggestion. And I want to echo that today, not to stomp on anybody's optimism, not to say that I'm not really pleased that they're advocating strongly for higher ed and doing so with an equity lens. I just want to be realistic and emphasize that, as supportive as the IBHE and this governor are of higher education, the pandemic has had significant adverse impact on state revenues. The graduate income tax didn't pass. And the Governor's Office of Management and Budget has suggested that our planning scenarios for next fiscal year model flat appropriations, as well as five and 10 percent reductions.

In their presentation today, Vice President Chinniah and Provost Ingram will remind you that pre-COVID, we were working on a multi-year plan to align resources with expenditures and achieve a balanced annual budget by fiscal year 24. The pandemic made our original plans obsolete, but our objective is unchanged. The financial impacts of COVID, the large deficits created in fiscal year 20 and 21 will be dealt with and will be felt for the next few years. The adjustments we need to make to reach fiscal sustainability by fiscal year 24 aren't going to be, can't be, enacted in a single fiscal year. And accordingly, our budget planning for next year, for fiscal year 22 will focus beyond just achievement of annual budget targets and will require actions that will stabilize the university in the coming fiscal years.

Our keys to achieving fiscal sustainability will be similar to the things that helped us navigate other challenges associated with the pandemic. We'll need to communicate, collaborate and be willing to come together, not only to support one another, but also to strategize about ways to ensure the vitality and success of our university. We must remember that updates about negative or uncertain financial picture aren't fun. They're not easy to communicate. But sharing this information gives our community context and insight into what the university is going through.

Our future's going to hold some difficult decisions, but today I actually have a couple things to share that are good news. First, now that we have more clarity regarding federal relief funds and timely payment of appropriated funds by our state, I can share that the university will be able to avoid furloughs this fiscal year. Furloughs are off the table for this fiscal year.

Also, I want to share that to facilitate information sharing and promote constructive dialog about budget matters between the university leadership and members of our university community, I have formed a new advisory group. The NIU Budget Committee is comprised of creative and forward-focused Huskies, and includes faculty, staff and students. They're being asked to provide insight and counsel to inform presidential budget decisions and recommendations. The committee is co-chaired by Sarah Chinniah and Beth Ingram, and I know that they plan to provide some additional detail about it in their presentation.

So, I've talked for a long time. Without further ado, let's go to agenda item VII. A. and their presentation. Kendall, given that this is the moment when I usually hand the gavel over to you, I'm going to offer you that opportunity, as well as the opportunity to introduce the budget item that I know you invited.

VII. ITEMS FOR UNIVERSITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

- A. Budget report
Provost Beth Ingram
CFO Sarah Chinniah

K. Thu: Thank you, Lisa. Thank you for all those updates. It's my pleasure to welcome back to the virtual podium Provost Beth Ingram and CFO Sarah Chinniah to give us an update on the budget planning process. Just as a reminder to everybody, in the past, this kind of effort has taken place in what the Resources, Space and Budget Committee. And we decided, since the University Council is smaller and has more equitable representation, that this would be the appropriate forum for these sorts of presentations and feedback. So, with that, I will turn it over to Provost Ingram and CFO Chinniah.

B. Ingram: Thanks, Kendall. I think Sarah's going to kick us off. I don't see her here right now.

S. Chinniah: I'm here.

B. Ingram: Oh, okay.

S. Chinniah: Good afternoon, everyone. Speaking on behalf of both Provost Ingram and myself, we have both appreciated and benefitted from the regular discussions with UC. Thank you for your attention during our regular updates and all the good questions during the meetings and after. And thank you to you, Kendall, for always working to ensure that we have a regular time and point of connection with this group. Pat, if you want to move to the first slide, please. Thank you.

We're going to use today's time to share budget information for fiscal year 21. We're also going to outline early thoughts on planning assumptions for fiscal year 22. And then look ahead to planning and budgeting for our future years. What we talk about often and are excited to explore further are multi-year planning efforts. As always, we welcome questions and value your input. We have a specific request for you today. As you consider the information that we present to you, we would really welcome your input on how we engage you going forward and the campus more broadly in these efforts. Not anything that you have to specifically respond to today, but a question we'd like to ask that you keep in the back of your minds as you listen to the discussion. Next slide, please.

Let's spend some time talking about NIU's outlook for the remainder of fiscal year 21. At mid-year, we are currently projecting a \$26 million loss. This is a projection based on what we knew as of December 31, 2020. As always, there could be upside or downside, based on actions that we take or that we have to respond to through the next six months.

Some immediate upside that we learned about in the last two weeks and, therefore, are not reflected in the projected \$26 million loss, is the receipt of federal funding relief bill. NIU received notice that we will receive \$23.7 million in federal relief funding. While this is down from the early estimates of \$30-\$35 million, nonetheless, we are very pleased by the news and the award. I should note that, of the total amount received, \$7.4 million will be allocated to students directly as grants. You may recall that, in the first federal relief bill, there was a portion that came to the institution and then a portion that was to be made available to students. The same provisions apply. So, about a third of our funding will be awarded directly to students, and the institution will receive about two-thirds. This is new news. It's rather late breaking, and we still need some time to understand the rules of how the federal relief funds can be used, how they can be awarded, how they should be awarded to students. We expect that that's information that will be made available, discussions are ongoing, and we hope to release to campus in the upcoming weeks.

Another piece of upside that's not represented in the numbers today, President Freeman shared earlier, the state released funding for universities to help to offset some of our testing costs. NIU received a trunch of tests that were made available. And, once we have a specific number on what that means as far as testing savings, that number, too, will be applied to our projections and factored in as we look ahead for the rest of the year. While I'm pleased to be sharing some upside to the numbers and noting some variances that we know now, it's important to note that we're still looking at a significant deficit as we plan for the rest of the year.

I also want to provide an update on our state funding. As we're looking ahead to the rest of the year, we're still assuming full receipt of our state funding. Where are state support is currently, our state has continued to make regular payments as part of our appropriation; and, to date, we've received

about \$44 million of the about \$88 million appropriation that NIU receives. The timing is consistent or on par with last year, and we continue to hear from the state that they expect to honor the payment through the remainder of fiscal year 21.

And something to acknowledge, we have made the commitment to share with campus information we know when we know it. In some cases, like the information we're presenting today, this may mean presenting real-time information. We're acknowledging that we do not yet know all the rules or provisions, but we will continue to provide regular and timely updates. It's very helpful to us, the president, the provost, myself, to share these updates and then have discussion and respond to feedback, so that we have information in perspective early on. We acknowledge that this could be frustrating as there are some points that may be left unanswered or information may evolve over time as we wait for facts and information to become clearer.

It's critical that, as we work through the remainder of this fiscal year and plan for fiscal year 22, that we must all realize that every dollar we don't spend is a dollar in support of students, faculty, staff, including funding for salaries in fiscal year 22 and beyond. We're very thankful for the collective efforts of campus that allow us to be able to save at some of the numbers that we presented earlier, that we continue to see some upside of those numbers. We were projecting, you may recall, a \$37 million deficit at the end of first quarter. So, we continue to see that actions on campus, the regular receipt of state funding, are allowing us to think about how those dollars will help to sustain us in fiscal year 22 and beyond. Next slide, please.

B. Ingram: Then we wanted to move into a discussion of our early planning assumptions for fiscal year 22. Consistent with our commitment to share information when we know it, we really want – these are early thoughts for what we're looking forward in fiscal year 22. And, of course, the situation is dynamic. I say that now – I think everybody is getting used to live with a bit of uncertainty in their lives.

Looking forward to next fall, and I am truly looking forward to next fall, we anticipate returning to a campus that looks normal. It may not look exactly like fall of 2019, but we're looking forward to a time when our students are back in the dorms, they're eating in our dining halls and they're meeting face-to-face with our faculty in the classrooms. I know we've learned some lessons on course delivery, and we're going to use those lessons to think about our fall schedule. But our students are eager to get back into the classroom – they tell us this all the time – and to interact with the faculty in person. Our early planning is that we expect fall of 2021 to look more lively and more engaging than what campus looks like today.

S. Chinniah: I will say that, even with the expected return to a normal or more typical year, NIU, like other universities, will face the lingering impacts from COVID. We ended last year with a significant deficit and expect to end this year with a significant deficit. Very simply, expenses continue to exceed revenue. While next year, we expect more people on campus, more interactions, this means more students in the residence halls, people in our dining venues, just increased activity on campus overall, we do not yet know at what level. And we also need to factor in what we expect from the state. Early indications have asked us to prepare for anything from a five to a 10 percent

planning reduction. Right now, NIU is modeling an eight percent decrease scenario. So, this would be approximately \$8 million less in our appropriation than what we receive currently. Next slide, please.

B. Ingram: Looking ahead, Sarah discussed the financial impacts of COVID. You may recall, prior to COVID, NIU started on a process to align its resources with its mission in the form of multi-year budget planning. What does that mean? It means that we plan for spending and resource allocation over several years instead of treating the budget as a signal-year decision. Prior to COVID, this allowed us to plan for changes instead of reacting or responding to events. A critical component of our transition to multi-year planning was the start of local control, which provided autonomy and flexibility to the deans and division heads. Little did we know what was going to happen in March of 2020. That multi-year planning was disrupted by COVID, and we believe that it will take us at least a year to work through the changes and incorporate the lessons that we've learned.

So, fiscal year 22 will be a transition back to multi-year planning. Understandably, our path to multi-year planning may look different than originally intended. We've learned some lessons over the last year, and we're in a different position than we were a year ago. What hasn't changed, though, is that we're still going to have to make difficult decisions to set ourselves up for future success. And some of the decisions will take more than 12 months to realize. Much like this year, where we implemented a hiring chill and a mission-critical, time-sensitive requirement for purchases, we expect that these parameters will continue into fiscal year 22.

We acknowledge that these actions, in essence, temporarily pause the flexibilities enacted under local control. But we also recognize we cannot operate this way indefinitely and are working to launch a multi-year planning and budget framework in June to focus efforts on fiscal year 23 and beyond. The specific actions that we take may look different, but we're looking forward to working with you collaboratively on framing that process and that multi-year budget plan.

To recognize that this is a journey for all of us, and we are embarking on this journey together, President Freeman has asked us, Sarah and I, to chair an advisory committee, the NIU Budget Committee, to provide counsel and insight to leadership to facilitate communication with campus and to provide perspective on the budget and budget decisions. The membership is on the next slide, if you would move ahead, thank you.

This is an advisory body expected to provide counsel and insight to inform presidential decisions and recommendations. As such, the committee is a deliberative body without the authority or responsibility for decisions. We have benefitted from the engagement with senior round table, the deans' council, University Council, to gain diverse perspectives. We have selected this group of individuals and draw on their experience and ask them to adopt a university lens as they provide advice and counsel on university decisions.

Thank you. I want to say, personally, thank you to the people who have agreed to serve on this committee, and to the time and effort they will put in to providing us with perspectives. The kick-off meeting is scheduled for February – the committee has not met yet – and will meet monthly

thereafter. Once we convene the committee and have an opportunity to talk about our work together and consider the university's plans and timeline for the budget, we will share ongoing progress with the University Council. Next slide, please.

We want to share with you our early thoughts and conversations so that we can hear your thoughts and reactions as we look ahead to planning and our budgeting efforts. Of course, we'll be having similar discussions, and those will be occurring in many different forms and with other leadership groups and other shared governance groups. We know that the budget is going to look different in the anticipated revenues that we expect, as well as how the budget is administered and how we communicate these changes.

On this slide, we've posted some questions that we have been considering and that we would like you to start thinking about as we move forward in this process. We will continue to post questions and seek input and feedback with the goal of confirming how we are going to proceed by June of 2021. We also know, of course, that many of the units are making decisions now that impact the budget going into next year so that some decisions are going to have to be made earlier this year than other decisions.

S. Chinniah: Next slide, Pat. We shared a lot of information with you today, and we will continue to come back with updates, as well as to follow up on many of the points raised today. As we progress the discussion from today's meeting and in future venues, we ask that everyone be familiar with the university's goals. Specifically, we ask our leaders to help each of their employees understand how their roles and their voices play into achieving these goals. All the decisions we make from a budget perspective, they go into supporting university priorities. So, having a shared understanding and appreciation of our university goals is going to be critical.

There will be a commitment to transparent, timely and useful communication. This includes from Beth, myself, from the president, from all of leadership, from the Budget Committee. We ask that UC do the same, our divisions, our colleges. As information becomes available, we want to make sure that the right people are made aware of it, are consulted, so that good, solid discussion can occur. As part of that discussion, we ask for a commitment for respectful dialog. We're not always going to agree. The discussions, the decisions, they might not be easy. But we ask for a shared commitment to do it together so that there is an awareness as to trade-offs, there is an awareness and appreciation for some of the decisions that we're making, but most importantly, so that there is agreement, awareness and excitement for where we're going.

That concludes our remarks today. We can pause for a moment and take any questions or reactions from the council.

K. Thu: Thanks, Beth and Sarah. Let's take a moment to field a few questions. I thought the agenda was going to be very light. It's a little bit heavier than I anticipated, but we do have time and this is the forum for you to ask initial questions. And, of course, if we don't have time for all of them, you can contact me and/or Beth and Sarah directly. So, questions anybody? Comments? I've noticed that in Teams meetings, it's not conducive to good dialog.

B. Ingram: Well, there are going to be other opportunities as well. Sarah and I are available in other forums, as well.

K. Thu: Sarah and Beth will be back and doing additional reports in the spring, and I'll be in contact with them. If there are things that UC members want to hear in the budget report or in the budgeting process, please let me know, and I can make sure to get that to them and get it on the agenda. But as I've said in the past, the budgeting process now compared to the way it worked 15 to 20 years ago is much healthier and much more transparent than it has been. So, I very much appreciate that.

L. Freeman: We didn't spend a lot of time with the slide up of who's on the University Budget Committee, but people will have a chance to look at this as the presentation will be posted on the UC page, and we tried to pick people who had expertise, who were thoughtful, who were good stewards of the university. And, not surprisingly, there's a lot of overlap with both UC and Faculty Senate. That's another venue or another opportunity that we really hope will be used to try to foment conversation and discussion around important budget topics. And I just wanted to make that point.

K. Thu: Thanks, Lisa. And by the way, just a reminder that, if you want a lot more detail about the budget, it's contained in the budget packet or in the Board of Trustees packet for the December meeting. There's a lot to go through there if you're so inclined.

G. Conderman [via chat box]: What are some things we have done to reduce costs?

K. Thu: So, we do have one comment, I see. Gregory Conderman has a question. What are some things that we have done to reduce our costs?

S. Chinniah: That's a great question. Really what we're seeing, and I'll take Kendall's opening to plug the materials that go in front of the finance committee of the board. They're not yet released. They will be for the February meeting, and you'll see a pretty comprehensive write-up, along with an update that goes through different categories. Just on the whole, we're seeing less activity, less spending on campus. I'm looking at the summary for the mid-year, and we're seeing that there is savings in contractual services. So that's everything from copy paper and water to some of the vendors that we use for some of our facilities or operational type of upkeep or activities on campus. As you can imagine, we're seeing significant savings in travel. Unfortunately, no one is going anywhere. We're also seeing savings just across the board, automotive, typically, what we would spend for vehicles. So, it's a wide range of actions and decisions made from partners across campus.

B. Ingram: I think a lot of units have been very prudent in their spending and in thinking very carefully about what purchases they need to make. And, even if the decisions look small from your perspective at a unit level, they add up to big numbers at the university level. So, we're really thankful that people are taking this seriously, even at the unit level, because it adds up.

T. Borg [via chat box]: We all understand how the burden is shared when budget cuts occur. In the future, can we hear about how funds will be distributed to units in the future? How will decisions be made?

D. Douglass [via chat box]: About \$7.4 million of federal funds dedicated to students – I know it may be too early to tell, but do you expect to be able to serve more students than the previous round of aid?

B. Ingram: There was a question about the money allocated to students. It is too early to tell. The question is about do we expect to serve more students? We're hoping to do so, but we're still waiting on some guidance from the federal government in how we can allocate those funds. We've had a preliminary meeting, but it will still take some time. I don't know if President Freeman knows more about that?

L. Freeman: I was on a legislative briefing with the American Council on Education yesterday, and we know at this point that the language about the financial aid title from the College of Education is going to be different so that students will not have had to fill out a FAFSA to be eligible. For undocumented students to be eligible, there needs to be more guidance coming from the executive branch and the DOE. But there was a lot of optimism yesterday that that was forthcoming, although that hasn't come yet. So, it's evolving, stay tuned, but my sense coming off the phone call yesterday is that we would already be able to have fewer restrictions and serve more students and that there might be more good news coming from the Biden administration very soon.

K. Thu: Thanks for your question, Dallas. Maybe we can take one more if anybody is so inclined?

J. Royce: Kendall, if I may, I feel a bit like Vanna White here sometimes, but I believe it is important to read the questions into the minutes for everyone's benefit. Terry also asked and commented: We all understand how the burden is shared when budget cuts occur. In the future, can we hear about how funds will be distributed to units in the future, and how will those decisions be made.

B. Ingram: Certainly. We've made a commitment to be transparent and collaborative as we make those decisions. Right now we can't tell you what decisions are going to be made, but we can tell you how we're going to make them. We'll make them transparently. We'll make them in conjunction with the leadership and with input from the campus. And, yes, we've committed to sharing with you the information we know when we know it. Did you want to add anything to that, Sarah?

S. Chinniah: No, I think you captured it nicely, Beth.

K. Thu: Well, thank you, Sarah and Beth. And we look forward to having you back at University Council. It's always nice to have a conversation about the budget without the numbers and the excel spread sheets. But maybe we'll get to that eventually. So, thank you again.

S. Chinniah: Thank you.

B. Ingram: Thank you.

B. Reimagining Shared Governance – reflections and going forward

K. Thu: With that, we'll move on to Roman numeral VII. B. Reimagining Shared Governance – reflections and going forward. We have half a year under our belts with the reimagined shared governance structure and processes. So, I thought it would be a good time to see what people think about what we've done, what works, what doesn't work. I remember at the beginning of the fall semester, I said that, if we get to the spring semester and folks have sort of absorbed the new structure for University Council and Faculty Senate, and it hasn't been too painful, then that will be a success. I know many of you, or maybe most, if not all, of you, don't ponder or reflect on shared governance the same way I do. But I just wanted to take a moment to see if anybody has any thoughts about how effective the changes have been and whether you have any concerns going forward. And I want to also invite Brad Beyer into the conversation with what's going on in the Student Government Association. Let me stop there and see if there are any observations or comments about our experiences thus far with the changes in shared governance. Go ahead, Natasha. Thank you.

N. Johnson: I would say having experienced it before in the other format, I feel like now it is better. There's more discussion, maybe because there are less in the room, so-to-speak. And then people have more of an opportunity to speak up or say whatever they might have on their minds. And before when it was so large and so big, it was like, oh my, what am I going to say? Is it really relevant? Do I want to say this, because people are looking at the clock? But now it doesn't seem like that, probably because we're virtual too. We always end at the end of the day, but I feel like now it does seem more inviting, if I can say that.

K. Thu: Yes, thank you. I do have to keep my eye on the clock, because 4:30 is feeding time for our cats, and I'm in charge of feeding. Other comments or observations? I guess no news is good news. There's not an outcry of how terrible the changes have been. So, we'll continue on this path and see how the remainder of the academic year goes. And we'll keep track of what we're doing. I will point out that, in the bigger picture, NIU is going through a kind of bureaucracy policy cleansing. So, the Board of Trustees is taking a look at their regulations and bylaws. I had a meeting with Trustee Wasowicz a couple weeks ago, and he described the need to blow up the BOT bylaws and regulations. And I said we're doing the same thing with the APPM, and you're using President Freeman's language. So, we're in the process of blowing up the APPM, parking those policies, revising those policies in the Policy Library. Of course, we've already gone through the process of revamping shared governance. And it turns out that the Student Government Association is also considering changes to its structure. So, Brad, I think you wanted to share some news about that and get feedback from UC members. So, I'm going to turn it over to you to talk about what's going on in SGA.

B. Beyer: Yes, absolutely. Thank you, Kendall. And good afternoon, everyone. Before I do so, I did want to give our newest UC member a quick second to introduce himself. Dallas is my deputy, the deputy speaker of the senate. So, go ahead, Dallas, introduce yourself so everyone can get to know you a little bit.

D. Douglass: Good afternoon, everyone. I'm happy to be here, honored to accept this position. I'm Dallas. I'm 21. My pronouns are he/him. I am a fourth-year student graduating in fall of 22. I'm an anthropology and women gender and sexuality studies double major, minoring in political science. As Brad said, I'm the deputy speaker of the senate. And currently, just some stuff that I'm working on, I'm creating a code of conduct for SGA employees and also thinking about bias reporting and conduct for university employees at large, checking how that factors in to the reporting of hate crimes and such.

L. Freeman [via chat box]: Welcome Dallas! So happy that you are working on important issues aligned with our university.

K. Thu: A hearty welcome, Dallas, from all of UC. It's good to have you. So, I'm going to turn it back to you, Brad.

B. Beyer: Thank you. Pat, did you get a chance to get the image that I sent over.

P. Erickson: Yes, and it's just coming up now.

B. Beyer: Perfect. And I want to be very clear that I did get permission from both Pat and Kendall before I borrowed, for lack of a better word, the visual that you all used last year. While we're on the topic of shared governance reforms, this is something that we're currently in the process of proposing to the Student Senate. It will be put to a vote this weekend. So, I really spent much of my winter break looking at our Student Senate and considering some changes that we felt would really benefit the organization. And so, it's not so much necessarily some of our engagement with the diversity, cultural resource centers, and the housing and the university at large. I'm more so today specifically looking to get feedback from our faculty representatives and from our dean representative, Bob Brinkmann, as well, because, as you can see, this will be the first time that colleges actually have specific seats allocated to them. It would still be a democratic election process, but each college now has seats. And, like I said, I worked with some of the enrollment people to get data to make sure it's reflective. And so, the spirit of all of this is helping to close some possible equity gaps that we see in terms of involvement, obviously, keeping ourselves consistent with other shared governance practices at the university, but also to make SGA more consistent with other student government associations at sister institutions around the country. And so, again, there's no promises. We're really hoping that this will pass this weekend, but this is something that we've put a lot of work into. And, again, this was kind of my little pet project over winter break.

In the interest of time, I can always put my email, and Dallas can put his email in the chat, and we can field responses that way. But I just kind of wanted to give everyone a little bit of a glance at some of what's to come.

K. Thu: Thank you, Brad. I'm very pleased to see that our visuals are continuing to be recycled and reused. Any comments for Brad and what they're trying to do. Bob, I see your hand up. Go ahead.

B. Brinkmann: Yes, thank you for the presentation. It's really a great opportunity for colleges to have representation of our student body on student government that's specifically directed. I think this is something that certainly I support in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and I will ask comments from the other deans to see what they think about it. But from my perspective, I think it's a wonderful addition to how student government will be managed. So, thank you for taking the time to work on it and present it.

B. Beyer: Thank you for the feedback.

K. Thu: I think this new structure, if it gets passed, is a better reflection of our academic organization at NIU. In that sense, I think it's much better. But as with all changes, there's going to be push-back, and there's going to have to be compromise. Brad and I have already had a conversation about this. But I look forward to seeing what happens in SGA and seeing whether this can get through. Thanks, Brad. And please do put your email addresses in the chat box.

B. Beyer: Will do. Thank you, everyone.

D. Douglass [via chat box]: ddouglass1@niu.edu – and thank you for the warm welcome.

B. Beyer [via chat box]: Thank you, everyone! My email is bbeyer1@niu.edu.

C. Consideration of NIU Constitution, Article 6.1

K. Thu: Item C under Roman numeral VII is consideration of NIU Constitution, Article 6.1. By way of background, this is part of a cleaning up our bylaws, in this case the constitution. We have inconsistencies in the definition of faculty categories between the constitution, our bylaws, the APPM and the Board of Trustees Regulations, which is one of the reasons I've been in contact with Trustee Wasowicz. So, I asked the – oh, now I'm blanking on the committee name – Pat, help. What's Peter Chomentowski's committee name?

P. Erickson: Oh, that is Faculty Rights and Responsibilities.

K. Thu: Faculty Rights and Responsibilities. So, I gave them the charge of going back and looking at our categories of faculty at NIU, and I gave them the charge last September. And so, they worked through the course of the fall semester, came up with a draft of faculty categories. And then we've been vetting it. We first vetted it in Faculty Senate. I've been vetting it with administration, leadership, the provost, the vice president for research, President Freeman and others. And it seems to change on a daily basis. We had a great meeting with instructors yesterday so that we could make sure that we were consistent with what they wanted to see, the instructional faculty [inaudible]. And we've reached out to the colleges, to individuals. And so, what you see here is the end product, although, there's one piece that is not correct. I believe the category of applied artist was put in here. Maybe it's not in here. I checked with Dean Kassel, and that category no longer exists as an employment category; those are instructors. Maybe it's not in here. So, I just present this to you to let you know it's here, that if you want feedback, please contact me and Peter Chomentowski.

In terms of the process going forward, what would happen is I will take this back to Faculty Senate in its February meeting, see if there's additional feedback and discussion. Then, depending upon how that goes, then it would come back to University Council, because this would require a change in the constitution, and that's the purview of the University Council. So, once it gets thoroughly vetted through Faculty Senate and if the Faculty Senate support, it would come to University Council in February by way of a first reading of a change in the constitution. Then it would be a second reading in March. Of course, that's all contingent on what faculty, staff and students say about it.

I don't want to do it here, because it's too difficult to wordsmith in this kind of forum, but I wanted to make you aware of it. And please contact me offline if you have comments, and also share them with Peter Chomentowski who is chair of the committee that had worked on this originally.

So, with that, I think we're done with items for University Council consideration.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

K. Thu: We have no consent agenda, correct, Pat?

P. Erickson: That's correct.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

K. Thu: And we have no unfinished business.

X. NEW BUSINESS

K. Thu: And we have no new business.

XI. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

A. IBHE Strategic Planning Advisory Committee – Simón Weffer – report

K. Thu: So, we can now jump to Roman numeral XI and see if Simón and Linda are still with us. I want to welcome both of them to the virtual podium. I'm pleased to get a report from the IBHE Strategic Planning Advisory Committee that Simón serves on. President Freeman also serves on that committee, so perhaps she can chime in where appropriate. But for now, I'm going to turn the podium over to Simón. Simón, are you with us?

S. Weffer: Yes, I'm here.

K. Thu: Great to have you. The platform is yours.

S. Weffer: Well, you know that's always dangerous, Kendall. While President Freeman didn't want to stomp on anyone's hope, I might do some of that today, and I apologize in advance. It's my University of Chicago training after all to stomp on hope when one can. I'm going to try and share

my screen. I tried to put together a brief set of slides so everyone gets a sense of where we're at and what we're doing on the strategic plan. I'll try and move quickly through these first few slides.

This is just a timeline to let you know where we're at. We're now in the January-February phase where we're developing specific recommendations for the design work groups. We're going to work on creating a draft strategic plan and, in the next six weeks, or eight weeks, 10 weeks, get public feedback. And so what I share with you today, I would encourage you all to report back to your constituencies about definitely getting involved in the feedback once the strategic plan does come out.

And just to give a sense of how this fits in with IBHE, at the top of the pyramid we have IBHE. Where I sit, and where President Freeman sits, right now is on this advisory committee. Based on the conversations we've had in our meetings, those concepts, combined with a prior set of focus groups done by the consulting company, UPB Consulting – you can see them there at the bottom of the slide – as well as a survey that was put out in the field earlier in the year. Some of you might remember that Linda has emphasized to all of us in both Faculty Senate and University Council last year about getting online and participating in the survey. And we have to be somewhat responsible for the fact that there weren't a lot of faculty respondents. And it's something that we need to think about as we get into the public comment period. And just emphasizing that everyone listens to Linda when she rings the bell about participating in this.

And so we've put some ideas to design work groups. I volunteered to be on the design work group. I also nominated some of our colleagues at NIU that work on some of the goals that I'm going to highlight in a couple of the next slides to be on these work groups. And they're going to come up with measurables, metrics. It's really the operationalization of some of the ideas that I'm going to highlight in the next couple of slides. And just so everyone knows, I'll also be presenting this at the next Faculty Senate meeting as well, as another place where faculty and staff can interact with me. And I think we have one more meeting before the next Faculty Senate meeting. So, hopefully, some of the things will be a little more fleshed out, and maybe some of my pessimism will be allayed. We'll wait and see.

The process of these design work groups uses this idea of theory of actions. And it's a new concept to me. It feels very consultant-y-speaking to me. For those of you who watched, there was a great show on SHOWTIME with Don Cheadle about consultants that I would encourage you to watch if you have some time to binge watch some things. If we really want to get at it, it's the idea of operationalizing what we're trying to get at.

What we're trying to get at from the surveys and the focus groups, the consultants drew these three key takeaways. The problem for me, as a social scientist, as someone that deals with both focus groups and survey data on a regular basis, we never saw how they got to these points. And so there are certain talking points that aren't on these slides that were part of conversations that were part of other materials that, to me, sort of lack legs, in part, because we don't know the background. And I understand that, as an academic and as a researcher, that's always going to be a critique that I'm going to have that others might not have. But there are certain concepts that worry me. For example, I'm not sure if it's here on this slide, but there was a big push for increased asynchronous learning. And as you can imagine, all the faculty members, there are five or six of us on this committee,

pushed back at that, because, if there's one thing we know our students don't want, it's more asynchronous learning. And so, the question then becomes for me, well how did you get to that bullet point and that outcome? What built up to that? And some people pushed back and said things like, someone that wants to advance a degree in early childhood education, can't be in a classroom at 9 a.m. And, of course, I understand that. My mother was a faculty member that did bilingual and special ed training. All of her classes were taught at night. Probably the reason I'm an academic is because I spent many nights in the back of her classrooms. So, for those of you who don't like listening to me on a regular basis, you can blame my mom taking me to bilingual ed classes at night at DePaul back in the '80s and '90s, or '80s really.

That's the thing, there was not a lot of necessary differentiation by what we mean by asynchronous, who asynchronous was meant for and who was proposing that there be more asynchronous. Maybe that's something that employers are wanting, because then it would allow their employees maybe to get some certificates or additional education. That's an important thing to know, versus faculty who aren't pushing more asynchronous or certainly our 18- to 25-year old undergraduates wouldn't be pushing more asynchronous.

Now, from those three big ideas came these six working group topic areas. As you can see, we have faculty that work in these areas. We have staff that work in these areas. And in some of them, I think, a lot of good work is being done. Even though I'm going to bring one of them up as a caution, I think the equity gaps is making some good progress. I'm a little bit more concerned having been in a break-out group on the Future of Work and the Future of Learning and the State's Workforce, that it's a very instrumental, one-way sort of thinking about how education fits in with workforce and how education fits in with work. And maybe we could have a little bit of time to discuss that.

And then there was also some slippage about this Middle School/High School, College, and Career Connection. How exactly those things work, what is meant by it. Again, it might be things that seem good if you're a consultant pulling stuff out from surveys and focus groups. But when you try and operationalize some of those things, particularly as a faculty member, it could be more problematic.

So, what are my concerns with the strategic plan? And, again, to be fair, my caveat is to this point: There's still a lot of distance to go. We're going to see what comes out of these work groups. But I think the first big one for me was that there was no discussion of the state commitment into all this. The plan, the draft and now all the discussions we're having have very ambitious goals. But without tying it to any sort of state funding, it makes it almost impossible to achieve some of these goals. For example, if we talk about diversifying the faculty across all our institutions, if there isn't money to be able to do those things, to retain faculty or to recruit faculty or to create post-doctoral programs that can lead into hiring as the professoriate, what does it really matter?

There's no goals or consideration of the investment in staff and faculty development over two decades of state underfunding and disinvestment in higher education. And I'd just like to point out that President Freeman, in the first working group that we were in on issues of diversity, her first statement was about getting state funding to recruit, to retain and to enhance the professional

development for faculty and staff, both BIPOC faculty and all our other faculty and staff. And I think that's a really important point. And I was very happy, of course, to hear Dr. Freeman speak about this. It's not a surprise for any of us that she would put that out there.

There's no focus on a broad base importance of a system to encourage and support research, which I think is particularly problematic for us at NIU. We do have the dual identity of both a teaching and a research institution. And the lack of that clear delineation or specification of supporting research in the plan was troubling for me.

I want to just go back to my previous bullet point. The only mention initially about faculty was on diversity issues. And as a Latino faculty member and one of the few tenured Latino faculty in Illinois, I appreciate that. But that can't be the only way that we speak about faculty. We have to talk about a stable pool of faculty and instructors to be able to teach what our students need. Otherwise, as we all know, if all of a sudden faculty are disappearing from programs left and right and no ability to rehire or retain, obviously, the cost is going to go up for students, because they're going to have to take more time to finish if they can't take those core courses.

There's very little regard for the role of gen ed and how that fits into higher ed outcomes. Not really much discussion on the role of higher ed institutions in their communities outside of the education of students. And I think for us in DeKalb, we know exactly how important that relationship is. I think also our colleagues at Western and all the other non-immediately urban institutions feel that way. But for IBHE not to recognize and point this out was a limitation to me.

There's a limited discussion of the importance of the role higher education plays in social justice and civil society. I, in part, put this bullet point in after the discussion that Provost Ingram was kind enough to invite me to participate in in the outcome of January 6. A better educated civil society, perhaps, does not allow for the sorts of outcomes that we saw with people storming the Capitol in a misguided attempt to overturn an election. We can go on and on in how the arts and the humanities and social sciences and sciences all impact civil society and social justice issues. But we didn't really see that.

There was a huge emphasis on immediate job placement. I think that's somewhat problematic in that it doesn't take into consideration scientific, technical, creative, artistic, humanistic advancement and development that societies need for the future that higher education plays a role in. I think it also undercut some of the notions of life-long learning in which many engaged, not just in four-year institutions, but especially in two-year institutions. Some of the discussions have been very short sighted, only focusing on degree attainment. And, while I certainly want to see lots of degree attainment, certainly when we're talking about disparities between BIPOC communities and others, sometimes all one needs is an English class or a welding class or a certificate at some of our two-year sister institutions, and that can't be discounted.

And then as I stated earlier, this issue of asynchronous versus synchronous platforms. We all want to get back in the classroom, but I think we all also understand that post-COVID, there will be a push for more asynchronous, remote-type learning, hybrid learning models. But we need to also, within that plan, define what we mean by these things, explain what we mean by these things, and be clear what our goals are for.

I think the important thing to also realize, at least for me as someone that looks at issues of politics and race and inequality, this is a plan not just for the Pritzker administration. This is for all the administrations that follow the Pritzker administration. And we don't want to get into another Rauner setting where we're being starved and not have a strategic plan for higher education that would push back against that and give us the leverage to push back on that. So, we need to think, not just in the short term for the Pritzker administration, but in the longer term. And that's where many of my comments come from.

I know we're pressed for time. I'll stop there with the presentation. I will always be happy, if anyone wants to chat, they can reach out to me. President Freeman, if there's anything you'd like to add, please do.

K. Thu: Thank you, Simón. I'm very grateful that you're serving in this capacity. Before I turn to Linda, I wanted to turn back to President Freeman. Lisa, do you have anything you want to add?

L. Freeman: I will also just try to be very brief. I will say that having the unique experience of going through two facilitated planning processes at the same time, one with the Equity Working Group for Black Student Access and Success, and one with the IBHE, I will say honestly that I share Simón's concern about being more blackboxed in the IBHE process than in the other one, not so much even in terms of seeing focus group-type data. But we spent a lot more time on data. And the individual break-out groups have spent more time prioritizing things in an iterative process in the equity working group. So, I completely agree with that concern.

I'm not quite as pessimistic as Simón, though, and he predicted that. I think a lot of it depends on what working group you're in on what day. After the first session, Simón and I were in the same working group, and I didn't leave with a lot of optimism, I'll be really honest. But the second go-around, I was in working groups that actually came up with some creative things that addressed the diversity of our institutions including their research missions, the value of expertly trained faculty to teach at all levels and the need to think creatively about bending the cost curve without sacrificing quality. And so, I feel that my last two groups really sent some good ideas down to design work and also rejected some of the things that Simón was very rightfully calling out as not appropriate.

For example, one of my groups was the workforce-type group. I'll just give two examples really briefly. One of the bullets we were asked to look at was about using some type of immediate placement job survey data to guide academic program, and everyone rejected that. Everyone said that's short-sighted, that what employers want are broad skills, and what society needs are people who are able to specifically engage. And the workforce group sent a fairly pointed discussion of the importance of gen ed and liberal education back down to the working group. So, I took that as a positive.

One of the other positives in my affordability working group – I think there were a couple. There was a recognition that we need more investment. At the same time, there was a recognition that resources will be scarce for a while. And, thinking about that, a couple ideas that came out that I know will be pursued by the design work groups, I think, for affordability and managing costs, are reasonable. The first is related to when you talk about collaboration and opportunities for economies

of scale, reject the fact that we have too many English departments and look at back-end administrative operations and how in a world with what we've learned about COVID and technology, we might achieve some savings across institutions there that allow the resources that we do have to be directed to students and faculty. And so, I thought that was fairly reasonable toward our academic mission. I thought that was a reasonable thing to send down. It will be very interesting to see what the work group comes back with.

And then in a discussion about trying to get students to graduate in a timely fashion, to progress to a degree, nobody said that we should blindly track them. And in a discussion of dual credit, which will always be a controversial subject, someone who was not from a four-year university said quite pointedly, the solution is not to have high school teach students and give them college credit. With the technology that we have, why don't we look across our universities at the opportunity for using technology synchronously to put our true expert faculty in the high school classrooms and inspire students. And so, I thought, again, I was really pleased with the solution coming down. It's not what we're doing now, but it's not the band-aid that doesn't really work solution. I'm less pessimistic, but I think that's pretty work group dependent.

S. Weffer: I wish I was in your work groups, President Freeman. I would have felt a lot better. The one other thing is that there was a little bit concerning discussion – I forgot to put this on the PowerPoint, and I'll update it when I sent it to Pat after this. There was a really disturbing conversation about the student as customer that really had a bad valence to it, and it almost got to the "I pay your salary, you should give me X grade sort of dynamic." And I will not deny that it soured me for most of the next few days, because we've all had experiences where, all of a sudden, that comes up. And that's not right. And I tried to phrase it as, the choice of where you go to school is definitely a consumer-based issue. Cost is something that parents and students need to think about. However, the actual education process and the process in the classroom should not be thought of that way. And I think we were able, along with a colleague from the Land of Lincoln [Lincoln Land]Community College, it's the largest community college in the area here in Illinois, were able to push back. But these are the things that we just need to be aware of, and I'm sure Linda has heard some of these same things. I'll stop there and, if anyone has comments or questions, please be in touch.

K. Thu: Well, thank you, Simón and Lisa. I know for a 30-member task force, it's great to hear we have two strong representatives with two strong voices. I'm pleased that you're there and infusing some common sense into the conversation. It may not seem common sensical to you, but it certainly does to us, I think. Please contact either President Freeman or Professor Weffer directly if you have comments. We've been doing a decent job at NIU in getting comments out, is that accurate? It's not an overwhelming set of comments, but at least our voices are getting heard. And maybe I'll have that as a lead-in to letting Linda talk about the IBHE, the Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE. So, again, thank you, Simón and Lisa. That won't be the last time we hear from you on this.

B. Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE – Linda Saborío – report

IBHE board approves higher education budget requested focused on equity
IBHE News, January 13, 2021

K. Thu: Linda, I'm going to turn it over to you.

L. Saborío: Good afternoon, and I was sitting here listening for the discussion about the higher education committee. I most certainly hope that there is discussion on the committee about accountability as you move forward with the strategic plan and what kind of measures you'd like to put in place over the next few years to ensure that there is accountability.

And in terms of dual credit, if you're interested, the FAC did produce a paper with a good deal of information about dual credit and some of the concerns that faculty members on the FAC have about dual credit. I understand that there is a huge push to allow for dual credit, for universities to embrace the idea. Perhaps we could be a part of the dialog that frames the policy for it. Such as, one of the ideas that came up was maybe 15 credit hour limit for dual credit so that we don't have students coming in with 30 credit hours, they're 18 years old. As an advisor, I had many times to place these students into a course with sophomores, juniors and seniors, and they just didn't have the social maturity to be in that course. They were not prepared to participate at that level. Just some things to keep in mind.

L. Freeman [via chat box]: Linda, you should submit that paper to the design work groups and volunteer.

L. Saborío: And also, with the asynchronous and synchronous courses, yes, we were all forced as faculty to move our courses to this virtual learning environment, but that doesn't mean that all faculty enjoy teaching virtually. And so to keep that in mind and maybe try to find a balance where we can address the students' needs but also really focus on what faculty would be best suited for that environment. I'm one of them. I like being in the classroom in their faces.

Since I don't have to really present on the IBHE Strategic Plan for Higher Education, my report is very short. The report from our legislative liaison at our January 15 meeting was that Rep. Chris Welch is the new speaker of the house. And he is known for being a strong advocate for higher education. He's the former chair of the Higher Education Committee, and so, our liaison thought this was a very positive move, and is looking forward to working with Rep. Welch. We've also invited him to join our group any time he's available, any month that he's available. And so, we are hoping to hear back from him.

The higher ed reform bill was passed recently. I have not read the entire bill, I have to admit. I think it's 200-and-some pages. But our liaison did point out that the language regarding dual credit was changed on the bill due to a little bit of push back from faculty in the FAC. Originally it said that for a student entering grade 12, the next most rigorous level of advanced course work under this Subsection (a) 5 shall be a dual credit course as defined in the Dual Credit Quality Act. And since there are many high schools and community colleges still negotiating this relationship, especially more rural areas, there was a lot of push back with this language. So, they changed it to "...the next

most rigorous level of advanced work may include a dual credit course, an advanced placement course as defined in section 10, an international baccalaureate course, an honors class, an enrichment opportunity, a gifted program or another program offered by the district.” So, we saw the FAC as a positive adjustment to the language.

The P-20 working group update – feels like we’re never going to finish with this project – it’s gotten kind of out of control here. But we do have another grad student from DePaul. We’re going through them rather quickly. But we have another one starting to work with us starting in April. At that time, we actually have to begin the process of updating our data on faculty-led initiatives because of COVID-19 budget impact. We feel that we’re going to need to reach out to institutions and ask for an update on the data that they shared with us, because there may be some initiatives that just won’t continue, unfortunately, after COVID-19.

This summer, we’re going to design our heat map. We’re going to do this, we’re committed. We’re going to upload data to the site and, by this fall, we expect to have the map available to share with legislators and other public members. So, this is very exciting. And I think I found someone at NIU who is going to help me with the design of this map. I’m not going to tell you who it is, though.

I think that’s all for me.

L. Freeman [via chat box]: AIM HIGH changes are good for NIU.

K. Thu: Thank you, Linda, as always.

- C. University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees – report
Natasha Johnson, Catherine Doederlein, Kendall Thu
Katy Jaekel, Sarah Marsh, Greg Beyer

K. Thu: So, jumping to the next item, the University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees. I have no report for that unless somebody else on the committee would like to say a few words. If not, then we can jump down.

- D. Rules, Governance and Elections Committee – no report
Therese Arado, Chair

K. Thu: There’s no report from Rules, Governance and Elections.

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

K. Thu: And that brings us to the SGA. Antonio and Brad, do either or both of you have something you’d like to share?

B. Beyer: I believe I already shared everything that I was going to share today, so I’m okay, thank you.

K. Thu: Okay. Antonio, are you here, and do you want to share anything?

A. Johnson: I am here. Happy new year, everyone. I don't have a long report, and I guess that's great for the sake of time. Right now, SGA is going into our election transition right now. We actually did change a few things regarding our election process just to make it a little more accessible and achievable for students, especially during the COVID era. We're just about ready to start our election process. It will start at the end of March. So, if anyone or any faculty or staff know any students who are interested in running for any SGA position, we would love to help them and give them the rundown of everything that SGA does. That's all for me. Thank you guys.

K. Thu: Thank you, Antonio.

D. Douglass [via chat box]: Please do tell students! We want competitive elections.

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

N. Johnson: Matt Streb was with us and presented. And so, people are just considering what their choices are to vaccinate once they get the opportunity to do so. And then everyone's awaiting for the CFO. She's coming to us on February 4. She's going to talk about some of the finances, and we're going to be able to hear some good things, but also some techniques on how we can bring in more money and have some ideas. So, that's what's going on. Thank you.

K. Thu: My apologies again, Natasha. I didn't quite understand what Cathy was saying and now I understand what she said.

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

K. Thu: So, that brings us to SPS Council. Cathy, are you still with us.

C. Doederlein: I don't have too much to update on. The provost was able to visit us for our most recent meeting, and we appreciated having her with us, although, most of the questions actually were ones that were probably would be appropriate for us to ask Matt Streb. And so he'll be joining us at our March meeting. The February meeting conflicts with Board of Trustees, so he'll join us for the March meeting. Not surprisingly, a lot of the questions were related to COVID and vaccines and that sort of thing.

We are just wrapping up our nomination window for SPS presidential awards. So, if you haven't already, please finalize your nomination packets and letters and get that sent in. We definitely are hoping to have some good recognition of our colleagues in that regard.

And then I should have said something sooner, but I don't have my agenda in front of me, so I don't know if maybe she didn't have a report. But I was thrown, because I usually go after Operating Staff Council. So, I didn't know if Natasha had a report or not. So, apologies that I didn't mention sooner.

K. Thu: Thank you as always, Cathy.

XII. INFORMATION ITEMS

K. Thu: And I'll also add that the Faculty Senate is now responsible for approving academic calendars. So, at the end of your information items in the agenda, you'll see that we approved the 2030-2031 academic calendar. I know you were all worried about that for some time, but rest assured we did get that approved. And then it's passed along to UC as an information item.

Lisa, is there anything else you would like to add before I ask for a motion to adjourn?

L. Freeman: I think Natasha has a report that we're looking forward to. She's turned on her camera, and you actually skipped her.

K. Thu: I'm sorry, Natasha, did I skip over you?

N. Johnson: You did, but that's okay. I know time is of the essence.

- A. [Policy Library](#) – Comment on Proposed Policies (right-hand column on web page)
- B. [Minutes](#), Academic Planning Council
- C. [Minutes](#), Athletic Board
- D. [Minutes](#), Baccalaureate Council
- E. [Minutes](#), Board of Trustees
- F. [Minutes](#), Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee
- G. [Minutes](#), Comm. on the Improvement of the Undergraduate Academic Experience
- H. [Minutes](#), General Education Committee
- I. [Minutes](#), Graduate Council
- J. [Minutes](#), Honors Committee
- K. [Minutes](#), Operating Staff Council
- L. [Minutes](#), Supportive Professional Staff Council
- M. [Minutes](#), University Assessment Panel
- N. [Minutes](#), University Benefits Committee
- O. [Minutes](#), Univ. Comm. on Advanced and Nonteaching Educator License Programs
- P. [Minutes](#), University Committee on Initial Educator Licensure
- Q. UC 2020-21 dates: Sep 9, Oct 7, Nov 4, Dec 2, Jan 27, Feb 24, Mar 31, Apr 28
All 2020-21 UC meetings will be held via Microsoft Teams. The Teams meeting link and the agendas will typically be sent via email on the Friday preceding the UC meeting.
- R. Approved 2030-31 academic calendar

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

K. Thu: And now let me turn back to Lisa. Do you have any final words before we get a motion to adjourn.

L. Freeman: Just that it's been a real pleasure to start the new year with this group virtually, and

like everyone, I look forward to the time when we can actually really be together. And I think motion to adjourn probably is your next request.

K. Thu: I think so. Thank you, Lisa. Thanks, everybody for the start of the spring semester. Please go into the chat box. I need a motion to adjourn first and then a second.

H. Nicholson: So moved.

T. Arado: Second.

K. Thu: Okay, now go forth in the chat box and populate the voting. And just to clarify, I am not a voting member of the University Council, so I should not vote.

L. Freeman: It looks as though enough people have voted that we may adjourn.

K. Thu: Thank you. Have a great evening and great week, everybody.

Meeting adjourned at 4:37 p.m.