

TRANSCRIPT

**University Council
Wednesday, March 31, 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, Bohanon (for Costello), Brinkmann, Chinniah, Collins, Conderman, Cripe, Doederlein, Douglass, Freeman, Garcia, Ingram, N. Johnson, Martin, Monteiro, Narayanan, Nicholson, Olson, Rogers (for Boughton), Royce, Scheibe, Stange, Teso-Warner, Vaughn, Weffer

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Boughton, Costello, Stange

OTHERS PRESENT: Barnhart, Blazey, Boston, Bryan, Elish-Piper, Falkoff, Frazier, Ghrayeb, Gregory, Henry, Hunt, Jaekel, Jensen, Klaper, Kushnick, McCord, McEvoy, Moyer, Rhode, Thu

OTHERS ABSENT: Saborío

I. CALL TO ORDER

L. Freeman: It looks like we have, Kendall, many, many participants, it's 3 o'clock and recording has started. So, in that case, I will call the meeting to order and ask Pat to verify that we have a quorum.

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

P. Erickson: Hi there. Yes, we do have a quorum.

L. Freeman: And, Pat, do you want to remind people, just in case they've forgotten, distracted by the windy weather, how we vote on different motions in this meeting?

P. Erickson: Thank you, yes, and we do have a few subs in today, so maybe it'll be helpful also for them. For some of our less controversial votes, such as adopting the agenda, something we'll do shortly, this is a reminder that we wait for our chat monitor, who is Jeffrey Royce today. He will type in 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 ask you to hover your cursor over the statement that matches your vote and click your thumbs-up icon. And that way, Jeffrey won't have to go through and read lots and lots of yesses in the chat, but we'll all see that thumbs-up icon number go up in one chat box. Later on in the meeting, we're going to have a more

significant vote for a proposed constitutional amendment. For that vote, we will use a web-based tool called Poll Everywhere. And I think we'll wait and direct you about that at the time. Thanks.

L. Freeman: Thank you, Pat. Very helpful as always.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

L. Freeman: And before we forget the excellent advice you just gave, can I have a motion to adopt the agenda.

T. Arado: So moved.

L. Garcia: Second.

L. Freeman: That was moved by Arado and seconded by Garcia. Thank you. And Jeffry will now help us take a vote on adopting the agenda. I don't see the numbers changing. Can someone confirm that that's an adequate number to adopt the agenda?

J. Royce: Now it shows 15. I think it is. It was showing 14 for me before.

L. Freeman: And I will say, given the pandemic and our general state of exhaustion, I appreciate those who wanted to either reject or be neutral on the agenda. So noted.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 24, 2021 MINUTES – Pages 3-5

L. Freeman: Can I now have a motion, please, to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2021 meeting.

T. Arado: So moved.

C. Doederlein: Second.

L. Freeman: I think that was second Doederlein and moved by Arado, if I'm correct. And then, Jeffry, here we go again. Looks like we've passed the magic number for approval of the minutes from the February 24, meeting.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

L. Freeman: Which brings us to Roman numeral V, which is public comment. And I understand from Professor Thu that we have two requests, at least, for public comment today. And so I will allow Pat or Ferald to call them to the microphone.

P. Erickson: Thank you. We have two requests today from Rod Moyer and Tammy Sheibe. And we'll talk to Rod first.

R. Moyer: Excellent. Good afternoon Huskies and Huskie nation leaders. On today's agenda, on page 8 of today's agenda for March 31, 2021, is a review that is titled to Dr. Lisa Freeman from Dr. Katy Jaekel regarding Sarah Klaper. And renewing the contract, I'm holding this document, actually, kind of hard to see it, but this is the document, I have it here in my hands. And this document says that they gave adequate opportunity for the public and Huskies to speak their ideas about this. And I would agree, this is an adequate opportunity right here that I'm going to take advantage of in what I would suggest, you know, when you have someone as good as Sarah Klaper, the question is how do you keep Michael Jordan? That's the question everyone here should ask themselves, because keeping a great and what it takes to keep someone who is the top of their field, that's different than the middle of the pack, average, below average. And Sarah Klaper is not average. If you have the opportunity to renew her contract without a big increase, I would say cut my comments short and get to that, because what an amazing opportunity. If you could let me know when I have one minute left, please, because I'm not running my timer.

So, the ombudsperson is about being neutral. And I have had countless experiences with Sarah Klaper starting in the fall of 2018 when I reached out to her because I read that she was an expert on mediation and solving problems the right way. And she was kind enough to take her time to share some of her information and actually put me through some trainings that I requested to go through to learn some of the skills that she professed that she had. In addition to that, the job of the ombudsperson is to be neutral. How do you know what someone's integrity is until it really comes down to it. And I've had a lot of experiences with Sarah Klaper where, for example, I would invite her to a particular event, and she wouldn't come. Why? Because the appearance that her presence could give the appearance that she had an opinion one way or another. And I appreciate that, because that's her job. That's what the job is. And she has always expressed to me that neutrality and it's not about me. It's about the rule. It's about what's right. And she's always exhibited that quality. In addition to just a lot of intelligence, a lot of strength, there are things that I have done, for example, that Sarah Klaper did not agree with. And you know what, she told me that. And she told me why. And it's not about me agreeing or disagreeing. It's about the integrity of who somebody is, how they go about doing what they do. And these are experiences that I've had.

So, I'm going to make a suggestion to whoever is in charge, and I am not up on my Roberts Rules of Order and all this. But whoever can make an amendment, a motion, whatever the case may be, let's put a special designation in here. Let's increase her salary by a dollar just as a – I mean, is it about the dollar? No, it's about the principle. And it's about making a statement that, gosh dang it, Sarah, we value you. Gosh dang it, Sarah, you're needed here at NIU. Gosh dang it, Sarah, in order for NIU to go from where it to where it is over the next two, three, five, ten years, you being here is an integral part of that. So, I'm suggesting to whoever is in charge or whoever is not in charge but is on this line and has the ability to make motions, as I do not, make some sort of motion for something that, because again, I can tell you that the greats, they appreciate that respect.

Thank you all for your service to Huskie nation.

S. Klaper [via chat]: Thank you, Rod. I sincerely appreciate it.

L. Freeman: Thank you, Mr. Moyer. Pat, I believe we have a second public comment?

P. Erickson: yes, Tammy's next.

T. Scheibe: Hello, how is everybody? I'm a little nervous. I wasn't sure if I was going to talk, but I'm kind of excited to share this. We are doing for the College of Education, a program called [Project Graduate](#). And it is through a Crowdfunding fundraiser. And what it is, and I'm very passionate about it, so I don't even know where to begin about it. But I'm very excited, because I have students that are in their junior and senior years always coming to me, I don't know if I can finish my clinicals. I can't work and go to clinicals at the same time. I don't have gas money. I don't have money to even pay for background checks. So, little things like this that we think are little are not little. I've had students drop out of the program, because they don't have the funds. They might even still be getting financial aid and still now have enough funds to pay for what we consider - \$40 background check – that's huge for somebody who needs extra money. Daycare, all kinds of things that happen when you're in a clinical experience full-time where our lovely teaching profession does not pay you to be an intern. So, we need to help our students.

What we're trying to do in the College of Education is raise \$15,000 to help the students. And it's not where they have to fill out a whole form that you normally would have to fill out for financial aid help. These are people that might not qualify for financial aid, because they look like they make enough. But this is for all of our students. I'm very, very excited about this. I was able to get four ambassadors to help with the program. And tomorrow is when we launch it. So, it's very exciting. Three of my student teachers were willing to be on a video about why, what we have done as NIU people to help them where they can actually finish their graduate this semester. This is a whole other thing that's going to help in addition to what they've already had for other students.

There is a link that I sent to Pat. I know this was last minute, so I'm not sure if Pat can do it. I'm not the best tech-savvy. But I'm going to be sharing this link with all of my personal friends and family - oh, thanks so much, Pat – tomorrow when we launch it. I'm going to be putting it on my Facebook page. All of the ambassadors are doing the same. And we're going to be sending out a letter, I think, an email with this link three times to our personal friends and family, as well as our social media. And I'm going to be asking people – it says \$10. So, even my current students, I'm going to share it with them. I'm not going to ask them for money. But I'm going to share it with them and say, look at what you cohort is doing. Or look at the video they did. And maybe they'll donate \$10, and you feel so good about yourself just donating that much. I'm going to be requesting a lot more from people I know that have more money, like some companies. But I just wanted to throw it out there. So, if you do want to give back. If you know somebody and you want to share this, that would be great. It's just a really exciting thing for our students, because the things that we think are little are not. And I'm so happy, because I can name on my hand at least a hand, of how many students have had to drop out of the program because they didn't have the extra funds, and they had to work full-time, they couldn't work full time and student teach at the same time. So, this is just very exciting.

Hope you have a chance to look at the link, very special students that were willing to volunteer for that video and share a brief summary of what they had experienced. And they each had different experiences. That's all I had to say, but very exciting.

[Project Graduate](#)

G. Beyer [via chat]: Thank you, Tammy. That is a very encouraging project.

L. Freeman: Thank you, Tammy. Thanks for taking the time to speak with us today and to alert us to an opportunity where Huskies can help Huskies within the spirit of helping our students transform their lives and achieve their dreams. We really appreciate your effort coming here today and all of your efforts. And, Pat, thank you for helping by posting that link. Very much appreciated, as always. Does that conclude the public comment?

P. Erickson: Yes, that does conclude it.

VI. NIU PRESIDENT LISA FREEMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

L. Freeman: All right, then the next agenda item is item VI. And that is the president's announcements. I'm going to start today on a serious note, a somber note. The past couple weeks have been heartbreaking. A second mass shooting in a Colorado supermarket came on the heels of the Atlanta shootings, which killed eight individuals, including six women of Asian descent, so much tragedy. The victims of these heinous acts of violence were parents. They were children, spouses and partners, students and community leaders. May their memories be a blessing.

On our campus, such incidents are always felt deeply, because of February 14, 2008, and our direct experience with tragedy, hope and recovery. And for our Asian and Asian American community, the trauma was compounded by reactions, feelings and concerns about the rising tide of anti-Asian violence taking place in our nation. It was important for Huskies to come together in solidarity this past Friday on National Day to Speak Out Against Anti-Asian Hate. That event – and I know many of you were there – featured powerful voices from our community. And they reminded us that rooting out hate, all hate, requires sustained action. And we are reminded of this daily by our news channels.

This past year, our country and our community have experienced incredible loss and trauma. It's been really hard, but finally there are signs that the pandemic is resolving. And we are emerging from the challenges of the last year stronger, more capable and more committed to positive change than before. I'm delighted that the higher education work force and [inaudible] are now eligible for vaccines, and that 11,070 Huskies received their first dose of the Pfizer vaccine at the Convo Center on March 18. I know that many more have since had the opportunity to be vaccinated, and this is very encouraging. Still, I want to remind everyone that we will reach the light at the end sooner if we continue to wear masks and respect distancing and show each other more grace than usual for just a little longer.

Shifting gears, I'm really impressed with the draft report and recommendation from the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee. Their work is thoughtful, aligned with the university goals, mission, vision and values, and provides meaningful guidance for shared action to address institutional racism. The work, the effort, makes me very proud to be a Huskie, and I look forward to mirroring the report's words with consistent and persistent actions.

And on a related topic, I want to give a heads-up that a new university website that highlights the work we are doing together for racial and social justice, equity and inclusion will be introduced officially to the public in the next week or two. To those of you who provided content and feedback, a resounding thank you. And a resounding extra thank you to Holly Nicholson who provided more help than just above and beyond. The website was shared with members of the Senate Higher Education Appropriations Committee before, and I used virtual testimony. And it was very well received. And I'm really looking forward to showing it to the rest of the community.

H. Nicholson [via chat]: Thank you, President Freeman.

L. Freeman: Speaking of the General Assembly and Springfield, the legislative session in Springfield and the IBHE's strategic planning process are commanding attention right now. We are pleased with the number of the strategies that are being considered. For example, the suggestion for campuses to make equity [inaudible] institutional planning and the suggestion that we allow MAP grants to be used for year-around study. We are concerned with some other suggestions. For example, the proposal to allow community colleges to offer applied baccalaureate degrees in early childhood education. With respect to the last, NIU has joined other four-year public universities in raising appropriate concerns about the legislation. And I want to complement Laurie Elish-Piper. Dean Elish-Piper has been an active and constructive voice in that discussion, and she will continue to be that.

Along those lines, NIU has been very well represented in the IBHE strategic planning process on the advisory committee, in the design work groups and in the public comments. At this point, draft recommendations have been shared with the advisory committee and the IBHE board with the expectation that the board provide feedback in a public meeting on April 14, and the advisory committee do so on April 15. The final draft will be posted for public comment the week of April 21. And town halls will be held the week of April 26. The final version that takes into account all that feedback of the strategic plan will be presented to the IBHE board on May 13. So, we'll make sure that you have those dates so that you can look for the appropriate opportunity to share your thoughts and feedback on the strategic plan.

Finally, thinking of Springfield, reminds me to provide updates to the community on the progress of searches we've had in progress for key positions. For the state relations position, Katie Davison will be joining NIU as director of state relations starting the first week of May. She's currently at Innovate Springfield, but she's been a Huskie previously working for the university at the Center for Governmental Studies, and we're very happy to have Katie back with us in this new role.

The interviews for the dean of the Graduate School, assistant vice president for international affairs are occurring this week, and I think many of you have attended the open forum. I think we're through two candidates with a third to follow. The searches for the dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences and the chief human resource officer are progressing on schedule with strong pools building. And Vice President Sol Jensen has made a hire for the position of assistant vice president and director of admissions. There will be a formal announcement forthcoming, likely next week. But we can't reveal the identity of that individual at this point, because she or he is still working through it with their institution.

So, that concludes the president's announcements. And, Kendall, did I cover everything that we talked about as important?

K. Thu: Absolutely. Thank you very much for all of those updates.

L. Freeman: All right. Well, in that case, it's my turn to hand the gavel, the microphone back to you.

K. Thu: Thank you, President Freeman.

VII. ITEMS FOR UNIVERSITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

- A. Budget report
President Lisa Freeman
Provost Beth Ingram
CFO Sarah Chinniah
CLAS Dean Robert Brinkmann

K. Thu: We'll move on to item VII on the agenda, and then I get to introduce the president again. We're going to have a budget report from President Freeman in tandem with Provost Ingram and CFO Sarah Chinniah. So, Lisa, I'm going to turn it back to you.

L. Freeman: Great. I think that we're going to ask Pat to pull up the slides, and Sarah is going to give an overview of the agenda, and then I'll provide some historical perspective within that context.

S. Chinniah: Thanks, President Freeman. Thank you, Pat, for pulling up the presentation. We're pleased to be back with University Council today, and are building on the discussion regarding planning and budgeting in today's meeting. We're fortunate that President Freeman will spend a few minutes talking us through the journey that NIU has gone through over the last four or five years that has really allowed us to get to this point and talking a bit about some of the conversations that have taken part on campus, as well as the results of those discussions.

We're then going to build on President Freeman's remarks and talk a little bit about changes to our budgeting in response to feedback from the campus. We're going to share some key data points in support of those decisions. We're going to talk a bit more about our return to multi-year budgeting. Provost Ingram is going to share with us her approach to budgeting with Academic Affairs. So, as we're talking about budgeting within the institution more broadly, Provost Ingram will drill down a bit and talk specifically about Academic Affairs. We're also going to pause for a moment and allow any discussion or feedback as we end today's discussion. So, with that, I'll turn it back to President Freeman.

L. Freeman: Thanks, Sarah, and good afternoon again, everybody. I think you all know that I'm generally more focused on looking forward than backward. But I do want to start out the budget presentation today with a brief historical perspective, because I think that understanding the history and progression of budgeting and resource allocation at NIU will help provide some insight into

what I and the members of the senior leadership team are so passionate about achieving a transparent process that aligns budget with strategic priorities and supports multi-year planning.

I am actually in my eleventh year at NIU, and when I started here as the vice president for research and graduate studies, our budget process was very opaque. The executive vice president and provost had little influence on the overall university budget. Decreases in enrollment driven tuition revenue and state appropriations drove increases in tuition that hurt our students, our competitiveness and our reputation. And when annual budgets were adjusted, cuts were made across the board rather than strategically. And this was not sustainable. It was not the right way to do budgeting at an institution of higher education. And that started to change. And it started to change because of good dialog between university leadership and shared governance.

In Fiscal Year '14, the Faculty Senate and University Council called for the university to link budget to goals with greater transparency and greater engagement of shared governance and campus stakeholders. And in Fiscal '15, the senior leadership and Board of Trustees of NIU committed to having budget development and multi-year planning processes that flowed from our mission, vision and values, that were academically responsive and fiscally responsible – a phrase we use a lot now. And we committed at that point to alignment, clarity, transparency and financial sustainability understanding that achieving those outcomes would be challenging and would take a minimum of 18 to 24 months in the absence of unforeseen disruptions.

During this period, the University Council and Faculty Senate supported the university's efforts to increase fiscal transparency and involved the university community in the budget process. And they made a series of recommendations – and if anyone is interested, I have the original documentation from then Faculty Senate presidents, Alan Rosenbaum and Greg Long. Their recommendations were that the university be more responsive to growing concerns from students and families about the cost of a university degree, that we increase investment in student recruitment and student retention, including student scholarships, that we be mindful of keeping pace in increasing employee compensation and that we be more creative with how spaces are shared and multi-purposed. The administration embraced these as shared objectives and committed to working with the university community to achieve these ends.

But remember, I said that we thought that this would be a process of at least 18 to 24 months in the absence of unforeseen disruptions. And shortly thereafter, the university faced the incredible hardship and disruption of the 700-day budget impasse that spanned Fiscal Year '16 and '17. And during that year, frankly, our focus was on survival, not on multi-year planning. And when the impasse ended, NIU was in a significant weaker position because the funding withheld in Fiscal Year '16 was never replaced. And yet, as we emerged from the state financial crisis, the University Council and Faculty Senate again, through the Resource, Space and Budget Committee, offered sound guidance and sage advice. And I want to quote their comments to the leadership.

“The committee recognizes that the rebound that occurs at NIU will not be a mere return to business as usual, but will represent a focus on strategic reallocation of resources across the university. The process will inevitably involve change.” After repeating the importance of transparency and stakeholder engagement, the committee went on to say, “We look forward to a bright future at NIU and to continued partnership between NIU students, staff, faculty and administration.”

And in the past few years, the university has been responsive to the recommendations received from our faculty, staff and students. For example, NIU maintained a flat tuition rate for six years with our base undergraduate tuition rate remaining unchanged from the 2015-16 academic year to the present. We formed the Division of Enrollment Management, Marketing and Communications, and invested in their marketing and recruitment efforts and the technology they needed to serve the university and support our students. We increased our institutional commitment to scholarships and successfully advocated for more state investment in student aid, specifically increased funding for MAP and the creation of AIM HIGH. We developed and implemented a comprehensive strategic enrollment management plan and equity plan focused on supporting not only access, but success, for all of our students. We provided three university-wide salary increments since 2017. And last year we even established a goal and a time line for space and facilities planning.

If you look at the February 2020 meeting of the University Council, Professor Arado, who I know is with us today, provided feedback from the Resource, Space and Budget Committee about the concepts about space ownership, space allocation, the responsibility for space and how these concepts interact with budget allocations. Also provided suggestions about how to identify ways to repurpose space and identify spaces that may be decommissioned due to underutilization or no use, and plans were discussed for open meetings about space and budget between Provost Ingram and Vice President Chinniah and the rest of the university community. And these suggestions were received quite positively.

And then the global pandemic hit upending those plans and many others and adversely impacting the past and current fiscal years. It's been very frustrating for all of us. Our implementation of multi-year planning and budgeting derailed for a second time by an unwelcome cataclysm. At the same time, I will say, though, that we did gain valuable experience and insights from our COVID-19 response. This year we learned again that we are a strong and resilient university community capable of change. And this is seen in the commitments and the progress we're making in areas that range from administrative process automation to dismantling structural inequity. Culturally, we are better prepared than we ever have been as a university community to embrace multi-year planning, to work collaboratively to balance cost containment, to invest in strategic priorities and growth opportunities. And I really look forward to resuming that work, and I really hope that we don't have another major disruption.

And at this point, I'm going to turn the presentation over to Sarah and Beth to talk about our approach to accomplishing our fiscal sustainability goals with an inclusive process. Sarah, thanks for the opportunity to provide that historical context.

S. Chinniah: Thank you, President Freeman. Pat, can you take us to the next slide, please. The historical context is critical as the conversations, decisions and commitments that President Freeman summarize really undergird our current structure and approach. I want to spend a few minutes building on three themes President Freeman shared in her remarks. The first, transparency. A critical priority of the leadership team has been transparency, transparency of information, decisions, discussions. It is a value that guides and informs our budget planning. Because of a commitment to transparency, we have adopted an inclusive process, one in which we, including the president, provost, myself and Andrew Rogers, our director of budget and financial planning, have

incorporated in how we work. This includes having regular conversations with key groups on campus to ensure that we are getting feedback, that we're thinking about things the right way, that we're sharing ideas.

We have adopted different forums to ensure that we are sharing this information, that we are responding to feedback and that we're soliciting information. A few of those forums are listed on the slide. You'll see reference to the former Resources, Space and Budget, now University Council, the recently adopted President's Budget Roundtable. We've also, through Provost Ingram, provides regular updates and discussions with the Dean's Council. President Freeman ensures that in her monthly leadership meetings, there are regular updates, discussions, opportunities to ask questions about budget and planning. We also have a regular meeting that was adopted within the last year, the Budget Resource and Information Network of Business Managers, which we affectionately refer to as the BRAIN group. This is convened by Andrew Rogers in our budget office.

Through these forums and many more that are not listed, this is not intended to be a full listing, we really demonstrate our commitment to transparency and to an inclusive process. I will note that this is a journey, and I won't claim to say that we will ever fully check the box as this is dynamic. An example, a very real example of this dynamic process builds on an example President Freeman shared. Through the former RSB Committee, as well as including representative members of the Academic Planning Council, two-three members from each group commonly were invited to our annual budget planning discussions. The members were invited into a day of budget meetings with university leaders to hear proposals, discussions and share feedback about plans for the following year. The feedback shared by the member participants did impact and did weigh in on any adjustments to targets, including funding provided for new initiatives or perhaps reallocation of funding to support those strategic priorities. We did have a plan for how, with the adoption of University Council, we would modify that approach. Unfortunately, with the global pandemic and events where they are, our budget planning has paused in the typical way. And we look forward to relaunching this involvement, including the partnership with University Council as we move forward with our budget.

We also want to highlight as we talk about the realignment of budget with our strategic priorities, Provost Ingram will provide some specific data points a bit later, but we have made progress. I'm thinking about those salary increments for faculty and staff. As we think about supporting student recruitment and scholarships, whether it be with technology, additional financial aid dollars, based on feedback from those university groups, the university has prioritized actions to support this growth. We've also seen the launch and the support of program growth, specifically in the online forum.

Finally, the return to multi-year planning. Change in any setting takes time, it takes discussion, it takes thoughtful action. And that's often challenging to do in a typical 10- to 12-month cycle. As we think about our return to multi-year planning and the need and our wants to return by Fiscal '23, it will allow for the addition of new priorities. As we've learned this year, conversations and needs to support commitments toward anti-racism and social justice, we need a dynamic process that allows us to have flexibility to respond to time-sensitive needs. We also need to allow the appropriate length of time to identify and implement action. And we want the opportunity, we need the opportunity, as shared in those earlier remarks, to permit the remodeling of the university, to align

with the changing landscape and demands. And I think this last year has taught us all that there is a need to think about how we respond to some of the lessons learned. And we allow for that to build in and form our multi-year planning. So, with that, I will turn it over to Provost Ingram.

B. Ingram: Thanks, Sarah. I'm here to talk about the effect of this process. What has been the effect of this process? Essentially, our total revenue has stayed flat. It's just declined slightly since Fiscal Year '18. But at the same time, we have reallocated revenue to fund those strategic initiatives that President Freeman talked about and CFO Chinniah outlined on the previous slide. And that included \$20 million annually to recruitment and scholarships for students, \$6.5 million to faculty and staff increments and \$2 million to diversity, equity and inclusion. We reallocated to those strategies that were important to our future. And those strategies are showing success. For example, we saw an uptick in enrollment this year, both overall, but also more specifically, at the freshman level, when most institutions across the country saw a decline in enrollment. That rationale for the reallocation was to ensure our future by focusing on enrollment and program growth. And we will continue to reallocate to support the priorities that we identified through a collaborative process. So, despite the disruption of COVID, we did continue to put our priorities first and to reallocate to support those priorities.

Of course, different units responded to these reallocations in different ways. Some units have reallocated funds internally. Academic Affairs is a good example of that. Some units had to change their sources of funding to become less reliant on the general fund and more reliant on other kinds of funding. An example of that would be Outreach, Engagement and Regional Development, which shifted their reliance to different kinds of funding that they have access to. Some units had to work with decreased budgets. Administration and Finance and, specifically, Facilities and DoIT, worked with decreased funding levels and had to defer projects to the future. Next slide, please.

We were asked to talk a little bit about specific approaches to budgeting in Academic Affairs, which is the unit that did internal reallocations to ensure that we could fund the priorities that had been created in that collaborative process. When I arrived here, we were in the midst of that multi-year planning process. And about ten months after I got here, COVID hit, and we spent that particular budget year basically trying to stabilize our budget, respond to the new needs of COVID funding and basically tried to stabilize our budget. In Academic Affairs, planning takes a long time. There's a long runway toward reallocation. And so, we've decided that Fiscal Year '22 would be a year of transition where we would stabilize budgets. But again, we have made a commitment to certain priorities, so we will continue to realign our budgets to make sure that we can fund the priorities that we've identified.

That should give us time and the runway that we need to do the multi-year planning for Fiscal '23 to realign our budgets to current strategic priorities, but also perhaps to new strategic priorities that are identified through the collaborative processes that President Freeman and Vice President Chinniah talked about – to realign our budgets for both strategic priorities, but also fiscal sustainability, to ensure that we have revenue where we need it to support the activities that we've identified as important to NIU and to Academic Affairs.

So, as we did before COVID, we're looking forward to renewed planning and budgeting efforts that support our priorities. Those discussions will be occurring in multiple forums, both the ones that

Sarah outlined, but also the ones that are specific to Academic Affairs, including the Deans Council, collegiate meetings, the academic leadership meetings that we convene, discussions with chairs and heads and other ways that everybody can be involved in those discussions. I expect that budget allocations will be different in order to align with the priorities that we've defined. Dean Bob Brinkmann is here with us today to talk about this process specifically in CLAS. And so I'm going to turn the mic over, so-to-speak, to Bob for a few minutes. And then we'll come back with a wrap-up of slides and Sarah.

B. Brinkmann: Hi everyone. Thank you for including me today. And, Kendall, thanks for the invite; and, President Freeman, Provost Ingram and CFO Chinniah, for the opportunity to speak. It's interesting to talk about the budget, because all of us have had to deal with challenges this year and previous years, because of the budget issues associated with COVID. I know the state of Illinois has had budget issues for years, and that's impacted the university in significant ways.

What I want to take a moment to talk about today is really how the budget process impacts the colleges, how these kinds of emergency situations impact the colleges, and also make a case for the need for multi-year planning from the college. To start that off, first let me just say that what a normal budget cycle looks like in the college. Typically, in January or February, the colleges work with the Provost's Office, develop budget targets. We develop our budgets in consultation with our stakeholders. And we start to plan for the fall or the spring, whatever searches we might do, whatever courses we might offer. And we're able to develop a schedule for the following year, a course schedule, based on that budget cycle. And that's under normal times what happens. But as we know, we've been in sort of an emergency period, obviously under COVID, but because of the issues in Illinois, it's also been going on for a while here at NIU. And so, all of the colleges still have to plan for fall and spring in February or March. And our fall schedule typically goes live in April. But the actual budget numbers get a little wobbly, because we don't really know where we're going to end up, because of uncertainties that exist. And I have to say, especially with the COVID year, this is not unique to NIU. This is a problem that, I think, every university around the country is facing. And everyone has to make revisions to budgets and schedules based on whatever the reality of the budget situation is for that year.

And so, the reason that long-term planning is so important, we can then start developing a budget cycle that approaches normality where we can start those budget conversations with chairs, with faculty and get input from our college councils, and make decisions based on the college and university's mission and vision. Because a lot of times what happens under emergency situations, we have to make decisions very quickly, and they're not always fully in alignment under stressful conditions. And we can also work hard to look at both data-driven, as well as mission-driven, qualitative metrics that influence our decision-making around how we distribute our budget at the college.

So, with that, I just want to conclude by thanking the inclusion of the colleges within this discussion and turn it back over to Provost Ingram.

B. Ingram: Sarah, I think you're taking the last slide.

S. Chinniah: Yes, I can wrap us up. Pat, if you can take us to the last slide. Thank you Dean, Brinkmann. I think you really hit the punch line of what we wanted to talk about, which is the return to the multi-year planning and budgeting, not just because it's something that we want to do, that campus wants us to do, but quite frankly something that we need to do. And again, you made the point so well. We need time to make thoughtful and deliberate resource decisions that support NIU's mission, goals and values. Much of the progress we made has been remarkable, but it's come at making in-the-moment decisions. And while that has really helped us to meet our goals, we know that, if we will continue the success that we have achieved, we need to allow time for us to come together as a university and align our academic offerings and administrative functions in support of our university goals.

Something that we've talked about previously in this forum is Fiscal '22, we're looking at as a transition year with really the goal of relaunching multi-year planning in FY '23. Much like last time, we're looking at an initial three-year window. To be clear, we don't see multi-year planning just taking us to Fiscal Year '25. Rather, we will work in three-year increments. And everyone will be in a slightly different place as to actions and conversations and what time sequence things will be happening in order to meet the goals within colleges, divisions, but in support of the institution more broadly. Much like last time, we're looking for a mix of sustainable actions. So, those actions that may structurally change how we operate, perhaps, a focus on really thinking about those entrepreneurial types of initiatives that will move us in a different direction, again, in support of university goals, perhaps help to stabilize or grow our revenue base. We also know that, as we look at responding to the structural deficit that does remain, that we will have to rely on limited uses of cash in order to help us get through these early years. The goal is still a fiscally sustainable budget by Fiscal '25. We'll call on the campus to take part and provide ownership and accountability through the process. And we are looking forward to incentivizing and acknowledging the changes that will help us move forward.

That concludes the remarks that President Freeman, Provost Ingram, Dean Brinkmann and I had for today. I can pause and open it up for questions or comments from the group.

K. Thu: Thanks, Lisa, Beth, Sarah and Bob. In looking at the agenda, we do have time for questions and comments. And so, I want to start off with, I think, the first hand that I see is Jeffry Royce. Go ahead, Jeffry.

J. Royce: Thank you, Kendall. I'll try and only take a second to collect my thoughts. That was a lot to digest. I'd like to start by thanking Lisa, Beth and Sarah. Each of you mentioned pay increases for faculty and staff, which, obviously, have been a concern, at least with regard to staff, for as long as I've been here. And hearing your renewed commitment and continued commitment to that issue really makes me a proud employee today. And I do not wish to detract from that as I continue with my comments, but I wanted to reiterate, on behalf of all the staff who are listening, you know, the staff morale issue does go a bit beyond pay increases, which I do think is something most of us here in this group do understand. But it just scratches the tip of the iceberg. Some of those issues include reinstating merit-based pay increases, a bit more localized and reward-based, having more competitive salaries as compared to other institutions within Illinois, greater opportunities for internal advancement, more supportive and collaborative human resources, recognition and value for increased workloads. And I really look forward to continuing the work on all these issues with

you fine folks. But these are issues that talk more about culture and practice, or just as much about culture and practices as it does about pay increases. And I know a lot of staff consider salary to kind of be a taboo topic. And most outspoken, hardworking NIU staff don't even want to bring the topic up, because they think it's not worthwhile. And I really like to start to tear those barriers down. So, I look forward to continued progress. And thank you again. And, President Freeman, congratulations on your reappointment for another four years.

K. Thu: Thank you, Jeffry. Take a moment for any of you to respond, Lisa, Beth, Sarah.

L. Freeman: I think everything Jeffry said are things we deeply care about. They're shared commitments. I think that we all appreciate that there's not a single switch we can pull and solve all those issues overnight, but as we plan for multiple years and as we bring in a new chief HR officer, I think we'll have ample opportunity to keep those things front of mind as we try to move the university forward.

K. Thu: Anybody else want to respond to Jeffry?

B. Ingram: I would just reiterate what President Freeman said, that these are priorities, and part of the collaborative effort is to come together to think about where those priorities lie and how we realign our resources to the priorities that we've heard from campus. So, I appreciate the comments.

K. Thu: I saw a hand raised from my colleague Simón Weffer, and then it disappeared. Simón, is your hand still up?

S. Weffer: Yes, it's still up. Thank you, Kendall. And thank you, everyone. One of the things that's been most illuminating for me during my time on University Council is learning more about the budgeting process at the very macro level. And thanks to Bob. Bob's created a bit of a leadership program in CLAS, where I got to learn a little bit more about the nitty gritty. So, I'm filling in a lot of holes in the vitae as it were. I would just like to say, though, I love the narrative that's coming from the top line of our university, but I worry that, as things filter their way down, the narrative is moving away from working together collectively to much more pitting individual groups against one another. We're starting to hear across the university that faculty are being told that it's because of their pay increase that X can't be funded or Y-person can't be brought back, or Z funding mechanism has to change. And I don't feel like that's the message we want to lead with, and I don't believe that's the message that, at the upper level, everyone is putting forward, because it works against the morale that's rebuilt from getting raises after years without. And so, I just wanted to raise that concern to all of you as someone that's here to represent all of CLAS and other faculty, is that we really need to work on our internal messaging as much as we need to work on our external messaging about budgeting. And I'd hate to have Jeffry and I pitted against each other on some level on these sorts of discussions, because that's not what any of us are looking for. And so I just wanted to make you all aware that some of those discussions are happening, and I don't believe it's coming from this level, but it's a big institution and there's lots of space between the provost and VP and president line and down to the individual faculty and staff line. So, I thought it was important to bring that up in the context of the discussion that we're having.

K. Thu: Thank you very much, Simón, extremely important. I've heard similar sorts of sentiments. Lisa, Beth, Sarah, even Bob, do you want to respond?

L. Freeman: I want to first say thank you, Simón, for raising that. It took courage, and we need to hear that that's what's being said, because that is certainly not our sentiment or intention. We can work much harder on messaging, and I look forward to working with University Council about that. And I just want to take a moment to be realistic. I think the only way we will ever stop all of the comments like that is to have an open-ended bucket of money, which we will never have. So, I just want to say that, when we set priorities and we set human resources priorities, we're doing that because we believe our people are very important. And we do that, knowing that we will continue to direct university resources to the people we care about, to our students and the values and mission of the university, and that we will try to innovate and invest in things that will grow the overall pot, because, obviously, that's better for all of us. But I can tell you that we will never have all the money that everybody wants to do everything that they're going to do. And that's why, I think, we're trying so hard to go to a multi-year and inclusive process so that everyone understands why the decisions that are being made are being made. And as we build our messaging for this process, I hope Simón and all of you on University Council, that you will help us figure out where we need to keep repeating the messages and whose voices we need to keep amplifying and elevating.

K. Thu: Thanks, Lisa.

B. Ingram: I will make that commitment, specifically in Academic Affairs, that if we make decisions, you will know why we made those decisions. And there will be ample opportunity to be a part of the conversation. And, as President Freeman said, on campuses we always make choices. And the important thing is to know why those choices have been made and to make sure that we heard all perspectives as we make those choices. And I think, as Dean Brinkmann said, we're not alone in this. There are lots of universities in this situation, and so, we can learn from other universities, as well, and have conversations with other places to find out about how they're managing strategy going forward.

K. Thu: Thank you. And thanks for the question, Simón. Maybe if I could just piggyback by way of segueing into the next part of the agenda, even in a transparent environment, there are always rumor mills that churn, and there have not been decisions at the top about program elimination. Could you please comment on that and make clear for everybody that's listening?

B. Ingram: I guess we could just repeat: At the top level, there have been no decisions made about program elimination, and nothing like that is going to happen without deep and robust conversations. The other thing I would say is that I really appreciate it when I hear from people when they hear something and they have a question or it's unclear, to send me a note or Bob a note or any of the deans or Kendall, to get the right information. And I really encourage people to feel free to ask us and talk to us and get the information. And then, when you have the information, to go back and to have conversations on campus when you have the information.

L. Freeman: I'll just add that I always like to use data to support what's being said. And I was provost, as you probably all know, before Provost Ingram in 2015. And I received a phone call about a rumor that I intended to merge math and English. And my response was shock, because I

couldn't even figure out where that rumor had started, and I assured the caller that that was not the case. And they said to me, well I don't think I would have heard it if it wasn't true. I said, I can't control misinformation, but I can assure you it's not true. And I just want to point out that six years later, we have not merged math and English.

S. Weffer [via chat]: That would make for very interesting departmental meetings.

K. Thu: I'd like to be a fly on the wall for that.

L. Freeman: I'm not making this up, but it was one of my favorite moments as provost.

J. Blazey [via chat]: The Department of Rigorous Language.

K. Thu: Well, thank you all, and I'm sure you're all willing to respond to questions offline as you always are. And I appreciate the time and effort that you put into today's presentation. And it's a far cry from where we were 15 years ago in talking about the university budget. So, thanks again. So, with that, I think we do need to move on with the agenda.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

K. Thu: Pat, we do not have any items under the consent agenda, is that correct?

P. Erickson: That's correct.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Proposed amendment to NIU Constitution, Article 6.1.1,
Definition of University Faculty – Pages 6-7
SECOND READING/VOTE

K. Thu: That brings us to Roman numeral IX new business. This is the proposed amendment to the NIU Constitution, Article 6.1.1. This is a second reading. It concerns the definition of faculty. Just by way of very brief historical context, last fall the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee led by Peter Chomentowski let the effort to try to move us in the direction of making the definition of university faculty more consistent across the board in our constitution, our bylaws and, of course, hopefully, eventually, into the Board of Trustee bylaws as well. So, the Faculty Senate voted overwhelmingly in favor of the proposed changes to the definition of faculty, to the categories of faculty definitions that we presented as a first reading during the February University Council meeting. And so, now we have a second reading of that same proposal. So, to get things started, I'd like to entertain a motion to approve.

T. Arado: So moved.

K. Thu: There is our first. Do we have a second.

G. Beyer: Second.

K. Thu: Thanks, Greg. So, with that, I think you've had ample time to read this. I did, myself and Peter Chomentowski, did respond to a number of questions that came out of the last UC meeting. And I think we've adequately responded to those. And so, are there any additional issues that anybody has before we put this to a vote? Just as by way of repeating what I've said in the past. Constitutional amendments require two-thirds vote, if I have it correctly, Ferald and Pat. And then it must go to a faculty referendum before moving on to the Board of Trustees for their approval. Constitutional changes require ultimate board approval. And this is already on the radar of the Board of Trustees. So, if there are no surprises at this point, Pat, do you want to explain the voting procedure for this proposal?

P. Erickson: Sure. First thing I'm going to do is bring up the slide that reminds all of us who our voting members are. So, if you see your name on this slide, or if you see the name of someone you are here subbing for today, then you are a voting member. While you're looking at that, I'm going to, on the side here, grab a link and paste that into the chat. Give me just a second to do that.

K. Thu: And while Pat is doing that, I need to remind myself that the chair of University Council has no vote, so I do not vote on this.

C. McEvoy [via chat]: Thanks Pete and Kendall for your work on this.

P. Erickson: Now, I've put this link into the chat. You should see it there. It's a Poll Everywhere link. It's going to take you to a ballot that has numbers 1 through 10. For our purposes today, 1 equals yes that you agree with the motion to approve the proposal. Two equals no. Three equals abstain. And then please just ignore the other numbers, 4 through 10. There's no need to hit any kind of a submit button. Once you click on the number that represents your vote, that vote is instantly submitted to the poll, and we'll see it tally; I'll bring that over in just a second here, so you can see it tallying. And if you vote and then you change your mind, there's a clear button at the bottom of the ballot page. And you can hit that and that will take your vote away from our total here, and you can enter a different one. As long as we have this poll open, you can change your mind. So, I think we'll let this go for a moment and see what we have here.

K. Thu: Now, everybody can exhale and relax for a moment. And again, I do want to thank Peter Chomentowski and his committee for all their original work on this and all the comments that we received in the interim. They've all been extremely helpful, and thinking through this was very important. So, Pat, I will take your cue and/or Ferald's cue if and when this passes.

P. Erickson: We clearly have our necessary two-thirds. I would have estimated that we have about 26 or 27 voting members in our meeting today, so that just means that there are a few of you who aren't voting, but maybe we'll give it just another few seconds. Looks like somebody is testing the clear button, there, so thank you. I'm breathing a sigh of relief that that really worked. And then, Kendall, I think you can call it whenever you're ready. I think everybody's had ample time.

K. Thu: I think so as well. Okay, with 13 yea, 3 no and 1 abstention, the motion carries. Thank you, everybody. I appreciate it. The next step will be a referendum that Pat is already working on, and we'll make sure that we get word out about that and make certain those that vote in the referendum

have adequate information on what they're voting on, of course. Congratulations, everybody. It's been a hard year's work, and I appreciate everybody's effort.

Yes – 18

No – 3

Abstain – 1

X. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Ombudsperson Penultimate Year Review/Recommendation – Page 8 Katy Jaekel, Chair, Ombudsperson Review Committee

K. Thu: Let's move on to item X in unfinished business. The first item we have is the ombudsperson penultimate year review/recommendation on page 8. And I'll wait for Pat to pull that up. While she's doing that, I want to thank Rod Moyer for his comments about the work of Sarah Klaper in the ombudsperson's office. And I'm going to turn it over to Katy to say a few remarks about the review.

K. Jaekel: Thanks, Kendall. My name is Dr. Katy Jaekel. I'm an associate professor in higher education in the College of Education and the chair of this committee. Per the NIU Bylaws, Article 11.5, when the ombudsperson wishes to be considered for an additional term, the University Council is called upon to establish an Ombudsperson Review Committee. Such a committee was established by University Council at its September 9, 2020 meeting. The committee met several times throughout this past year, reviewed the ombudsperson's summary of service and most recent annual reports. Opportunity for input from members of the university community was also provided through a campus-wide survey. Upon conclusion of its review, the committee recommends that Sarah Klaper be reappointed as NIU's ombudsperson. And at this time, I believe we need a University Council member to make a motion to approve the committee's recommendation, and then a second and then discussion.

H. Nicholson: So moved.

S. Weffer: Second.

K. Thu: Any discussion? Well, Katy, hearing none, I think Pat has suggested we could do this as a vote in the chat box. Is that right, Pat?

P. Erickson: Yes, I think that's okay.

K. Thu: So, if that's okay with you, Katy, then we'll wait for Jeffry to get the response options up.

K. Jaekel: That is absolutely okay with me. I like that I have this power.

K. Thu: And while we are waiting for the vote to come in, I want to express my appreciation for Katy for taking the lead on this. I served on the review committee, as well, and I know how much

work it takes. And so, thank you, Katy. Thanks to the other committee members for all the effort that you put into it. This is the way that these processes should work, right?

K. Jaekel: Yes, thank you.

K. Thu: Maybe, Katy, you can see the vote.

K. Jaekel: Yes, I can, and I love that somebody also put a heart in it. I love that that's also a vote. I love that we vote with hearts. It looks like we have 12 thumbs up, one heart and two friends who have abstained. That appears to be a simple majority.

K. Thu: Yep, that's what we need. We just need a simple majority. Well, congratulations, Sarah. We look forward to your serving another term, pending approval by the administration, of course. So, thank you again.

S. Klaper: Thank you.

H. Nicholson [via chat]: Sarah is a treasure! As is Katy!

K. Thu: Thank you, Sarah. And thank you, Katy.

K. Jaekel: Thank you, and happy Trans Day of Visibility, everybody.

K. Thu: Yes, happy Trans Day and Disability Day, thank you. What did I just say?

L. Freeman: I think it was Trans Day of Visibility, not Disability.

K. Thu: Well, there you go, I stuck my foot in my mouth. So, sorry about that, my apologies. We can go back and look at that on the recording again.

- B. Advancing Administrative Efficiency – Update
Chris McCord, Senior Advisor to the Vice President, Administration and Finance

K. Thu: That brings us to the next item on the agenda, advancing administrative efficiency by Chris McCord. As you remember, we had an earlier presentation by Chris. This is simply a follow-up to see how things are moving along. So, Chris, with my foot firmly in my mouth, I'm going to turn it over to you.

C. McCord: Thanks, Kendall. I don't have any great come-back to that, I won't try. As Kendall noted, I presented to Faculty Senate and University Council a few months ago, a project that's been underway. I promise we are not going to come back every three months with an update on this to University Council. But we did hit, I think, an important milestone. And we felt it was worthwhile reporting on, so I'd like to briefly remind you of the context and then tell you some of the recent developments and what we're looking at for the near future and invite your discussion.

You may recall last year, a long, long time ago, February of last year, President Freeman called on the university community, among other things, to look at ways to streamline the university by asking what administrative practices, policies and procedures can be transformed, simplified or eliminated. That call was formulated in February of last year. Of course, March of last year, our world changed on us, and it brought into sharp focus the need to transform, simplify and eliminate administrative practices, policies and procedures, and gave a particular focus on the value of moving to a more automated or digitized environment, in order to eliminate the need for paper, improve work flow by streamlining, better connect systems to avoid often tedious, often error-prone manual data transfer between systems and, something that has been tremendously valuable in this past year, support flexible work environments and remote working.

We undertook, I think, what has become an expectation for NIU, we undertook a very inclusive process for sourcing these opportunities for improvement, these opportunities for increased efficiency. There were two surveys conducted. We had over 150 respondents. There were seven different leadership groups engaged, 80 individuals interviewed at length. And out of that process, a number of opportunities for streamlining the university for achieving administrative efficiency through process improvement, we identified 74 distinct projects. Now 74 projects, almost all of which had some technology or digital focus. It was clearly more than we were going to be able to execute in a limited amount of time. It was clear that this breadth of ideas needed to be prioritized. And so this became not only an exercise in identifying opportunities and advancing them, but it became an exercise in aligning to our values, aligning to our priorities and making sure that we were directing resources in the most valuable way possible.

First, we sorted projects into different categories. I'll show you in a moment a number of projects that were complete or just on the cusp of completion. There was no value in halting the good work that was underway. We just saw those projects through to completion. Because a large focus was on the ability of our programmers and developers and their partners in the functional units, programmers and developers in DoIT, it was important to identify projects that didn't really need to involve DoIT and the developer team, that could be managed locally. Those could be separated out.

We went through a leadership process, leadership within the divisions, leadership at the university level and identified a number of projects that, while interesting, were not seen as the most important projects to consider at this time. We identified a small set of projects that really needed more thought. They weren't ready for implementation yet. They really needed to be developed in some fashion before they could be implemented. That left us with 21 projects that we felt were really candidates for near-term prioritization and then action.

One of the main things I want to report to you is just where we are on that. Before though, I want to give a glance at those projects that have been underway, because I think they show something about the kind of transformation we're making in this area and the kinds of opportunities. I'm not going to go through this entire list, but some of these I think you'll recognize as clearly value added to the community. The ability to automate processing of additional pay, the ability to take the change of grade form out of being a paper form and turn it into a digital form, the ability to process travel vouchers online, the ability to have a self-service tool for gender identification where students and staff can update their records directly themselves, the ability to integrate information across

systems. We have been making progress in all these areas. The challenge was we were sometimes not fully prioritized in terms of what was going to bring the greatest value.

So, we went through a process of taking those 21 projects that I mentioned, and you'll see here a list of them. We evaluated them on factors such as how many transactions of each of these types did the community go through each year. How many different people touch these processes? How do they align with the university mission? How do they contribute to operational efficiency? A leadership team evaluated these on the premise that these weren't just divisional or departmental priorities. We were really speaking to what was the highest priority of the university as a whole. So, the university leadership team prioritized these projects into what you see here, three tiers, high, middle, low. And our goal is now to prioritize effort on the projects listed in the high tier. As resources become available, to move to the middle tier. As resources become available, move to the final tier. And we hope this will speak to a new paradigm really for these sorts of efforts that we will, by prioritizing, make sure that the things that are truly of great value to the university in terms of process improvement happen soonest, happen first, and the university can feel the effects of them as soon as possible.

L. Freeman [via chat]: Sometimes things were put in a lower tier because there was work that needed to be done on the process before it was automated, too.

C. McCord: I can provide a bit more detail about these projects. Again, I don't propose to go through every one of them, but I can give you a little bit of a sense of each of these if there's time during the discussion. This presentation will be presented online, and there will also be on the website some of this information will be made available. We're working toward that now. The tireless Holly Nicholson is involved in helping set that up as soon as some other higher priorities that you've heard about are moved forward.

So, what's coming? Now that we've set priorities, these are being translated into implementation plans. Those implementation plans take into account the priorities indicated. They take into account the scope and complexity of each of the projects. They take into account the staff requirements, which are not just the staff requirements in DoIT, but in human resources or the registrar's office or Administration and Finance. Leadership will review, help fine-tune, help give final imprimatur to those implementation plans. And then we'll move forward on each of these projects.

Each of these projects will move at its own pace as the dictates of its work indicate. We will provide information on an ongoing basis. There will be tracking available, both on the DoIT website and at the university level. And we intend this to be an ongoing process. That is, every few months, leadership will reassemble and review progress, periodically update the priority list. As projects move off of the list, new projects will be considered and prioritized. And so we hope that this will flow into an ongoing prioritization of technology needs and technology improvement efforts.

As we go through this process, we're excited to have a list to put in front of you. Again, I'm happy to come back as I finish here on this slide and talk through some of those items if you wish. But I want to emphasize, as we begin to prioritize these projects with our very limited staff, we heard in the previous presentation how Administration and Finance and DoIT were among some of the teams that were most limited in resources in the past few years, these are not going to get

implemented overnight. Some of these are significant projects. Some of them we hope to execute quickly. Some of these will take time. They're priorities, and we want to move on them as quickly as we can, but we ask your patience as we move forward, both as these projects roll out, and as other projects wait in the queue for their turn in order to execute these high-priority processes.

We know how important it is, as these process improvements roll out, to get input from the user communities about the implementation, make sure that there's adequate training, there's adequate documentation, make sure that the processes are user-friendly. So, we know that we'll be calling on you and your colleagues as is appropriate to provide input on the implementation processes. We know that also many of these projects require us to do things like set up an approval chain. Who all has to sign off on this? And we've found from experience that the more individualized and the more idiosyncratic from one unit to another the workflow is, the harder it is to implement, the harder it is to streamline, and the harder it is for the whole campus to see the benefit.

So, we hope that, when it comes to something like what are the steps to go through to get a travel voucher approved, we hope that people will embrace a certain amount of flexibility in maybe letting go of the precise process that their unit has used and be willing to consider a more standardized or streamlined approach, respecting flexibility as much as can, but allowing for some standardization to implement change in a timely fashion. Of course, we know that this is a dynamic environment. There's always going to be new ideas coming forward, always new opportunities. It was a great experience hearing about those 74 ideas. We hope people will continue to share ideas for new opportunities as you become aware of them. It's from the community that these ideas have emerged. And finally, we hope, as things like an improved time and benefit reporting or improved opportunities for students to process changes, we hope you'll take advantage of these. We hope that they will make your work faster, maybe lift some of the tedious routine from your day and support a work-from-home environment and flexible scheduling and help you really do what you came here to do, which probably wasn't to push paper from one side of the desk to the other. So, with that, I'm happy to answer whatever questions time permits.

K. Thu [via chat]: Great progress, more to come, hopefully. Pat had to make a special trip to the shared governance office today to recreate monthly pay sheets in hard copy form for audit purposes.

L. Freeman [via chat]: Amazing progress, Chris!

K. Thu: Thank you, Chris. Questions or comments for Chris? I know it's getting a little late in the meeting hour. If not, thank you very much, Chris. It's great work. I'm sure there's more to be done. And, hopefully, life will be easier for a number of people as a result. So, thank you.

C. McCord: Your welcome. Thank you all. Bye.

XI. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE – Linda Saborío – no report

K. Thu: Okay, that brings us to Roman numeral XI on the agenda. I know from an email from Linda Saborío earlier that she has no report.

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

K. Thu: The University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees, just a couple of items from the last board meeting. First of all, the board approved, I believe it was 35 sabbatical proposals and continues to support sabbaticals. So, thank you to the board for that. And I don't think it's old news yet that, of course, the board extended President Freeman's contract. So, congratulations yet again, President Freeman, on many more years to come. We look forward to your continuing leadership. And I don't know whether other University Advisory Committee members have anything to add from the last board meeting.

H. Nicholson [via chat]: Congratulations, President Freeman!

K. Thu: Yes, congratulations, President Freeman, absolutely. Thanks, Holly.

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

K. Thu: Let's move on. We have no report from Rules, Governance and Elections.

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

K. Thu: And that brings us to the Student Government Association, Antonio and Brad. I don't know if either or both of you are here. So, would either one of you like to give us a report from SGA?

B. Beyer: Antonio can go first if he's on. I can't see if he's here.

K. Thu: Are you with us, Antonio?

P. Erickson: I don't believe he is, Kendall.

K. Thu: Okay, go ahead, Brad.

D. Collins [via chat]: I'm filling in for Antonio.

K. Thu: Oh, wait, go ahead, Devlin. Are you on mute, Devlin? Well, Brad, why don't you go ahead and then we'll go to Devlin.

B. Beyer: Yes, absolutely. Good afternoon everyone. I think this is my penultimate, my second-to-the-last time with NIU, so we're kind of going into the last month here. I want to keep my comments relatively brief today. Student government elections for next year are open. [inaudible] to make sure the word gets out for students to choose.

D. Douglass [via chat]: SGA elections close at 11:59 p.m. tonight! Please remind any students you're in contact with to vote.

B. Beyer: In terms of just regular [inaudible] in terms of [inaudible] it's no different than usual. We're finishing up, putting the final touches on the budget. But I just want to say that, in addition to the shared governance reform that I reported on in January, one of my other projects for this semester was really redefining our finance policy, just to close some of the equity gaps and be a little more responsible as stewards of institutional funds. And so that passed. With two more senate meetings left, but what I did want to say is that we officially have a speaker-elect who will be coming after me. That is my current deputy speaker, Dallas Douglass, who is with us here at University Council. So I wanted to give Dallas a chance to give some thoughts, because he will be taking over for me in a few weeks. So, Dallas?

K. Thu [via chat]: Hi Dallas, welcome!

D. Douglass: Thank you, Brad. Hello University Council. I just have a couple things to address today. I know this is a bit of a long meeting for us. First, I want to thank Katy Jaekel for bringing up Trans Day of Visibility. Happy TDOV. To my knowledge, I am the first transgender speaker to be elected to the SGA, so that's pretty exciting. I'm thrilled to accept the position. I'm really excited to get cracking on next year. I just wanted to kind of briefly talk about my goals for the senate and for SGA. I love that the beginning of this meeting started with the discussion of multi-year planning. Didn't even know that was on the agenda, but it's something that I've been thinking a lot about. I want to encourage the senate to reorient itself toward policy making and policy writing, and encouraging the university to do the same. So, that was, I think, my overarching goal for the year is to, as I said, reorient the senate toward policy and reorient the executive branch toward handling more direct student contact. Those would be my two overarching goals above a whole list of smaller goals that I have.

I also did want to mention, complete 180, mostly unrelated to my position next year. I wanted to pass on concerns that I've heard from students and from professors about fatigue this semester. A lot have cited the cancelation of spring break as a reason for this, but I've heard a lot of pretty severe fatigue and kind of disenfranchisement this semester, even in comparison to last semester, which I know was also kind of a doozy. So, with that said, I would love to chat with anyone here who wants to get a look into next semester from the SGA standpoint. I love one-on-one meetings and just chatting and getting to know people that I'm going to be working with. I'll put my email in the chat so you all have that. And thank you all again so much for the floor.

D. Douglass [via chat]: ddouglass1@niu.edu

K. Thu: Thank you, Dallas. And again, welcome. Could you remind us of your major?

D. Douglass: Yes, I'm double majoring in anthropology, Dr. Thu, and women, gender and sexuality studies, and minoring in political science.

K. Thu: I'm not sure why I brought that up, but thank you.

L. Freeman: What a set-up, but welcome, Dallas.

K. Thu: Thank you, Dallas.

H. Nicholson [via chat]: Welcome, Dallas!

S. Weffer [via chat]: Welcome Dallas!

D. Douglass [via chat]: Thank you everyone!

K. Thu: Devlin, are you there and would you like to say a few words? I'm not sure if Devlin is on mute or maybe not with us.

P. Erickson: I can see Devlin on my attendance list right now in the list of folks in the meeting. Oh, here he is back.

K. Thu: Devlin, are you with us?

D. Collins [via chat]: Apologies for the technical difficulties everyone. I believe my microphone was the issue.

K. Thu: I see him in the chat room. Would you like to share anything, Devlin? Okay. Well, if you manage to join us by the end of the meeting, let us know.

[Returning to SGA reports after hearing other reports.]

K. Thu: I see in the chat room where Devlin has mentioned that he had a technical problem with your mic, Devlin. Do you want to try again as we bring the meeting to the end?

D. Collins: Yes, I would.

K. Thu: Go ahead, Devlin, we can hear you now.

D. Collins: Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful. Sorry, I do apologize for my technical difficulties, everyone. I'll go ahead and keep this a bit brief today. I apologize for President Antonio Johnson's absence today. Due to some unforeseen circumstances, he could not come to today's meeting. But I would like to inform you all that SGA is already at work with ending all of our events and planning for this semester. Just as we speak, the elections are in their second and final day in full swing. I'm

personally at the Holmes Student Center right now, and I have seen [inaudible] students just roaming around the campus, so I can say, just from personal experience, it is quite fun to see students interacting again on a physical level, and it feels good to be back on campus, truthfully.

I'd also like to read a couple of remarks from Antonio Johnson. First, we'd like to congratulate Dallas on being named speaker-elect, and I suppose a first farewell to Speaker Beyer. Speaker Beyer, working with you has been an honor in my time at NIU, and I will really miss talking with you throughout the office. Speaker-elect Dallas Douglass, I do wish you luck in your new role as speaker of the senate. And on a final note, this academic year has been quite the challenge being virtual for students, and we have taken note of the student concerns coming up this year to follow up with and gain a bit more perspective on to bring to you all. We hope that with the return of in-person classes and with the new developments in fighting COVID-19, this campus reopens to the hub of student activity it was prior to the pandemic. And we are confident that this body will continue to serve our students and provide the support necessary for our success.

So, that is really all the remarks I have for you all today. Thank you all for letting me speak today. Thanks you.

K. Thu: Thank you, Devlin. Very much appreciated.

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

K. Thu: That brings us to Operating Staff Council. Natasha, are you with us?

N. Johnson: Yes, I am. How is everybody? Just a couple of things that I wanted to share. Our meeting tomorrow will be honoring the two dependent scholarship winners, Samuel Hancock and Halle Beverley. So, we'll give a brief overview and let them speak. And then we're all looking forward to hearing from John Heckmann about facilities and finding out different information with buildings and all that good stuff. We're still working on bylaws, trying to get everything solidified to get it to an organized structure. And then, lastly, we are still trying to move forward with the Civil Service Emergency Fund. We have a committee that is working on that. They'll be working through the final details in getting all that together. We were able to get information from Dr. Kelly Wesener Michael similar to how they did with the student emergency fund, so we didn't have to start from scratch. So, they're working through those things. And then just like the young lady said earlier before when she was asking about \$10, we'll be asking for money too, to help our workers who do so much of the groundwork. So, that's pretty much the gist of it.

K. Thu: Thank you, Natasha. Sounds like there's a lot of busyness going on in the background.

N. Johnson: It is. Sometimes I don't know if you can hear or not. I got the headphones so I can hear so much. Kids will be kids.

K. Thu: We got it. Thank you very much. Understood. Understood.

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

K. Thu: Okay, Supportive Professional Staff Council report. Cathy?

C. Doederlein: Yes, thank you so much, Kendall. A couple of things that I often highlight that I just want to mention here. We are getting ready to open up our elections process, so just again, if you know of supportive professional staff who might be interested in running for a seat on council, encourage them to either self-nominate or nominate their peers. We also are very pleased that we've been able to continue the tradition of honoring our colleagues with SPS Presidential Awards, as well as other awards that we had created in recent years to just honor the work of our SPS colleagues. Pleased to report that Carolyn Law, Dan Pedersen, Kristin Schultz and Jason Underwood were selected as our Presidential Award recipients. They were all surprised by President Freeman, definitely kudos there. They were all surprised by President Freeman in different meetings and capacities and definitely really appreciated that. And will be honored at a virtual awards opportunity coming up soon. Also we had recipients for our Partnership and Collaboration Award, two recipients there, Matt Parks and the Center for Student Assistance. For Institutional Advancement, we are honoring Jason Rhode. And for Excellence in Supervision, we're honoring Lindsay Hatzis. So, just wanted to share those names publicly here for those that aren't necessarily able to join for the virtual awards ceremony.

T. Arado [via chat]: Congrats to them all!

C. Doederlein: Removing my SPS Council or Career Services hat and just kind of speaking more from a personal note, I wanted to also mention Trans Day of Visibility. I think it aligns well with President Freeman's remarks during her announcements at the outset of this meeting in terms of the upsetting layers of racism and hate we continue to experience as a country across many populations. Recent proposed and enacted law changes across the country stand to further harm our trans colleagues and students in the NIU community and across the country, and I hope that we'll continue to make efforts to protect and recognize these important people on our campus and the contributions that they make here and elsewhere. Thank you.

D. Douglass [via chat]: Thank you to the team working to remove barriers to changing gender markers! Tangible changes that help trans people.

H. Nicholson [via chat]: Well said, Cathy.

G. Beyer [via chat]: Thank you for those powerful comments, Catherine!

K. Thu: Thank you very much, Cathy, and congratulations to all the awardees. So, thank you.

XII. 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](#), 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.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

K. Thu: So, unless there are any final remarks, I will entertain a motion to adjourn the meeting.

N. Johnson: So moved.

L. Garcia: Second.

K. Thu: All those in favor, please open your microphone by saying aye.

Members: Aye.

K. Thu: We got in front of you, Jeffrey. So, I think we have an adjournment. Enjoy the rest of the week and the remainder of the semester.

J. Royce: Thank you, Kendall.

Meeting adjourned at 4:42 p.m.