

## TRANSCRIPT

**University Council**  
**Wednesday, November 4, 2020, 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](mailto:pje@niu.edu).*

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

**VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT:** A. Johnson, Narayanan

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Barnhart, Blazey, Bryan, Edghill-Walden, Falkoff, Frazier, Gancarz, Gelman, Glendening, Klaper, McEvoy, Miner, Rhode, Rogers, Saborío, Skarbinski, Thu, Wesener-Michael

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

**L. Freeman:** Well, the clock on my computer just turned to 3 o'clock and, as Kendall noted, it's beautiful outside. So, I'm going to start the meeting exactly on time in hopes that some of us can get a little bit of daylight to enjoy. I am officially calling the meeting to order.

Meeting called to order at 3 p.m.

### **II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM**

**L. Freeman:** Pat, can you verify that we have a quorum.

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

**L. Freeman:** Wonderful.

### **III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

**L. Freeman:** In that case, can I have a motion to adopt the agenda.

**T. Arado:** So moved.

**L. Freeman:** We had a second, but I didn't quite hear it.

**C. Doederlein:** Second.

**L. Freeman:** All right, second from Doederlein. Now, Pat, are we using a special voting technique to approve the agenda today?

**P. Erickson:** We are. Thank you for being our guinea pigs this afternoon. We're experimenting with a new voting platform called Poll Everywhere. It operates much like

**K. Thu:** We've lost you, Pat.

**L. Freeman:** Pat went mute.

**P. Erickson:** I'm back. So, thank you for experimenting with us today. You can see the hyperlink in the chat box. And you can just click on that. That will take you to the poll. You'll see ten options. It's just a general ballot template that I've made. So, in this case, 1 equals yes, you approve the agenda; 2 equals no; and 3 equals abstain. All you have to do is click on your option. You don't need to click any "submit" or anything like that. So I think you're doing that now. And I can see you, 17, 18 people have voted so far. Give you another minute. Okay, probably enough time, and I will bring this over to the screen so you can see it. You can see that we've clearly adopted the agenda, thanks.

**L. Freeman:** Wonderful.

#### **IV. APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 7, 2020 MINUTES**

**L. Freeman:** Now we get to do it all over when we approve the minutes of the October 7 meeting. So, may I have a motion to approve those minutes.

**T. Arado:** So moved.

**L. Freeman:** Arado. And a second?

**W. Vaughn:** Second.

**L. Freeman:** Okay, second by Vaughn I heard. And Pat's going to give us the link, and we're going to do it all over again. Or do we just use the same link.

**P. Erickson:** I'm going to give you a different link now to a new ballot. It should be there in the chat. Go ahead and use it. I'm going to just pull it over so you can watch it. Looks good.

**L. Freeman:** Awesome.

## **V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**L. Freeman:** Have we received any requests for public comment?

**P. Erickson:** We have not.

## **VI. NIU PRESIDENT LISA FREEMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**L. Freeman:** In that case, I'll go ahead and make brief comments. I want to say good afternoon to everybody. This is our first University Council after the national election day and after the switch back from daylight savings time. And, as you know, yesterday we were closed for election day, because our state legislature wanted to provide easy access to voting and polling places amidst the continued challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the election season, by way of our participation in the Democracy Challenge, NIU worked hard to encourage Huskies to take part in the electoral process by registering to vote and by voting, our goal not being to advance a particular candidate or political agenda, but to increase civic engagement across our community, particularly among our students. And voter turnout was high, locally, statewide and nationwide. Those involved in the Democracy Challenge put out a great effort, and I also want to add that the Northern Star election coverage has been outstanding. And I want to congratulate everyone who deserves credit for that.

At this point, all the votes have been cast, but not all have been counted. And as I said in Monday's message to the campus, it's important at this time for us to act in accordance with our core values, modeling civility and respect for diverse perspectives as we await final outcomes and share ideas about improving our community, our state and our country.

It's also important for us now to embrace the future perspective and planning orientation together for our university. In this regard, NIU's actually ahead of many peer institutions. We have a history of meaningful and collaborative shared governance and because we've demonstrated a willingness to think institutionally. There's remarkable alignment across our annual goals agreed upon by the board and president, the work undertaken by Faculty Senate, staff councils and the Student Government Association. And all of these agendas reflect the university's mission, vision and core values. We're able together to create workable solution-oriented plans because of our culture of shared governance.

And this has been recognized by thought leaders outside the university. At different times, our Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, Equity Plan and research emphases have been commented upon positively by higher education leaders, by the governor's office, members of the General Assembly and the IBHE, the Illinois Board of Higher Education. And in just the last month since we've met, members of NIU's leadership, including me, Dr. Vernese Edghill-Walden and Dr. Renique Hersch, were asked to present to higher education institutions from around our state as part of the Illinois Equity and Attainment Summit. Additionally, Trustee Barsema, Trustee Herrera and I were invited by the IBHE to talk about NIU's Enrollment and Equity Plans to the trustees representing all of Illinois' public universities. As you know from previous comments made by me and by Dr. Saborío, the IBHE is actively engaged in its strategic planning process for higher ed in our state. And it's very important that our voices are reflected in their work product, just as it's

important that their priorities are acknowledged in our multi-year planning efforts. To this end, I really want to encourage you to visit the [IBHE website](#), look at the [October 26 strategic plan presentation](#) and submit comments to the email site provided. We want the IBHE vision statement and core principles to be inclusive of NIU's contributions to public higher education in our state. The current IBHE emphases on equity and affordability resonate very well with NIU priorities. However, our equity framework also includes access and inclusion in research, artistry and knowledge creation. And I'm not sure if that aspect of equity is adequately understood and represented in the developing IBHE plan.

In addition, I want to ask you to start thinking about how the IBHE's plan development and priority setting might shape NIU's multi-year planning efforts. We, other institutions of higher education and the IBHE share the same very challenging operating environment for developing and executing plans in pursuit of common goals. COVID-19 has reshaped the educational experience, accelerated the already changing nature of work and, unfortunately, acerbated budget concerns. In this context, along with the challenges, there will be new opportunities for collaboration and synergy. And let's look for them together.

I also have a couple timely announcements and reminders. NIU and the DeKalb County Health Department will be offering free drive-thru COVID-19 testing on November 16, 17 and 18 for any student, faculty or staff member who would like to be tested in anticipation of Thanksgiving week. Testing is going to be available each day from 9 to 5 in the Anderson Hall parking lot. And the results will be available in four to seven days. There is no charge for this testing, and specific information about testing days will be made available online and in announcements that are coming out this week.

And in case you missed this, Thursday, as in tomorrow at 5 p.m., there'll be a Teams event moderated by the provost and featuring a round table of faculty from NIU's Department of Political Science and College of Law. They'll answer your factual questions about 2020 election process and potential outcomes. The details are on the university events calendar, including a way to submit questions in advance. I think it's going to be a very informative and helpful program, and I encourage you to take a look at it. And that concludes my announcements, and brings me to the point of the meeting where I turn the gavel over to Kendall. And I'm going to do that at this time.

**K. Thu:** Thank you, President Freeman. I think I want to echo what I said in Faculty Senate, which is to please help Linda Saborío in commenting on the IBHE master plan. We need to have more faculty, staff, student voices in that plan. So, with that, good afternoon everybody. Glad to see everybody, even though it's virtually. I've already taken my walk earlier today, so I'm not as in big a rush to get this done, but that's beside the point.

## VII. ITEMS FOR UNIVERSITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

- A. Ombudsperson Annual Report – Sarah Klaper  
Per NIU Bylaws, Article 11.1, the ombudsperson is to provide an oral summary at a University Council meeting in the beginning of the penultimate year of the term.

**K. Thu:** The first item under Items for University Council Consideration is the annual ombudsperson report. Per NIU Bylaws, Article 11.1, the ombudsperson is to provide an oral summary at a UC meeting in the beginning of her penultimate year. So, with that, I'm going to invite Sarah to take over the virtual podium and provide us her report.

**S. Klaper:** Thank you very much. I appreciate your time. My name is Sarah Klaper. I am the university ombudsperson. Previously, each year I would give a report to University Council. But with the changes made a couple years ago to the bylaw controlling our office, it's now in the penultimate year of my contract. So, you get it today.

What is the office? We specialize in conflict prevention, conflict resolution. But I really like to think about it as multiple stages in conflict, because if we can prevent something from happening or getting bigger, we want to help do that. If it's in the middle, we want help resolve the conflict. And after it's done, frequently people need help figuring out a strategy of how do we move forward from whatever status we're at now. I also frequently give policy recommendations to different decision makers on campus about different policy issues.

Four main qualities to my office are that I'm a confidential resource. I don't let anybody know who comes to see me or what we talk about. The only exceptions are if it's regarding an imminent physical threat or otherwise required to disclose something by law. And I'm also neutral. So, I'm designated neutral on campus. I work with everybody. I'm not allowed to take sides. I can help people with the process; I'm just not allowed to be anybody's lawyer or advocate in the process.

That quality of my office about being neutral, I frequently hear a concern that, oh, she's not really neutral. I was at a meeting with her, and she said or she thought or she gave her opinion. I am allowed to give opinions at different meetings and to different decision makers on campus. I'm governed by the International Ombudsperson Association's Standards of Practice, and 2.2 of the Standards of Practice focus on the concept of fairness and equity. And so, the ombudsperson is permitted to advocate for fairness and equity in administering processes, and that is what I do.

The last two qualities of my office is that I'm informal. So, there are places on campus and off to file formal complaints. And if somebody needs to do that, I will help them get to the right place and help them with it. I'm just not an office of notice for campus, so I'm not authorized to receive a complaint in my office. That becomes an issue if somebody comes and talks to me about something and then they say, well okay, so now I've told you so the university knows, and the university has to do something about it. But I'm not an office of notice. I'm confidential, so that's the reason. I'm confidential. I don't pass on information to the rest of campus. So, I'm considered an informal resource, but can help a visitor get back to a formal resource at any time.

And the last thing is that I'm independent. I report to the president. I get evaluated by the whole

campus through University Council. And so I don't belong to any department or division to have a natural bias. If you come to our office during non-COVID times, you will see that we have a two-person office at this time. It is Gay Campbell, who is the administrative assistant for our office. She is wonderful. She's a great resource. She's lovely. She's kind. And she's very knowledgeable about NIU, and where to go, who to talk to, what process you need to follow. And then me. We control just our own office. We have no decision-making authority over anybody else on campus.

So, what does such an office do? One of our main things is that we listen. We are active listeners. [inaudible] that I taught her that listening is an active skill, an active verb, and it is. And the thing is, people need to be heard, even if, ultimately, the ultimate result is that they do not have a valid complaint, they need to be heard about what their concern is. And so that's what we do. We listen, and then we help people identify what exactly their issues are, because frequently they will come and talk with us about a giant knot of problems. And we'll talk for an hour or more about this giant knot of problems, and what we can do is help them identify, okay, of all the things you've spoken about, there really are three main issues here that you're identifying. And help them pinpoint that, because that will help them when they go to figure out what to do about those three issues. So, the other thing we do is to help identify possibilities, options, how to handle your situation, what exactly could you possibly do. We help them identify that and then, if they need help with any of those processes, then we can help them and get them to the right place.

We also help people develop strategies. Your information stays in your control, and if you come and speak with me, I will not just automatically start a process without you. And so, by listening, I can also then work with you to develop a strategy about what the problem is and how exactly would be, what ways you can address it. That also frequently involves some coaching about, you probably need to speak with these three people. And then exactly how should you speak with those people. I do a lot of coaching in my office about how conversations and emails and appeals should go, and make recommendations to people.

I also do mediation and facilitated discussions. A mediation is a more formal process, where a facilitated discussion is, I might be invited to a meeting between two or more people just to help with the conversation. If there's nothing for me to say, I don't say anything.

And then the last thing is that I frequently give feedback on fairness and equity issues, particularly in how policies are drafted or implemented at the university.

For this past year, we had a total of 652 visitors in the Office of the Ombudsperson at NIU. That is down by about 180 visitors from the previous year. And I'm going to directly attribute that to COVID, because as soon as the university offices shut down in the middle of March, we normally have ebbs and flows of how many people come to our office, but it just stopped dramatically. And we stopped having people come to our office until May. So, we had about a month and a half of no visitors, and it was me just reaching out to people or attending meetings. But it was because, basically, people were waiting. That was that time period where the university had somewhat shut down, at least in-person things had shut-down, in-person activities, but we were kind of waiting for the governor to make a decision about how to move forward, and that didn't happen until May 1. So, then things started to pick up again, but it was still kind of slow until summertime. And then in summer, it really picked up.

Another issue affecting how many people came to our office was clearly the faculty union collective bargaining agreement. That being solidified really helped address a lot of concerns that faculty used to come me to talk about. I still do get faculty visitors, both people who are part of the union and not. And then I help them to realize that they are a member of a union and who they should talk to and that this is a union issue, you need to go talk to your union representative, all of that, just like I do with all the civil service and instructor unions.

So, beyond the numbers, even though we are down a little bit, we did still see 652 individuals, and we bring other value, additional value, to the campus. First of all, people can come to us and be heard without judgment, which is huge. Being able to be heard is essential for faculty, staff and students. And being able to talk about things and not fear repercussions, that is huge. I also have a lot of relationships across campus. I just finished my eighth year on campus, and so I know a lot of people, what they do, and different programs, and have developed relationships across campus, which helps me to help people to resolve their issues, because I can pick up the phone or send a message and get some quick assistance to help people resolve issues.

Also, we bring a risk management perspective to campus, not that that's our primary goal, because we have a whole department that does risk management. But, when people come and speak with me, and they're concerned about something that involves some sort of liability, I can help them get to the right place so that the university does know and can take action. Also, because I'm actively listening to people's concerns and helping them get to other people who will help them, and will listen to them and will help address their concerns instead of them flailing, that helps eliminate the need for formal complaints and litigation, because they're getting their needs addressed, even if it's not exactly turning out exactly how they want it to. They still are being heard and feel like somebody's taking them seriously. And so that is very helpful.

I also do a ton of training and workshops on campus for specific departments, but then also general information things and working closely with Employee Assistance to be on their calendar. And I work with individuals, but I also have an eye on the whole campus, because of all the different meetings that I attend, shared governance, the commissions, a variety of things. And so that is helpful in how I am able to advise people, because I can see kind of the bigger picture that, when you're in the middle of a problem, you only see what's right in front of you. Also, I'm super practical. I don't think it's helpful just to do stuff just to do it. So, when I'm talking with people, we will talk theory, but then, okay, what does that mean to you.

So, some trends and observations that I saw, we saw, this past year. The mood on campus was really tricky this year, as I'm sure you've all experienced. At the beginning of last school year, people were, generally speaking, optimistic. People felt like we were turning a corner as an institution, and this is going to be our year to come back and be great after all the challenges we have faced as a state and as an institution. And then COVID hit, and it was just kind of a gut punch to the institution, as it has been to many areas of the country. So, that's been very frustrating all across the board. We have people who have lost jobs, who have been forced to transfer or be bumped, themselves, or bump somebody else, that has a lot of emotional baggage that goes with it. Great, you saved your job, but if you bump somebody else out of theirs, then you might feel guilty about that. Also, different departments and programs on campus who had very big plans for

expanding and creating programming that would benefit our students and benefit our colleagues and benefit the institution, and a lot of those things had to be put on hold this year, as well as hiring. A lot of hiring things had to be stalled or eliminated due to budgetary concerns. And so, that has been a frustration. One, that, as you've heard President Freeman and Provost Ingram speak frequently and CFO Chinniah all speak about frequently, we're trying to work our way through it and out of it. But a lot of it depends so much on outside entities, such as the state and federal governments that it is frustrating to the rest of campus and to all those leaders I just mentioned, because we are in a state of limbo for some things.

Other issues that I observed and heard frequently about. Frequent issues regarding communication, and communication from top down and side to side, horizontal and vertical. Frequently communication and information gets stuck somewhere, and I say this pretty much every year in my annual report, but communication gets stuck somewhere. A group of people is told something, and they just assume everybody else also knows. And everybody else doesn't know. So, there are usually groups of people underneath those people who have no idea what is going on. And when we don't know what's happening, we tend to jump to negative conclusions and to be fearful. The unknown is one of the greatest stressors on all of our lives. And so, increasing communication and making sure that it's getting everywhere it's supposed to has been extremely helpful. I know that has been an initiative of the president, but making it bigger so it's kind of all our initiative, to make sure that our colleagues and our students have heard what they need to hear to function to the best of their abilities.

Also, there were a lot of communication issues between supervisors and staff, and faculty and students. I was involved in a record number of mediations and facilitations this past school year, 74 of them. And a lot of it was involving respect, ethical concerns, discrimination issues, fears. It all would generally come back to communication problems. So, I'm trying to help individuals and groups of people work through those issues, something that I did a lot of. There were also concerns about unprofessionalism, and unprofessionalism showed itself through people being disrespectful in their tone or in their manner. Again, those concerns about honesty issues. And process problems, where people didn't understand what process was happening in the background and just saw the end results and so, therefore, jumped to conclusions about how things were happening.

The last thing on this slide anyway is about hiring process. And I know that Dr. Edghill-Walden is working on that with Pulchratia Smith and the rest of HR to try to get that streamlined. Last year HR was in a different position, and it was a frustration as far as timing, how quickly things get turned around, classification issues, job duty issues. And so, I know it's something that's being worked on and, actually, has improved dramatically since last year, but it's still an ongoing concern.

Additional concerns – these are particularly focused on students – grading standards and grad appeals. Sometimes students don't understand what is expected of them. And then when COVID hit, there was also the extra concern. We have a specialized population at NIU, we do. We have a lot, as you all know, first-generation students, different students who are at risk. And so, the need for flexibility, but at the same time trying to balance flexibility for students with maintaining standards of departments and programs and curriculum, has been a real challenge, particularly since COVID hit. It's always been an issue, but it is particularly a challenge now, because we have students who, all of a sudden, lose their Internet or who never had Internet to begin with and have to



go work in a parking lot to gain Internet access or who are having other issues where they're doing all their work on their phone. And so, getting them to the right place, like Founders Library, to borrow equipment and technology, to get technology assistance, has been really essential.

Also, other issues that came up: Issues of discrimination seem to be more at the forefront of people's minds this past year. And the something that I've been talking with people about since probably last November, December, is how we, as an institution, work with students who we see as "different," because of their race, their religion, how we work with international students, students who maybe behave differently in social interactions than what the expectation is, students with disabilities. Are we seeing these students as disruptions in our classes or our offices? And if so, are they a true disruption, or are they having other concerns that just don't present in the same way that you're expecting, and how do we deal with that? And is calling the police the right answer? And sometimes, you know, in an emergency, of course, it is. Safety is always number one. But if that's not the concern, is calling the police the right answer? Or is there a different resource that would be more helpful?

So, what do we do about that? I used to work at DePaul, I taught there, and I'm good friends with the Ombuds at DePaul. And he always talks about the Vincetian Mission, which of course, we're a public institution, so we don't have that. But my colleague sums it up as ennobling dignity. And I just really like that phrase. I think it is very apropos. If we ennoble dignity in everything we do, then we cannot be going wrong. So, when somebody approaches you with a concern, responding by ennobling dignity, giving them the dignity to have that concern, instead of belittling or shaming them or whatever, taking that dignity away.

At the same time, another thing we can do is to work on professional development. Pre-COVID, I would have said that professional development needs to be a part of every employee's expectations at NIU. Faculty, with their requirements for tenure and post-tenure, have professional development already built in. Research and artistry, have that performed or presented at conferences, that is an expectation. It is not an expectation for the rest of campus. And so, if professional development can be incorporated as a part of your job, it is an expectation that you will do these things, and that we will make it happen so that these things can happen, that would be fantastic. It would help those communication issues. It would help with those supervision and leadership skill development concerns. That would be fantastic. It would be very helpful.

The reality is right now that budget and also we have a lot of people on campus who are extraordinarily stressed and who are doing more and more and more for a variety of reasons, because of COVID, because of moving their classes online, that they are not used to moving online, moving their work online that's not used to being done online, dealing with all of these different life stresses outside of campus, and being involved in a million committees. Many of them are great that we can have these committees, but it puts a great deal of stress on our workplace and our employees. So, if we can work to figure out a way, once we have been able to, hopefully, recover our budget a little bit better, figure out a way to embed professional development into each of our jobs, so it's not just another mandatory training I have to do. No, to make it incentivized, to make it something that people want to do, that would be fantastic.

**K. Thu:** Thank you, Sarah. I think you can also give a tutorial on using clever imagines in

PowerPoints, so I enjoy those. I just have a quick question, and then we'll open it up to others. The last time you and I talked, I asked you about the effect of COVID on cases coming to your office and, obviously, the number of cases has gone down as a result of COVID. But, could you talk about the kinds of things that are coming to you, the nature of issues that people bring to you that might be related to COVID?

**S. Klaper:** A lot of stress about employment issues and people being laid off, programs being closed. Some of those are very reasonable concerns. Some of it's less reasonable. It's not really something for a particular department or program. It's not really anything that I've heard that's on the table. But for a lot of people, concerns about employment and bumping. And I know that Pulchratia Smith has been doing a great deal of community education on what bumping means and how it is done, considerations that go to every single case, individually. And so, you can't just make wide sweeping statements about it, but it is a very tricky thing in the civil service system in the state of Illinois, and it causes a great deal of stress, because people don't understand it. And they feel like they're in constant jeopardy. It's also been a great deal of stress on folks who are transitioning from SPS to civil service. Again, we have a significant number of those, as Cathy Doederlein speaks about frequently. And because those folks are then dealing with a system where seniority matters, and so, it becomes very concerning. And so, it's very frustrating for people. So, a lot of job concerns, but also communication issues. I'm seeing a lot of communication issues between students and faculty and a lot of grade appeals this spring, which now, of course, we're past the deadline. But over the summer and at the beginning of the semester, grade appeals from spring and summer focused a lot on issues related to COVID, the format of class changing in the middle of the semester. And while they did really well at the beginning of the semester, they weren't at the end. Things that really didn't fit in the grade appeal policy, because to file a grade appeal, it has to be capricious grading, and I had multiple students who said, my faculty member did everything they could possibly do to make this work for me in the spring. It just didn't work. It wasn't good. I suffered because of it. And the pass/fail policy from this spring helped a lot of people, but there were some people who fell through the cracks. So, I am seeing a lot.

**K. Thu:** Okay. We can take a minute or two if there are any questions or comments.

**V. Edghill-Walden** [via chat box]: HR will be hosting a few presentations on civil service system in January 2021 to help answer questions and provide more insight into the system.

**K. Thu:** I certainly know the bumping issue is very complicated, and the last time I heard Vernese talk about it, my head was spinning, and I think it's still spinning every time I hear about it.

**S. Klaper:** Pulchratia's presentation is excellent on that, because she goes through actual examples of people with different classifications and what would happen if. It's very helpful.

**K. Thu:** One more question or comment?

**G. Beyer:** Sarah, thank you so much for this presentation. It's excellent. It's open-hearted. It's really broad thinking. I appreciate how you underscore the fact that, while you work with individuals, you keep your eye on the mission of the university. And it just sounds like you're doing excellent work, and it's really delightful to know that you are the person doing that work. I

appreciate your mention of ennobled dignity, and I wonder if directors in their various departments and even the deans could be thinking about ways in which professional development could be shared among the staff more so than the faculty to ennoble them and to make them feel like there's a forward path beyond what you mention, which is simple seniority and the problems that are created because of those seniority issues. So, thank you for everything that you've offered today.

**S. Klaper:** Thank you.

**J. Royce** [via chat box]: Thank you, Sarah. This campus is made stronger by your role and specifically the way in which you execute it.

**N. Johnson:** Thanks, Sarah.

**K. Thu:** Just so you know, we have seated a review committee of the ombudsperson's performance and, as Sarah mentioned during her remarks, she is evaluated by the president every year, but in her penultimate year, then, the bylaws stipulate that we have to do an evaluation of her term and that committee's been seated. We've met twice. I'm very pleased that Katy Jaekel is chairing that committee, and we have a path forward, I believe. So, thank you again, Sarah, very much, for everything you do and for your presentation.

**S. Klaper:** Thank you for your time.

B. Budget report  
Provost Beth Ingram  
CFO Sarah Chinniah

**K. Thu:** Next under Items for UC Consideration is another budget report. Just as a reminder, as a result of our changes to the shared governance system, we no longer have a Resources, Space and Budget Committee. That was where budgets were deliberated in the past. But now the UC, as it's currently structured, serves that function. So, the budget is kind of a semi-standing issue on the agenda. So, I invited Sarah and Beth to follow up on their presentation in the previous meeting and talk a little bit more about process and transactions involved in the budget at various levels. So, I'm going to turn it over to Sarah or Beth or both?

**B. Ingram:** We're going to do this jointly. I'm going to kick it off, and then Sarah's going to take the middle part. And this is pretty short, and I'm going to see quickly, because I can see the sun descending in the sky. I did want to put in one plug for an event on Thursday. We're getting quite a few questions on the electoral college. So, if you have an interest in how that might intersect with what's going on, I invite you to come and listen to our experts on the particular issue.

**W. Vaughn** [via chat box] Here is some more information about the panel tomorrow night: [Election 2020: Ask the Experts Roundtable](#) on Thursday, Nov. 5, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. via Microsoft Teams

**B. Ingram:** Thank you for giving us the opportunity to present the next round of budget information. Today we're going to present just very quickly some transactional details about the budget. We want to outline the budget process in general terms. We're not going to cover

everything about the budget, and we're going to gloss over a lot of the technical details. But, of course, we can provide more information if you want it. And we're going to be talking about all of our funds together. So, if you remember last time we talked about specific funds on campus. Today, we're going to speak of all of those funds as if they were combined into one group. And Sarah and I are going to share the presentation, so I'm going to kick it off and Sarah will come in in the middle.

We thought it would be useful to just define what is meant by the budget, because that's kind of a general term. It means one thing to economists and a different thing to a household. Essentially, it's an itemized list of estimated or intended expenditures, so what would we like to spend money on over a period of time. We do it for a year. And it's accompanied by an estimate of the resources for funding them. Or, if you think about it really simply, who gets authority to spend how much money and for what purpose over the course of a particular year. This is forward looking and it's subject to change, because we do this ahead of the actual budget year.

We start at the top of the circle by determining our expense budget capacity. How much can we spend in all of our funds. That budget capacity then gets allocated out to the divisions, like Academic Affairs, and then to subdivisions, like colleges. The subdivisions then submit budget worksheets that roll up to the division and then up to the university. And we return to the top of the circle, because those budget worksheets have to be checked against budget capacity. Did we actually hit our expected target before we do the technical processing of the budget. Sarah's going to talk a little bit more about some of the specific elements of two of those circles.

**S. Chinniah:** So, what determines budget capacity? And we're really going to focus, thinking about expense budgets, so, the money that we have going out. And we've identified four main themes that make up our expense budget capacity, the first being the non-appropriated revenue. This is funds that we, throughout the university, receive, not from the state. So, this could include tuition revenue, both what we consider standard tuition, as well as differential. This could include course fees or other types of student fees. This also includes revenue that we receive from housing and dining, events. And just from the descriptors, there's an awareness that many of these estimates come from sources throughout the university. So, it very much is seeking information from the university that would help to inform centrally what funds do we have available?

We also have our state appropriation assumption. This varies. And it's often that the timing of the state appropriation, as well as some of the other bullets on this list are not known until well into the next year. So, there's an element of taking the best information we have available and using that to help to guide our expense budget capacity.

We have our Board of Trustees expectations. This is important, and you'll notice that the arrow is both sides. This is a dialog. Our Board of Trustees serve in a fiduciary stewardship role for the university. They help to guide and inform our overall financial position. They also have to approve our budget annually, so there's a discussion that goes into setting the budget capacity with our board, as well as regular quarterly reporting at our FACFO Board of Trustees Committee meeting.

We've also identified risk tolerance. We can solely look at the numbers and say that we must have a balanced budget. Our expenses can't exceed our revenues. I don't know, and I think that it's an open discussion for leadership and others, to determine if that's always the case. As we know, pre-

COVID, the university took on a little bit of risk by agreeing to run a negative budget to help to move the university forward. So, there's an element of risk that goes into setting that expense budget capacity. And, as a reminder, we always have to think about what may happen, because as Beth said, we set our budget early in the year. We set it without all the information. Think of the timing of when that state appropriation is known. And we need to play for what if. For instance, what happens if there is a global pandemic. Sometimes we can't plan for everything, but we need to allow ourselves the opportunity to think of the bad as well as the good.

From the expense budget, once we know how much we can spend, how do we allocate the funds out to the divisions? This is a question that both the provost and I receive quite often. And, as you can tell from the four circles with arrow going both directions, it can be more of an art than it can be a science. And what we want to emphasize here is that there really is a dialog. We consider multiple variables. It's not a formulaic approach. It's also an approach that, once divisional targets are set, the information is shared throughout divisional leads, throughout leadership and shared governance – it had typically been Resources, Space and Budget Committee, the Academic Planning Council – but we make the information available so that we're not operating in silos or in a bubble. The four main areas we look at – those strategic priorities. What are those items, what are those themes that are important to moving the university forward, essential to our mission, vision, values?

Divisional plans – where are divisions focusing their efforts? How do those plans support the university? What are unique needs or opportunities that need to be considered?

We think about what we call local revenue access. That's access to non-02 funds. What opportunities do specific divisions have to raise revenue on their own? I think this is most important for some of what we call our auxiliary enterprises, those enterprises that rely on outside revenue, dining, housing, events, conferences, all have access to revenue that may drive and may help to inform what their targets may be.

And then we have those unique costs. We have items, I think the most common ones we think about under unique costs are compliance related. We need to pay for property insurance. We, on the 02 side, fund minimum wage increases. There are data requirements. So, what are those unique costs that divisions must bear that funds should be considered and allocated to. Beth and I, in our roles, provost and CFO, oversee and help to administer the budget. So, we meet individually with division leaders, [inaudible] many times throughout the year to understand what our challenges and opportunities to get information related to these four buckets. And we use that information to help to set the targets. And I'll say going into this year, given the impacts of COVID and the budgets that we have set, our conversations with unit leads were all about what can you reasonably do? Because we knew what had to be done in order to deliver a balanced budget for the university would have created significant hardship to close a \$30 million gap. So, many of the conversations were what can you do. And even what could be done was challenging and was difficult. However, there was a series of conversations that happened related to these four themes that helped to drive those discussions. I think I'm going to turn it back over to you, Beth, to go into a little bit of detail.

**B. Ingram:** This is just a quick slide to remind everybody that the divisions have a lot of subdivisions. And also, what happens at the divisional level gets replicated at the subdivision level. So, throughout the year, I have discussions – this is the provost side of this – I have discussions with

the deans; we go back and forth on the budget and their targets. And this is happening across divisions at the university. And then for subdivisions that have further units, like a college, the College of Liberal Arts, the dean, Bob, who is here today, would be having discussions with the departments about how the expenditures authority for a college gets allocated out to the subdivisions of his college.

That's all to say that, to me, the right-hand side of this diagram is where a lot of the discussion where policy enters in, where we've having a dialog about what the budget targets should be. The left-hand side, which I'm going to let Sarah talk about, is really the technical side. So, once we've set budget targets, there's a whole bunch of really technical stuff that happens having to do with budget worksheets and rolling those up back to the central. So, we've kind of filtered everything down, and now we have to filter it back up and make sure that the numbers add up.

**S. Chinniah:** And we spared the down-and-dirty listing. Just as an overview, it's all driven by excel worksheets. There's one budget worksheet for each and every cost center. The budget office works to load those budget worksheets. They typically go out, we work with divisional business managers that work, then, within their divisions, within their subdivisions, to help to get all that information coordinated. The business managers work with their division leads and deans to coordinate the information, enter it. There's a series of actions where they hit a button. Hopefully, it balances. That information comes back up to the budget office that does a review, mainly a review for reasonableness, because to the provost's point, there's a lot of back and forth. So, a review for accuracy at the central level isn't always possible. So, there's a review for reasonableness. Do the targets align? We look at last year's and previous years' numbers. Are there any big differences that would cause note. Once that review is done, questions are answered. All the information rolls up and goes into the budget that is shared with the board and, ultimately, approved. And that's the budget that we execute on at an institutional level for that year.

Last slide. So, what's our goal in budget execution? It's to watch both revenue and expense and make sure that we're adhering to the budget process and balancing revenues and expenses according to our risk tolerance, our goals, our ambitions, our access to those financial resources. It doesn't just end at the start of the year. The process doesn't just end at the start of the year. Throughout the year, we look at and release items related to budget guidelines. There's budget checking that is regularly performed. There are daily budget emails that go out to leaders and to business managers that talk about access to funds. There are personnel or staffing obligations, as well as procurement obligations that are loaded, as well as those quarterly updates that go to the board. So, this is an item that gets a lot of attention throughout the year.

So, if Beth and I have piqued your curiosity, and you'd like some more information, we provided the 50,000-foot level. If you have specific questions about what this means for your division, your college, please reach out to your division head, your dean or your business manager. They can probably talk to you in more detail about some of these processes at the high level and how they're specifically applied within your area.

**K. Thu:** Thank you, Beth and Sarah. Just a reminder to UC members that this is the forum for providing input into the budget. That used to be done in RSB, but now it's with this body. And so I anticipate that, now that you understand a little more about the structure of the budget, the

processes, the directions, I would anticipate in the spring more conversation about what the following year's budget is going to look like, although, I'm sure you're already working on the budget for next year. But I would anticipate both Beth and Sarah coming back to us in February and March and talking about what we think should be the priorities for budgeting within certain parameters, I would imagine.

So with that, since this is the forum for getting feedback, input, answering questions about the budget for shared governance, I want to open it up to let folks ask questions, comment. And I also want to know from you what you would like to hear from Sarah and Beth in the spring. They're not going to be coming to the December meeting. I've given them a leave for that meeting, but they certainly will be back in the spring.

**T. Borg** [via chat box]: Will there be a process during the fiscal year to increase a unit's budget expenditure authority when there is an opportunity to increase non-appropriated funds through unanticipated entrepreneurial activity in that fiscal year?

**K. Thu:** Who wants to take that one?

**S. Chinniah:** Beth, do you want me to?

**B. Ingram:** It's an interesting question, because there is a technical aspect, and there's an aspect related to this year's budget. And then there's an ongoing conversation that Sarah and I have had, especially with the deans. So, Sarah, maybe we could answer the immediate question and then, Terry, I'd be happy to get back to you regarding the longer-term strategic discussion that we've been having.

**S. Chinniah:** The immediate question is this year it's challenging, Terry. It's challenging because of the environment that we're working in. So, we're really trying to think about mission-critical and, in time, time-sensitive purchases. And that's just strictly from a cash flow perspective. That being said, if there is something significant that's unanticipated that is crucial to this time, I think both the provost and I are sensitive to that, and we can determine how to proceed. But this year, we're really working diligently to adhere to the budget that we established, mainly related to expenses, just try to limit those as much as possible.

**S. Chinniah** [via chat box]: Terry, although we are working to limit purchases to time sensitive/mission critical, the question you posed may meet that criteria. Do see y our college business manager, who can work with you, within the prescribed university budget guidelines, to facilitate a request for consideration.

**K. Thu:** Thank you. Other questions or comments?

**G. Beyer:** Thank you so much again for a wonderful presentation, very colorful and very informative. As the representative for the College of Visual and Performing Arts, I've been having regular meetings with the directors and the dean about the budget process within the College of Visual and Performing Arts. And it's interesting to contrast your presentation with Sarah Klaper's presentation, because it seems that, perhaps, one of the things that we could all benefit from is

clarifying the process of communication from those divisions heads, from the directors, to the dean and then to each of you. It sounds like the deans actually report more to the provost than directly CFO. What I am sensing is that the directors of the divisions or of the schools within the college are concerned for not being able to go through this process at the local level with any assurance, because they're unable to determine their own capacity to begin with. In other words, I've heard capacity discussed at the division head level as being something akin to shifting sands or just uncertain territory. And while these mathematical processes are fairly straight forward to understand, it's not possible to actually determine what's available to spend beyond simple personnel needs, is not present. The directors have repeatedly said that anything beyond personnel expenses is simply not there, so that there is no budget to talk about to handle any of these special projects or mission-critical things that our college obviously provides on a humanitarian level. So, I think what would be worth knowing from you, and if a clear answer isn't possible within the parameters of this conversation, maybe that's something that's worth discussing with the deans and thinking about how we can talk about that in February. I think what I want to get across is that, as the representative for the college, my understanding is that there doesn't seem to be clarity from the directors of the divisions with regards to what variable to work with. And I think that they would appreciate having some more clarity, which may mean direct communication with the provost or more communication with the dean.

**B. Ingram:** It's one of the things that I've spent a lot of time talking about. Sarah and I talk about it a lot. We talk with President Freeman about it a lot, about how we communicate budget information and the budget process at various levels on campus. And what information is most useful at various levels. I think your question touches on a couple of things. One is that it's the case in Academic Affairs that a high proportion of our budget is in personnel. And your statement is that there isn't a whole lot of leftover budget for operating. But that's a little bit different than saying you don't know what the budget is. It's just not the allocation that you would prefer it to be. And so, there are really two questions going on, which is: What's your budget capacity? And then how do you allocate that budget capacity that you're given between the various uses that you need to put it to? The second question is not one we addressed today. We talked about the first question, which is just how do we determine the amount that goes down to the colleges and the departments. But then the allocation within that is a discussion that can happen locally.

**G. Beyer:** Right, I think that's really clear. And I think, at that local level, it's seems [inaudible] through a similar process would be helpful. The individual areas need to create their own understanding of that capacity and then talk about their local plans and those strategic plans that meet the mission of the university, etc. And what I am hearing from the division heads is that they are not able to make those plans, because

**B. Ingram:** One interesting thing you said, and I think maybe two things, one is that I can have a conversation with the deans, because your interest is, obviously on the Academic Affairs side. I have talked to Chad about how do we provide more information to the department chairs and the unit heads, chairs, heads and directors to help them look at budgets and think about capacity. And that's something that I think is really important that we're going to start working on. So, I'm really glad you brought that up, because it's something that's been on my mind. And we've been thinking about how do we move in that direction.



**G. Beyer:** I think all of the directors would also just like to reiterate that everyone understands the nature of the budget right now. No one is thinking that we're not in a very, very difficult situation. It's just that I think that asked for communication is what I want to get across. Thank you very much for listening.

**K. Thu:** Thank you for that. Also, there's always rumors that there's some sort of pile of cash hidden in a closet that they want to know about. And no such closet of cash exists. I think the transparency that we're getting here is very useful and very helpful, so we can actually ask more meaningful questions going forward and provide more meaningful comments.

**L. Freeman** [via chat box]: I confirm that there is no hidden pot of gold.

**K. Thu:** Natasha, I see your hand is up.

**N. Johnson:** I wanted to ask a question that some civil service workers asked in a meeting that we had. It was brought up that they were concerned how bad the state of

**K. Thu:** You're cutting out, Natasha.

**J. Royce:** You're breaking up quite a bit.

**N. Johnson:** Really bad? I'll try to text it. I'm not sure what's wrong. You can move forward.

**K. Thu:** Okay, go ahead Jeffrey.

**J. Royce:** As Natasha's typing, I'm curious to know, I know, at least as I recall, we were submitting quarterly budget reports to the Board of Trustees this year, as opposed to previous years, in the hopes that not only gives our divisions and our administrators more flexibility, but it also provides the board with more accurate budget reports. Have you found if there's been any detriments in doing it that way? Or if there's been any negative impact on what you just presented to us by handling this on a quarterly basis rather than an annual?

**S. Chinniah:** Jeffrey, I think that's a very astute question. I don't know if it's negative. We're doing it because it's a fluid and dynamic environment, because there were many risks that we identified early in the year. We don't control a lot of what may happen, and we wanted to make sure that we had the forum to make that information visible and be clear with the board, because of their fiduciary responsibility, but then also use that information and share it with the university community more broadly. So, it's not a negative. I do think, though, that as we're planning for the end of the first quarter, as we think about the results, it's just going to reinforce that we are in a fluid and dynamic environment and that we should be prepared for a year with some ups and some downs. So, we had some good news coming into the start of the year with our enrollment levels and some unexpected tuition revenue. I think, as we look through first quarter now that we have a little bit more information about where the virus is going to be for the rest of the year, we rode a high, we might see a little bit of a bump down. I think we need to be prepared for the conversation with campus and what access to information will mean as we move forward.

**J. Royce:** Thank you, Sarah.

**N. Johnson** [via chat box] If the university is in a rough financial situation, how is it that the university is able to give free days to employees for time off? This is about the one day spring break and the addition day for February 11. I did not have an answer for these people, but said I would ask. I also am grateful to be getting the days off.

**L. Freeman:** I think it's great that our employees are so cognizant of our financial predicament that they're willing to ask a question like that. My answer is that, overall, the health, sustainability and productivity of the university depends, in large part, on the mental health and morale of our employees. And I know how hard this year has been on everybody. There's not a day that goes by that somebody doesn't talk to me about COVID fatigue, about exhaustion, about all the things that Sarah Klaper mentioned she'd seen people come and talk about this year. And so, when you make a judgment call about what needs to be done for the overall sustainability of the university and its employees, you sometimes look at making different judgments. And to us in this particular year, knowing that we were going to canceling spring break. And staff don't normally get spring break, but often they use their vacation days there, and just that the pace and the style and everything else with working, we really felt that this was something that we could do with minimal financial impact in a way that really helped our employees who might not be getting to do some of the other things they would normally be doing. Certainly, we're not investing in some of the events and celebrations. That's one of the ways that we've reduced expenses. And we know that those things have a very positive morale and mental health boost. So, I think that's my answer to that question. I don't know, Beth or Sarah, if you want to talk more about the pluses and minuses of administrative closure.

**B. Ingram:** No, I think that's a very good answer.

**K. Thu:** I will also add that the idea for those days off came, in no small part, from student leaders, who wanted to see a little bit of mental health relief. And so I think the fact that shared governance and leadership listened is important to understand in terms of process.

**L. Freeman:** There was an article in the Chronicle of Higher Education within the last two weeks, and the title was something like Staff Are Hurting Too or What About Staff. And it talked about nationwide universities and their faculty councils and student governments, everybody's worried about students and worried about faculty. And people don't remember the staff. And one of the things that I love most about being a Huskie is that we have a strong staff voice in shared governance and that, in general, our students and our faculty are very empathetic to our staff, and you see that. And I think that's one of the drivers for making sure that those mental health days were spread around.

**N. Johnson** [via chat box]: Thank you, President Freeman.

**C. McEvoy** [via chat box]: As Sarah and Beth pointed out, our college and division budget managers are a tremendous resource for information on how university budget and finance works. If you're interested in learning more on this topic, please consider reaching out to those individuals. I'm also happy to help facilitate professional development on this topic if some are interested.

**J. Royce** [via chat box]: A request for future topics: Charge-backs for trades' services and work orders. I recall at an RSB meeting last year we agreed to discuss this in the future.

**K. Thu:** Well, thank you. Thank you for the presentation and the questions. It certainly doesn't have to end here. If you have questions for Sarah and Beth, I'm sure they'd be willing to field them one-on-one or by email or some other form as well. Thank you very much.

## **VIII. CONSENT AGENDA**

**K. Thu:** We do not have a consent agenda.

## **IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**K. Thu:** We do not have anything under Unfinished Business.

## **X. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Proposed amendment to NIU Bylaws, Article 2.2 University Council Personnel Committee  
FIRST READING

**K. Thu:** We have new business, proposed amendment to the NIU Bylaws, Article 2.2 University Council Personnel Committee. This is very simple. The chair for the University Council Personnel Committee is delegated to the vice provost for faculty affairs. However, we inadvertently left it off the membership roster. So, this is a first reading. We don't vote. This is to change the bylaws slightly under item G. to specify that the vice provost for academic [faculty] affairs shall serve as an ex officio, as chair, and who shall not vote. So, are there any questions about that at this point? Pretty simple stuff.

- B. Approval of proposed updated 2021 university holidays

**K. Thu:** Item B under New Business is we inadvertently left off, I believe, a holiday day in the calendar that we approved, namely Monday, Jan. 3. So, this is to go back and clean that up. So, if you vote for this, you get an additional day off. If you don't, you don't get the day off, I'm just kidding. So, this is to clean up the calendar that we already voted on. And, Pat, I believe we do want to get a motion, a second and formally vote on this so we have this on record?

**P. Erickson:** Sure, why don't we do that, get a motion, a second, and then can we try the Poll Everywhere again?

**K. Thu:** Yes.

**P. Erickson:** Great.

**K. Thu:** So, I will entertain a motion to approve this slightly revised calendar.

**T. Arado:** So moved.

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

**G. Conderman:** Second.

**K. Thu:** Thank you. Any discussion? Again, I don't think this is controversial in the least, but if you have questions? Okay, if not, let's go ahead and see the poll that Pat is posting in the chat box as we speak. And while she's doing that, did anybody have any problems with voting, because we're considering adopting this for a general voting process going forward? And I think it was Jay Monteiro who suggested that we use this. So, Jay, if you're here.

**T. Arado:** I actually didn't get the link in the chat.

**K. Thu:** Oh, you didn't?

**T. Arado:** But clearly it's there, because people are using it.

**P. Erickson:** Let me see if I can re-post that.

**M. Costello** [via chat box]: The first vote, I couldn't take because my slow laptop at home didn't open it fast enough.

**S. Weffer** [via chat box]: Kendall, I couldn't get it to work via my phone, though I vote yes.

**K. Thu:** So it looks like, Pat, we can confirm that this passes quite easily.

**P. Erickson:** Yes, and the link is there a second time if anybody didn't get it the first time.

**K. Thu:** Anybody have a problem with voting? Okay, thank you.

## **XI. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES**

### **A. Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE – Linda Saborío – report**

**K. Thu:** Now we move to Reports from Councils, Boards and Standing Committees. And we have an important report from Linda Saborío. Linda, are you with us?

**L. Saborío:** Yes, I'm here this afternoon. Today I thought I would focus on the October 26 IBHE strategic plan meeting. And to begin with some key take-aways that I found and also that were shared with the FAC group by our chair were: 1) the need to expand the knowledge of the value of higher education. To offer solutions to society's challenges to develop talent for workforce needs and to address non-market benefits, such as citizenship. 2) we talked about the necessity of closing equity gaps to all students, families and community members. 3) the need to improve affordability and cost structure of higher education. 4) the necessity of providing diverse pathways to meet the

needs of all students to address differences [inaudible]. 5) we have the need to provide clarity around the role of the IBHE [inaudible] and the notion of gaining buy-in of different institutions. And finally, the need for a resilient and nimble system of higher education.

So, as President Freeman mentioned at the beginning of today's meeting, the IBHE is developing a strategic plan for higher education in Illinois. This 26<sup>th</sup> meeting of October was the second of what I'm sure will be many [inaudible] as they continue to develop the strategic plan. And these were just some of the key take-aways from this first meeting.

The chair of the FAC plans to meet with a couple members of the IBHE in order to discuss further the FAC's role in the strategic plan and how faculty can communicate directly with the IBHE in terms of our concerns and our feedback.

At the end of this meeting, one of my colleagues on the FAC, she's from Western Illinois, Amy Car, shared some of the work of the FAC, and I do have a copy of her comments that she shared with me. If you think that would be nice to post on the link, just let me know, Kendall.

**K. Thu:** Yes, I think that would be helpful.

**L. Saborío:** I also have a copy of the PowerPoint from the IBHE Strategic Planning meeting that I could share with you.

**K. Thu:** Yes, I believe it's on President Freeman's website, as well.

**L. Saborío:** Okay, good.

**K. Thu:** No?

**L. Saborío:** It's not up there?

**L. Freeman:** The IBHE one I downloaded from their website and shared with you, Kendall. But I didn't post it on our website. I could, or we could post it on UC, which seems, in a way, more appropriate.

**K. Thu:** Yes, why don't we do that.

**L. Saborío:** I'll forward to you and you can decide.

**K. Thu:** Sounds good.

**L. Saborío:** And there was some discussion last week about the role of faculty research in the strategic plan. And Kendall and I talked a little bit about the need to really stress the importance of faculty research and faculty endeavors in terms of student engagement. I did send a response to the IBHE. I could forward that to you, as well, Kendall.

**K. Thu:** Absolutely.

**L. Saborío:** I don't know if I should read it here, but it basically is talking about faculty engagement of undergraduates in research and scholarly endeavors provides significant opportunities to traditionally underrepresented students who may not otherwise be offered such an experience. And I also received a copy of an email from Holly Jones who is in the Department of Biological Sciences that she also shared her concerns about the lack of focus on the importance of research and innovation. And I can share both of those with you. Maybe it can give folks some ideas of feedback that they could provide to the IBHE.

**K. Thu:** That sounds great.

**L. Saborío:** Kind of get the ball rolling. Have you tried sending anything to the email that I shared with you, [strategicplan@ibhe.org](mailto:strategicplan@ibhe.org)? My got bounced back as undeliverable.

**K. Thu:** I have not yet.

**L. Saborío:** I wonder if anybody else has. I talked to the chair of FAC, and he's been in contact with folks over at the IBHE and asked what is the best way to provide feedback directly to them.

**K. Thu:** Okay, great. Can you remind me of what the deadline is for that?

**L. Saborío:** For providing feedback? Well, from what I know, there is no deadline.

**K. Thu:** There is no deadline, okay.

**L. Freeman:** It's an ongoing process. They'll be forming the working groups and forming an advisory committee into December and even early next year, I think it's like spring by the time it's really going to be wrapped up. So, there is no deadline, but I think Linda and I both will continue to see snapshots at different points in time, and we'll bring them back to this group and let you know how feedback is received and where opportunities are. I think getting that in soon would be good, because, as they name members of the advisory committee and figure out what the working group topics would be, it would be useful to let them know that we care about equity in research.

**L. Saborío:** Yes, they will be forming the advisory committee, I think, early next year, even. And then, what was that timeline, they just shared that with us. Maybe having an early draft sometime in March.

**L. Freeman:** Yes, it's in the presentation. So, when we post it, the timeline is on that slide. It seems to morph a little bit from presentation to presentation.

**L. Saborío:** It does. That's typical, right?

**L. Freeman:** It's COVID, you know.

**K. Thu:** Does anybody have any questions or comments for Linda. We'll post all this information on the shared governance website and, if you have additional questions, you can come to me or

Linda. But I want to encourage everybody to get involved in providing comments. It's very important. Even though it seems very distant, it's still very important. Thank you, Linda.

**L. Saborío:** All right, thank you.

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

**K. Thu:** Next is the University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees report. There is no report from the University Advisory Committee. There has not been a board meeting since the last time we met. Committees are going to meet and the board's going to meet next Thursday, Nov. 12.

- C. Rules, Governance and Elections Committee – no report  
Therese Arado, Chair
- D. Student Government Association – report  
Antonio Johnson, President  
Bradley Beyer, Speaker of the Senate

**K. Thu:** So, that takes us to the Student Government Association, because there's no report from Rules, Governance and Elections. Antonio and Brad, are you with us?

**P. Erickson:** I don't think Antonio is with us today, but I think Brad is.

**K. Thu:** Okay, I see Brad now. Brad, go ahead if you have any comments.

**B. Beyer:** Yes, I don't think Antonio is going to be here today, so I can report for SGA. We're wrapping up the semester; it's starting to wind down at this point. I know for the Student Senate, we only have three meetings left. So, I think then we'll go into recess for about seven weeks and winter break falls in between that seven-week period. Really reflecting on the semester and trying to get a game plan now that we understand what the mostly virtual life is like on campus, putting together a plan for the spring. I'll say, though, that most of what we're doing is very behind-the-scenes advocacy this year. That's not something that often lands in a Northern Star article, but in terms of SGA, I gave a presentation last week to Faculty Senate about student mental health, and so I've been working with the dean of students, Kelly Wesener Michael, and you, Kendall, to put statements together, hopefully getting that resource information into course syllabi for the spring. I've really been working hard with the Democracy Challenge team. I was out just as the sun was coming up, and I was outside pretty much all day. I started my morning at Westminster Presbyterian and then I was at the BAVC and finished my day at HSC making sure that students knew where they were going, they had their proper forms of ID. So, there's a lot going on, again, behind-the-scenes advocacy work. I know we talked a little bit ago about mental health in terms of other options for what to do other than a traditional spring break. I'm optimistic. I am tired. I'm ready for the semester to unwind and then take a break. But I'm looking forward to the spring. But I think that really covers it well. And I think Antonio would agree. It's been challenging, but I think, all things considered, I'm pretty happy with how things have turned out.

**K. Thu:** Thank you, Brad, and thank you for everything you're doing. You did a wonderful job last week in your mental health presentation. Even though you might have thought you were nervous, you didn't come off as nervous, so you did a great job. And I think you sent that to us already, or sent it to Pat, I guess, the PowerPoint.

**L. Freeman:** While you're checking, Kendall, I just want to let everybody know that Brad was honored as one of our Lincoln Laureate nominees at a virtual reception earlier this week, and it was just so wonderful for me to see him in a different role and hear about that. And so I wanted to make sure that everyone had a chance to congratulate him.

**K. Thu:** Congratulations, Brad, I did not know that. That's wonderful.

**B. Beyer:** Thank you very much.

**K. Thu:** Well deserved for sure.

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

**K. Thu:** So, that brings us to Natasha, report from the Operating Staff Council.

**N. Johnson** [via chat box]: OSC has no report. We meet tomorrow.

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

**K. Thu:** Then that brings us to Cathy Doederlein, report for SPS?

**C. Doederlein:** Just briefly wanted to thank President Freeman and Dr. Edghill-Walden. Both made it to our last month's meeting, and we were able to get some really important information from HR just to further clarify – I'll use the word, although it's a very confusing topic when it comes to bumping rights and shifting from SPS to civil service and things of that nature. But I know that everybody was very appreciative of the time that we had with them. So, thank you for that.

And just a heads-up as we're talking about some of the awards that we've recently celebrated or are trying to celebrate even still from last year, I can report that we'll be getting our nomination forms out soon or a call for nominations out soon for our SPS presidential awards. So, keep an eye out for that and definitely take the opportunity to nominate your SPS colleagues for the great work that they're doing across campus. Thank you very much.

## **XII. INFORMATION ITEMS**

**K. Thu:** Thank you, Cathy. I also got a note from President Freeman, are there any remaining questions for her that anybody might have, or the provost? You're ready to get out with the little bit of light that's outside right now.

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. [Annual Reports](#), 2019-20
- R. 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.
- S. Revisions to Spring 2021 academic calendar

### **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**K. Thu:** Okay, if there are none, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**J. Royce:** So moved.

**L. Garcia:** Second.

**K. Thu:** All in favor, indicate by saying aye, just open up your mics so we can hear you.

**Members:** Aye.

**K. Thu:** Take care everybody. Have a great week. Hang in there. Take care of each other.

**L. Freeman:** Good night everybody.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.