VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Akst (for Scheibe), Beyer, Burg, Cofer, Collins, Conderman, Cripe, Elish-Piper, Freeman, Garcia, Hein (for Costello), Hulseberg, Ingram, Martin, Monteiro, Nicholson, Rogers, Stange, Timko, Vaughn, Weffer, Yates

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Bohanon, Boughton, Costello, Olson, Poyser, Scheibe, Teso-Warner

OTHERS PRESENT: Bryan, Chomentowski, Majeed, McEvoy, Saborío

I. CALL TO ORDER

L. Freeman: Good afternoon, everybody. I’d like to call our last spring meeting of University Council to order.

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

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

P. Erickson: We do have a quorum.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

L. Freeman: And can I please have a motion to adopt the agenda, and please remember to identify yourself.

M. Stange: So moved.

L. Freeman: Second?

W. Vaughn: Second.

L. Freeman: We have a motion and a second. All in favor, say aye.

Members: Aye.

L. Freeman: Any opposed? Abstentions?
IV. APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 6, 2022, MINUTES

L. Freeman: May I now have a motion to approve the April 6, 2022, minutes, which are found on pages 3 to 5 of your packet.

J. Hulseberg: So moved.

L. Freeman: Thank you. A second?

A. Rogers: Second.

L. Freeman: Thank you. All in favor?

Members: Aye.

L. Freeman: Opposed? Great.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

L. Freeman: Pat and Ferald, have we had anyone express a desire for public comment?

P. Erickson: We have not.

VI. NIU PRESIDENT LISA FREEMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

L. Freeman: In that case, we will move quickly to my announcements. And I will try to keep them brief and keep us moving, because I don’t need to tell anybody here that this is a very busy time of year that’s full of deadlines and celebrations and dreams of the summer weather that has alluded us to date, although at least the clouds parted, and we are seeing the sun today.

But in all seriousness, as the semester draws to a close, I just want to take a few minutes to review and celebrate some of the progress that we’ve made to fulfilling the university goals. I don’t have time to talk about all of the goals, or even all of the work done in support of any one single goal. But I do want to highlight progress in a few key areas.

With respect to goal 1, which is the goal that focuses on professional development and capacity for shared leadership, I’m very pleased to share with the University Council that Michaela Holtz has been serving as the President’s Office first staff fellow, and that she’s been helping us to advance two relevant initiatives. First, this week, the President’s Office announced the launch of a new Staff Leadership Development Academy for all full-time, non-academic civil service and SPS staff. It’s a year-long program that will expose participants to multiple facets of the university, including goals, operations, governance and the higher education landscape, along with matching them to a mentor for the duration of the program.

The program will also focus on professional growth and enhancing staff leadership skills, including consensus building, self awareness and creating shared goals. And the intent of the program is to develop a network of leaders at all levels and areas of the university to promote and sustain a culture of shared leadership at NIU. So, please, I encourage you to share this opportunity with non-academic staff in your areas.
Additionally, I’m excited to share there is a newly formed working group comprised of staff with diverse roles, backgrounds and experiences. And I’ve charged them with developing strategies to support an environment of employee growth and development that includes building capacity for shared leadership. This includes recommendations for the right mechanisms, infrastructure, processes, managerial support and guidance necessary for us to do this work. The group is led by co-chairs Rena Cotsones and Holly Nicholson, and it’s expected to present the initial outcomes by the end of summer ’22. So, this group will be modeling shared leadership even as they make recommendations to the university about what our long-term needs are to continue to support growth in this area. And I want to also just comment that these two initiatives are complementary and not duplicative of the supervisor coaching and training that has been implemented by Human Resource Services.

And I want to say that I’m also really proud of the incredibly productive collaborations that have been borne from shared governance this year. For example, the great work that’s being done by the University Council Rules, Governance and Elections Committee cyberbullying policy work group. And I think we’ll hear a report from them later today. They’ve been working to create a definition to develop a web resource and propose a framework for training and policy revision around this important issue. And I very much look forward to working with them to implement the recommendations.

As a university, we also have a lot to celebrate relative to goal 2, our goal on student recruitment, student success and the student experience. First, as you know, on schedule, we launched version 2.0 of our Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, the plan that will guide our enrollment related efforts through 2025. I’m very pleased that we used an inclusive process to develop the plan and received thoughtful input from across the campus community, most notably from our students. And I want to thank SGA [Student Government Association] for their engagement in that effort.

I’m also delighted that Clint-Michael Reneau will be joining NIU as vice president for student affairs. His appointment will be approved by the Board of Trustees on May 12, and he will begin work here in mid-June. And I want to thank everyone who participated in the search and recruitment process.

Shifting gears a bit, in the context of goal 6 and campus facilities planning, I want to share that, at long last, we have seen progress advancing a prioritized facilities project, the construction of our Northern Illinois Center for Community Sustainability or NICCS. Specifically, the university has had our intake meeting with the Capital Development Board, and they are preparing documentation for design build bridging documents that will be posted in their procurement bulletin. And we have reasonable expectation that that will happen this month. And so, we are finally moving forward, seeing movement there, and that’s great news for all of us.

And then again, in the context of goal 6, I want to let University Council know that the departure of Vice President for Administration and Finance and CFO Sarah Chinniah is not going to stop our momentum moving forward to implement a transparent, inclusive multi-year budget planning process. Drs. Blazey, Brinkmann and Edghill-Walden are finalizing recommendations based on the input they’ve heard from you and from multiple stakeholder groups for presentation to me, to the executive vice president and provost, Beth Ingram, and to our interim vice president for administration and finance/CFO, Jim Cofer, who is in the room today sitting next to Provost Ingram.
I expect this initiative to be on the UC agenda when we reconvene in the fall. We expect Dr. Cofer to be part of the Huskie family through the end of the calendar year, by which point we are optimistic that a national search will have resulted in the hire of our next permanent vice president for administration and finance/CFO. The search committee has been formed, a search firm has been engaged, and that process is moving forward. Immediately following this meeting, you’ll have the opportunity to meet Dr. Cofer and welcome him to NIU as we have some refreshments.

And I really encourage you to do that. And again, I just want to say thank you to everyone for everything you did this year to help us get through what we hope is the final stages of the pandemic as we return to a new normal, but more normal. And, of course, go Huskies!

This is the point where I typically turn the agenda and the gavel over to Faculty Senate President Pete Chomentowski, but before I do that, I have a special presentation to make. Per our NIU tradition, when we transition Faculty Senate presidents, we reward their efforts on behalf of the university with a golden gavel. And I want to say, Pete, thank you for all you’ve done this year. And we really appreciate the fact you’re going to stay involved with shared governance and the Faculty Senate. And we’re really, really pleased that we have a strong leader coming in in Ishmael Montana, but this is really to just say thank you for your service this year. It’s not an easy job.

P. Chomentowski: Thank you very much.

VII. ITEMS FOR UNIVERSITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

A. Recognition of University Council members who have completed their service

P. Chomentowski: Under items for University Council to consider, the first one, of course, is we like to recognize University Council members who are vacating their seats for all their service that they’ve done for University Council. Second, I would also like to recognize someone today. As you know, this is my last meeting as chair

L. Freeman: What is the exact?

P. Erickson: Chair.

L. Freeman: Chair, okay.

P. Chomentowski: Because it was actually secretary for a while.

P. Erickson: Nonvoting chair.

P. Chomentowski: Okay, nonvoting chair. It’s changed a little bit.

L. Freeman: Am I ex officio?

P. Erickson: You’re the convener.

L. Freeman: I’m convener. Who knew?
P. Chomentowski: With the whole reimagining of shared governance, it changed all the names. So, this is my last meeting, and I wanted to introduce the new Faculty Senate president, who will be taking over for next year and will be sitting in this seat, Ismael Montana. He was elected Faculty Senate president last week, and he will be for the 2022-23 academic year.

I. Montana: [inaudible]

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

P. Chomentowski: We’ll move on to consent agenda, and we have none.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

P. Chomentowski: Unfinished business, we don’t have any. We’ll just keep going.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Proposed amendment to NIU Bylaws, Article 13, Amendment of Bylaws
   Peter Chomentowski, University Council Chair
   FIRST READING

P. Chomentowski: So, new business, we are on the proposed amendment to the NIU Bylaws, Article 13, Amendment of Bylaws. It’s on page 6. The current voting process for amending the NIU Bylaws can be very cumbersome. We went through this last month when we actually were trying to talk about how voting and how it’s different between Faculty Senate and University Council. So, what this is actually doing is streamlining it and making everything the same between the two. So, it's to adopt the voting process that has been used to amend the Faculty Senate Bylaws for many years. This process is less cumbersome to calculate during the meeting, but still provides for the careful consideration of any bylaw change by requiring more than a simple majority vote to approve a proposed amendment. With that being said, this is a first reading at the moment, I would like to open the floor for any discussion for questions about this.

With that, I’m going to pose this question. What are your thoughts from the group today, do we want to hold this proposed amendment over for a second reading in the fall, or do we want to make a motion to waive the waiting period and vote on the proposed changes today? I will give you a minute to think about this and see if there is anyone who would like to move to a microphone and make a motion to waive the waiting period.

S. Weffer: I’ll move to waive the waiting period on this one.

P. Chomentowski: Second?

B. Ingram: Second.

P. Chomentowski: With that, any discussion about waiving the waiting period and moving to voting on this amendment today? All right, [inaudible].
**P. Erickson:** Okay, first I think we want to vote on that motion to waive the waiting period. I think we all know, but just in case we don’t, we have some new folks with us today and some subs, if your name is on this list, that means you’re a voting member. Or if you’re here today for someone whose name is on this list, you’re a voting member, so you should have a clicker. They’re by the door. I don’t see anybody getting up to get one – oh, okay, plenty of time.

Just a reminder, we don’t need to turn the clickers on and off. When we’re ready to vote, I’ll give you the directions and you just click the number or letter that corresponds with your vote. If you change your mind while the poll is still open, you can just click another number and that will replace your first vote. I’ll open the poll, and we need three fourths of those voting to pass this. So, 1 or A is yes, you agree to waive the waiting period; 2 or B is no; and 3 or C is abstain.

Okay, we’ve had 22 people vote. Anybody else? If your clicker isn’t working, feel free to ask us for help. You all look pretty satisfied out there. Okay, so that passes.

Yes – 18 votes  
No – 3 votes  
Abstain – 1 vote

**P. Erickson:** So, next we’ll go to the motion, is that right?

**F. Bryan:** Yes, the main motion to pass.

**P. Erickson:** Okay. I’m going to get rid of that. Now we’re on the motion that’s already on the floor to pass this proposed amendment to the bylaw. And is there anymore discussion? Okay, so we’re ready to vote. And I won’t make you sit through that long lecture I gave you last month about how we vote in our current way, but I will just put that slide up again so you remember that we need 18 people in the room to vote, and we have that. And then we have to pass whichever is the highest threshold, either a) which would be 14 members or b) which would be – what is two thirds of 22? Fourteen-ish? Do we need to say 15? So, we need 15 yes votes then to pass this amendment today. And just a reminder that – I haven’t opened it yet, but when I do – 1 or A is yes, you agree with the proposed amendment; 2 or B is no, you don’t agree; 3 or C is abstain. And in this case, if you chose to abstain, while it’s not a no vote, remember it declines to give the amount of yes votes that we might need, so it acts as a no vote. And that poll is open. We had 22 voting before, and we only have 21, which is okay, no one is required to vote, there we go. Anybody else?

Yes – 20 votes  
No – 2 votes  
Abstain – 0 votes

**P. Chomentowski:** And the proposed amendment passes.
XI. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE – report
Linda Saborío, NIU representative

P. Chomentowski: Now we’ll move on to reports from councils, boards and standing committees. Linda, we have new microphones today. You can get this far away, so you don’t get close to it.

L. Saborío: But I like to bother Tony and get really close. Good afternoon, everyone, our April FAC meeting was a very productive one. We had several guest speakers visit our group, and the first guest speaker was Dave Tretter. He’s the president of the Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities. David talked about enrollments, funding, the pandemic and innovation.

For enrollment, we’ve seen a decrease in high school graduation numbers and a decrease in both undergrad and grad student populations, which has some direct correlations to some institutional closures in the state of Illinois.

Regarding funding, Dave talked about a need for more sustained funding and predictability, something we have not had for the past year and more. There’s a commitment by the state [inaudible] for the K-12 education, they add to the baseline and never argue over the base itself, but yet this has not been the same for higher education.

The pandemic brought its own challenges including many transitions in a short time, as we all know, housing and mental health issues and greater stress on students, faculty and staff and administrators.

And finally, there was a question about higher education and innovation. We have been following some of the same structures for over 100 years. In fact, he compared us to religious institutions. So, outside academe, we are viewed as archaic and statis. And he challenged us with the question: How do we change this perspective?

Our second group of guest speakers were Dr. Lisa Downey, the associate professor and associate dean for undergraduate educator preparation, and then Sasha Villagrana-Frost, a project director for the HSI Teacher Pipeline Initiatives from National Louis University. Dr. Downey mentioned that at National Louis University, over 50 percent of their students in the educator prep program identify as Hispanic or Latinx. Eight percent of the coursework is offered fully online, which attracts some students from other states. They offer multiple endorsements and competency-based early childhood education. Sasha then noted that National Louis University’s Hispanic student population jumped from 30 percent in 2015-16 to more than 40 percent in 2020-21. She attributes this jump to improved articulation agreements with specific community colleges. And she showed us a heat map that they created of growing enrollment among Latinx where they decided to target their articulation agreements and recruitment efforts, more student groups for support, increased recruitment of bilingual faculty, and one of their Latinx resources on campus that she referred to as the Centro de Excelencia.

And in our caucus groups, we drafted a list of questions for Senator Bennett, who will be joining us at our meeting in May. We also discussed institutional policies regarding remote working. And then in my working group, one of my colleagues from Waubonsee actually showed up with a PowerPoint for us. That’s the first time I’ve ever seen that, she was very prepared, on the Nevada
Promise Program and the Illinois Promise bill. And then we discussed asking Illinois Representative Laura Murphy to join our group at the May or June meeting to talk more about college affordability and student debt with her. In May, we’re going to be meeting down in Springfield at the IASB [Illinois Association of School Boards] office for the first time in 26 months, we’re going to meeting in person, I’m very excited. Some of the committee members, we’ve never met before face-to-face, only on Zoom. Any questions for me? Thank you.

P. Chomentowski: Thank you, Linda.

B. University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees – report
   Felicia Bohanon, Holly Nicholson, Peter Chomentowski
   Katy Jaekel, Karen Whedbee, Greg Beyer

P. Chomentowski: We’ll move on to University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees, just some information from the last special Board of Trustees meeting, which was held on Thursday, April 7. Under president’s report, President Freeman requested approval of the contract with Braven, Inc. Braven provides career-related opportunities to undergraduate students who [inaudible] inequalities in socio-economic mobility faced by the NIU students or underserved students. This partnership will provide NIU students with career building, career accelerating skills, mentorship, partnerships, provide networking and real life problem solving. So, it’s going to work with the students through a 300 level course where they can learn about career [inaudible].

They also approved an executive firm to conduct a search for the new dean of Health and Human Sciences for next year.

C. Rules, Governance and Elections Committee – report
   Holly Nicholson, Chair

P. Chomentowski: We’ll move on to Rules, Governance and Elections Committee, and Holly.

H. Nicholson: As President Freeman already suggested, we have been working cyberbullying resources this year. And so, we will present on Friday to her our findings. And that includes a new website, which will be niu.edu/cyberbullying, where you’ll find a definition, next steps when you experience cyberbullying, some campus contacts, research and resources. And then we’ll also present our recommendations regarding communication, training and behavioral norming on campus. We also identified three policies to revise and just add language around cyberbullying, and we identified some stakeholders to revise other types of documentation. Any questions?

P. Chomentowski: Thank you, Holly.

D. Student Government Association – report
   Devlin Collins, President
   Dallas Douglass, Speaker of the Senate

P. Chomentowski: Student Government Association, I don’t think Devlin or Dallas is here. But Jacob is here. And if you want to introduce the new president for SGA.

J. Burg: Hello, everyone. I am Jacob Burg. I am the outgoing deputy speaker of the SGA Senate. And I wanted to give a brief report and inform of all the workings of the SGA. With that, our
student leaders are in full transition mode. Working alongside our acting advisor, Meg Junk, leadership is creating a two-part training program for all new senators and executive members for the upcoming year. We have a lot of goals for the next session and are certain that the state of the SGA will be stronger than ever. Reflecting on the past year, we are so proud of this rebuilding phase of the organization and look forward to continuing this growth. So, after a year where we saw over a 40 percent in student voter participation in our elections, 45 percent increase in students running in the elections, gain in outreach to underrepresented communities, over a 40 percent increase in number of organizations that the SGA provides annual funding to, multiple successful involvement fairs and other events, serving on countless university committees in the interest of students and a plethora of other successes, I ask that this university continue to support us in all of our goals. The collaboration and guidance given to us is irreplaceable and invaluable. Special thanks to Meg Junk, Peggy Hayes, Alex Pitner, Aubrey Hense, Marzena Szmydt, and all other staff that work with us in our efforts to better serve the student body. As a final note, the SGA will be having our annual inauguration event this Friday at 1 p.m. in the Altgeld ballroom, where we will swear in the upcoming student leaders, and we’d love to see you all there if you are able. With that, I yield to the president-elect of the SGA, Raaf Majeed.

R. Majeed: Hello, everyone. For those of you who don’t know who I am, my name is Raaf Majeed. I am the president-elect of the Student Government Association for the 2022-23 academic year. I don’t have a report, but I just wanted to introduce myself real quick, and I’m really looking forward to working with everybody for the next year. Thank you.

E. Operating Staff Council – report
Holly Nicholson, President

P. Chomentowski: We’ll move on to Operating Staff Council, Holly, you’re up.

H. Nicholson: I’m sure you won’t miss me reporting twice in one meeting anymore after this. We have been really focused on our Civil Service Emergency Fund, and we launched it in March, and we were able to award two grants to some employees who have expressed incredible gratitude. We had an event last week celebrating the launch of the fund. President Freeman came and spoke, and we appreciate that. Mission was there, as well, and we had some treats. We’re very excited to move this fund forward. We’ll be ready to award two more grants coming up very soon. If you need information about how to donate to the fund, see me. We have a go URL, go.niu.edu/civil-service-donation. That is all I have to report on.

P. Chomentowski: Thank you.

F. Supportive Professional Staff Council – report
Felicia Bohanon, President

P. Chomentowski: Supportive Professional Staff Council, no report today? All right.

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 2022-23 dates: Sep 7, Oct 5, Nov 2, Nov 30, Feb 1, Mar 1, Apr 5, May 3

P. Chomentowski: We’ll move to informational items. I want to draw your attention to the line Q. These are the dates for next year’s University Council, so please make a note of that. Any other?

L. Saborío: [inaudible]

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

P. Chomentowski: I’ll move on to adjournment.

L. Freeman: If the snacks aren’t ready, you could do that. UC is being followed by a reception to meet and greet Dr. Cofer that will have snacks. It was scheduled to start at 4, so I’m hoping that our colleagues from Dining are out there setting things up. And if we need Jacob to sing in Spanish or Linda to give more of a travelogue while we’re waiting, we can probably get that done.

P. Chomentowski: Well, we can have someone else come up and sing after we adjourn, which will be fine. So, I’m going to move to adjournment. Can I have someone make a motion to adjourn the meeting today, and then a second?

H. Nicholson: So moved.

M. Stange: Second.

P. Chomentowski: All those in favor of adjourning the meeting today.

Members: Aye.

P. Chomentowski: All those opposed, say no. Any abstentions? Hopefully, not. All right meeting is adjourned.

L. Freeman: Let’s give Devlin a round of applause for his service.

P. Chomentowski: Devlin Collins, everyone.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.