

# TRANSCRIPT

University Council  
Wednesday, March 1, 2023, 3 p.m.  
Altgeld Hall 315  
Northern Illinois University  
DeKalb, Illinois

**VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:** Beyer, Bohanon, Costello, Cripe, Douglass, Falkoff, Garcia, Geller, Heckman (for Middlemist), Ingram, Jaekel, Kassel, Monteiro, Nicholson, Olson, Reneau (for Freeman), Srygler, Tataru, Vaughn, Walther

**VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT:** Freeman, Hulseberg, Majeed, Middlemist, Pietrowski, Rogers, Scheibe, Simonson,

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Bryan, Doederlein, Drott, McEvoy, Montana, Moskal, Newman, Stoffregen

## I. CALL TO ORDER

**B. Ingram:** I call the meeting to order.

Meeting called to order at 3 p.m.

## II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

**B. Ingram:** Pat, can you please verify that we have our quorum?

**P. Erickson:** We do have a quorum. Thanks again for remembering, all members and guests, to fill out the attendance slip at your place and just leave it there. We'll collect them after the meeting. And thank you also for remembering, if you have a comment or a question, to go to a microphone. And it also helps us if you tell us your name and who you're representing. Thank you.

**B. Ingram:** Thank you.

## III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

**B. Ingram:** Could I have a motion to adopt the agenda?

**C. Walther:** So moved.

**B. Ingram:** A second.

**F. Bohanon:** Second.

**B. Ingram:** Are there any corrections or additions to the agenda? All right, all in favor of adopting the agenda, please say aye.

**Members:** Aye.

**B. Ingram:** Opposed? Abstentions? All right, the agenda is approved.

#### **IV. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 1, 2023, MINUTES**

**B. Ingram:** Could I have a motion to approve the minutes from the February 1, 2023, meeting?

**H. Nicholson:** So moved.

**B. Ingram:** Holly Nicholson. A second?

**P. Kassel:** Second.

**B. Ingram:** Paul Kassel seconds. Are there any corrections or comments on the minutes? Hearing none, all in favor of approving the minutes, please say aye.

**Members:** Aye.

**B. Ingram:** Any opposed? Abstentions? Great, the minutes are approved.

#### **V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**B. Ingram:** Pat, do we have any timely requests for public comment?

**P. Erickson:** No public comment today.

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

**B. Ingram:** We will move to President Freeman's announcements, which are my announcements today, because President Freeman is currently in Springfield preparing for our House legislative appropriations hearing tomorrow, continuing to be a passionate advocate for NIU and for higher education more broadly.

She asked me to talk about a couple of items today. First, I'd like to provide an update on NIU's current leadership searches. We have three open searches for deans in different stages of completion. When the final interview stage for the dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences, the search committee for the dean of the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology has narrowed the list of candidates to a group that will participate in preliminary interviews. Campus visits are scheduled for the end of March and early April. The application for the acting dean of the College of Education closes on March 5, which is Friday.

The director of federal relations search is nearing the end. Three finalists visited campus, and the search team is gathering feedback and preparing to make an offer to the top candidate. The vice president for research position drew a strong pool of 28 candidates, and finalists are scheduled to be on campus during the first part of April. A search firm has been engaged for the vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion and chief diversity officer position. The firm conducted listening sessions last week, and the search committee has been formed and had its first meeting. It's

expected that finalists will be on campus in early May. Finally, a committee has been formed to conduct the search for a chief human resource officer, and the position is being posted. President Freeman says, stay tuned.

I encourage everyone to participate in these searches by attending available open forums and providing feedback. It's really important that we understand that we're recruiting the candidates, as much as we're evaluating the candidates. Please take the opportunity to be involved in the searches as you are able.

I'd also like to provide just a brief introduction to the presentation today. As I'm sure you know, the past three years have been stressful for all of us, but especially for our students. Rates of anxiety, depression, withdrawal and other signs of mental stress have skyrocketed for our students, but also students across the country. Today, Vice President Reneau is going to discuss with us NIU's approach to mental and emotion wellbeing, from providing acute psychiatric care to promoting wellness and self-care among our students. I urge you all to take this information back to your units and departments and think about how you and your colleagues can be involved in the initiatives that he's going to discuss today. And with that, I will turn it over to Dr. Montana.

## **VII. ITEMS FOR UNIVERSITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION**

### **A. Mental Health as a Foundation for Student Success**

Clint-Michael Reneau, Vice President for Student Affairs

Andrea Drott, Asst. Dir. for Student Wellness, Counseling and Consultation Services

**I. Montana:** Thank you, Provost Ingram, and thank you for the introductory remarks about the presentation Dr. Clint-Michael Reneau and Andrea Drott are going to present today. So, with that, we will segue to agenda item VII, items for University Council consideration. And with that, I'd like to invite Clint-Michael Reneau and Andrea Drott, who are going to speak on the topic of mental health as a foundation for student success. And my understanding is that they are also joined by students who are going to be part of the presentation. So, the floor is all yours, thank you.

**C. Reneau:** Thank you for allowing us to be with you today. We're excited to be here with you and talk about some things that are very important that are happening in our campus community, and how we're responding to mental health and wellbeing as a whole for our campus. My colleague, Andrea, and I would like to begin today by sharing a clip with you that we think kind of captures some of the pieces that we'd like to speak with you about today. So, we want to share this TED Talk with you to help frame what it is that we're experiencing.

**TED Talk:** For a second, think about wellbeing on a spectrum, from unwell to very well. Up here, you're living your best life, you're smelling the roses, you're the real best version of yourself. And down here, you're really struggling, hard to get out of bed in the morning, you're getting pretty close to crisis point. What we've traditionally done is we've waited for people to be at a pretty high risk of crisis, so down this end of the spectrum, before we give them access to support services. What we actually need to do is invest in services and support across this entire spectrum of wellbeing, because if we are thinking of physical health, let's say someone had a hairline fracture in their leg. You wouldn't wait until it was a clean break, and there was bone poking through the skin

before you let them go to hospital. So, we need to invest across the entire spectrum. And that will help people who are doing pretty good to stay in a good spot. And it will help people who are in a crisis to get some immediate help. And everything in between.

So, we've talked about how we can break down stresses, and strategies for improving students' wellbeing. Let's talk now about how we're going to do it. The short answer is together. For too long, universities and many other institutions have siloed support services and put them off into a corner, waiting for people to come to them in a crisis. Instead of doing this, what we actually need to do is work together with these services to find and implement new ways of promoting mental wellbeing and breaking down stigma around mental illness.

Universities in the U.K. call this a whole of institution approach. It's one that engages the university's academic staff, its professional staff, students, clinicians, senior leaders and the community in the solution. And it's accurately and very eloquently depicted by the Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition as having an approach to mental health that permeates every aspect of work and is embedded across policies, cultures, curricula and practice within the university. What this is, is a culture shift to bring everyone together and putting mental health at the center of what we're doing in universities.

With all this talk of what universities and key decision-makers ought to do, you'd be justified in asking: Well, what can I do in my own life? So, I want to leave you today with three simple tips of things that you can do that could make a difference to someone else's mental wellbeing.

Number one, look out for your friend. Make time for them, talk to them and support them to seek help when they need it.

Number two, break down mental health stigma. Put in an effort to learn a little bit more about wellbeing and mental illness. Call out jokes about things like depression, anxiety and suicide. And when you hear stigma around you, call it out.

And thirdly, be radically inclusive. Value people for who they are and for their uniqueness, and empower them to be their authentic self with you.

The kind of change that we need is a challenge. It takes all of us working together with determination, assistance and focus. If we can do that, we can get ahead of this trend. If we can do that, we can get ahead of this trend against the odds, and that will save lives. Thank you.

**C. Reneau:** To that end, what we know is that we are still seeing students on this campus who are experiencing and who are responding to and dealing with in the moment, the fallout, essentially, from the pandemic. We're seeing that there are issues around finances and family concerns, extended time to completion of degree that students are experiencing. We're seeing folks that are responding to being disconnected and working to be reconnected again in a university system, and what that feels like and looks like for them. This idea of isolation, transitioning back to in-person and students who are struggling with the lost time of their college experience, both inside and outside the classroom.

And we've seen that this shows up in a number of ways. The most common mental health concerns that we're seeing on this campus, and pretty much nationally, is that we're seeing anxiety and stress is the number one. We're looking at depression as number two. And our third piece is related to

academic and school concerns, most often connected to mental health. And what we know is that 75 percent of our counseling appointments on this campus have been in-person, and 25 percent have been through tele-mental health appointments. When we're thinking about this notion of centering the work, like the clip talked about, this idea of centering this, we have to take this from a community approach on this campus, knowing that we're all involved and we all have to be involved in the business of supporting mental health needs, and that we have to make sure that we have the training and the support mechanisms put in place to provide some basic helping skills around some of this work.

We know that when we're – we have a presidential commission that has been formed that my colleague, Andrea, can talk to you about, that we're excited about, the Presidential Commission for Health and Wellbeing. And we know that there's going to be a lot of initiatives that can come from this group and a lot of ways to really center and engage this work in meaningful and thoughtful ways.

We also know that this group can utilize the ways to think about how to be proactive rather than reactive around health and wellbeing on this campus and how we provide front line staff, how we provide faculty, with the basic help seeking tools to help serve students in a different way. And also how we're thinking about graduate students in this component, thinking about what are we doing around the supportive graduate students, as well.

The other piece that we're thinking about when we're talking about centering the health and needs of our students, we just came from an event last night around one of our conversations that matter dinners that we host in Student Affairs. And what we heard, as a common theme, was around some of the mental health needs. What was pretty interesting and what I found fascinating was that we had several athletes in attendance last night. And the athletes that we had there were very open about talking about the fact of how excited they were that we have a counselor that we sit full-time in Athletics and who sees them in their space. So, it's not as if you're coming to a counseling center to be seen. We have a counselor who is embedded in the Athletics department, and they couldn't talk about enough about that. And they asked for more counselors to be embedded over there. And I just thought how cool it was to have this table full of football players or these softball players or whoever these athletes were to talk about, yea, we do this and we think this is one of the best things that has happened to us since we've been here. So, the stigma was dropping, and they talked about how necessary it was. And so, that was exciting to see.

And so, I appreciate what my colleague will share with you today, and I appreciate this time collective thought that we can give to this necessary and important work.

**A. Drott:** In that vein of knowing that there are students who are seeking counseling, we've had over 650 initial consultations and mental health crisis appointments since the beginning of the academic year. We've had over 2600 individual client meetings, either group or individual counseling sessions since the beginning of the year. And we even have referrals in an ongoing way with Compassionate Edge in Aurora for eight free tele-mental health counseling sessions for students who would prefer a BIPOC counselor so we can get them connected right away with somebody who meets their needs, who they feel most able to meet those needs.

We also know that our student populations that we see at the counseling center reflect our general student populations. Our students of color, our LGBTQ+ students, our first-generation students, our transfer students, our international students, undergrad and graduate students, those percentages that

we see in the counseling center reflect big picture across the populations on campus. And so, we're meeting those basic counseling needs at the best rates that we can across campus. And when you look and think about that spectrum, there might be students who aren't quite ready or maybe even yet need one-on-one individual counseling. And so, we have an amazing team in our student wellness areas doing lots of really great work. I also do want to mention just briefly that the new Presidential Commission on Wellbeing, we are going to be working on a contract we are adopting with the Judd Foundation to look at suicide prevention and substance use prevention and a mental health task force that will bring in a consultant. We're going to be conducting the [Healthy Minds](#) survey to look at what the needs of our students are on that basic level and then working within that mental health task, the presidential commission and other places to best meet the needs across campus.

To talk a little bit about that student wellness piece, we have our student wellness folks out there hitting the streets, doing all the things. We've seen over 1,000 students since the beginning of the academic year. We have currently 14 peer educators. We have tons of presentations, tabling events, wholistic focus. We have a mindfulness group we run every Monday night for students to drop in to. We have our chillin' with Chase new therapy dog on campus, I believe Friday, for an hour. You can come hang out with Chase over at the Center for Student Assistance. And we have these ways of connecting at that base level, again, maybe before things get to a crisis.

I want to give two of my students an opportunity to come up and just share a little bit about the work that they're working on, our graduate assistant and one of our peer eds. Lauryn and Suzanna, if you want to come up and introduce yourselves and share what you're working on. Thanks.

**L. Stoffregen:** Hi, I'm Lauryn. I'm a graduate assistant with Student Wellness. I've had the privilege of working with all of these students on a variety of different projects. We have committees right now, and I work with the emotional wellness committee. One of the things that we're doing is, we're polling students, and we're trying to see what specifically emotional wellness issues students are dealing with. Based on this feedback, we're going to create tabling events based on what students are saying. So, whether that's anxiety, depression, procrastination. We're going to provide resources, tips, strategies for students. So, this helps students specifically, who aren't quite at that counseling level yet, so they don't need counseling services, but it gives all the students an opportunity to practice some of these strategies to better their mental health.

And then, also with this group, we are in the process of creating some sort of an event to highlight stress management, anxiety. We're going to do something outdoors, and it's really going to include that social component. So, giving students an opportunity to socialize with their peers and also learn some new tips and activities to better their mental health.

**S. Newman:** Hello, I'm Suzanna Newman. I'm chairman underneath Lauryn here. I'm a peer educator, so I'm boots on the ground. I am directly working with students one-on-one. And being a student myself, I have that connection. What I am seeing is that we cannot afford, as a university, to ignore mental health any longer. Our students are what makes up our university, and the problem right now is coming off the heels of COVID, we have lost all connectivity, even the most basic fun experiences that you're suppose to have when you start college, that everyone had and talks about, have been stripped from them. And it gets harder and harder with the way things are for students right now. And so, they need someone they can talk to, that they feel are going to understand them and aren't going to come from a place of judgment. And that's what we do as peer educators. Peer is the important word there. It's important to connect on that level, generationally, because they are

so lost. And there's a lot of cynicism there, and we have to reach them in a way that will actually reach them. And so, that's what we do as peer educators, and we have a wonderful team that supports us so that we can support the university.

**A. Drott:** Thank you for your time. We'd like to open it up for questions.

**I. Montana:** The floor is open for questions, comments.

**B. Ingram:** I'm going to take the privilege of asking the first question. One of the things that they talked about in the clip is that it takes a village. I don't know if that's how he said it, but one of the things that you might talk about is how do people here get involved. You've talked about a lot of things that you're doing, but what can we do, and how can we get involved in our units or departments.

**C. Reneau:** One of the first things that I would say is that with this new presidential commission, and we're excited about that, so that's why I want to keep saying presidential commission over and over again, the elevation that's happened with this. One of the pieces of that is that it's made up of such a diverse group of folks from across the campus, different stakeholders. Part of that is working with training and developing this commission so that they will take information back to wherever it is that they may sit throughout the university and help share and present this information there.

The other piece is that this commission is also going to develop ways to think about how we can help bring in and cast a wider net when we're thinking about working to be proactive and how we're addressing some of these concerns that our campus may experience, those on our campus may experience, and what that could look like in terms of strategy. So, there will be a strategy developed around this piece.

**A. Drott:** I think one of the big things is for folks in whatever sphere of influence you have is, when you see a student struggling, what can you do to help them through that process. Acknowledging that students need to be sleeping; what can we do to help them sleep better. Maybe due times at midnight is not the most effective way to have classes oriented. Maybe it's about if a student needs an extension, offering that grace, having that conversation, figuring out what those best opportunities are. Knowing that it taking a village is really about acknowledging each individual has their own struggle, but also as a whole, we can do better together. So, figuring out those opportunities and challenges that maybe we unintentionally put barriers out there. What can we do to reduce those to make the whole student experience better.

**M. Geller:** Meredith Geller, I'm from the College of Law. I have to say, as part of the presidential commission, I hope you also address – I love my students. At the law school, we're a very collegial group, and I see my students all the time. And I do legal writing and academic success, so I see all the struggles, as well. But I would really like to see a little bit more balance on the university side and with the presidential commission, maybe talking about the employee wellbeing as well, because I have to say, I'm exhausted. I did a lot during the pandemic. I had meetings for my students at all times, and I was very accessible. And we've all started taking on more jobs. Suddenly, there's been this creep of all of us doing more things. And so, I think that Linda has asked about – is there burnout? Yes, yes, there is. Yea, there is. And so, I think that for us, as a university – the university consists of not just the students, but also the employees and the people who make it work – and so I'd like to see a little bit more focus, or a more balanced focus, because we, as the people who work here, are really down to the empty cup stage, and we can't pour from an empty cup. And so, we

need to be able to have more of that balance, because a lot of us would love to do more. I would love to do more, but I just physically cannot, and mentally cannot. And so, I think that would be something for the commission to talk about, as well, that balance, needing to seek that balance for all of us.

**A. Drott:** That has been part of the intention for the NIU wellbeing work, as well as the presidential commission moving forward, to absolutely address the wellbeing of faculty and staff on campus. We can't have a well university without everyone on campus being well. Part of the adoption of the Okanagan Charter that President Freeman signed and adopted in September of 2021 looks at wellbeing from people, place and planet. And so, looking at we can't have a well campus until we have a well campus.

**C. Reneau:** And the other piece that I would like to just say is that part of this commission is going to look at the intersectionality of wellbeing in relationship to the other commissions on campus. How do we find the intersectional approach to the work within the other commissions. And how do we help support the intersectional approach to that. So, thank you.

**P. Kassel:** I have something to offer. This is something we've been talking about in our college quite a bit, and my colleague, Greg Beyer, can attest to this. About a year ago, we did a presentation by Brian Smith from the Employee Assistance Program, and refresh my memory, and someone from Student Affairs. We had a comprehensive conversation about this. One of the examples was from this scientist and doctor, Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, who wrote a book called *The Body Keeps the Score*. And in the book, he talks about the palliative aspects of the arts when it comes to stress and post traumatic stress syndrome. And I'd like to offer that. Of course, I represent all the colleges as a dean, and we all have assets and resources available to students. And, of course, our performing arts and our exhibits are a natural place where communities can come together. And what I'd like to offer is that we can be a partner with the commission in creating specific nights or opportunities for engagement in the works that we're already doing. So, it wouldn't create more for anybody; it's existing work. But then, I'd like to also offer – and this is a little bit more tentative – that audiences all over the place are declining, because there's a great hesitancy to engage with people, because of the lingering effects of the pandemic. But sometimes we can bring the arts to the people. And maybe there's a way that we can bring the arts directly to residence halls of off-campus places, the fraternal and sororal organizations. Maybe there's a way we can bring the arts, whether it's music, a night of painting or a little play or doing some creative writing and performing, poetry slam. These are the kinds of things that we're good at, our students would be eager to be involved with. And so you'd find all the deans, but especially me, a willing partner in dealing with this very important problem. Thank you.

**C. Reneau:** Brilliant, thank you so much, Dean Kassel.

**F. Bohanon:** Can you talk a little bit more about how the BIPOC students are connecting with those services in Aurora? Are those services coming to campus, or are they being transported? How are students accessing those services?

**A. Drott:** They're all tele-mental services, so it is all through online therapy. They're referred; we have the contract with them. They have eight free sessions, so the students aren't being charged for those sessions, and they're tele-health sessions.

**F. Bohanon:** Thank you.



**A. Drott:** You're welcome.

**Unidentified:** To follow up with that, when you mentioned that 75 percent of your students are coming in person, but people seeking representation in their services have to all go through tele-health, I'm sure you're considering that. But I just wanted to follow up with Felicia and see what's being done.

**C. Reneau:** I would just say that 75 percent of our folks are coming in person. But what we're seeing is that – I would add a friendly amendment to your statement. So, you're saying that the folks seeking representation have to go to tele-health, but that's not the case. If you look at the number we can provide percentages of, the number of LGBT+ students that we're serving, the number of BIPOC students on this campus that we're serving, we're seeing significant numbers of each, first generation students that we're serving. Each month, we've broken it down to those identifiers, as well, so we're seeing a tremendous amount of students with multiple identifications being served within the counseling center here in person, as well, in addition to those seeking services through tele-health through Compassionate Edge.

**A. Drott:** And just for clarification, we do have some counselors on campus who do identify as folks of color, so it isn't just through Compassionate Edge that they can get connected to a counselor of color. It's just that it is an additional way, if they have a specific preference, to make that connection more quickly.

**I. Montana:** Questions, comments? If there are no further questions, I would like to ask everyone to join me in expressing our thanks and appreciation to our presenters.

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

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

**I. Montana:** We are going to move now to agenda item VIII. reports from councils, boards and standing committees. Item VIII.A. is Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE, and we have Linda Saborío. I wonder, Linda, if you have a report. You choose wherever you feel most comfortable.

**L. Saborío:** No, I'm just kidding. Good afternoon. I don't have much of a report today, because for our February meeting, we met via zoom. And we've tried to take advantage of that time to really gather our information from our caucus and our working groups and try to compile information that we want to bring to Springfield in May when we meet with different legislators.

Ginger Ostro did speak with the group briefly about the governor's budget, and they see it as very encouraging. It was the first time that we've really seen a focus on education in that amount, a couple of decades. But, it still has to go through the General Assembly; I'm sure that's why President Freeman is down there today, probably to talk about the budget.

She spoke a little bit about DEI initiatives at public institutions. IBHE has formed an advisory committee, and a couple of the reps from the FAC are on this committee. They're going to be looking at different institutions and the plan components and then how they plan to implement their DEI initiatives. I believe they have a one-page fact sheet up on the IBHE website, what they're up to. And she also gave us an update on the funding commission, and it seems like it's moving forward but still talking about the issue with adequacy.

Other than that, it was just a working group meeting. Thank you very much. I don't imagine with that brief report that there are any questions. But I will entertain them. Okay, thank you very much.

- B. University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees – report  
Felicia Bohanon, Holly Nicholson, Ismael Montana  
Katy Jaekel, Karen Whedbee, Brad Cripe

**I. Montana:** We'll move on to agenda item VIII.B., University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees. Members of this committee include Felicia Bohanon, Holly Nicholson, Katy Jaekel, Karen Whedbee, Brad Cripe and Ismael Montana, sitting here. I will start on behalf of my colleagues who can step in and cover some of the items that I'm going to be reporting on.

On February 16, the Board of Trustees held committee meetings, and what I'm going to present here is just selected highlights. The first committee is the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee, also known as AASAP. The agenda for this committee included a request for three academic program changes. The first two of these requests focused on deletion of the Bachelor of Science in the hospitality and tourism management program. This program has been closed to new enrollment since 2021 and is now being offered with emphasis in hospitality and tourism management through the Bachelor of Science in business administration. The second request for deletion centered on the Master of Science in taxation offered by the Department of Accountancy in the College of Business. Enrollment in this program has declined to a point where it is no longer sustainable and, in fact, has been closed for enrollment for a couple of years. The third proposed academic program change pertained to the introduction of a new minor in sports medicine. The university proposed to offer this minor in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education within the College of Education. The university recommended that the AASAP Committee endorse these requests and asked that the president forward them to the Board of Trustees for approval at its March 23 meeting, which is the next Board of Trustees meeting.

The AASAP Committee also discussed a couple of sabbatical items. Recommendation for faculty and supportive professional sabbatical leave for the 2023-24 academic year and proposed that the university recommend the president to forward it to the Board of Trustees for approval on March 23, 2023. Besides these action items. Dr. Holly Jones, an associate professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, who recently completed a sabbatical leave, gave a brief report on the scholarly work that she completed during her sabbatical. The committee also presented an annual report on the outcome of all sabbatical leaves that occurred in the 2019-20 academic year. And this concludes the agenda items from the AASAP Committee.

Moving on to the Research and Innovation, Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee (RILLA), some of the key agenda items from this committee revolve around sponsored program administrative reports. According to Dr. Jerry Blazey, NIU has received a total of 190 sponsored awards from the beginning of the current fiscal year, totaling \$27.8 million. Dr. Jerry Blazey also provided a federal relations update, including a report on several appropriations that are in process. Also, Dr. Zachary Wahl-Alexander and Ms. Gabrielle Bennett, gave a faculty presentation on the accomplishments of a project known as FLEX, a program sponsored by the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education for youth who are incarcerated in the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice. The youth are provided with opportunities to participate in sports programs that teach leadership, life skills and fitness behaviors, which prepare them for life after prison. And I'm

sure some of you might have seen this program, which has been heavily covered in the media, including local Chicago TV stations; and, of course, NIU also carried this in some of NIU Today and other media outlets.

Matt Streb provided a state legislative report and reported that there are several proposals under consideration at present and that, if these proposals pass, it will be very helpful to NIU. Matt Streb also summarized Gov. Pritzker's budget address. Apart from the budget and other key information pertaining to education, NIU was also featured in the accomplishments of Joyce DeFauw who, at age 90, recently graduated from NIU with a bachelor of general studies. And this was met with huge applause and very encouraging in terms of what our university does.

Lastly, the Finance, Audit, Compliance, Facilities and Operations Committee (FACFO) had a very packed agenda. The agenda for this committee focused on two quarterly financial summaries for fiscal year 2023, starting December 31, 2022. A summary of these two financial reports can be found on the [BOT website](#).

There were also 16 university recommendations from FACFO, including fiscal year 2023-24 room and board pricing, and 2023-24 zero increase in base and differential tuition for undergraduate, graduate and College of Law students. There was also a recommendation for an increase in the graduate fee paid by students in the semester during which they graduate. This has not increased since 1999. The new fee would be \$40 for baccalaureate students and \$55 for graduate students, effective August 2023. Also, the university is negotiating a health insurance plan for fiscal year 2024, which will lower the cost insurance premiums for students. The university requested the board approve this proposal at a special meeting, which was held on February 16.

All these and other recommendations, including campus printer lease program, Microsoft enrollment contract renewal and others, all shared the goal of addressing affordability concerns and maintaining fiscal responsibility and operations of the university for fiscal year 2024.

The FACFO meeting concluded with three reports, including a presentation on facilities and infrastructure capital investment, fiscal year 2022 report on facilities and infrastructure capital investment activities, and a quarterly summary report of transactions in excess of \$100,000 for the period October 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022.

The full reports on all these items can be found on the BOT website. And at this point, I'd like to invite any of my BOT colleagues, if there is any important item that they'd like to add, please feel free to do so. Otherwise, this concludes the report from the UAC to BOT. Thank you. Anyone want to add anything? Great.

#### C. Rules, Governance and Elections Committee – no report

**I. Montana:** We'll move on to agenda item VIII.C., Rules, Governance and Elections Committee. There is no report.

- D. Student Government Association – report  
Raaif Majeed, President  
Dallas Douglass, Speaker of the Senate

**I. Montana:** We have item VIII.D., Student Government Association. Raaif and Dallas, if you are around and have a report, the floor is yours.

**D. Douglass:** Good afternoon, everybody. For those who don't know me, I am --Dallas Douglass, speaker of the senate for the Student Government Association. This is one of my last reports as a student here, I'm graduating in May. I've been here since 2017. This is year six – thank you. And for four years of that time, I've been in the Student Government Association. I joined in the fall semester of 2019 and, if you're keeping track, that was about six weeks before COVID. So, I very briefly worked in the HSC before switching to an online format. I've been the vice chairperson of a committee; I've been the chairperson of a committee; I was about to be speaker for a year, and this is my second year as speaker. And that time and experience in SGA has allowed me a really unique perspective on it. It's not often that people spend all four years of their time at NIU in SGA. We have historically a high turnover rate, as a lot of student organizations do. And because of that high turnover rate and lack of consistent transition, we face a lot of issues. So, myself and the rest of the senate lately have been working to ensure that the SGA is working better to serve the student body. The student government carries a large legacy here at NIU. We're riding on the shoulders of a very powerful organization that existed in the '80's and '90's, and I at least am working to restructure the SGA to serve a similar purpose in today's decade. So, as part of that, recently this year, we passed a bill that altered some of our HR policies, made us more in line with how the university processes issues related to human resources. There is a supervisory hierarchy that I created with a tiered system that encourages growth and accountability.

Other plans that we have before we close out this semester: We're looking at some training and transition plans, amendments to our governing documents that require people to be more accountable to their successors. We're also thinking about doing some minor restructuring for the organization and how it functions practically, eliminating positions that don't serve a purpose anymore, revamping the relationship between the branches of the government, stuff like that.

We're also doing a lot of funding stuff. So, the treasurer, Honor Morgan, is here sometimes, has given a few reports on our financial situation. But for anybody who knows student organizations, who are looking for funding, we do have available to us a larger-than-average amount of funding due to rollover from COVID. So, we are looking to get student organizations involved, literally invest in students here on campus. And on the topic of mental health, I think that definitely speaks to fostering that kind of community that we want here. So, please, if you know students who are looking to do cool stuff, even if they're not part of a student org, send them our way. There are a lot of restrictions on what we can and can't fund, so please ensure that they are reading those policies. If you have any questions, direct those to myself or Treasurer Morgan. But we would like to get that investment done.

And then, finally, and most importantly, our elections are coming up. For those of you who have been here for a while or even just last year, elections are a big deal. They used to be a much bigger deal, but they are still the core of how we structure the SGA. In order to run in the election, candidates have to attend a candidate meeting, and all paperwork is due this Friday at 5:30 p.m. I will really appreciate shares on social media so that students know there is still time to go to a candidate meeting and get the paperwork in. I'm on the Board of Elections; we can schedule those

meetings by request basically anytime. We really want students to get registered to run in the elections. So, if you're thinking of a student who would be a really great candidate for SGA, send them my way, that would be awesome. The elections, themselves, are going to be March 28 through 29. So, 12:01 the 28<sup>th</sup> through 11:59 the 29<sup>th</sup>.

I'm also going to be sending Pat some materials on just kind of some flyers, posters, digital stuff, for distribution. So, if you could spread that in your social networks, I'd really appreciate it. Word of mouth is one of the most important things for getting turnout in these elections. With that, encourage your students to run and vote and spread the word. And that's all I've got for today. Questions?

**Unidentified:** What are your plans for after graduation?

**D. Douglass:** I've got a couple different plans. Being part of SGA has given me a love for higher education. I'm hoping to get into other master's program after a gap year, or just get a job in higher education. Thank you for asking. This was definitely, Katy's fault, also. Very directly Katy's involvement.

**I. Montana:** Any other questions? If not, thank you for all you did for the SGA.

**D. Douglass:** I'm not gone yet. I'm not gone yet. I've still got two more meetings here.

**I. Montana:** I know. Wonderful.

E. Operating Staff Council – Holly Nicholson, President – no report

**I. Montana:** So, we'll move to agenda item VIII.E., Operating Staff Council. We do not have a report today.

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

**I. Montana:** And that takes us now to Supportive Professional Staff Council. Felicia, do you have a report?

**F. Bohanon:** No.

**I. Montana:** Okay.

## **IX. 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: Mar 1, Apr 5, May 3
  
- R. Approved 2032-33 academic calendar

**I. Montana:** With that, we are at our very last agenda item, which is informational items. The only thing of note, apart from pointing your attention to the links for minutes and reports, we have item IX.R., which is approval of the 2032-33 academic calendar. So, if you want to plan anything in the near or distant future, that is a good guide and something for you to consider.

## **X. ADJOURNMENT**

**I. Montana:** With that, I think we've come to the end of the meeting today, and I will entertain a motion and a second to adjourn the meeting. May I have a motion?

**M. Geller:** Yes, so moved.

**I. Montana:** Okay, second?

**M. Costello:** Second.

**I. Montana:** All in favor, say aye.

**Members:** Aye.

**I. Montana:** Okay, thank you.

Meeting adjourned at 3:52 p.m.