

TRANSCRIPT

University Council
Wednesday, October 11, 2023, 3 p.m.
Altgeld Hall 315
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Birch, Elish-Piper, Falkoff, Freeman, Hensley, Howell, Johnson, Martin, Middlemist, Monteiro, Morris, Myung, Njue, Phares, Pitney, Richter, Stoker, Sutcliffe, Vaughn, Walther, Ziarati

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Bohanon, O'Grady

OTHERS PRESENT: Arcado, Bryan, Creed, Mooberry, Olson, Paquette, Reneau, Saborío, Sumner, Whitelaw

I. CALL TO ORDER

L. Freeman: I'll call the University Council meeting to order. On this homecoming day, I hope everyone knows that there are 41 offices that participated in the contest and decorated. The judges have been going around – I don't have a say in it. I'm not even going to tell you what my favorite is, but there are some amazing offices and such incredible creativity out there, so good for us.

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

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

P. Erickson: We do have a quorum. And just a reminder to fill out the attendance sheet and leave it on your chair. Our thanks to Ferald, who will collect them at the end of the meeting. And if you want to make a comment or ask a question, we really appreciate it if you use the microphone. Thanks.

L. Freeman: And we're trying a new configuration today, which I think is a good one.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

L. Freeman: Can I have a motion to adopt the agenda.

W. Vaughn: Moving to adopt the agenda.

L. Freeman: Okay, motion by Vaughn. Second?

Z. Birch: Second.

L. Freeman: Second by Birch, okay. All in favor?

Members: Aye.

L. Freeman: Any opposed?

IV. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 13, 2023, MINUTES

L. Freeman: And now can I have a motion to approve the September 13, 2023, minutes. Those are found on pages three to five of the packet.

S. Stoker: Motion to approve the minutes.

L. Freeman: Motion, Stoker. Second?

D. Phares: Second.

L. Freeman: Thank you. All in favor?

Members: Aye.

L. Freeman: Any opposed? Great.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

P. Erickson: No public comment today.

L. Freeman: Okay, thank you.

VI. NIU PRESIDENT LISA FREEMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Budget and Planning Update

L. Freeman: We have a couple of presentations, so I'm going to be fairly brief with my comments. I do want to say that we are continuing to move forward with the strategies that were proposed in the [budget planning resource group report from 2022-23](#). Yesterday, Interim Executive Vice President and Provost Elish-Piper and VP for Administration and Finance George Middlemist addressed the chairs and directors group that meets monthly on Tuesday morning with some background and progress being done behind the scenes and ways that people can help support our efforts. And a slightly abbreviated, I imagine, version of that presentation is slated to come to this group, to Faculty Senate, to the Academic Leadership Council in the upcoming weeks. I might be missing a couple of shared governance or shared leadership groups. But stay tuned for that.

What I thought I would focus my comments around budget and planning today is, in addition to that good work that's going on at the university level behind the scenes, we are doing a lot of work to advocate for our university and, in fact, for all public higher ed, in Springfield and with legislators. We have had one or two legislators per week visiting our campus. We've been having very frank conversations with them about the needs of the university and our students and the importance of continuing to invest in higher ed in our state.

And we have coming up on October 17 what is an annual event for the administration. We meet with members of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, their staff; and we present the budget scenarios that we would like to see funded for the coming year, and we talk about all of the work that's being done on our campus that aligns with [A Thriving Illinois](#), the strategic plan for the state of Illinois. We talk about enrollment; we talk about equity; and this year, we're talking a little bit more about community engagement and workforce development, because they're moving their emphasis from Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 to Pillar 3 of the IBHE plan, which has that piece about partnerships with the private sector workforce development, etc. We have a lot of really good things to talk about; I'm actually very much looking forward to that meeting. We will make a strong case for that.

I also want to update people on what's going on with the [Illinois Public Funding Commission](#), looking at equitable funding for higher ed. This work has been going on, I believe, for a year now – sometimes it seems like ten years, but I think it's only been a year. And I've updated this group before. This is a commission that's through the effort of the full commission, and its three work groups have been trying to create a funding formula to distribute the funds that are given to higher ed in an equitable fashion, considering things like enrollment, mission and the type of students served, recognizing that universities, like ours, that serve large populations of first-generation students and students from low socio-economic backgrounds, have to invest in services to help those students get to and through the university.

The report from the commission actually should have been issued by now. Part of the reason things have been slow is because it's fairly innovative to try to do an adequacy-based formula that models K-12, because higher ed and K-12 have some obvious differences, which I don't think I need to focus on with this group. But also because, as the work was moving forward, the Supreme Court handed down the decision forbidding the use of race in admissions. And certainly there are a lot of people who believe that there will be subsequent challenges related to race in any kind of scholarship or aid. And the commission, the state of Illinois, the governor and certainly the leadership at this university are completely committed to closing equity gaps and to making sure that all of our students have what they need to succeed. But I think very sensibly, the work of this commission is trying to be proactive in hearing from legal experts so they don't frame an adequacy-based formula in terms that will attract a lightning rod, a legal challenge, tie things up in the courts and prevent the funding from being released. And as someone who remembers what it's like not to have state funding, I'm all for not letting that happen.

The next public funding commission meeting will actually have legal experts talking about this issue. I think some of you may remember back when we had COVID relief funds that were distributed from the IBHE, they used the percentage of Pell students at a university served to influence the amount of funds that were directed to the students, and NIU did quite well under that formula. So, I'm optimistic that good things will come from this commission, but the formula being released is the first step, and then adoption into legislation. And so, I think we'll see if there's going to be a move to use something simpler for equitable funding in this coming session. Certainly, we will continue to advocate to make sure we get what the university and our students need, but I don't think I'm stealing the thunder from George and Laurie's presentation to tell you that the state will not solve all our problems. So, stay tuned for that presentation.

And I'll stop there, and before I turn the gavel over to Ben, does anybody have any questions about what's going on, on campus or anything else? All right, don't forget all the cool homecoming things that are coming. Dr. Streb has been focused on the weather app for the last 72 hours. He is in constant contact with – this is so serious, I'm not making this up – he's been in constant contact with our meteorology faculty who look at two weather models per day to look at changes in storm patterns. And what we believe will happen now is that there may be a break in the clouds from the storms that start tonight for the downtown DeKalb events tomorrow, and we'll all be very, very excited about that. Probably Friday and Saturday are going to have inclement weather, but a lot of things have moved inside. Anyone who was planning to go to Jonamac or the local brews and spirits event, it's moving inside to the Cider House, so there will not be a tent and you will not be blown away. We can't move the football game inside, but there will still be a lot of really fun things to do for homecoming. And what I always say when I go outside and get wet in the rain is that at least it proves I'm not a witch, right?

Members: Laughter.

L. Freeman: It was even funnier when I said that in Kansas when I worked there. I'm going to pass the gavel and the agenda over to Ben so he can introduce the next two presentations.

VII. ITEMS FOR UNIVERSITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

- A. Technology Accessibility at NIU
Katy Whitelaw, Technology Accessibility Officer

B. Creed: Thank you, President Freeman. That brings us to item VII, which are Items for University Council Consideration. We have two presentations today. The first is an update and overview related to technology accessibility here at NIU, and Katy Whitelaw, who serves as NIU's information technology accessibility officer, will give this presentation and answer questions after. While the presentation focuses on relevant and important laws, definitions and NIU efforts, it's worth noting that President Freeman has charged a group called the Digital Accessibility Task Force, which Katy is a member of, with helping move the campus forward with an accessibility-first perspective.

L. Freeman: And if I can just add to that real quickly. I charged the group, but the group was an idea that came from Holly Nicholson, who felt that shared leadership was a good way to solve problems, and I wanted to make sure she got recognized for that.

K. Whitelaw: I am Katy Whitelaw, and I'm NIU's information technology accessibility officer. My position is in the Ethics and Compliance Office, and you can find basic information about technology accessibility at go.niu.edu/technology-accessibility. The technology I'll be talking about is referred to as the electronic and information technology or EIT. There are four main categories, digital content, software, hardware and support documentation and services for them.

There are laws and a policy that apply to NIU's EIT or electronic and information technology. The federal law is the [Rehabilitation Act, Section 508 Refresh](#), which became law in January 2018. We also have an Illinois law, the [Illinois Information Technology Accessibility Act 2.0](#), which is closely aligned with the federal law, and it also became law in January 2018. NIU has its own [Accessible Electronic and Information Technology Policy](#), based on the federal and Illinois laws.

The law says that technology is accessible when a person with disabilities is able to use it independently to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions and enjoy the same services in the same time frame as a person without disabilities. So, you can imagine at NIU, this applies to things like course materials, course applications, registering for classes, paying for classes, getting your grades, using the OneCard, applying for a scholarship.

The laws say that it applies to people who are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, can't use a mouse, can't use a keyboard or who use a wheelchair.

There are exceptions to accessibility requirements. There might not be an accessible choice; the industry standard or product must be used; the accessible choice is far more expensive, and here there is no dollar amount, it's up to the buyer's discretion; it may be for a small known group of people who don't have a disability that would prevent them from using the technology; or it may not be public facing.

Measuring accessibility is kind of messy. The legally accepted way to measure accessibility is the voluntary product accessibility template or VPAT. This is completed by the vendor. More and more vendors are putting these on their websites, but if I have to ask for one, I almost always get one right away. It's important to note that vendors do not have to produce accessible technology, and their VPATs can show there are accessibility problems. But, we have to choose accessible technology whenever we can.

Very briefly, this VPAT is a table. It has three columns. The first column is each criteria of the law. The second column is whether the product supports, partially supports or does not support the criteria. And the third column is for comments or maybe a timeline to compliance.

When I get a VPAT, I send it to the purchaser, and I know what accessibility issues are shown in the VPAT and how they might affect people with disabilities. Here's a really great technology; it's called Blackboard Ally. It's an addition to Blackboard, and it's available to all students, faculty and staff. To use it, log in to Blackboard, scroll down to Assist, then scroll down to Blackboard Ally. Upload a file and choose a format. Here are some of the formats you can choose: HTML will display very nicely on your phone or small device. ePub lets you choose the text font, the background color and lets you make notes on the document. You could have it translated into your primary language. You could give an audio file so you can hear the content. You can even get electronic braille.

You may have noticed QR codes like this on campus. NIU is installing a wayfinding system, which was developed for people who are blind and visually impaired. Unlike the black QR codes, these codes you don't have to focus on. You don't have to know exactly where they are. The codes are detected by your phone using a free app. Scan your surroundings with your phone – I brought my phone, so this is how I've seen people use it, just like this. And when your phone detects a QR code, it will give a little buzz, and it will display and announce the information in the code. The directions to, and the distance from, the QR code are also displayed and announced in the language of your phone.

There are universal design aspects to this wayfinding system. It was created for people who are blind or visually impaired, but it's useful for deaf and hard of hearing people, who may have trouble asking for directions from a hearing person. It's easy for non-native English speakers to use, because it uses the language of their phone. And it's nice for anyone who's not familiar with one of our buildings.

There are many benefits to NIU for having accessible technology. We can recruit students with disabilities knowing that they will be successful here and retain them all the way to graduation. When these students are successful here, we build a reputation for having an accessible campus and an accessible education. We also reduce our risk of litigation for being out of compliance with accessibility law.

Going forward, let's make NIU a center of excellence for accessibility. There's more information at [this website](#). And, do you have any questions now?

C. Reneau: Thank you for the information about the Blackboard Ally. Are there ways that we can help support your area? I think the way you described it is fantastic, and it offers universal design for so many folks around the access, and that piece is so important. I know that the Provost's Office – not to put you on the spot – but, you do a newsletter to your faculty colleagues and your partnerships. I do information to Student Affairs. Are there things and ways, or do you have snippets of information about Blackboard Ally that we could push out and help promote to increase students' awareness of it, to increase different groups, our faculty, things like that? Because I think it sounds like such a great accessible tool that maybe folks just might not fully understand as being there.

K. Whitelaw: yes, this Blackboard Ally form is a page on the Blackboard site that lists all of the possible formats and all of the advantages to each one. So, that link will be clickable when you get the presentation.

B. Creed: I just want to add to that, I was curious and went on [CITL's website](#), and they have resources there too that can walk you through how to use it, as well.

K. Whitelaw: That's true, yes.

B. Creed: We can share that out, as well, as long as they have it.

K. Whitelaw: Yes. Anything else? Thank you.

B. Creed: Thank you so much for that.

- B. Mental Health Early Action on Campus Act – Update
Tim Paquette, Director of Counseling and Consultative Services
Kelly Olson, AVP Student Development and Dean of Students

B. Creed: The next presentation we have is the [Mental Health Early Action on Campus Act](#) update, and this will be a joint presentation by Tim Paquette, who is the director of Counseling and Consultative Services, and Kelly Olson, who is associate vice provost for student development and dean of students.

T. Paquette: Good afternoon, everyone, I am Tim Paquette, CCS director.

K. Olson: And I'm Kelly Olson. I serve as our assistant vice president for Student Affairs and dean of students. Thanks for having us.

T. Paquette: I'd like to apologize in advance for anyone who was attending the Faculty Senate meeting last Wednesday. This is the same presentation that we're going to cover with the same points. But please feel free to jump in as we go along. We thought it would be important to start with a quick overview of what MHEAC – as we've come to abbreviate the act – what it actually is all about. So, the Mental Health Early Action on Campus Act was started in the Illinois legislature in 2019 connected to how can the state of Illinois, especially at public universities and all two-year community colleges, fill the gaps around mental health, gaps that might not always be about funding, although sometimes it is, but about how can there be increased awareness, training and education around mental health services on campuses. And it really focuses on a few main areas that more than anything highlights peer-to-peer support as one of those ways to do that. And so what we've been tasked with over time is to be able to talk about the implementation of MHEAC here at NIU, not just through CCS, but throughout campus, around ways to prioritize ways to meet the requirements. In March of 2023, we received our first funding.

K. Olson: I think as all of us have experienced in some ways, this act was really an unfunded mandate from the state for several years. It challenged us, because it did open our mindset to how we look at resources, which, to be honest, we didn't have additional financial resources to support efforts. And so we have been reporting on our work toward the act since 2019 and in that we've been doing regular budgetary requests of what would it look like if this was funded, and what would our budget look like. And so as much as we are very grateful for funding from the state, I think it's important to note that, when we first initially started this, our budget that we really proposed was closer to about \$400,000 to really look at new and innovative ways and how to bring this to campus and expand. Now, as I said, we're grateful for the funding that we have. As you can see, it's increased this year, which is exciting, but that's really over the course of the whole fiscal year. So, we're going to talk about how we're using that budget, but I think it's an important perspective for you to understand about the resources this takes to do this type of work.

T. Paquette: We also wanted to highlight some updates about what we have been able to implement, as Kelly said, even before we received funding, but certainly the impact that funding has had over the last six months or so and even a little bit before that. What we really want to highlight is the expansion of our peer education program through CCS student wellness. For those who don't know, Counseling and Consultation Services also includes our student wellness team; and in our student wellness team, we have administrative leadership and three GA positions, as well as peer educators. Previously, those peer educators positions were always volunteer, and I don't think it will shock anyone to know that the volunteer numbers could ebb and flow. Sometimes

people would commit to becoming peer educators and then need to drop out. Well guess what? Once we made them paid peer educator positions, we had quite a few students who were willing to, not just commit their time, but their energy and effort to be able to expand on our peer-to-peer education efforts. We had 15 peer educators at the end of last spring semester. Some of those graduated, others had other time commitments. But as we come into this fall semester, we now have expanded those three GA positions and have ten peer educators who have all gone through certified peer education training. And we're doing all kinds of peer-to-peer support around, not just mental health, but holistic health and well-being.

The other thing that we were able to implement – and this was with the support and encouragement of Dr. Ingram – was to begin the process of becoming a JED campus. The [JED Foundation](#) is a national organization that works primarily with colleges and universities to promote suicide awareness and prevention. JED was developed as a not for profit for a family who lost their son to suicide when he was attending college. It is now a nationally recognized leader in college mental health and prevention efforts. We have been able to take steps to enter into a three-year consultation agreement with JED to be able to become a JED campus. What that means is that we partner with JED to provide them with information about our resources on campus, what we currently provide. They also are using their assessment model to look for gaps in what we do provide so that we can focus in on resources, training, education, awareness around mental health that also helps us meet the requirements of MHEAC. And so, it really is an exciting partnership, and we are now taking next steps in that partnership where we will have our first site visit from our JED consultant in December. That will include a summary report of a healthy mind survey that over 450 students completed in the spring semester and our own university self-assessment that we provided around mental health and well-being services that we currently do or do not provide. And that will be part of the next steps toward strategic planning and implementation of what we will start with when it comes to JED on our campus. But that will continue over the next few years.

K. Olson: One of the things that it also does, as the act states, it's about mental health early action. We know that it's important for us to talk with our students immediately. And so, we've continued partnerships with orientation, first-year programs, to how do we infuse the narrative around mental health support so that our students understand that the minute they step on campus. And so that is really part of MHEAC, and that's been a partnership we've had for a number of years. But again, I think the benefit of this type of work is that it just brings you to a more centralized goal. We have continued that partnership, and we've expanded that to include students, but also for families, so that our families understand that, when their student is struggling, sometimes their families also, as we know, we have a large population of first-generation, they don't know where to start. And so, our goal has really been to partner together in the orientation process so that our families and our students are prepared to know how we can support them, where they can go. And so, that's a continued important partnership.

We've also continued to partner with our Residential Life and Housing staff. One of the requirements of MHEAC is to increase training and specifically mental health first aid training with our Housing staff. Because what we know is that we become their home away from home. As we enter the academic year with about 4,200 students living with us, it's important for us to know that our Housing staff are on those front lines with those students. How do we prepare them? How do we train them and make that at all levels within Housing? One of our partnerships has been to look

at everything from our community advisors – our undergraduate students, they're also known as CAs. So, if you hear the CA term from students, that's who live on their floors with them, talk about them regularly, all the way through our professional staff, so that all lines have the same training and so that we're equally looking at our response for mental health.

The other big partnership for us on campus is Employee Well-being. And so, we've continued, and several of you have been wonderful partners in this, but we have expanded this beyond just Student Affairs and into our Academic Affairs units and looking at our students through a holistic lens. Partnering with colleges, with academic advisors, who are on the front lines with our students, who often times are hearing the stories of what's happening with our students and so that we can make sure that those resources are shown and shared, and so that we know who to contact, so folks know. That's been a wonderful partnership, and it's led primarily out of Counseling and Consultation Services through the consultation part of their unit. So, again, a lot of things that we've been doing on campus are continuing, but it's having that lens that it's a common goal of the early action.

T. Paquette: And I would just say, as well, to add to that, is that we have also already been working with faculty around mental health first aid. The exciting thing about our JED partnership is that that will assist with that, as well. And as we continue to identify ways to best use the JED campus resources, really can see that as a clear connection about how we continue to provide faculty more around that mental health first aid training about how are you responding in the classroom, how are you responding to student concerns around mental health or well-being, and that partnership will continue to expand.

[inaudible] MHEAC requirements, how are you trying to come up with creative ways to expand mental health services and supports for students. We were able to partner with Athletics to create an embedded counselor position, started initially just a few hours a week. Then it went to a few days a week. And then this year, with the strong support of Athletics providing funding to have Dr. Shyann Beach, our staff psychologist, be there five days a week as a full-time embedded psychologist. That salary savings then allowed us at CCS to be able to search and successfully fill two staff counselor positions back at CCS. If you were in our presentation last week, we provided the punt to say, please feel free to go back to your departments and say, hey, maybe there's something to this embedded counselor process. But in all seriousness, this could be the way to expand this kind of model. It's not unique to NIU, but it is a really nice way to say, we can bring mental health staff to different spaces on campus, and through partnership, also be able to expand services at the same time. And we're looking forward to being able to do that.

We've also been able to expand our existing [Compassionate Edge](#) agreement. That's something that goes back to the heart of the pandemic when President Freeman and Dr. Ingram provided emergency funding for us to contract with Compassionate Edge to provide an opportunity for students who really do have a strong preference for to meet with a counselor of color, to be able to have that opportunity. And we've been able to continue to utilize that resource when students have that preference. We continue to be able to fund that; another way that we've been able to expand our services.

Money really helps, it does. So, money has allowed us – the funding from the state – to also move forward with a [Togetherall](#) contract. This is a service that is all about 24/7 peer-to-peer support online. It's a platform that allows students to be able to access support any time from other trained peers who are supervised by licensed mental health therapists above them, to be able to monitor chats, online resources, discussions about concerns and ways to cope and manage. We're going to

be able to be implementing Togetherall with a contract that we've entered into. It will be launched within the next few weeks as we start this new academic year. And so, that is also happening on that peer-to-peer support. Togetherall will also be providing additional mental health focused training for our peer educators. So, an exciting part of this partnership is that, not just the platforms are provided to students, but the training for peer educators is happening, as well, to be able to expand our peer-to-peer mental health support, one-on-one support, that we're going to be piloting in the spring. Another mental health early action requirement that can be hard to think about how you implement it, but we think this can be a helpful way to do that peer-to-peer support.

K. Olson: We are excited because, as some of you know, we have a new presidential commission on campus, the Presidential Commission on Well-being. That aligns with MHEAC and having the mindset of looking at well-being campus-wide. That's really that systems logo; that's going to be a lot of our partnerships. Some of that will come directly from Counseling and Consultation Services; it will come from Student Affairs. But that's really that – when we look at the act, what it's really saying as how do we holistically provide for our students, but also our campuses. So, we're excited, because we're already ahead of the game in that way, than where some other campuses are, because we have our new presidential commission. So, that's exciting.

Tim mentioned this earlier, but when we looked at this act, it really did help us focus on how do we look at student support peer to peer? Because what we know is that our students do value that. We've had a lot of success for peer coaching at the Center for Student Assistance and some of the other academic units on campus. And we've seen a lot of support through our peer educators that we talked about that are specific to MHEAC.

But a couple of examples that I wanted to share, because some of you may know these happened, but this year we listed a wellness concert, part of Week of Welcome. And I think when you say wellness concert, are you like: Are students going to go to this? What does this mean? And I'll tell you, we engaged over 300 students with just mindfulness activities. And there was a concert happening, they were doing crafts, they were engaging with our peer educators. And that really launched us in a positive way starting this fall semester, because right away we connected them with our peer educators, and we've seen that continue throughout the semester.

Last week, several of you may have also seen our campaign of Send Silence Packing. That connects a lot to what JED will be providing us, as we look at suicide prevention and suicide awareness. And so, that was a really exciting opportunity as well. We had a lot of engagement come through that, through our peer educators and our students. There was a wall of hope that was coordinated, and students, faculty and staff wrote messages on that. I think, again, that's looking at this holistically – that it's not just therapy, it's not just counseling in a one-on-one setting. But it's the interactions that we intentionally have about who we're putting in those spaces with our students. Just a couple examples I wanted to share because it's been a great fall semester, and we're excited where we're going to go.

T. Paquette: Questions? Thank you very much.

B. Creed: Thank you for that.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Approve Professor Steven Howell to serve on the
2023-24 University Fee Advisory Group

B. Creed: Moving on to item VIII, New Business. There is one item, which is a vote on approving Professor Steven Howell to serve on the 2023-24 University Fee Advisory Group. Can I have a motion to approve Professor Howell to serve on this group? Marc Falkoff and a second from Pitney. We'll use a voice vote for this. All in favor, say aye.

Members: Aye.

B. Creed: All opposed? The ayes have it. Thank you, Steve, for serving in this capacity.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Proposed amendment to NIU Bylaws, Article 8, to remove Article 8.3,
Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee
SECOND READING and VOTE
Scott Mooberry, Director, Environmental Health and Safety

B. Creed: Moving on to Unfinished Business, we have the proposed amendment to NIU Bylaws, Article 8, to remove Article 8.3, which is Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee. Before I turn it over to Scott for the reading, I'd like to take a motion and a second, and then we'll invite Scott to present on the reading and engage in any discussion. Following that, we'll have a vote, which Pat will lead us through. So, can I please have a motion? Pitney. And a second? Falkoff, thank you. And with that, I will turn it over to Scott to walk us through the reading.

S. Mooberry: All right, thank you. The reading, as I mentioned last month in the September meeting, is as follows: The Campus Security and Environmental Committee met on April 19, 2023, and unanimously voted to dissolve the committee. The proposal comes with the support of Chief Mitchell of the NIU Police Department and John Heckmann, associate vice president for facilities management and campus services, both of whom have historically had a vested interest in the committee. Currently, Police and Public Safety, Facilities Management and Campus Services and my department, Environmental Health and Safety, all have mechanisms and workflows in place to respond to the needs of the university community without the assistance of the committee. This appears to be evident as the committee has entertained few requests for assistance from the university community in recent years in accordance with the scope of the committee bylaws. Furthermore, there is optimism that the spirit of the committee bylaws will be incorporated into existing related student-centric committees and/or emerging committees including, but not limited to the Environmental Sustainability Task Force and the Presidential Commission on Well-being.

With that, I'm happy to entertain any questions.

B. Creed: Seeing no questions or comments, we'll move to a vote, and Pat will lead us through that.

P. Erickson: The first step is just to clarify. The slide shows everyone who is a voting member. So, if you see your name on that slide, or if you're here today for someone whose name is on that slide, we need you to pick up a clicker by the door there. While we're doing that, I want to remind you that there is no need to turn the clickers on or off; they activate automatically when you vote, and they deactivate after several seconds of non-use.

For our vote today, I'll let you know when the software is ready, so wait for my cue before you press any of the buttons. And when we're ready, we'll tell you to press 1 or A for yes, 2 or B for no, 3 or C for abstain. Clicking 3 to abstain means that you are present but you're choosing not to vote. So, clicking 3 will have no impact on the total vote calculation. For today's proposal to amend the bylaws, we're reminded that the proposal must be approved by a vote of two-thirds of those voting, provided at least two-thirds of our voting members are present. I do confirm that two-thirds of our voting membership is present.

And so, now give me a minute, and I'm going to open this poll. And remember, that 1 or A is yes, you agree with the motion; 2 or B is no, you do not agree; 3 or C is abstain, which means that you're present but choosing not to vote, and it will have no impact on the total. So, go, you can go ahead and do that. If you press a button and then you change your mind, just press a different button; it will automatically erase your old vote and put your new one in. You can only vote once; one clicker per person. Yes, you get a checkmark or a smiley face on your clicker if your vote was received. If you're having trouble with your clicker at all, just raise your hand, and we'll help you out. Okay, so that clearly passes.

Yes – 18 votes

No – 0 votes

Abstain – 2 votes

X. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

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

1. What are some of NIU's university-wide or college-specific requirements for graduation, other than general education and major courses? A few examples are the COB Business Passport program, a writing infused course and the human diversity requirement.

B. Creed: That brings us to item X, which is Reports from Councils, Boards and Standing Committees. Our first report is from Linda Saborío on the Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE.

L. Saborío: Good afternoon. I just have a few highlights from our September 15 meeting down at IVCC. We had the opportunity to speak with Illinois State Rep. Lance Yednock at our meeting. It was a great conversation. A lot of working groups were able to share with him many of their ideas from research that they're working on, such as prior learning assessments. In particular, they shared with him this idea they have of their being a statewide, almost parallel to the IAI from a statewide committee that looks a prior learning assessment and how institutions are assessing prior learning.

There was also a conversation about early college credit, and we reminded him of a white paper that group produced and asked him if he had any questions about it or if there were issues that came up regarding dual credit or early college credit, they can definitely reach out to our group for verification.

And then we also talked a little bit about college affordability and this idea how there is a middle class that tends to be left out of financial aid opportunities, perhaps because their income threshold falls above the maximum allowed for financial aid, yet the middle class – the donut hole – don't make enough to support one, two or sometimes more children through college. That was a great session that we had with Lance.

And then we had two presentations by Stephanie Bernoteit from the IBHE, who is retiring – she announced it at our meeting – I did not know that she was retiring. It will be a big loss for our group, because Stephanie attended a lot of our meetings and really kept us connected with the IBHE.

I have the slides if anyone is interested. Like I said in Faculty Senate, I'm happy to share them with you, and I'm sure that Stephanie would not mind. The first presentation was about the [Illinois Articulation Initiative](#) at 30 years. She looked at some of the background on the [IAI Act](#), showed us a lot of data on what appears to be a very robust statewide participation in IAI. And she provided us with a couple updates to the IAI Act. One has to do with the transfer of major courses, which I'm sure you all know more about than I do. And the second one on oversight they added a new group on early childhood education.

Her second presentation was on higher education paths to equity, sustainability and growth, where she focused on this idea of closing equity gaps for students who have been left behind, and again shared some ideas there in terms of grant opportunities, for example, to end student housing insecurity, opportunities for nursing students, early childhood education and the Mental Health Early Action on Campus Act, which we had our discussion on today.

And that is really all I wanted to share with you. It was our first meeting of the year, so we did spend a good deal of time getting to know our new members a little bit and learning about some initiatives on their campuses and their research interests. Our next meeting is October 20. So, next Friday, I'll be down at Illinois State University.

Are there any questions for me? I ask, because it appears that the Faculty Senate president at ISU has decided to convene – she invited – was it just the public institutions – the Faculty Senate presidents to join her at ISU. And so, we're going to be meeting with them in the morning. She said she had eight that would be coming.

B. Creed: I just had a question. I noticed you submitted a question to us about college-specific requirements for graduation. Is there any way that you'd like us to share that with you? I'm happy to push something out and ask for responses if that would be helpful.

L. Saborío: Is there something that you're aware of in the College of Education?

B. Creed: No, I'm just asking if you would like

L. Saborío: It was a curiosity from one of my colleagues on the FAC.

L. Elish-Piper: University-wide, we have a requirement for writing intensive course and for the human diversity requirement. Beyond that, we would have to get data from individual colleges and/or programs if they have additional things that are not normal curricular requirements.

L. Saborío: [inaudible]

L. Elish-Piper: Yes, we would have to gather that, and that could be done either by contacting the colleges or just by going into the catalog, because those graduation requirements are all codified in the catalog.

- B. University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees – report
Felicia Bohanon, Natasha Johnson, Ben Creed
Larissa Garcia (Katy Jaekel alternate for fall 2023), Karen Whedbee, Brad Cripe

B. Creed: Our next report is from the University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees met on September 21, and there are a few items to highlight. But first, I want to continue encouraging members of the University Council to read or skim the Board of Trustees public notices and reports as they are made available. Spending just a few minutes to do that will help you understand and learn more information about what’s going on on campus and within the broader context of the state, sometimes several months before it may trickle down and impact you directly. But it gives you that heads-up, and then you may be able to join virtually to learn more directly.

During the Board of Trustees meeting, they approved two collective bargaining agreements, one with Local 160 and one with Local 790. They also heard public comments from Local 1890 as they are in their negotiation process for their contract.

The Board of Trustees approved a request to work with ReUp to re-enroll former NIU students who were last enrolled more than a year ago. This is an organization that will work to identify eligible students, reach out to them on NIU’s behalf and then provide supports to those students with non-academic issues if they choose to re-enroll. It’s a way to bring students back into our university to help them achieve their goals.

The Board of Trustees also heard updates from the Graduate School and engaged in a conversation about the various efforts with community colleges including transfer enrollments, the partnerships that NIU is engaged with and then strategies NIU is currently taking to be a more transfer-friendly institution.

And that’s the summary. Are there any additions from those who were there?

- C. Rules, Governance and Elections Committee – Marc Falkoff, Chair – no report

B. Creed: Item C, Rules, Governance and Elections Committee, there is no report.

- D. Student Government Association – report
Olivia Newman, SGA President
Cole Hensley, Speaker of the Senate

B. Creed: Item D is Student Government Association. I think we have a report from Cole.

C. Hensley: Since the last time we met, the SGA has met four times. So far, for our budget, we have spent roughly half on supplemental funding. By the end of this week, I think we're going to spend roughly two-thirds. Our executive funding is about half of what it is. SGA Senate still has some open seats, and Olivia Newman is still filling her cabinet. Besides that, we are planning events for later this semester and next semester and trying to plan some events for next fall in advance. And that's all I have.

B. Creed: Thank you, Cole. Any questions? Thank you so much; we appreciate you coming and sharing.

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

B. Creed: Next up is our report from the Operating Staff Council, Natasha?

N. Johnson: Hi everybody. First, we want to congratulate President Freeman on being named among the Top 50 Women Leaders in Education. Congratulations on that. [applause] For OSC, we are taking a deeper dive through our priorities survey. We sent out a survey to gather what matters most to civil service employees right now, so we can advocate in those areas. The first one was internal equity gaps/salary compression. Second was enrollment/recruitment. The third one was desk audit. So, we're going to take a deeper dive into those three to figure out what we can do for measurables and what we can do to support the civil service employees. That's pretty much what we'll be working on for the next few months. Thank you.

B. Creed: Thank you, Natasha.

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

B. Creed: I did not see Felicia. Is there someone else give a report on behalf of the Supportive Professional Staff Council? Not seeing anyone racing to the microphone, I'll assume no.

XI. 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. 2023-24 UC schedule: Sep 13, Oct 11, Nov 8, Dec 6, Jan 31, Feb 28, Apr 3, May 1
- R. [2022-23 Annual Reports](#)
- S. Annual call for [honorary doctoral degree nominations](#); materials must be submitted by Friday, Oct. 27.
- T. 2024 University Holiday Schedule

B. Creed: So, on to item XI, which are Informational Items. You can look through these if they interest you. I'd like to again draw your attention to the last four items, Q through T. Q is the upcoming dates for University Council. Item R are the annual reports. Item S is the last time you'll see this; it's the call for honorary doctoral degree nominations, materials must be submitted by the end of this month, October 27. And the final thing I want to bring attention is item T, which is the updated 2024 University Holiday Schedule. We received clarification from Human Resource Services, General Counsel and the director of State Relations that we do not get the general election day off. So, as such, the Faculty Senate will amend those calendars, that have already been approved, at our next Faculty Senate meeting. And that will be reflected going forward. And that's all we have for informational items.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

B. Creed: That brings us to item XII, Adjournment. May I have a motion to adjourn. Johnson, second, Pitney. All in favor?

Members: Aye.

Meeting adjourned at 3:56 p.m.