

Minutes of the
NIU Board of Trustees
**ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, STUDENT AFFAIRS
AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**
September 6, 2007

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Chair Barbara Giorgi Vella at 9:04 a.m. in the Board of Trustees Room, 315 Altgeld Hall. Recording Secretary Sharon Banks-Wilkins conducted a roll call of Trustees. Members present were Trustees Robert Boey, Marc Strauss, Student Trustee Shaun Crisler, Board Chair Murer and Committee Chair Vella. Also present were Committee Liaison Raymond W. Alden III, President John Peters and Board Parliamentarian Kenneth Davidson. With a quorum present, the meeting proceeded.

VERIFICATION OF APPROPRIATE NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Confirmation of Open Meetings Act notification compliance was given by Board Parliamentarian Ken Davidson.

MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL

Trustee Strauss made a motion to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Student Trustee Crisler. The motion was approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Trustee Strauss and seconded by Trustee Boey to approve the minutes of the June 11, 2007 meeting. The motion was approved.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

I want to welcome all of you to the first Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee meeting for the 2007-2008 school year, Chair Vella said. As you know, there are many things going on in our nation and in our state that are unsettling to all of us. We have a war in Iraq, our financial issues are unsettled in Springfield, and we have an important election looming ahead for our country. However, I know the administration, faculty and support staff here are focused on one thing, and that is our students. This is a world-class university with an outstanding faculty and support staff. Our university offers an excellent academic experience and comprehensive student services that allow our students to reach their potential and prepare for their roll as citizens. Our goal is to help our students take advantage of all the opportunities and support that NIU has to offer them. It is my hope that this committee can assist this university family in furthering that goal. It is important that we all work together to make this the best experience possible. I thank you for all that you have done to get the students moved in and ready to begin.

On today's agenda, we have one action item, a request for a new research center, the Northern Illinois Center for Accelerator and Detector Development. The agenda also includes six information items, which include the Fiscal Year 2007 University Performance Report; the Progress Report to the Higher Learning Commission, which gives continuing accreditation to the university until 2014; recognition of those faculty who were granted emeritus status as a result of having retired from the university in good standing; and faculty and staff recipients of professional excellence awards. It is a pleasure to recognize those individuals who provide the margin of excellence that makes NIU a peer among peers. Finally, we will review the results of NIU's faculty and staff efforts to acquire external funding for research, public service and instructional projects during the year, and the Strategic Planning Process update.

Chair Vella recognized University Advisory Committee representative Ferald Bryan. I want to welcome the Trustees back to campus, Professor Bryan said, and to let you know that we share your excitement at this start of a new academic year.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chair asked Board Parliamentarian Kenneth Davidson if any members of the public had registered a written request to address the Board in accordance with state law and the Board of Trustees Bylaws. Mr. Davidson noted that no timely requests for public comment had been received.

UNIVERSITY REPORT

Before we begin the agenda, Provost Alden said, during the summer we appointed an Interim Dean of Libraries, and he is here with us this morning. I want to introduce Byron Anderson, who was the Associate Dean of Libraries and received acclamation by his faculty and staff for this position.

Agenda Item 7.a. – Request for a New Research Center

The first item on the agenda is an action item related to the Northern Illinois Center for Accelerator and Detector Development (NICADD), the Provost said. This is actually a product of academic evolution. NICADD has been in a temporary status since 2001 and has become a self-supporting center. It has several mission areas: the advancement of accelerator research and development, the advancement of detector research and development and, of course, the educational opportunities provided to students in the areas of science and technology. It has very strong partnerships with FermiLab and Argonne. And we are very proud of its record to date. It has an average of nearly a million dollars a year in external support. The center has produced over 150 journal articles and hundreds of presentations in the science of particle physics and accelerator and detector design. It also has provided many undergraduate students with the experiential learning opportunities made available in this kind of multidisciplinary center, and 25 graduate students have participated at NICADD. We have expectations for this center to increase in its productivity in the future. Currently, 18 graduate students are participating in projects related to these areas termed “big science.” No additional resources are needed since it is a self-supporting center.

Dr. Sue Mini, Chair of the Department of Physics, answered questions from the Board about NICADD in conjunction with the proposed International Linear Collider (ILC) and CERN,* saying that the department has one faculty member who is participating in the experiment at CERN along with two graduate students and some post-graduate students. It is our hope that the ILC will come to the United States, she said. If it does come to the U.S., it will probably be at FermiLab. NICADD as a center is much stronger than it would be as separate parts – the accelerator component and the detector component. So, the current accelerator will continue to have a function and purpose at FermiLab. There are several accelerator projects in the United States, and NICADD is involved in all of them.

This research group in physics, their work at FermiLab and their importance is in large measure the reason I was appointed as a member of the Board of Directors at FermiLab, President Peters said. When the hadron collider at CERN is turned on next year, it will be the most powerful collider in the world, which means the cyclotron at FermiLab can be used by our group and others to work on components as we prepare for the development of the International Linear Collider sometime from 2016 through 2020. The ILC is an expensive big science proposition that requires international cooperation. Meanwhile, our NICADD group is involved at Argonne in other projects, and they are in the beginning stages of getting ready for the international collider, which would be an important economic boon to our region. So, in terms of our science profile, we have many wonderful research scientists and engineers. But in terms of our international profile, maybe the analogy is, NICADD is to our science programs what the Vermeer Quartet was to the arts. I may be overstating that a little bit, but I want to put it in perspective for you.

Chair Vella asked for a motion to approve the request for a new research center, the Northern Illinois Center for Accelerator and Detector Development. Trustee Boey so moved, seconded by Trustee Strauss. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 7.b. – Fiscal Year 2007 University Performance Report

We take accountability and assessment very seriously at NIU, Dr. Alden said. We review all programs very intensively on an eight-year cycle and have traditionally reported our performance reports to the IBHE. He asked Vice Provost Virginia Cassidy to give a brief overview of this report.

The report that we will submit this year is quite different from the usual reports that we submit to the IBHE, Dr. Cassidy said. The IBHE is in a strategic planning process, and there are some questions about whether the *Illinois Commitment* will continue to be the master plan for higher education. So as the IBHE is transitioning through its strategic planning process, they asked us to submit only specific items that are ordinarily included in this report. Those items include our pass rates on nursing and bar examinations and the number of students achieving initial teacher certification in the different certification areas and to report on the results of our program reviews. Dr. Cassidy stated that information about a specific timeline or what the specific direction of the IBHE will be has not been discussed in any detail because the funding to hire a consultant for that project was not approved by the Governor.

Obviously, the *Illinois Commitment*, which was the accepted plan for Board of Higher Education, has guided our preparation for budgets and programs for all of postsecondary education in the state, the President said. The Council of Presidents expressed the need for a master plan, a direction for higher education in the state, to Carrie Hightman, the new chair of the IBHE, and she has taken that up. Among the issues of interest to her and to commission members are some rationalization of the role of the two-year community colleges; elements of the new accountability at the federal level; better data systems for tracking the progress of students in the system from high school through graduation; the impact on economic development, particularly things like investment in the international collider and making sure that research is invested in; and looking at high school graduate rates and “going on to university” rates. But right now, it is in a holding pattern to determine if they will have the kind of funding needed to move forward and bring in outside experts.

Agenda Item 7.c. – Progress Report to the Higher Learning Commission

Provost Alden asked Vice Provost Virginia Cassidy to give a brief report on this item. At our June meeting, Dr. Cassidy said, we indicated that we were in the process of preparing a report to the Higher Learning Commission on questions related to the assessment of learning outcomes. That report was submitted. And in the middle of July, we received a response from the Higher Learning Commission indicating that the concerns that had been raised at the time of the site visit had been addressed, that no further reports are required, and that our next full accreditation visit will be in 2014. Our Director of Assessment Services, Dr. Carolinda Douglass was instrumental in preparing that report and implementing many of the processes incorporated into that report. So we have a very systematized way of tracking the information that programs provide us about students’ achievement of learning outcomes and providing feedback to the programs so they can make improvements in their reporting and in their methods.

I have been involved with a number of these accreditation visits and reports, Dr. Alden said, and I think the report I read as a result of this particular study was exemplary. I would like to congratulate Dr. Cassidy as well as the assessment panel and all of the academic units that participated. The assessment efforts were very significant and they were recognized by the Higher Learning Commission.

We are all thrilled that we have done so well on this report, Chair Vella said, and happy that we will not need to have another evaluation until 2014. So thank all of you for your hard work. I know that it helps the students, and that is what it is all about.

Agenda Item 7.d. – 2006/2007 Faculty Emeritus Recognition

These individuals are valued for their service and contributions, the Provost said. They are truly the giants on whose shoulders we stand as we advance the university. This year we have 27 individuals from 20 different areas. They are considered valued human resources as we move forward, and I would like to recognize their importance to the university. In reply to a question from Trustee Boey, Provost Alden stated that these are individuals who have generally served long careers at NIU or other institutions and are recognized as having gone through the ranks and been successful in their careers. So they are people who are now being recognized, even in retirement, as having made valuable contributions, and

many of them are continuing to teach, do advising and other things. The emeritus status is a valued status in academia. It is a recommendation process similar to the way our faculty are recommended to be tenured, President Peters said, you have to have a recommendation from somebody from your unit.

Agenda Item 7.e. – Professional Excellence Awards for Faculty and Staff

The individuals who have received these professional excellence awards have been recognized for their outstanding performance, Provost Alden said. They represent individuals who excelled in teaching, research, undergraduate teaching or instruction. We have created a category for our instructors as well as our operating and supportive professional staff. I would like to commend the university on recognizing the support staff, Trustee Murer said, in the same method and means and timing as our professors. Without our support staff, none of us can do our jobs, so this is a wonderful recognition of them. I was on the committee for the Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award, Chair Vella said, and it is a rigorous selection process. It is very collaborative, as all things are at this university, so I know that these are wonderful people and that they move along the goals of the university.

Agenda Item 7.f. – Fiscal Year 2007 External Funding for Research, Public Service and Instructional Projects

Provost Alden asked Vice President for Research Rathindra Bose to brief the Board on external funding for research, public service and instructional projects. External funding is not the absolute measure of the faculty's relentless pursuit of new knowledge, Dr. Bose said. This is a measure of success in certain disciplines, but not in every discipline we have at the university. Our faculty are publishing their research in the best journals in their respective fields. They are being invited to make national and international presentations. They are recognized through their research awards by professional associations. They are publishing books in the most prestigious academic places in the world. They are also producing innovative technologies. So our faculty are highly successful in securing competitive grants.

We have more than 300 active awards. It would be difficult for me to tell the scope and dimension of each one of these projects, but I want to mention a few from different disciplines so you can see how engaged they are and the contributions they are making. Dr. Anne Berg, from Biological Sciences, received over \$5 million for her epilepsy research. Keith Millis and his colleagues in the Department of Psychology have \$2 million to create a learning tool that will teach scientific inquiry and critical thinking skills to students. Drs. Norm Stahl and Richard Orem received \$1.5 million from the Department of Education to increase the number of educators teaching ESL and/or bilingual students. Dr. Susan Mini's proposal from NSF enhances the detection technology for an advanced proton source at Argonne National Lab. Dr. Collier's innovative teaching methodology in the College of Engineering has been incorporated into video games. Also, from the University Libraries, Dr. VandeCreek's Mark Twain digitization process is supported by NEA. Finally, Dr. Susan Russell's support for "Bridging the Gap: Engaging a New Generation in the Southern Philippines in Inter-Ethnic Dialogue and Conflict Resolution" is funded from the Department of State. So, this is the variety of projects from science to social impact, education and technology that our faculty are pursuing.

In 1945, Director Vannevar Bush submitted a report to President Harry Truman entitled "Science, the Endless Frontier." Many of you have seen that outstanding report, and I wanted to borrow the phrase to say that "research is the endless frontier."

There is a slight increase over last year's funding with a total of \$55.4 million in external support compared to \$54.9 million last year. To put this in context, many institutions' funding has either gone flat or gone down because many funding agencies in the last few years did not have increased funding. However, NIU has held its ground and has even increased a little. Broken into different categories, the total amount constitutes research, instruction and public service. Our total funding distribution is 76 percent from federal, 15 percent from state, and the remainder from other support in the state and corporate worlds. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is continuing its funding success at \$16 million. Next is Outreach at \$6.9 million. Education and Engineering are running about even in funding.

Among the departments, Psychology gets just over \$5 million, Teaching and Learning \$4 million, Physics \$2.2 million, Geology and Environmental Geosciences \$2 million, Biological Sciences \$1.1 million, and Anthropology has close to \$800,000.

In Illinois, we report the Pell Grant along with everything else. If that amount is taken out, it is actually \$42.4 million. The University of Toledo is at \$37 million, which includes their medical college. Toledo University now has acquired the Ohio Medical College, and this is combined in their funding. Likewise, Ohio University's \$57.2 million includes their osteopathic medical school. Kent State is at \$37 million. So, no matter how you look at these figures, Dr. Bose said, NIU is doing better compared to its peer institutions.

In the last two years, Congress has increased funding for science and engineering. There is \$33.8 billion in funding that has not been appropriated yet, but is in the act that is going to be devoted to stem education and research for the next three years. There is massive funding for retraining high school teachers, especially in the science and math areas, as well as other areas such as young investigator awards and three other graduate awards.

In graduate education, I take special pride in diversifying our graduate students. The Graduate School has the third largest DIF (Diversifying Illinois Faculty) Fellowship and is ranked in the top 20 percent in the production of doctoral students. We ranked highest in the State of Illinois in the percent of doctoral minority students, and the Hispanic outlet listed Northern Illinois University as one of the top 25 institutions awarding master's degrees to Hispanics. Last year I reported the number of degrees awarded to Hispanics at 105, and this year it has gone up to 145.

We take special pride in the Northern Illinois University Press. We published 22 books. We have many awards and one of our books was discussed on C-SPAN. Many of our books have received press reviews in the *DeKalb Daily Chronicle* and many other outlets. I would like to introduce the new director of the University Press, Mr. Alex Schwartz. The former director, Mary Lincoln, who served as director for 27 years, just retired. Alex was the acquisition editor at the University of Chicago Press, Yale University Press and now has come from a public press to lead the University Press in a new direction.

In reply to queries from the Trustees, Dr. Bose said that although externally funded grants have remained flat over the last three or four years, there has been an increase from some federal agencies. One of those was the Department of Homeland Security, but those allocations did not go to very many academic institutions. So this is with reference to what academic institutions have been able to compete for of the past few years. And the reason that funding for 2005 appeared particularly high was because the total included about \$6 million in earmark funding.

I want to ask a question regarding the college distributions, which will deal with something we are going to talk about later under strategic planning, Dr. Peters said, but it relates to the benchmarking and setting of some goals and milestones in these various areas. Take this funding by college. I am more used to breaking it down by divisions. Take for instance, LA&S. I would like to see a breakdown by functional areas – the sciences, the social sciences and so forth. And then, if possible, I would like to see the competitive R&D per scientist or engineer. Then I would like to know where we have opportunities.

Trustee Murer asked Provost Alden to speak briefly about the emphasis on research and the level of emphasis in the strategic plan. We had a major focus on research, particularly multidisciplinary research, the Provost said, because we see that as a real strength. And it is the direction many funding agencies as well as many industries are going. So, that will be a focus for the future and, hopefully, it will help support some of the things that Dr. Bose is doing.

Agenda Item 7.g. – Strategic Planning Process Update

Since the strategic planning process was begun as a result of President Peters' State of the University speech last year, Provost Alden said, I would like him to say a few words. I will then explain how we have tackled this process over the past year, where we are and where we are going from here.

This will be the focus of my State of the University address on Thursday, September 27, the President said. When I came to NIU in 2000, I indicated in my State of the University address that I thought our goal should be the nation's premiere regional research university in the country, and we are making some strides toward that. We have made a lot of strides in very tough state budget times. In 2005, within that context, I talked about the vision of the university not only to be a premiere regional research university, but one that is accountable, responsive, engaged, global and sustainable. So last year, I charged the Provost with conducting the preliminaries for an academic strategic plan. Usually these things take two to three years, but Ray and a dedicated task force have brought back a preliminary academic document with many ideas that will be reviewed at the department, unit and college levels. It then will be my responsibility along with the Trustees to embrace the best elements of the plan and then work hard to find funding. I am very pleased with what I have read and will be implementing many of these ideas in my State of the University address. I want to thank Ray and his group for bringing us this far.

This process involved a 45-member task force representing all the constituencies on campus, Dr. Alden said. That group worked hard on narrowing down all the ideas that were presented and the outside consultants interviewed over 150 people to determine what the sense of the university was in terms of values and tradition as well as desired direction. Last spring we had four work groups. One of the work groups was dedicated to teaching and learning environment, lead by Dean Harold Kafer. The second focused on research and scholarship clusters, lead by Dr. Sue Mini, Chair of Physics. The third group was the regional impact subcommittee, lead by Dr. Bridget Lusk, Chair of the School of Nursing. And the final group looked at campus climate and campus community, lead by Deborah Haliczzer, Director of Employee Relations. Those plans were polished and brought together by the external consultants into a integrated document. The deans looked at the document and the strategic imperatives during a retreat this summer and provided the bridge that was needed for the college planning.

I will focus on what we call the Strategic Imperatives and a little bit about the next process. First, the primary imperative is to preserve, strengthen and extend NIU's teaching and learning environment. It was very clear from all parties that our dedication to excellence in education, particularly undergraduate education was something we wanted to not only preserve but also actually enhance over time. Basically, some of the ideas brought forward involved our dedication to engaged learning. We recognize that what we do in the classroom is important, but we also recognize that the educational experience also involves research experiences with students and faculty, service learning, civic learning, internships and those kinds of opportunities to apply the hands-on experience. The work group came up with a number of examples. These are not mandates, but they are good ideas, and we are soliciting more good ideas from the university community. Another component of that work group imperative was to foster opportunities to think broadly and deeply, and they made a number of recommendations involving things like capstone experiences and the focus of the general education to provide that deeper type of experience for the students. The third component of that first imperative was to embrace the fact that we have a very diverse campus community both in ethnic diversity and in academic diversity, which we want to expand and build on. And finally, there were the creative venues for conversing about ideas. They talked about the idea of a themed year that could get the campus together and focus on a topic every one or two years.

The second work group focused on developing a strategy for investing in multidisciplinary scholarship artistic and academic clusters, and they identified how these clusters would work and how they would be identified. We decided on the term "clusters" to represent the fact that so many fields are going in this direction that cut across traditional academic units to get a synergistic activity.

The third area was to strengthen and extend NIU's regional impact, which is built upon the first two imperatives. It is defining the regional impact in a global region. We are a regional university in a global region. Therefore, by serving this region, we are serving the world, and that was very clearly defined by this work group. They identified some cluster areas that they saw supporting not only the research agenda, but also the regional impact agenda. One of those was the proton therapy center and another concept, yet to be fully developed, is the idea of creating a world education center. These are not mandates but good ideas that we will be exploring over the coming year.

The final imperative area was to make NIU an institution of first choice for faculty, students and staff. There is a very good sense of community that we want to preserve.

The dean's retreat led to a section that we call the articulation process. It identifies how the college and department level plans will be a grassroots level where we solicit concept papers that will be vetted through the colleges looking for other multidisciplinary opportunities as well as things that can be done well within the colleges. So where at the university level we have strategic imperatives, at the college level we have goals, strategies, action items, milestones and who is responsible for carrying them out – the benchmarking that will be so important as we develop this year's more specific strategic plans. So, while the work groups came up with a lot of good ideas that we are going to pursue on the university level, we expect a lot more to come up through this process. After the President's State of the University address I hope to be announcing the next steps in those processes.

From the time of my appointment to this Board, Trustee Strauss said, I have been interested in the strategic planning process. I am particularly grateful for the investment of time by all the people who have been involved in getting us to this point and am anxious to see this process completed. My question is whether we are taking a look at the financial aspects of the various potential recommendations and whether, at the same time, we are thinking creatively about things we should be doing as an institution.

This is a critical question, President Peters said. There are many things that we already do, but many of those things we are doing now are underfunded. This great university has many infrastructure needs to provide the proper kind of education, public safety and buildings required. However, what we really need to do is commit ourselves to the best elements of this plan over five years, to reallocate an existing resource base, as we normally would do, but with more focus and purpose. Add to that a bank of money we can turn over to start new efforts that will become self-sustaining such as research activities that garner external funding. We have True North which will help with private support, but it is not going to get us all the way. We have to find a way of carving out another set of new dollars that can move us there.

Coming from the corporate world, Trustee Boey said, I always understood that the success of a strategic plan has to be supportive from the grassroots, which is what you have done. At the same time, there is a challenge because by nature a strategic plan is very complicated. It is our challenge to simplify it enough so that from the grassroots up everybody understands what the strategic plan is for a given year, because if you do not understand what it is, there is no support for it.

That is something that came out of the deans' retreat and was so important to this process, Provost Alden said. They tried to make a fairly simple template so that everybody understood the lexicon of what the various items would be in a simplified format. The hardest part of strategic planning is prioritization. So, when a college comes forward with that template, it should be very clear what things they think are most important to invest in to support the university level imperatives. It will take most of this year to get that kind of prioritization for initiatives and for potential funding consideration.

I speak also in the context of being a Trustee that it is my responsibility when called upon to be able to articulate in five minutes what may have been in the making for five years.

My thoughts are that when we talk about strategic planning, Trustee Murer said, we are really talking about a sense of cohesiveness so that even in the best of operations, if there is not a plan, you have dysfunction. We are not only trying to have cohesiveness in our academic programs, as Trustee Strauss said, but we also should not lose that sense of opportunity of funding. So, the strategic plan gives you that sense of cohesiveness programmatically and financially, and then strategically being able to say that this is what NIU is, and that is a major task.

One of the things that I was very gratified to see is, Provost Alden said, how quickly we came to consensus about building on our strengths. We are a research university which is somewhat unique in that we also value the undergraduate educational and learning environment and particularly one that involves students in things such as research, service learning and internships. Many research universities do not do that. Many research universities do not go beyond their silos of departmental structure or colleges. At many universities, a business faculty member and an engineering faculty member would never consider talking to each other, much less working with each other. Yet, we have those kinds of initiatives coming forward here at NIU.

We are thrilled with what you are doing and praise you for all your hard work, Chair Vella said. As you can tell, the Trustees are very interested in seeing how this progresses, and we would like to stay involved in the process. So we would like you to keep us informed through updates at either the Academic Affairs Committee meetings or our general Board of Trustees meetings.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The Chair announced that the next meeting of the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee would be scheduled for November.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no Other Matters, Chair Vella asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Strauss so moved, seconded by Trustee Murer. The motion was approved. The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon M. Banks-Wilkins
Recording Secretary

**Organisation Européenne pour la Recherche Nucléaire; originally French for Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire (European Council for Nuclear Research)*