

Minutes of the
NIU Board of Trustees
LEGISLATION, AUDIT AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE MEETING
November 12, 2009

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Cherilyn Murer at 11:03 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 John Butler, Manuel Sanchez, Barbara Giorgi Vella, Student Trustee Matthew Venaas, Chair Cherilyn Murer and BOT Chair Marc Strauss. Not present was Trustee Myron Siegel. Also present were Committee Liaison Kathryn Buettner and Board Parliamentarian Kenneth Davidson.

VERIFICATION OF APPROPRIATE NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Confirmation of Open Meetings Act public notice compliance was given by Parliamentarian Kenneth Davidson.

MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL

Trustee Sanchez made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Student Trustee Venaas. The motion was approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Trustee Vella and seconded by Trustee Sanchez to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2009 meeting. The motion was approved.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Chair Murer welcomed the University Advisory Committee representatives, Mr. Jay Monteiro, President of the Operating Staff Council, and Ms. Bobbie Cesarek, President of the Supportive Professional Staff Council.

I would like to welcome everyone to the last meeting of the committee in 2009. We look forward to a report from Jeff Compher, our athletics director, updating us on athletic certification later in the meeting. It is such an honor to represent the university, Chair Murer commented. We will hear more in the budget information that is being presented, but I am pleased to report that we have at Northern Illinois University 25,000 students, 4,000 faculty and an operating budget that is pushing toward half a billion dollars at \$435 million. As our colleague, Trustee Boey, always asks, what is the state support? It is, obviously, shrinking at 25 percent, but on the other hand, the denominator keeps getting bigger, and so our budget keeps getting bigger in terms of the activities and the support we have to provide for the university.

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 Board of Trustees *Bylaws*. Mr. Davidson noted that no timely requests for public comment had been received.

UNIVERSITY REPORT

Agenda Item 7.a. – Veto Session Update and 96th General Assembly Report

Ms. Buettner asked Ken Zehnder, Director of State and Local Relations, to provide the committee with a summary of what occurred during Veto Session on legislation that affects the university on the budget side as well as on the substantive side.

The 96th General Assembly completed their action towards the end of October, and they took several significant actions, Mr. Zehnder reported, one of which was the confirmation by the Senate of NIU Board member Manny Sanchez. So our Board of Trustees is in full complement at this point. In other significant actions, they authorized language for the second semester of the MAP monies in the amount of \$205 million. While this is \$15 million less than was authorized in the previous year, it was a major accomplishment through the combined lobbying efforts of students, parents and the private and public sector university and college presidents. Unfortunately, though there were several recommendations for legislation that would provide specific funding for the MAP program, none of that legislation passed. It was authorization only, so there is no direct line of funding which, as with many other things, will put additional pressure on the budget for this coming year. In addition to the legislation that was completed during the regular session, there were several items that required action in the Veto Session. House Bill 574, the Identity Protection Bill, passed both chambers and the General Assembly accepted the Governor's amendatory veto items. Senate Bill 51, which impacted university procurement issues, was overridden by both chambers; the effective date of the bill was changed to July 1, 2010, and it will apply to procurements initiated on or after that date. That will have significant implications for the university, but there is discussion about a trailer bill in January when the General Assembly returns. They will actually start regular business in February following the primary. The amendatory veto for House Bill 382, the Nurse Educators Scholarships, was also overridden. Both chambers accepted the amendatory veto on House Bill 725, the Universal Sign Language Credit, which we supported.

On the capital budget update, the funds that have been approved for NIU include money for Cole, Stevens and the Technology Center. President Peters made a request for the release of funds for both Stevens and Cole Halls. Note that they have not released any funding as the bonds for the capital bill have not been issued.

There is one other issue I want to address that was unrelated to the Veto Session, but is of concern to the university, Mr. Zehnder said, and that is an executive summary from the Pension Modernization Task Force which operated during the summer and the fall. Some of the things they talked about were issues such as a two-tier system and delaying retirement ages. But the majority findings did not issue that report. The Task Force statements were that the primary causes of the state pension funding woes really have very little to do with overly generous benefits or high employee headcounts or inflated costs, because Illinois employees, per capita, are actually very low, and regular state employees in Illinois are low relative to benefits provided by other states. That Pension Modernization Task Force did not take any action, and the specific issues they raised will be reviewed next year in the General Assembly. The detail and some of the reports that led up to their conclusions are listed on a website at www.illinois.gov/gov/pensionreform. That is an issue that impacts the state funding with a backlog of bills which we have been talking about and Vice President Williams has been addressing. All these issues are going to make it a very difficult fiscal year.

When asked by Chair Sanchez what he felt the demeanor and disposition of the legislators to be when he was in Springfield, Mr. Zehnder said that they seemed very aware of the upcoming elections, and they took care of what they needed to take care of. The only way they can take any serious action now would be through a special session, and that will not happen. There was some talk that once the filing was over they might do something in the Veto Session. Another thought was that maybe once they get past the primary they will do something. My greatest concern is they will be reluctant to take any serious action on addressing revenues or expenditures until after the fall election.

In answer to a query from Chair Murer on whether the \$200 million MAP funding was tied to the \$800 million bond offering, Mr. Zehnder stated that they are trying to cover the bills for an extended period with the bond offering. But the backlog on reimbursements is huge and the obligations on the pension side,

which they have already borrowed for, compete with the \$200 million. The Governor's Office of Management and Budget is trying to cover that under the umbrella of this loan, but the debt far exceeds the capacity.

Agenda Item 7.b. – Congressional Report

Under the reorganization of the University Relations Division, Ms. Buettner said, Ms. Lori Clark has assumed the position of Director of Federal Relations, and she will be giving her first report to the committee in that position this morning.

As many of you read daily, the main issue being deliberated by Congress right now is universal healthcare. There was a proposal that passed the House and is pending in the Senate that is going to occupy the majority of Congress' time up through the end of the year. Right now, Congress is scheduled to be in session ready to take votes up through Christmas Eve.

This year, before the federal fiscal year started on October 1, they passed four appropriations bills: agriculture, energy and water, homeland security and interior, and the environment. I am happy to report that NIU received a million dollar grant in the energy and water bill for our transportation program with the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology. However, the remainder of our grants for 2011 is in the Department of Defense Bill that was passed by a continuing resolution. I am working with Senator Durbin's Office to protect these two interests, the proton cancer treatment center and the hadron center, in that defense bill.

We are now preparing for 2011. The Provost, the Vice President of Research and I are working on grants for the next fiscal year and we will be reviewing them. Those are being tied in with our strategic planning effort and the university's priorities.

Finally, we have a wonderful group of new applicants for congressional interns. Since our interns set such a high mark last year, we hope to place five interns at the beginning of the year. Everyone in our congressional delegation is expecting an equally high quality, so we are looking to Trustee Venaas to help us appropriately mentor those who are selected so that when they begin their internship in May, they will meet the high standards our delegation has come to expect from NIU.

We also have a couple of other grants that we are watching, Ms. Buettner added. The first was put in by Congressman Manzullo and passed by the House to extend the ROCK Program. Senator Durbin is helping us with that as well. There are two other grants supported by Congressman Foster that have not made it as far, but we do believe that there will be some funding available in the Labor Health and Human Services bill for two of these marks as well. One is in the College of Education and involves our visually impaired program. The other is in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and involves the Physics program. So, we have a nice range of research efforts that faculty are pursuing which tie in with the strategic planning efforts of the campus.

Agenda Item 7.c. – NIU Activity with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 2009

We had to hurry at the last meeting, Ms. Buettner said, and, unfortunately, did not really address the issue that Chair Murer asked about, which was how NIU is doing overall in relation to other colleges and universities of like size in obtaining federal stimulus research funding. After discussions with Chair Murer and David Stone, who put the report together last time, Dr. Stone updated the report to reflect the new grants that have come in over the last couple of months. I asked Dr. Stone if he would explain not only what is happening at NIU with applications for the federal stimulus funding, but also how NIU's efforts compare with other institutions of similar size.

Most of the \$21.5 billion for research and development funding purposes from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the stimulus program signed into law on February 17, have now been obligated, Dr. Stone reported. The key funding agencies for us are the National Science Foundation, which received about \$3 billion, about a 50 percent increase for them, and the National Institutes of Health that received \$10 billion additional dollars, about a 30 percent increase for them. The goal of the stimulus was economic recovery and job creation. There has been an unprecedented level of

transparency regarding this funding. We have been sending our information to the state every week, and that information can be viewed on the recovery.gov web site. There is now a searchable map of the United States by zip code where you can look at any institution, state or locality and see how much stimulus funding has been reported. The first reporting period ended October 20.

Each of the agencies was allowed to spend the money through any process they chose. The National Science Foundation chose to look back at approximately six months of proposals that had already been submitted to see if they could fund any more meritorious projects out of those instead of doing a forward looking RFP process. At the time they set the deadlines, we had 48 proposals eligible for review under ARRA with a value of about \$16 million. Out of that pool, we had 15 awards for that period totaling \$5.2 million. Of those, five were funded with stimulus money for a total of \$4 million, and five proposals valued at about a million dollars are pending.

For proposal submissions to agencies like the NIH, the Department of Energy and others that have done forward looking proposals for their stimulus money over the summer, we put in 25 applications. Of concern to us in the Office of Sponsored Projects was that ARRA funding submissions would crowd out our usual submissions. However, we are delighted to report that did not happen. Overall, from March to October, we had a 17 percent increase in submissions, and 10 percent of that 17 percent is accounted for by the ARRA submissions. These 25 proposals total about \$54 million in stimulus funding.

As you can see from the June/July numbers, some of these stimulus fund proposals were not our usual size submissions. When this first began, I was on a number of conference calls with the people at the Council on Governmental Relations (COGR), and they estimated that since this is roughly a 30 percent increase in total R&D funding for the country, each institution should get about 30 percent more in an ideal world where we all competed equally for that money and where we were all eligible. NIU has received almost \$4.2 million in awards from the NSF and another \$162,000 from the NIH for seven awards out of the 25 submissions. Seventeen submissions totaling \$27 million are still pending, so we will very likely exceed the 30 percent threshold.

Of the awards NIU actually received, Ross Powell and his group in Geology received two awards. These were essentially combined awards of about \$2.5 million from the NSF for their work in Antarctica. John Carnahan, in the Chemistry Department, received an NSF award for the NMR spectrometer, a very critical piece of technology, which they are upgrading to make it much more usable both to students and to faculty. The high energy group in the Physics Department received a million dollars from the NSF. Brian Coller in Engineering received funding from the NSF for an educational video process. Sen-Maw Kuo in Electrical Engineering received \$57,000 from the NIH as part of a grant he did with the University of Minnesota for his work on noise cancellation in neonatal intensive care units. Anne Berg, who has a large ongoing Javits grant for her epilepsy work, received a \$105,000 supplement for her project.

To try to address Chair Murer's concerns about comparative effectiveness, not all of this data is out, but we were able to find some data. For other Illinois institutions, we could identify fairly concrete numbers. All of the Southern Illinois University campuses combined, while receiving 21 awards, have only \$3.7 million so far. Western Illinois University has only four awards totaling a little over \$500,000. Illinois State University has six awards totaling about \$2 million. On the upper end of the scale, University of Illinois at Chicago has reported 122 awards totaling \$55 million, and they probably will be reporting more since they were part of the NIH process that is still moving forward. Northwestern University has 179 awards right now totaling \$91 million. We were able to pull a few others from the recovery.gov web site. Lehigh University, which normally does about \$22 million was projected to do about \$5.5 million, but did quite well at \$18 million. University of Louisville, which does about \$76 million a year in funded research, was projected to do about \$19 million, and they received \$40 million. Rice University has done \$77 million in research. University of Washington, which currently does about \$620 million in research annually, was projected to do \$155 million. They are reporting approximately \$100 million right now, but again, most of theirs probably will be in NIH, which has not been reported yet. So, we did extraordinarily well given where we are situated and our limited access to NIH funding, especially large NIH funding. Some of those very large NIH projects we were not eligible for because we do not have a sufficient base number of R01 grants. But we have exceeded the 30 percent threshold that we were shooting for and, have done very well. We will continue to report back as more information becomes available.

In keeping with our last conversation regarding how to grow research exponentially, and the hypothesis that it is the medical school that really enhances any university's capabilities, Chair Murer said, I would like to see how much of that \$55 million that University of Illinois at Chicago received was for their medical school.

Agenda Item 7.d. – NIU School of Music and Internet2 Technology Upgrade

Dr. Paul Bauer gave a very interesting presentation at the last meeting on the use of Internet2 technology in the School of Music, Ms. Buettner said, and Chair Murer asked him to give us an update on how that has been working on an instructional basis, as well as on a performance basis. So Paul is here to give us a brief update on some of the concert venues and opportunities as well as audience participation that has been achieved over the last couple of months as a result of the use of this Internet2 technology in the School of Music.

I want to thank the Legislation, Audit and External Affairs Committee for allowing me to spend some time with you today in response to Trustee Murer's request, Dr. Bauer said, and I am here to share some very good news. I have grouped this using some language that would look familiar from our strategic planning imperatives. First, I would like to talk about use of this video technology and Internet2 in regard to extending NIU's teaching and learning environment. Some of you know, especially if you have children who are musicians, singers and instrumentalists in high schools, the Illinois Music Education Association (IMEA) is very active throughout the state in virtually all of the 800-plus high schools in the state. They have auditions that take place in the fall for district organizations, and then again in the winter for statewide organizations. Thousands of students prepare for these IMEA auditions, some more successfully than others. In the School of Music, we have witnessed these auditions and lamented that if they only had more help in preparing, they could realize their potential more fully. Since we have this technology – the cameras, computers, the web – we thought, what if we put together some tutorial videos and share them with these students? So six faculty put together some tutorial videos, which we posted last month, just before the auditions, because we only had the technology about five weeks before the auditions took place. In the course of that month, more than 4,000 views of our tutorial videos went up and were reviewed by the students. By next fall, we should easily have double the number of faculty and more than 10,000 views. This is providing free instruction to students throughout the state and having some positive impact. One comment that came back from a board member of IMEA was "I watched the videos and think they are terrific learning aides. I believe these videos will help many students be more successful, particularly those in areas with limited resources." When I was visiting with an alumnus during Homecoming, I asked if he had seen the videos and shared them with his high school students, and he said he certainly had. When I asked him what he thought, he said, "It makes me proud to be an alum." We get these kinds of comments from our students as well on these videos. It has been gratifying to get this kind of feedback.

Strengthening our global impact, Internet2 has been making presentations at a supercomputing conference for 10 years. We are presenting on Monday at the 2009 Supercomputing Conference, and we will be representing Internet2. NIU is the face of Internet2 on Monday. Our NIU Jazz Lab Band will be performing in the concert hall, and it will be providing a 90-minute performance for the conference using Internet2. We will also have it web streamed live for those who cannot get to campus.

We have been working on this with Eastern Illinois University. Last weekend we were testing the use of interactive video technology for instruction with them, and today we have a live video conference scheduled with them to troubleshoot and help them. We are also working a more on a national basis with the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. They wanted to do what we are doing. They contacted us and wrote a grant. We wrote the specs for the equipment for them. They submitted the grant and it was funded, so we will have a new partner. In their grant, they listed NIU as an expert in the use of this technology. It is nice to get that kind of recognition on a national basis.

We are working on other things in the pipeline for the future that I would like to share with you. We have a pilot program at the DeKalb schools that is going to support our teacher certification preparation activities in some exciting ways. What we are probably most well-known or much recognized for right now is our live HD webcasts. On the School of Music webpage, in the middle, is a link for live HD webcasts. During a live concert, you can click on that link and see performances in progress. Most of

these are musical concerts, but we have also been involved with some multidisciplinary artistic activities. We recently had a concert that focused on a theme of civil war in countries around the world. This involved music, spoken word and images, and was a four-camera production with PowerPoint all direct streamed. There were students and faculty from School of Theatre and Dance, School of Art and School of Music all participating in that terrific live production, and it was shared extensively.

Who is watching these live webcasts? It has been eight weeks since we had our first live webcast this semester, and in that time, we have hit cities all over the United States from as far north as Fairbanks, Alaska, to Honolulu, Hawaii in the West, to Miami, Florida in the south. A retired faculty member called me yesterday from Oak Crest. He saw the Avalon String Quartet earlier this week, and this is what he had to say: "You're to be congratulated. This is an innovative step in an amazing direction." We had some people who could not get to concerts, but love what we do. They found out about this concert, and some donors in Naperville sent this e-mail to us: "...What a professional production! The experience was like attending a concert for the first time ... it was like watching something special. The picture, the sound, the lighting, the variety of views (you could read the sheet music in some shots), it was all so exceptional. AND ALSO OF COURSE, THE CHERRY ON TOP WAS THE WONDERFUL MUSIC MAKING BY THE MARVELOUS AVALON QUARTET! BRAVO, BRAVO! A big THANK YOU to all who made this possible...." We are also getting feedback from former faculty. I spoke on the phone with a donor who lives in Indianapolis who had not given in quite some time. We had a conversation and I mentioned that there was going to be a concert the next night. In correspondence from them they said, "Thank you for your letter in response to our recent telephone conversation. We did view that evening's live telecast and were quite impressed w/your students' fine performance.... Enclosed is our contribution... for \$10,000...." This is an e-mail from an alum, and he has to say, "... What I really enjoyed, though, was seeing the two of you, my friends, people who I know so well, live over the Internet. I felt like I was there with you. ..." This is pretty compelling, and we are making connections with this alum who lives in Los Angeles and still maintains contact with us. Aside from the cities we have hit, we have hit five continents and 19 countries so far. This is largely word of mouth, and we have many international students in our School of Music, so I am sure some of these are families of students. We have been watched by Washington, D.C. and all but one of the 50 states, and that one is New Hampshire.

Dr. Bauer concluded his presentation with a demonstration by connecting to the School of Music homepage and tuning in to performances by the Gamelan, Debussy String Quartet and the Avalon Quartet.

In reply to a question from Trustee Murer on the future of Internet2, Dr. Bauer said that what is really exciting about this technology is the interactive possibilities, and that is the next step. We are building partnerships with other institutions, like Eastern Illinois University and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. We have been asked to provide content on what is needed for the Internet2 website. So, we are helping others learn how to do this. Also, I have a business plan for us to provide steel pan instruction. We are uniquely qualified, probably in the world, to provide that kind of instruction on a very broad basis. That would involve bringing graduate students from Trinidad and funding their graduate assistantships totally off revenue that comes from the steel pan instruction.

It would be very interesting to be able to track what impact this has on student enrollment now and in the future. Because if we are able to communicate in this way with 50 states and around the world, it will be very interesting to see what impact that has on the diversity of student enrollment. Maybe not in the next few years, but over a longer period of time, it has to have a very positive influence in that respect.

Agenda Item 7.e. – NIU Athletics Certification Report

Jeff Compher, Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, gave an update on the NCAA certification process in Athletics. In your Board packets is a status report on where we stand with our NCAA certification, which only happens every 10 years, Mr. Compher said. This is a very lengthy process that we have just gone through, and it is a process that includes this entire university in everything that we do. What took place was a large self-study, and Dr. Kafer helped with one of our subcommittees. We were to study several areas internally: governance and commitment to rules compliance, academic integrity, gender and diversity issues, and student athlete wellbeing. Each of those subcommittees took an in-depth look into

how we as an athletics department and the university interact in those areas. They reported back, we compiled that information and responded to the self-study. In the latter part of September, the site visit team came from the NCAA. The site visit team is a group of people like myself and other administrators and presidents from around the country who sit down with you and go through that document and interview people from the President to all of our student athletes. We had 18 student athletes meet with them, and they had a chance to talk about their experiences as student athletes here at NIU.

We had a transition when Tom Krepel, who was assistant to the president, left to become president of Fairmont State University in West Virginia. President Peters appointed Dr. Matt Streb to take over as steering committee chair, and he did a wonderful job pulling together all of the information, responding to the callbacks we had, and helping us put together an excellent format for our site visit and the final document. After reviewing the report, the committee will get together in the early spring, and we will hear about our certification status in April. Because of what we were able to do and the involvement we had from the rest of the university, we have a good roadmap of the things we need to keep track of and plans we need to monitor for the next five to ten years. One of the recommendations from that group was that I report occasionally to the Board of Trustees. So I feel privileged to be here and thank you for this opportunity.

I would like to give you some updates of other things that are going on in Athletics. One of the first things I wanted to do when I got here was put together a strategic plan. As part of that strategic plan, we wanted to take a look at our mission, what we do and how we do things. An essential part of that was to look at what our values are and the foundations from which we would make decisions for everything we do. In your packet is this bracelet. We gave these out to our student athletes this year. On it is an acronym, R.E.D., and these stand for our three core values. The "R" stands for "Represent NIU with pride in all that we do." The "E" stands for "Expect success." And the "D" stands for "Demand integrity." It is all about doing things the right way, and this little bracelet is a reminder of that. When you open it, it is a jump drive. Our student athletes wear this, they can use it, take it with them to class and download information. They can bring it to the Yordon Center and work on their lessons in our computer center and then take it with them, always having R.E.D. as a constant reminder about what we value most.

Another important part of our planning process was our mission statement: "We develop champions in the classroom, in competition and in life." I want to go through those areas and give you some examples of how we are doing that. First, academically, for eight straight semesters we have had a 3.0 GPA for all of our student athletes. That is unheard of in this business. Last year, Kyle Knotek, one of our soccer team members, was an Academic All-American,

I want to talk about athletic excellence and what our teams are doing this semester. Our cross-country team finished eighth this season. What is so good about that is that every year before, we came in twelfth out of twelve. We are trying hard to show competitive success and progress. We have some great freshmen on the team and our entire team comes back next year, so we are going to aim for the top three places. We just put in a bid to host a regional NCAA cross-country championship here at NIU. Our men's soccer team is one of only four that are qualified to compete this weekend in the MAC Championships. They play Akron, the number one team in the country, at Akron, tomorrow afternoon. We will find out if we will go to the championship game later that Sunday. We have played two number one teams already this year. We lost one and tied the other. So this is the third time we have played a number one team, and it is a great opportunity for us to make it to the NCAA Championships.

Finally, we have done some great things with our football team over the last few years. Four out of five years, we have qualified to go to a bowl game. The landscape of the bowls has changed. There are 68 teams that can go to a bowl game. Right now, there are approximately 90 that could qualify. We are already one of those that is eligible. Three bowl games are affiliated with our conference: the International Bowl in Toronto; the Little Caesars Bowl in Detroit; and the GMAC Bowl in Mobile, Alabama. All of those bowls are part of the affiliation we have with the MAC, and we are hopeful of qualifying for one of those. If not, there may be other opportunities such as the Independence Bowl we went to last year. We just put a site on our webpage called Bowl Central. If you are interested in the dates, times and ticket prices, we will keep this site updated so we can keep our fans involved and informed.

Today is a game day; it is blackout day. We printed up 5,000 shirts that will be distributed at the game, and we have some for the Board members. We are very fortunate to be honoring the armed services at our game tonight at 5:00 p.m. in Huskie Stadium. Our special event at half-time will be four individuals taking the oath to join the National Guard. When you talk about the exposure Athletics can give you, an article in *USA Today* about one of our players very recently really helps. The story in *USA Today* was about Jake Coffman, a veteran on our defensive line, who did two tours in Iraq. He is 25 years old, and decided to walk on and play football as part of our team. He is now on scholarship and will be playing tonight.

All of you should have a copy of our annual report from last year. This was sent to university personnel as well as to the Trustees. One other thing in keeping with Veteran's Day, our cheerleading coach received a call from some people in Rockford who said that several of the troops were coming home, and they wondered if the cheerleaders could come to the Rockford Airport and welcome them back. We took 12 cheerleaders who cheered for the soldiers as they came off the plane. We saw the families, what it meant to them and how touched they were by it. The next day, one of the soldiers came in and personally gave our cheerleading coach a flag that was flown in Iraq and presented her with a certificate thanking the cheerleaders for what they had done to welcome back the troops.

I earlier made a comment that we were pleased you were going to join us today, Chair Murer said, and I hope this will be a frequent event for this committee. It is very important. You speak of pride that your students have in the university. We have a lot of pride in them today.

Today we had a nice cross-section of commentary. We talked about the academic side, we talked about research, we talked about the spirit and the soul of the university when we talked about our music, and we talked about athletics, which is such a vital part of what we do, because it teaches character. Congratulations on the academic side of what you do with your student athletes.

Agenda Item 7.f. – Benefit Provisions for Marital Status/Domestic Partnerships (Update)

In August, Trustee Butler asked this committee to look at an issue that is extraordinarily significant to the university, Chair Murer said, and that is the relationship of domestic partnership to benefits. I commend Dr. Steve Cunningham for the tremendous response and efforts that he has put forth. There is a lot of information, and we want to be quite responsive on this issue. I do want to say to this committee that this is an issue of great significance to the university that will not be resolved in one committee meeting. It probably will be on our agenda for the next several committee meetings. But I do feel that we are making progress, and that is the most important thing. In light of the time, the Chair asked Dr. Cunningham if this could be the lead issue at the next LAEA Committee meeting.

I will look forward to coming back with my report, Dr. Cunningham said. We have been developing an updated Human Resources (HR) website over the last year, and it will be much more comprehensive than the current website. One challenge, especially with the HR website, is the scope of policy information that can be placed on the website. However, based on the committee's discussion last time, we have placed the domestic partner policy resource page on the website. It incorporates a summary statement, which was jointly developed with the Commission on Sexual Orientation and Deborah Haliczzer's group in HR, about the availability of resources for domestic partner information. We have also included the summary table about comparative benefits that was presented to the committee at its last meeting.

Agenda Item 7.g. – Internal Audit Update

Chair Murer asked Danielle Schultz, the newly appointed Director of Internal Audit, to introduce herself and perhaps say a few words in regard to her new position. Her report will be second on the agenda for the next committee meeting.

As Ms. Buettner indicated, I was appointed Director of Internal Audit effective July 1 of this year, Ms. Schultz said. I have served in the Internal Audit Department at NIU for over 14 years, and when Sharon Downen retired, I became acting director, and as of July 1, director. The one thing I want to express to the committee is that I am very proud to be a part of our department. We have a very skilled and qualified staff that serves this committee and the university very well. We currently have three staff members and are working on getting a fourth to replace the position I vacated.

It is important we remember that there are two parts to this committee, Chair Murer said. We so often emphasize the legislative aspect of the committee because it is so imperative to us in regards to our funding. But in this era of demand for transparency and accountability, the second aspect of our committee, that of audit, is equally as valuable and necessary for us to give the proper amount of attention. We appreciate your efforts and look forward to working with you. This whole committee is very concerned and wants to make sure that we are constantly at the forefront of addressing issues. I am always concerned about this because, as we have these committee meetings, not just Legislation and Audit, but also Academic Affairs and Finance, we speak of all our accomplishments and we speak of all our successes; but as we move into this next decade, we also concurrently should speak of our challenges and of the impacting issues, because that is where we are going to grow. Under audit, we should be very attentive to areas that should serve as hot buttons, things that we should pay closer attention to. So I would ask you, as you start to work with Ms. Buettner for this committee, to try and identify some of the things we really should be attentive to, especially those that require the attention of the Board of Trustees.

OTHER MATTERS

There were no Other Matters to come before the committee.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The Chair announced that the next meeting of the Legislation, Audit and External Affairs Committee was scheduled for Thursday, March 4, 2010.*

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Murer asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Strauss so moved, seconded by Student Trustee Venaas. The meeting was adjourned at 12:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon M. Banks-Wilkins
Recording secretary

*This meeting was later rescheduled for February 4, 2010.