

Minutes of the
NIU Board of Trustees
**ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, STUDENT AFFAIRS
AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**
August 30, 2012

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Chair Wheeler Coleman at 9:05 a.m. in the Board of Trustees Room, 315 Altgeld Hall. Recording Secretary Sharon Banks-Wilkins conducted a roll call of the Trustees. Members present were Trustees Robert Boey, John Butler, Wheeler Coleman, Robert Marshall, Student Trustee Jaemin Robertson and Chair Cherilyn Murer. Also present were Trustee Anthony Iosco, committee Liaison Ray Alden, President John Peters and Board General Counsel Jerry Blakemore. With a quorum present, the meeting proceeded.

VERIFICATION OF APPROPRIATE NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Confirmation of Open Meetings Act public notice compliance was provided by Board General Counsel Jerry Blakemore.

MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL

Trustee Strauss made a motion to approve the meeting agenda as amended. Trustee Boey seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

On today's agenda, under the University Report, Chair Coleman said, we have one action item and four information items to talk about today. Our action item is a request for New Degree Authority in Early Childhood Studies in the College of Education at the University Center of Lake County. Our first information item is recognition of faculty and staff who are 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. Our other information items include recognition of those faculty who have retired from the university in good standing and are granted emeritus status; an update on Higher Learning Commission Accreditation; and the results of NIU faculty and staff efforts to acquire external funding for research, public service and instructional projects during the past year.

The Chair recognized the representatives from the University Advisory Committee, Dr. Kerry Freedman and Mr. Andy Small.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Trustee Boey and seconded by Trustee Butler to approve the minutes of the April 19, 2012 committee meeting. The motion was approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chair asked General Counsel Blakemore 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. Blakemore noted that he had received no requests to address this meeting.

UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS/REPORTS

Provost Alden introduced Dr. Derryl Block, the new Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences. We went over her credentials during consideration for her acceptance as dean and a tenured faculty member, but I wanted you to have a face to match the credentials, which are considerable.

Agenda Item 7.a. – Request for Degree Authority at University Center of Lake County

The university is seeking Board approval for an off-campus degree authority at the University Center of Lake County, the Provost said. Institutions offering a degree program on our home campus must seek Board approval to offer them elsewhere. This particular center has an exemption in that the Board of Trustees has final authority. The university does not have to go through the Illinois Board of Higher Education for approval. The request is for a B.S. in Early Childhood Studies. This is a program we have had on campus for a long time, and the College of Lake County, which is the campus on which the university center resides, has developed an Associate of Arts in Teaching degree. This would provide articulation all the way through the baccalaureate so that students can receive their certificates. There is a growing population of at-risk students as well as individuals where English is not the first language, so this particular degree program is important because it can lead to a credential that will allow the graduates to participate in areas such as Head Start centers and to work with students with special needs and with students where English is their second language. It will be offered by a series of different venues. Some will be hybrid courses, some will be clinical practice, and independent study and project work. This program is recognized by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and has specialized accreditation from the National Association for Education of Young Children.

Dr. LaVonne Neal, Dean of the College of Education, answered questions from the Board regarding this program and she will supply other requested information to the Board. Dr. Neal stated that this is supplemental to the program that is taught on the DeKalb campus. As you are aware, she said, Illinois is one of five states in the United States that combines the 67 percent of English language learners in the nation. We are adjusting for that demographic shift. We recognize also that in collaboration with the different communities, because there is a disproportionate number of those students who are economically disenfranchised, the more opportunities we can take to them, the better. So this really enhances the NIU Professional Development School model.

This goes back at least ten years when Lake County had a desire for four-year degrees at the College of Lake County, a community college. They received an appropriation from the State with blended county funds from Lake County, and IBHE supported it. They adopted the idea of a multiuniversity campus and funded it originally at the level of somewhere between \$2 million to \$4 million. Then they constructed a building on the property of the College of Lake County, but not necessarily associated with the community college. They have a board that governs the programming there, and many universities, public and private, were asked to program it. Not everybody participated over the years. NIU has had a history of service to Lake County, particularly through the Naval Station where, for generations, we had adult education programs. That has changed quite a bit. Over time, that independent multiuniversity campus has struggled to program because it is so remote and hard to get to. The need is there, but the market is not fully developed. We feel it is part of our service area and there is going to be tremendous growth in Lake County, McHenry County and those areas. Over time, the State has steadily withdrawn its base appropriations to Lake County by at least half. In the next decade or two, when the economy comes back, there is going to be a tremendous surge there and they are going to need education services.

Chair Coleman asked for a motion to approve this request for degree authority at the University Center of Lake County. Trustee Boey so moved, seconded by Trustee Marshall. The motion was approved.

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

We have a long tradition of reward and regard commitments, Provost Alden stated, and those have increased over time. NIU offers a number of awards designated to honor excellence in our faculty and staff performance. Three faculty members have received the Board of Trustees Professorship Award, which is selected by a committee of their peers, previous award winners, as well as the Vice President for

Research and Graduate Studies, and myself. Three faculty members are recognized for Professional Teaching Professorships, selected by faculty and alumni committee chaired by the Vice Provost. One faculty member was recognized this year as a Presidential Research Professor, who is selected by a committee of peers chaired by the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies. One additional faculty member has been recognized as a Presidential Engagement Professor. Another three faculty members received the Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award, and one instructor received the Excellence in Undergraduate Instruction Award. These have been through a selection process that was originally initiated by nominations from students and reviewed by student and faculty committees in each college, with the final decision made by the University Committee on Improvement of Undergraduate Education, which is one of our standing shared governance committees. The Operating Staff and Supportive Professional Staff Councils each select four employees for recognition following a university-wide nomination process and is coordinated and selected by a committee from each of these two councils. Those awardees who were present were introduced and recognized for their accomplishments.

Agenda Item 7.c. – 2011-2012 Faculty Emeritus Recognition Update

We also annually bring to the attention of the Board those faculty who have been selected for emeritus recognition, the Provost said. This year, we have 46 individuals who have retired during the last fiscal year in good standing. We want to recognize their contribution, and many of them remain active in teaching courses, participating in research and service activities, and other areas around the university community.

Agenda Item 7.d. – Higher Learning Commission Accreditation Update

Dr. Carolinda Douglass gave a brief update on the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) self-study process. Nine groups have met to gather information, Dr. Douglass reported, and will continue to do so. We have begun the writing process, completed the introduction and now are working on other drafts of the self-study. The date of our Higher Learning Commission visit will be March 3 through March 5, 2014. Also, we just received word that we have been approved as an institution to participate in the Higher Learning Commission's notification program for additional locations. This means that now, when we want to offer programs at additional locations, we no longer need to go through the full board at the Higher Learning Commission; we can now undergo a desk audit by the HLC staff.

The Board may remember that the HLC did not adopt the final criteria until we were well into the site visit preparation process, Provost Alden said. We are still working with a bit of a moving target and trying to figure out how to work with data they expect us to gather henceforth. This is not just until the site visit, but from now on. That includes such things as how we know for any given course or course section that we have offered sufficient credit hours, down to the particular types of activities the students are participating in, which will create a huge database over time. Dr. Alden recognized the various individuals working on the steering committees, Doris Macdonald, in particular, who is the Steering Committee Chair, and Vice Provost Douglass, who have been working hard to address this moving target. They have gone above and beyond the typical site visit team because it is a time of transition for the Higher Learning Commission. It is not that the Higher Learning Commission has decided to be particularly rough on us. These are all rules, regulations and policies coming out of the Department of Education in the last few years.

Agenda Item 7.e. – Fiscal Year 2012 External Funding for Research, Public Service and Instructional Projects

The Chair asked Dr. Lisa Freeman, Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies, to present the annual Fiscal Year 2012 External Funding for research, Public Service and Instructional Projects for the past fiscal year.

This is a very challenging time for public research universities because of the situation in Washington and the economic challenges we are facing. There have been two reports this year by the National Academy

of Sciences and by a think tank focused on research universities that have actually addressed these challenges. The think tank, Research University Consortium, likened research administration to playing chess blindfolded and trying to make the right moves at the right time without being able to see the board or the other players. External funding is becoming less available and more competitive. External funding is also becoming less predictable, and at the same time, less flexible. To give a sense of the magnitude of the issue, I will give you some national data. Because of the gridlock, the partisanship, and the difficulties and uncertainties about budget that have been ongoing for a couple of years, we do not hear from our sponsors in a timely fashion. However, they do not adjust either the start dates or the end dates for their awards.

In addition to being less available, more competitive, less predictable and less flexible, external funding is also more highly regulated. Our General Counsel, Jerry Blakemore, has spoken to you several times about the new policies for conflict of interest affecting federal funding from the public health service. Considering the very long-term trend for research and development dollars by agency from about 1970 into 2012, funding has become more available over the last 30 years. However, over the last decade, funding spiked during the stimulus, but has otherwise gone down pretty much for every agency, especially the agencies that sponsor most of the research on this campus, the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health.

Also, funds that have been historically available to universities through a mechanism sometimes called federal appropriation, earmark or pork, have not been available for the last year. These are funds that have benefited universities greatly and allowed them to respond to problems quickly. It has also allowed smaller universities that play an important role in their region to have some of the necessary funding needed to move forward. The number of awards and applications received by the National Institutes of Health from 1995 to 2011 has been relatively flat for about the last ten years. At the same time, the number of applications received has continued to go up steadily. The success rate of our investigators at NIU with NIH applications pretty much tracks the national average. Over the past few years, our success rate overall has been between 17 and 29 percent, so we are keeping pace with the national average, but it is very competitive.

Federal funding is more highly regulated and the new Conflict of Interest Policy that took effect August 24 states that financial conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest now have to be disclosed at a threshold of \$5,000. There is mandatory training for everyone who touches a project funded by the National Institutes of Health.

There is a broader definition of impacted personnel and new public accessibility requirements. We either have to have a web site listing all of our potential conflicts of interest or we have to be able to respond to FOIA requests within 72 hours. There is increased scrutiny for travel reimbursements. Every university who accepts federal funding has had to comply with this requirement.

Trends in NIU's total external funding from 2007 to 2012 were up as a direct result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The university also benefited from earmarks through federal appropriations from 2007 to 2012.

Dr. Freeman then presented the same data broken down by whether the funding was awarded for instruction, public service or research, the funding categories that align with the core elements of NIU's mission. Each year, we receive funding for instruction, public service and research, and a significant portion of our funding comes in under the public service category, as you would very much expect for a regional public university who takes being a steward very important and very seriously as a core component of our mission. In partnerships, about three-quarters of the projects for which we receive funding have NIU personnel as the lead on the project and, for about a quarter of them, someone else sought out our expertise and asked us to partner with them. Those who sought out the special expertise of NIU faculty and staff are people at National Laboratories, about 30 percent of our partnerships, and is not unexpected given our proximity to Argonne and Fermi and our historically strong relationships; about a quarter is people at other universities who have sought the expertise of our faculty and staff; about

20 percent comes from Illinois agencies like DCFS or municipal governments. We collaborate to leverage our resources and make sure that we meet the needs of our region.

During the past year, 371 proposals totaling \$80 million were submitted, the majority of which were submitted to request funds for research. We continue to submit grants and contracts at the rate of about three proposals for every unique PI or faculty member who submits a grant. The number of faculty and staff who have submitted grants since 2009 has decreased because our overall number of faculty have decreased since 2009. However, I expect these numbers, especially the PI's, to be up some next year. As a result of the Vision 2020 investment, we have hired an incredible group of young faculty members who cannot wait to write grants, submit proposals and teach students in various departments.

The goal I have chosen to talk about when we consider our Vision 2020 goals is Competitive External Funding. Competitive external funding is, in a sense, an indicator of the quality of the research proposals and the return on them, because our faculty are competing with faculty from other universities. We are ahead of what we had in funding overall in 2010; we are on track to reach our three-year goal.

I want to finish by talking about three particular proposals, Dr. Freeman continued. Two are funded by the National Science Foundation, PROMISE Scholars and Operation ETank, and one is funded by a conglomeration of federal agencies related to small business, commerce and labor, and economic development. These are proposals where we were successful in very prestigious, competitive competitions, and they serve functions that are core to our values, critical to our mission and say something about what we do best at NIU. PROMISE stands for Providing Resources and Opportunities to Maximize Interest in STEM Education. This grant is focused on attracting, retaining and graduating students in the STEM professions – science, technology, engineering and math. We were successful in getting this program at NIU, in part, because we had excellent collaboration among our internal stakeholders on campus. We had the CHANCE program working with the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Career Services was involved, a unit of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management; and the program is housed in the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost. This program shows how all the units at NIU can come together to do what we do best, support students who may be the first in their families to go to college, who may come from historically underrepresented groups or economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and show them the opportunities available to them, and give them the tools they need to succeed.

I am pleased to be one of the co-project directors for the Research Experiences for Undergrad (REUs) program along with Dave Changnon in the Department of Geography. This is a program that created a summer research experience for undergraduates at NIU focused on energy, economy, ethics and environment, and it is about sustainability. It is one of the more prestigious undergraduate research grants you can acquire. Our proposal was ranked in the top eight of 48 submissions. Again, this proposal came together because we had strong collaboration from the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology, and the Institute for Environment, Sustainability and Energy. Personnel in Student Affairs and Enrollment Management worked with us on a very short timeline to make sure our students had residence halls, OneCards, bus access and library access.

The last program I want to talk about is a Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge Grant. This grant is a result of 12 years of hard work in Rockford by the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology and the Division of Outreach, Engagement and Information Technology. There is dynamic leadership in their Area Economic Development Council and, because we have good relationships there, we were well poised to respond to this submission. The grant was funded at 1 of 20 in a pool of 125 that were submitted, about a 16 percent rate. It is funding workforce development, advertising for the aerospace network and building additional bridges between Rock Valley College and our College of Engineering and Engineering Technology.

What we are seeing reflected under research is really influenced largely by two of the trends that I have talked about in the rest of the presentation. The first being the loss of the federally appropriated or earmarked funding because that has been supporting research here for a while, and we are in the

process of converting from a campus that has relied on that as a source of research funding to one that sees that as a one-time investment that allows you to be competitive in other pools. The other thing that has impacted here are the retirements of our senior research active faculty who have not been replaced. We have hired new faculty this year that are probably better trained and better prepared to compete for grants than many faculty, but they are still entry level faculty, we are not bringing in people who have large grants, but we will see this grow.

Regarding reaching our 2020 goal of a \$40 million, Dr. Freeman stated that we need to continue to invest in faculty hires that attract the best people in their fields. Once they are here, we have to make sure they have everything they need to succeed. Part of that is money for equipment, quality space and the personnel to assist them, and Vision 2020 has made a big difference as has the core user facility initiative of the Great Journeys Strategic Plan.

I have talked to a number of presidents of universities and flagships like ours, President Peters said, and except for those that have focused on areas which maximize federal spending, for instance, those with medical schools and biomedical, and even there, their curves do not look much different. What distinguishes us is the fact that we have great potential in the public service area, and that is opportunistic dollars that come about through our programmatic areas. Going back to 2000, for several years we had a robust earmark strategy that yielded investments in our research enterprise that I had hoped would turn into permanent competitive funding. For example, if we received an earmark in the area of environmental geosciences, we expected people to then develop the capacity to be competitive for these grants, and that is what has happened. Earmarks will come back, but probably not in the next three or four years.

What you really want in the competitive area is scientists and engineers to get major continuation funding in programs that are funded for 10, 15 or 20 years. Also, we have had retirements of senior people who were major grant getters with track records, and we have replaced or maybe lagged replacement of them with very capable, high end individuals who are submitting their first grants, and the award rate is lower. During the Great Journeys Strategic Plan, we identified five or six thematic, multidisciplinary areas in research that have resulted in our obtaining the kind of multidisciplinary grants that we talked about. The presidential elections could have devastating consequences nationwide because of domestic cuts in spending, and not just Pell Grants. It takes time to write a competitive proposal. So, we are investing more per scientist and engineer under Vision 2020, and we have spent that on infrastructure, extra personnel and what is needed to help our new people coming in to hit the ground running.

OTHER MATTERS

Trustee Butler noted the passing of Arthur Doederlein, a Professor in the Department of Communication. He noted that *Northern Today* had published an article by his wife, Sue Doederlein, Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and encouraged everyone to take a moment to read the article and learn a little about him and the work he did.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The Chair announced that the next meeting of the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee will be Thursday, November 8.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Coleman asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Murer so moved, seconded by Trustee Strauss. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:16 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon M. Banks-Wilkins
Recording Secretary

In compliance with Illinois Open Meetings Act 5 ILCS 120/1, et seq, a verbatim record of all Northern Illinois University Board of Trustees meetings is maintained by the Board Recording Secretary and is available for review upon request. The minutes contained herein represent a true and accurate summary of the Board proceedings.