

Minutes of the
NIU Board of Trustees
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, STUDENT AFFAIRS AND PERSONNEL
COMMITTEE MEETING
May 29, 2014

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Chair Robert Marshall at 1:06 p.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, Cheryl Murer, Marc Strauss, Student Trustee Elliot Echols, Committee Chair Robert Marshall, and BOT Chair John Butler. Trustee Anthony Iosco joined the meeting via telephone. Also present were Committee Liaison Lisa Freeman, President Douglas Baker and General Counsel Jerry Blakemore. 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 General Counsel Jerry Blakemore.

MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Marshall asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Trustee Strauss made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Trustee Butler. The motion was approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Marshall asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the AASAP meeting of February 27, 2014. It was moved by Trustee Strauss and seconded by Trustee Boey to approve the minutes. The motion was approved.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Marshall: On today's agenda under University Reports we will have at least two items that will be presented for action and at least three information items. Today's meeting of this committee is of particular importance for faculty. This is the time of the year that Board acts on recommendations for faculty tenure and promotion. The first action item concerns the recommendations for faculty promotion, tenure, and promotions with tenure for the 2014-2015 academic year. There is one programmatic issue on the agenda for today. The second action item is a request for a new emphasis in educator licensure--environmental science within the B.A./B.S. in environmental studies degree program and a request for a concentration in financial economics within the M.A. in economics degree program. In our information items, there are three. The first information item is an informational update on the second year residency policy. Dr. Eric Weldy will present an update. The second information item provides information on the 2014 professional excellence awards for faculty and staff. The third information item is an update on the Higher Learning Commission accreditation report.

Chair Marshall recognized the representatives from the University Advisory Committee, Dr. Dan Gebo and Mr. Andy Small, and asked if either representative wished to make a comment before the committee. Operating Staff Council President Andy Small stated that Dr. Gebo was not in attendance this afternoon. Mr. Small indicated that he personally had no comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Marshall 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 stated that no requests to address this meeting were received.

UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS/REPORTS

At this point, the meeting was turned over to Committee Liaison, Executive Vice President and Provost Lisa Freeman to present the University Report

Agenda Item 7.a. – Recommendations for Faculty Promotions, Tenure, and Promotions with Tenure for 2014-2015

Provost Freeman stated that the first action item lists the names of the faculty who are being recommended for promotion, tenure, and promotion with tenure. The Provost explained that the faculty members who are on this list have had their credentials studied at the department, college and university level to ensure that the rigorous expectations of their disciplines have been met. These recommendations are then considered by a university level committee and then by the Provost and the President. The faculty members listed have met the required expectations and are being recommended for tenure, promotion or promotion with tenure based on their accomplishments in teaching and learning, research, scholarship and artistry, and service. The Provost's recommendation was that the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee endorse these recommendations and asked that the President forward them by means of the President's Report to the Board of Trustees for approval at the June 19, 2014 meeting. Provost Freeman asked that Chair Marshall call for such a motion from the committee.

Chair Marshall called for the motion of approval. Trustee Strauss so moved and Trustee Boey seconded the motion. Chair Marshall asked if there was any discussion of this action item.

Trustee Murer requested a point of clarification. She noted that Professor Leonard Clapp, Department of Philosophy, went from Assistant Professor to Full Professor skipping the associate level. Trustee Murer wanted to clarify that this was not a typographical error.

Provost Freeman indicated that because of Professor Clapp's exceptional accomplishments and his service in faculty equivalent positions at an international institution, the Department Chair, the Department Personnel Committee and the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences endorsed this promotion from assistant professor to full professor as an appropriate action. Further this action was endorsed by the University Council Personnel Committee (UCPC) as well as the Provost and the President. While this is an unusual action, the General Counsel has assured the Provost that it is consistent with NIU's *Constitution and Bylaws*.

Trustee Strauss inquired if any of these recommendations were not unanimous or involved appeals.

Provost Freeman indicated that there were no appeals. She further indicated that there were less than half a dozen recommendations for early promotion or early promotion with tenure. According to NIU's *Constitution and Bylaws* early promotions must be considered by the UCPC and there was no controversy regarding any of these early promotion recommendations. One split decision was brought forward which was a respectful disagreement between the Dean and the College Council. The UCPC unanimously endorsed the individual for tenure.

With no further discussion, Chair Marshall indicated that there was a motion and a second before the committee. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 7.b. – Request for a New Emphasis and Concentration

Provost Freeman indicated that the next agenda action item was a request for a new emphasis and concentration. The Provost explained that new subdivisions of existing undergraduate programs are called emphases and new subdivisions of existing graduate programs have multiple titles including concentrations or emphases. The Provost stated that the first request brought forward an Emphasis in Educator Licensure in the Environmental Science Program within the Bachelor's in Environmental Studies. This new emphasis has been developed to prepare environmental studies majors to meet the increasing demand for science teachers with this strong background in order to address next generation science standards. Provost Freeman indicated that the second request was for a Concentration in Financial Economics within the Master's in Economics. It was stated that this concentration will address the growing need for students who have skills in financial data analysis. Provost Freeman indicated to Chair Marshall that the university recommendation is that the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee endorse these requests and ask the President to forward them by means of the President's Report to the Board of Trustees for approval at the June 19, 2014 meeting.

Chair Marshall called for the motion of approval. Trustee Strauss so moved and Trustee Murer seconded the motion. Chair Marshall asked if there was any discussion of this action item.

Trustee Strauss inquired if there was any coordination with the Department of Finance in the College of Business regarding the Concentration in Financial Economics.

Dr. Jeremy Groves, Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Economics, responded to Trustee Strauss' inquiry indicating that the Department of Finance had been consulted at the beginning of the process to establish the concentration and on numerous occasions throughout the 2 ½ year process to ensure there was no duplication within the Department of Finance. This is a graduate degree concentration and the Department of Finance does not offer a graduate degree.

Trustee Straus asked how many students are projected to enroll in this concentration.

Dr. Groves indicated it is anticipated that 3 to 5 students would be enrolled initially in this concentration.

Trustee Murer inquired what the alternative to the subset of Finance in an Economics degree might be.

Dr. Groves indicated that the purpose of the concentration in financial economics is basically to allow students to convey to prospective employers that they are not just general economists, but trained specifically in financial economics.

Trustee Murer asked if faculty resources are being diluted with this concentration.

Dr. Groves indicated that resources would not be diluted because most of the courses are being taught already as part of the Ph.D. in Financial Economics and the M.A. students would be joining the Ph.D. Students in these financial economics courses.

With no further discussion, Chair Marshall indicated that there was a motion and a second before the committee. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 7.c. – Residence Halls/Housing and Dining Incentives

Provost Freeman indicated that the last update the Board received on the Second Year Residency Policy was provided to the Board in April of 2012. Since that time, a study has been conducted by the NIU Center for Governmental Studies looking at students' perception of living on campus and implications of changing existing policies. Dr. Eric Weldy, Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management presented those survey findings.

Vice President Weldy's Presentation: I'm happy to have an opportunity to present some findings to you today. As was noted, I'm basically here to share some recommendations on whether we should move forward with implementing a second year residency requirement beginning fall 2015 or move in a different direction. As a part of that, I was asked to look into getting student feedback on this issue and so the Center for Governmental Studies conducted an on-line survey of two groups of students – freshmen and sophomore students who live on campus and sophomore students who live off campus. As a part of that survey we sought to obtain student feedback on a few areas, one being the second year residency requirement and another being the potential incentives for second year students who live on campus. In addition, we sought to get students' feedback as it relates to their satisfaction with the overall experience living in the residence halls as well as awareness, usage and value of the resources and programs that are made available to them in the residence halls.

I thought it would be great to show from the standpoint of students who are freshmen going into their sophomore year, first or second year, over a six year period. I wanted to look at averages. How many students returned? What percentage of students ends up returning to the residence halls? What percentage of returning students entered off campus housing, entered Greek housing or commuted.

The Center for Governmental Studies survey data revealed that between academic years 2007-2008 and 2012-2013:

- Approximately 45% of freshman students returning to the university their sophomore year ended up returning to the residence halls or an average of about 888 students annually over that six year period.
- Those returning students who ended up moving off campus numbered approximately 29% or roughly an average of 589 students annually over that six year period.
- Those returning students who ended up entering Greek housing totaled approximately 19% or an average of 375 students annually over that six year period.
- Those returning students who ended up commuting going into their second year totaled approximately 7% or an average of 138 students annually over that six year period.

And the reason why I put this data up is because there is a misperception among students, staff members and members of the local community, predominantly local landlords, that those students finishing their freshmen year and going into their second year who are looking to live off campus number about 1,500 and that is not the case. On average, as I noted from 2007 and 2013, it was about 589 students a year.

What I would like to do now is to share a bit of information about the survey that was conducted along with the focus groups to give you an indication of the students' perception of on-campus living. The majority of students who took part in the survey and focus groups reported that they had a very positive experience living on campus. Some of the benefits they saw from the standpoint of living on campus was that it was easier to meet new people, whether fellow students, faculty or staff members. They felt that there was greater access to campus resources and events. And they also felt that they had less responsibility from the standpoint if you move off campus that means that you have to make sure your rent is paid, you have to make sure that your utilities are paid, so forth and so on.

Over the course of the year, there have been lots of questions in regards to what possible directions we could go. What options we felt like we have and obviously the one that has been a part of much discussion has been the mandated second year residency requirement having students going into their second year live on campus. The second idea that has been discussed is providing students incentives to encourage them to live on campus and then the third one is increasing the desirability as it relates to what we offer students in the residence halls and on campus. A few things that I want to share here are that across the board of all groups who took part in the survey a majority of the students were not in favor of a second year residency requirement. However they were in favor of receiving certain incentives as it relates to staying on campus. For example, off campus students prefer to have a private room and a shared bath at a double room price. They also preferred some sort of loyalty program which means

that if they decided to live in the residence halls their sophomore, junior, senior years that each year they would receive a discounted rate. Other things students living off campus preferred reserved parking or free parking of some kind. Also, they preferred pet friendly floors or communities. And so some of the students who live off campus have a preference of having a pet and obviously are not able to have pets within the residence halls and so their preference has been to live off campus. Other things in regards to on-campus students, some incentives that they preferred were having free parking, some form of a loyalty program and use of meal plans at all campus dining locations. In other words, students want to be able to use their meal plans on other parts of campus, like Holmes Student Center. Finally, in regards to the study, students reported that they moved off campus also to have increased choices regarding their roommates and where to live without roommates and so basically it came down to choice for those students who preferred to live off campus.

At this point, I would like to talk a little bit about implications if we were to go with a mandate or incentives as it relates to living in the residence halls. One of the things discussed in regards to having a mandate or a second year residency requirement is that it raises concerns over affordability. So in other words if you are going to have a second year residency requirement, the thought is will prices change, will there be discounted rates for students if they're required to live on campus their second year?

Secondly, one of the fears has been that if we go with a second year residency requirement, how will that impact the decision that a prospective student makes on whether or not they come to NIU and so presently we rank about 6th among all colleges and universities within the State of Illinois in regards to cost and so that may impact whether or not a student would decide to come to NIU as it relates to affordability.

Third, it reinforces both positive and negative group/floor dynamics. If you go with a mandatory second year residency requirement, one of the challenges that you have is that the student who preferred to live off campus, those who preferred to indulge in certain activities that can be considered unlawful, you will get those students living in the residence halls, not that you wouldn't get them already. But any issues that you would have in regards to the student body, the makeup, the character of the students that live on campus will change and so you will have some added issues. It also impacts community/university relationships. I would say that from the time that I arrived at least once a month I have met with local landlords who have a concern in regards to whether or not we go to a second year residency requirement, and as I noted there are some false perceptions that if we went to a second year residency requirement, that we are talking about 1,000 to 1,500 students taken out of the local housing market. But definitely there are some concerns among local landlords as it relates to them not being able to fill their units, units having to be boarded up, and what does that mean in regards to the neighborhoods and the look of the neighborhoods and so forth.

And finally, with incentivizing and mandating at least one major implication is we would not be able to accurately predict increases in occupancy and return on investment. So from the standpoint of mandating, we are not really sure how students and parents will react. As they look at the cost and whether or not they would be able to afford to live on campus, signing basically a contract to say I'm going to live in the residence halls for two years at a certain price may cause pause, and even adding in incentives there is really no guarantee that there will be a certain number or percentage of students who will make that decision to live on campus.

What I am recommending today, and I'm leaving this for last, is that we strongly consider going with increasing the desirability on campus and there are a few parts that I want to share with you. One of the implications of going with increasing the desirability of our residence halls is that we must reinvigorate NIU's commitment to the residence hall experience. We have improved some of our accommodations with Gilbert Hall as well as with Grant and I think that there have been some great benefits on that side. We received wonderful feedback from students as well as from family members, faculty and staff who enjoy having lunch over at Gilbert Hall. So definitely there are some attractions for all members of the community.

Secondly, improve affordability. There have been a number of steps we have taken to improve affordability and I had noted before that we ranked 6th within the State among all colleges and universities as it relates to room and board costs. In regards to affordability, I think that we should strive to be priced competitively within the State. In addition, I think that we should continue to decrease room and board rates if at all possible. As many of you know the decision was made to reduce room and board costs for this year by 2.07% and so any way that we can pass on the savings to the students should be considered.

Third, apply financial aid to housing costs. One option we have not offered previously is to allow students to use their institutional need-based aid to cover their room and board costs. This coming fall we will be able to do that and so that will add some flexibility as it relates to the issues of whether or not the students will be able to cover room and board costs.

Fourth, I think that we should explore supplemental aid for housing to recruit or retain select students. In other words, for those students who are heavily need-based I think that we should consider ways of providing maybe some added assistance, whether it's a waiver of some kind or some other aid directed towards housing and dining for those students.

One thing that is not up here that I would like to share with you is that reducing costs, making housing and dining more affordable, is definitely a good thing. I think all universities need to do it, but something we also need to consider seriously is how do we increase revenue. So if we are looking at making housing and dining more affordable, we really need to think of creative ways on how we can increase revenue. And I'll just give you a couple of examples of what we have been doing. For example, we anticipate increases in dining revenues with the expansion of the flex dollars use and the expansion of faculty and staff and commuter meal plans. To start out in regards to flex dollars, students with residence hall meal plans have only been able to utilize that meal plan within the residence halls, and so students have been really crying out to be able to use their flex bucks other places on campus whether it's the Three Sons Café in Barsema Hall or other places on campus like the Holmes Student Center and so forth. And so they're really anxious to have that opportunity and I think that will give us a chance to increase our revenue.

Some other things that we are looking at are increasing the number of commuters who utilize on-campus meal plans. In 2012 and 2013 in Housing and Dining, we sold 50 commuter meal plans and so we made about \$15,000 in revenue. In 2013 and 2014, 350 commuter meal plans were sold and that came to just over \$105,000 in revenue. And so these are just a couple of examples of areas that I think we seriously need to go in because nothing is free and I think it is important to try to make our housing and dining affordable, but I also think that we need to be creative as it relates to bringing in more revenue. And so as noted my recommendation is that we look at and create a detailed plan on how to go about improving affordability for our students, but also coming up with ideas, concrete plans on how we can increase revenue as well.

Finally, I just wanted to share here from the standpoint of enhancing our on-campus experience, there are a lot of things that we can do to make the on-campus experience desirable for our students. One perfect example of this is enhanced technology in the residence halls. As of today, I note that 100% of our residence halls are wireless. And so students have that opportunity, that luxury, as an example. Then we have the development of our second year experience program which really is a retention program focusing on getting second year students more involved on campus and also creating opportunities for them to grow and develop in many different areas. Vice President Weldy concluded his presentation and asked for questions.

Trustee Strauss responded to the Second Year Residency presentation as follows: I'm glad that we did some survey work to try to determine instead of guess what the impacts were going to be on the students. This is a topic that the Board has considered off and on over the last four years. I was struck initially by the data we were provided that showed that we had better academic success and retention rates if we were to require a second year in the residence halls, and at the end of the day that's what we

are trying to be able to accomplish. Under the prior administration notice was given to the landlord community that two years henceforth there would be a second year residency requirement. So now two years into that program, we are asking what we should do about it. So I was struck by several things in this presentation.

First, given where we are at, if we don't mandate a program today, we are never going to do it. We're never going to do it because we are not going to go through a two year notice requirement again or the equivalent which is a pre-requisite to treat the landlord community fairly and because we will never be deemed to have credibility again. This is really a choice from my perspective where we're either going to do it or we're not going to do it. For two years I've listened to the same people who have probably come to see you in your office and to students as I've walked around campus and I've reflected that as I govern my own affairs I'm a much happier person with incentives than I am with mandates and I expect all of us are. I mean as a student of economics and someone who has a master's in finance apropos to our last conversation, it's all about incentives. Life is about incentives. So you and I have had a conversation and I think that there is some merit to taking a look at the perceived value proposition for living in our housing. But I want to be mindful that we have on the table a solution that has a likelihood of a particular result. If we give it up, we're gambling, so we also get in my view one opportunity to get it right, how you frame that value proposition and make a difference on what otherwise has a big impact on our financial model and this is an incredibly complex array of factors that play into how you get that value proposition framed right. What type of students are we going to have? How many do we want to reside on campus? What do they need in order to be able to make an intelligent choice? What fully informed data about the relevant benefits and costs for off campus housing and opportunities can we provide? So I want us to be thoughtful about the way in which we approach this so that we get the one opportunity that we have correct if consensus is that this is the direction we should go in. I'm pleased that you have at least started to think about all of those factors that are involved, but I would encourage that we make sure that we thoroughly analyze the entire environment and come up with a set of action items that will get us to the desired result in an overall strategic sense.

Trustee Boey expressed confusion about the Board's previous action on this topic. He thought the Board had voted to implement the second year residency requirement.

Vice President Bill Nicklas responded that in May of 2012 the Second Year Residency requirement was brought forward as a presidential initiative as part of a larger initiative called Residential Renaissance. Approval was not sought and no vote was taken by the Board. The Board was supportive of the presidential initiative and wanted a report back in the fall of 2012 to assess the impact of the proposed initiative. There was strong interest by the Board in what would be done to add vital programming to the residence halls to increase retention by offering mentoring opportunities and closer collaboration with faculty and staff. At the time, there was a different individual in Vice President Weldy's position who left the university before he was able to provide the follow-up report. This personnel change and the need to collect survey data led to a delay in reporting back to the Board on this topic.

Trustee Marshall inquired whether the committee should look at moving this item into the near future as an action item. Trustee Strauss suggested that because the Board did not take formal action in May of 2012, no formal Board action is required at this time. The administration will need to finish their assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of a second year residency requirement versus an incentive program and take action to finalize any changes to housing options in a timely manner for prospective students. Vice President Weldy indicated that it was his understanding that if it was determined to proceed with the second year residency requirement it would be implemented in the fall of 2015.

Trustee Butler concurred with Trustee Strauss that an incentive program or a desirability approach is ideal in this situation, rather than a mandated second year residency requirement.

President Baker commented that one thing that hadn't been mentioned was that some students will not come to the university if they are required to sign a two-year contract and some students particularly those who have financial challenges may want to live in a less expensive off campus situation.

Chair Marshall thanked Dr. Weldy for the information provided and moved forward to the next information item.

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

Provost Freeman reported that the next item is an information item that lists the names of this year's award winners for the professional excellence awards for faculty and staff. These are very prestigious awards within the NIU community because of the nature of the awards process. Individuals are recognized for excellence in undergraduate teaching and instruction using a process that is initiated and driven by students. Faculty members are recognized for excellence in research, teaching and scholarship, and artistry and engagement in a combination thereof through a process that is faculty driven where those who have been recognized previously are called upon to look at the next generation of individuals with excellence in these areas. Our operating staff and our supportive professional staff awards are also peer recognition awards.

A number of award recipients had been in attendance earlier in the day, but were unable to remain when the AASAP meeting was delayed. Liz Wright and Patricia Lee recipients of the Operating Staff Outstanding Service Award were still in attendance and spoke to the meeting expressing their thanks.

Trustee Butler spoke about representing the Board at faculty award ceremonies for the Board of Trustees Professorships. Trustee Butler acknowledged award recipients Professors David Hedin and Laura Vazquez. Trustee Butler indicated that medals designed by Associate Professor James Obermeier of the School of Art and his Master's student, Agnes Ma, are awarded to recipients of the BOT Professorships. Provost Freeman indicated that an arrangement had been reached with Professor Obermeier and his students to continue to craft unique individual medals for the BOT Professors.

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

Provost Freeman reported that the final information item in the University Report would be an update on the Higher Learning Commission accreditation process. Vice Provost Carolinda Douglass was asked to make this report.

Vice Provost Carolinda Douglass reported that the Higher Learning Commission site visit team was on campus March 3-5, 2014 and there was excellent participation across campus from the Board of Trustees, students, staff and faculty. There were five criterion assessed by the site visit team. The site visit team made a recommendation that the criterion were met, met with concerns, or not met. The first four criterion were determined to be met. Criterion Five – Resources, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness was met with concerns. This resulted from a lack of alignment between past budgeting and planning processes. However the site visit team had high hopes going forward with the new budget guidelines and the accountability, clarity, transparency and sustainability currently being implemented. The site visit team recommended an update in May of 2016 on the alignment between budgeting and planning. The team also recommended an increase in our distance learning programs. The final recommendation was that NIU would have 10 years before the next accreditation reaffirmation. This is the maximum time frame available. These recommendations need to go to the HLC Institutional Actions Council this summer with the final report from the Higher Learning Commission to follow.

Provost Freeman indicated that the university report was concluded.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The Chair announced that the next meeting of the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee is scheduled for Thursday, August 28, at 10 a.m..

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Marshall asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Strauss so moved, seconded by Trustee Butler. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Ross
Interim 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.

