

Minutes of the  
**NIU Board of Trustees**  
**Of Northern Illinois University**  
**Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment**  
January 16, 2015

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chair Marc Strauss in the Board of Trustees Room, 315 Altgeld Hall. Recording Secretary Liz Wright conducted a roll call of Trustees. Members present were Board Chair John Butler, Trustee Robert Marshall, Student Trustee Paul Julion and Committee Chair Marc Strauss. Trustee Robert Boey was absent. Also present were President Douglas Baker, Provost Lisa Freeman, Committee Liaison Eric Weldy, General Counsel Jerry Blakemore, Board Liaison Mike Mann, UAC Representative Bill Pitney, Anne Kaplan, Promod Vohra, Denise Schoenbachler, Rebecca Babel.

**2. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM AND APPROPRIATE NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING**

Mr. Blakemore indicated that appropriate notification of the meeting had been provided pursuant to the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

**3. APPROVAL OF PROPOSED MEETING AGENDA**

Trustee Marshall made the motion to approve the agenda and Trustee Butler seconded. The motion was approved.

**4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 11/14/14**

Trustee Butler made the motion to approve the minutes of 11/14/14 and Student Trustee Julion seconded. The motion was approved.

**5. CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chair Strauss commented that he wanted to allow as much time as possible for business this morning. At the last meeting we spent a little time talking about how to get a handle on the economic sustainability and mission of the university enrollment along with how many different facets of our operation have an impact on enrollment. We received a considerable amount of information at the first meeting. There were requests for a large amount of additional information made at that meeting. The intention for this meeting was to take up a second topic and spend only a portion of our time receiving additional information, but there's so much of it instead of progressing to another substantive topic, we are going to devote the two hours today to the receipt of the information that's ready. I recognize that there is information requested at the last meeting that hasn't yet been presented. I've discussed that with some of the liaisons involved. The expectation is that as we proceed to other substantive areas that information will be presented, but to the extent that there are questions that were asked last time that are not answered.

Chair Strauss recognized the University Advisory Council representative Bill Pitney and asked if he had any statement at this time. He did not.

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Blakemore noted that no timely requests had been made to address this Ad Hoc Meeting.

## 7. UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS/REPORTS

### Information Item 7.b. – Financial Aid Packaging and Scholarship Information

### Information Item 7.c. – Other Discussion

Marc Strauss then turned the floor over to Mike Mann who had a presentation for the committee.

Mike Mann began with **tuition and fee trends and comparisons**, the item presented here starts out with a little background information. It recaps the action the board has taken the last couple of years with regards to the increase in tuition, fees and room and board packages that students face here at NIU. I also thought it would be important to include a little background information here on the truth in tuition law. I know we talk about it a lot. I thought it would be important to have the specifics in the item just for the record. The first three tables provide a ten year history of what tuition and fees have done at Illinois public universities. When we compare ourselves to other institutions, we look at Illinois public universities, other schools within the MAC conference and there's a peer group for out of state schools. The first three tables provide a ten year comparison and an average annual increase for tuition, fees and the combined tuition and fees. Table four is the table I was referring to which compares us using IPEDs data, compared to our tuition and fee charges against other public universities, but it also provides information on the MAC schools and then information on peer institutions. I worked with the Office of Institutional Research to come up with a short list of schools that we feel like are institutions that we compete for students with. I have also provided a couple of tables that look at what has happened to state funding and higher education funding in Illinois over the past 20 years. After table four there is an Illinois Higher Education appropriation table that provides general fund appropriations for operations and grants for fiscal year '95 and 2015. If you look at FY95 public universities received slightly over a billion dollars in state support which represented 61.7 percent of the higher education funding pie. Flash forward to the current fiscal year, public universities are funded at 1.2 billion dollars which is only 36.8 percent of the higher education funding. You'll notice state funding for SURS which does come out of the Higher Ed portion, has grown from 5 percent of the funding picture to 40.4 percent, and in fiscal year '15 funding is at 1.3 billion dollars which is more funding provided to support retirement payments than it is to operate all of the public universities in the state. I believe FY13 was the crossover year when that started exceeding the support for state public universities. The next table provides an institution by institution breakdown of what's happened since fiscal year 2002. Fiscal year 2002 was the high water mark for public university funding in the state at 1.5 billion. Since that year funding for universities has decreased by 273 million dollars, almost 20 percent. You'll see institution by institution, our funding has declined almost 25 million dollars at 21.1 percent. Some of the differentials between the universities can be explained by performance funding and the legislature's elimination of certain appropriation lines, for example a permanent improvement line was zeroed out a few years ago. There's not much consistency with how the appropriation bills list funding for each of the universities. Occasionally when there have been eliminations of certain line items, it has disproportionately affected certain institutions, and unfortunately for us that has occurred on a couple of occasions. The next table I put together I was attempting to respond to one of the chairs questions regarding the differences between public university and community college funding. I pulled this data from the Illinois Community College board data book and the IBHE public university revenue and expenditure report. This chart shows that in the community college revenue source nearly 30 percent of their funding comes from local tax support and other local support. A source of revenue public universities don't have. It's the type of factor, not the sole factor, but it's the type of issue that allows community colleges to keep their costs lower and as state sources decline, the impact on universities, there's no other source to rely on whereas the community college sector does have the local piece as part of their funding scheme.

John Butler asked, is there something characteristically different about what's going on in Illinois? Table four compares us with the MAC schools and the additional peer institutions, this is tuition and fees right?

Mike Mann responded yes.

John Butler responded that we seem to be going up much higher at an accelerated rate compared to the other institutions as a group and that's characteristic of them responding to the state dynamics that you're mentioning.

Mike Mann responded, exactly, for example a few years ago, the state of Missouri issued a freeze on tuition and fees which allowed state schools to keep their costs down. The governor there was a big supporter of higher education, but there was a period of time where Missouri schools kept costs down when Illinois increases were six, eight, even ten percent annually. There were some other surrounding states that were holding the line on the tuition increases and it didn't take long for the Illinois costs to really out pace and stand out compared to some of these other schools.

John Butler asked in your experience, are these schools listed under the Illinois public schools all responding in the same way to these dynamics or are any of them attempting experimental or entrepreneurial ways of managing the demands that they increase tuition?

Mike Mann responded, I think if you turn back and look at table three which provides the ten year history of tuition and fee increases and look at the average annual increases. To me that seems like a pretty narrow range. I don't see any numbers in here that would indicate that there are a few schools that are reacting differently than for the most part the collective bunch.

John Butler noted that table two does seem to suggest that we may have used student fees as a way of managing expenses more so than the other public universities.

Mike Mann indicated because this data comes from the Board of Higher Education and as noted in the foot note these figures include student health insurance fees, which in FY15 increased dramatically. That is a fee that students with proof of comparable health insurance can get waived, so the levels that you see here inflate what most students are facing. In my opinion our average annual increase does not look out of line with the other institutions.

John Butler indicated, at the end of the chart it becomes apparent that we are higher than any other state institution. If you factor in the student health insurance fee, would that still be the case?

Mike Mann clarified that the student health insurance fee is over \$700 a semester. The health insurance fee at ISU is \$230 a semester. So on an annual basis \$1500 versus \$500, that's a thousand dollar difference right there.

Eric Weldy noted, they have had an in depth discussion in regards to the health insurance fee we offer. Offering students more in regards to health insurance, but also is the question of what part of the health insurance does Illinois State or other universities subsidize for their students and are able to subsidize in order to keep costs low for their students. So that's an issue as well.

Marc Strauss added, there isn't a uniform set of guidelines as to what's included in tuition and fees. If you're looking at them separately, it might not come up with the same number and none of this includes voluntary fees. I'm not sure that you can draw firm conclusions from this information except to note what the trend is and try to get some idea about where it is that we stand. Politically we should take a look at what happens with regard to the other institutions within the State of Illinois system. But beyond that, we have to judge what the competitive environment is for the products that we're offering. I understand including the MAC schools but I'm not sure where we came up with the additional items that are shown in table four and whether we should take a look at those institutions where we lose the most students.

Mike Mann responded, I worked with the Office of Institutional Research and I believe these were the institutions cited as where we lost a lot of potential students. I would be happy to get back with them and see if there's a more robust group.

Marc Strauss responded, I just find it hard to believe that for most of the students we would lose to a

four year institution it would be Wisconsin, Michigan State and Indiana.

Anne Kaplan added, these are students who are able to go out of state. We're also losing students to regional institutions, students who don't want to or can't go out of state. Some of those institutions are private. We've been competing against students with waivers at a more expensive private institution like Aurora, they get one bill for tuition and it's all waived. Whereas here, they get tuition waived and then they have to pay fees. Based on the tuition recommendations that the Board approved at its last meeting, we've made some progress on reducing that disparity.

Marc Strauss responded, I think that could be true with regard to the programs that you're offering.

Anne Kaplan responded, I think that that will be true even to the standard program because once you collapse the fees into tuition, then we are not disadvantaged against a higher charge of a private institution.

Marc Strauss responded, he is interested in seeing that we get a good gauge on what the competitive environment looks like because at the Board level we come back to ask whether we should have a policy with regard to the setting of tuition and fees. What we're trying to do is have something that allows us to have a sustainable financial model but also is workable. If we say to have a sustainable financial model, we need more money but that makes us no longer competitive in the market place. We haven't accomplished anything. What I want to do is see whether we can get a firm sense as to whether there are marketplace trends that ought to enter into our consideration of how we should go about setting tuition and fees.

Mike Mann indicated, it is difficult to track students that leave. When we don't even get students here to begin with, I think it's hard to identify where they're going. Anecdotally, we're losing kids from the suburbs that are hopping right over us and going over to Iowa. You hear things like that anecdotally, but I don't know that we have data.

Lisa Freeman indicated, the list is reflective largely of four year public schools because there are some things that are much more difficult to compare if you include our five competitors. You can identify sticker price but without knowledge of tuition discounting and the populations, you can't really understand what families are paying. Certainly the Board has seen data before that Dr. Weldy has shown in a number of venues that cites Roosevelt and DePaul as institutions that we compete with. When you look at their sticker price just as when you compare the John Marshall sticker price to our law school, what appears to be a great difference can actually be inverted when you think about financial aid.

Marc Strauss responded, I'm mindful of the fact that the discounted price would be important and I think we also saw data previously indicating that a number of students that we lose after they've first started here wind up in community colleges and not at a four year institution. I get that this is really segmented in the way that it would be applicable both to people who are thinking about attending NIU in the first instance, as well as those people who are making a decision about whether to come back. I just want to make sure we make sure we understand what that environment looks like as best as we can construct. I want to leave with an assurance on behalf of the committee members that we at least have a good sense as to what the environment looks like and we can factor that into the evaluation of recommendations we get from staff regarding whether we should have a board policy on how we go about setting tuition and fees. I think it is ultimately what we want to do in this area in this committee, we need to make a recommendation to the board.

Eric Weldy responded, before I start I just want to make a statement. As you know the Board gave approval for us to hire Lipman Hearne to work with us in regards to enrollment management. I just want to give you a brief update in regards to that. Prior to the winter holiday break, I went over to Lipman Hearne to have a kickoff session with them. Harlan Teller, VP for Marketing Communications also went and a member of his staff. I had staff on the phone as well for those who couldn't make it there physically. It gave us an opportunity to share some information. I was able to give them an update in

regards to just overall enrollment management and some of our challenges over the past few years. Harlan was able to give information as it relates to marketing and communications not just for enrollment management, but really for the university overall. I thought it was very good and we had an opportunity to meet with the staff there. One of the things that came out of that meeting was, before that meeting Lipman Hearne had asked us to pull some information and I had an opportunity to share this with our council deans as well. They asked us to pull information within the last four years of students who had applied to NIU and who were applied, accepted, and enrolled but left in good academic standing after about a semester or a year. We called them stop outs. The group were individuals who were admitted to the university but they did not enroll or register for classes. The third group are individuals who had made some inquiries in regards to the university and had an interest but they didn't follow through on their application. We came up with about 120,000 students, we took that information and data, we sent it to the national clearing house to identify where those students are today? Are they in college or not in college? We came up with roughly 90,000 or so that were not in college. What we wanted to do was begin the process of communicating with that group. We sent out an e-mail blast during the Christmas holiday to let them know that we're here, we would love to have you at NIU. Come back on campus, we welcome you. We attached an application for spring semester and if you're not interested in spring maybe summer or fall. We sent out a blast and then we sent out another blast the Friday before the start of the semester. Information is still coming in, but we had about 44 students that applied for the spring. I really thought that we wouldn't get any students apply for the spring because it's so close. As of the day before yesterday, 22 of those students are registered. I was thinking in terms of if we had done absolutely nothing, we would have got absolutely nothing. Lipman Hearne really pushed this and they were on campus all day yesterday. They met with members of my staff, members of Harlan's staff to go over our admissions process. They had a tour of campus and we had a very good day with them. This will begin the process of us developing an overall plan, workbook plan. They will begin spending time with us every other week and in regards to the contract as those of you know, they'll be working with us until the end of June. So far it's been very good and I've been very pleased.

Eric Weldy continued with **Financial Aid and Scholarships**. The first thing that we're going to look at is the first page, how students pay overall. It gives you a big picture as it relates to undergraduate, graduate and law students. The first top half you see the charges. In regards to the charges for students, tuition, special program fees, various fees, along with room and board. The second row deals with payments. How students pay; whether through financial aid which includes federal and state grants, loans, federal work study and so forth, waivers through the university. Third, payment, third party payments which are really private scholarships like the Rotary scholarship and some of those other things. The other is what student's pay out of pocket. What is very interesting about this information is, if you look at since 2009 in regards to what students are able to pay and think about how our discussion on tuition and fees have increased over the years that students and families are not able to pay as much out of pocket as they have in the past. This is very significant when you look at over 97 million in regards to what students paid out of pocket in 2009 versus what they're able to pay out of pocket in 2013; over 86 almost 87 million. That alone in regards to this data information tells you a little bit in regards to our student profile and also the impact of the cost of education, not just from the standpoint of NIU, but from the standpoint of education and Higher Ed around the country.

Marc Strauss asked if Eric knew how much of the financial aid payment comes from MAP grants?

Eric Weldy responded, 20 million. I thought this was good from the standpoint of giving us a big picture.

Marc Strauss asked, financial aid doesn't differentiate between loans and grants?

Robert Marshall asked, are the unfunded mandates and waivers grouped?

Eric Weldy responded, I believe the unfunded mandates are in the waivers group and we talk more about that later in the presentation. This next sheet is titled executive summary for February update that all students consolidate if first year and transfers. It is really like a profile of our fall 2014 cohort group. This is an executive summary. There's a lot of information and data that comes with this. This is information

that Noel Levitz has collected for us and we utilize. I want to give you a summary of the information that we have to look at. For example, under admissions these are the number of students who have applied first year and transfers for fall 2014. This shows our goal from the numbers of undergraduates first year and transfers we were seeking to apply, this shows September 8<sup>th</sup> the beginning of fall, the date in regards to the number we ended up with. We also list here the confirmations and these are basically students that say I will attend NIU. We track that, so if we're talking on the phone with the student or whether we receive any kind of e-mail correspondence from students. The third is the yield rate in regards to the group which I think that we were pretty close in regards to what we were hoping our yield rate would be from that group. If you look at the bottom, I just want to make a clarification; we've been working with Noel Levitz from the standpoint of looking at changing our scholarship structure. We have a lot of two-year scholarships and this year as we look to enroll students into fall 2015, we're able to make a transition and move a number of our top scholarships from two years to four years. Noel Levitz identified five different levels in regards to students that we're looking at. Level one are students who meet the requirements for our NIU scholar's scholarship. Level two are students that meet the requirements as it related to our Northern academic scholarship. Level three are really students that meet that academic requirement whether ACT, SAT requirement along with GPA as it relates to our Centennial Scholarship. Level four and five are not scholarship levels for us. I wanted to reference that you can see from the standpoint a number of confirms that we had at each academic level as well as our goal for fall 2014 as well as students average SAT scores. The average ACT scores for that group gives you a good profile of the first year and transfer students coming in for fall 2014. The undergraduate major aid programs really gets to the matter when we talk about how much in regards to federal aid, state aid students receive. How much they receive from NIU in regards to helping them fund their education as well as the foundation and private. There's a chart on the first page and then the second page really shows the detail when we talk about federal funding we're talking how much Pell our students receive as well as federal work-study, ROTC, direct student loans and so forth. Our students receive 20 million in MAP grants for Illinois. Undergraduate institutional aid gives you a little bit more information from the standpoint of merit awards and least anticipated for FY15, what we think that we'll be distributing as it relates to merit award as well as need based athletic scholarships and waivers along with undergraduate assistantships and research and so forth. I have a few definitions to give you more understanding, for example with the waivers, the state of Illinois has a law in which the amount of undergraduate tuition revenue that a public university may waive is limited to 3 percent of total available undergraduate tuition revenue, but there are also mandatory waivers in which we are inclined to cover. Basically the word is unfunded mandates. We've had a lot of discussion about those but I thought it would be very important to understand what we're also distributing as it relates to what the state and federal government is asking us to pay out of pocket. I gave some examples in regards to the Illinois veteran's grant which usually sparks a lot of discussion. Special aid grants, ginger equity and intercollegiate athletics and so forth. The next document is what I call our academic index. Then there's the merit scholarship sheet which shows all of our merit scholarships. There was some questions in regards to our scholarships and what scholarships that we offer students. Our presidential scholarship is our top scholarship. Students get an estimated \$25,000 each year for four years. This is not included in the chart where I shared with you the five academic levels, but usually we offer about ten scholarships in regards to the presidential scholarships. We've changed the process for the top scholarship where students actually come to campus; they go through an interview process. Last year we invited maybe forty or more.

Lisa Freeman indicated we interviewed 25 students.

Eric Weldy added that we identified ten from that group.

John Butler asked, are those always incoming freshmen?

Eric Weldy responded, yes those are incoming freshmen. The other scholarships I mentioned before, the NIU scholars, the Northern academic scholarship and the Centennial Scholarship those were previously two year scholarships and transitioning into four year scholarships which I think is very important for us. There are some other scholarships that we have in regards to the transfer scholarships, red and black award scholarship, and our Huskie legacy award as well.

Robert Marshall asked if there are any scholarships that are curriculum oriented, say engineering...

Eric Weldy responded, yes, the academic departments do offer scholarships but usually they are for upper classmen...

Lisa Freeman added, that general statement is true.

Promod Vohra responded, we have provided some university scholarships.

Denise Schoenbachler added, The College of Business and Law.

Eric Weldy responded, in regards to the academic index, this is part of the work that Noel Levitz has done for us, when you look at the NIU scholars sheet information on NIU scholars, it has an academic index of 88.0 or higher. You can look on this chart to find out what student's GPA's are as well as ACT/SAT scores. I bring this up for one specific reason. There's been an ongoing debate in regards to ACT/SAT and the weight that you put on that as it relates to the students that you admit. There's also ongoing debate from the standpoint of standardized test scores on how much of a predictor of how successful a student will be. There's an initial belief that the standardized test score are a good predictor of how well a student will do the first semester of their first year, but the GPA is a great predictor in regards to how well that student will do over time. There have been some institutions that have eliminated their standardized test score as it relates to admission, this is a debate that will continue for a long time. The next sheet is from the standpoint of our recruitment of first generation college students and what they're able to afford and pay. This is a wonderful sheet as it relates to what our students are able to pay, our first and second year undergraduate students. Estimated family contribution (EFC), what we think a student will be able to pay out of pocket. This is the range in regards to what we think that they'll pay. What I find quite interesting is that the higher the family income it's still more challenging for families to pay for the education. If you have a family with a zero EFC and on an average they're supposed to pay \$250.00 out of pocket and then you look at in regards to their unmet need for actual costs which is just over \$6,000.00 that they still would need to pay. As you move up, higher EFC \$1,000 to over \$5,000 there is still a large gap in regards to an unmet need for our students. This goes into question from the standpoint of identifying students who are able to pay out of pocket and in the challenges associated with that for us. At the same time as a state institution, I believe that we have an obligation to serve the larger community as it relates to our students within the state. This poses some very interesting questions for us as an institution.

Marc Strauss noted that this tells us something about the economic achievement of the households that our students are coming from as well.

Eric Weldy added, yes.

Marc Straus responded, because we have so many that have low EFC's?

Eric Weldy added, yes.

Marc Strauss asked, Do we know how that compares to other institutions that we're competing against?

Anne Kaplan responded, I don't know on EFC and probably can't get to that data. Do you know how our number of Pell recipients compares to other institutions? This year almost fifty percent of our first and second year dependent students which are the majority of our first and second year students were Pell eligible and that compares to the 37 percent for example of Illinois State that are Pell eligible. Of the regional state universities, we have the highest population of Pell eligible students which anecdotally we say we have the highest population of ED students of the regional universities in Illinois.

Marc Strauss asked, Do we have any hypothesis about why that condition exists?

Eric Weldy asked, from the standpoint of attracting those students?

Marc Strauss responded, yes.

Eric Weldy continued, we have had a history of attracting first generation college students for many years. If I had a choice of being a student today and being a student 20 years ago, I think I would pick 20 years ago from the standpoint of the high cost of tuition. We have always attracted this caliber of student.

Marc Strauss responded, I'm not suggesting any particular outcome for this, it's just an interesting fact but it has a large impact. You're going to have a higher unmet need if you're recruiting students that come from households that can't afford to pay.

Lisa Freeman added, I think if you look at our region and the population and the diversity across economic levels as well as other dimensions of diversity the fact that we're in proximity to 28 community colleges who serve, eight of them as major feeders to us, and you look at the opportunity for students to live at home and attend NIU albeit with some hardship versus living at home and attending Illinois State. We have some things that favor us being in this position.

Marc Strauss asked, do we have any idea what the cost is to deliver a credit hour at a community college as opposed to the cost for us to deliver that credit hour?

Anne Kaplan asked, cost or the charge?

Marc Strauss responded, cost. I can't really look at what the list price is but if we're trying to determine what happens to first and second year students then the question is do you get the same outcome attending a community college as you would attending NIU and what does it cost to deliver that outcome?

Anne Kaplan added, On the personnel side it's bound to be lower because the community colleges use such a heavy proportion of part time faculty.

John Butler added, they have higher teaching loads.

Anne Kaplan noted, that's true. It's a different model. Also the lower division courses require a different level of expertise.

Eric Weldy continued, we tried to look at the same thing with third and fourth year students as well. The next sheet is an average of debt for NIU students and huge campaigns by the federal government and others from the standpoint of getting students to take out fewer loans. One thing that we monitor is our student loan default rate. We have shown you the average of federal debt for our students and this is the average for all of our students, our graduates, who graduated in summer 2012, fall 2012 or spring 2013 as well as for the following year. This is a large debt when you talk about finishing up, getting a job and trying to begin that process of starting their lives and then having to deal with this huge debt and the impact it has on the economy and the state. We wanted to give you an indication of some of the things that our students are up against. One thing we really attract is the student loan default rate. I wanted to show a comparison to our default rate as an institution in comparison to Illinois State, SIU, UIC, Western, as well as Chicago State University. This goes into what you have noted Trustee Strauss from the standpoint of our focus on first generation college students. For example NIU for FY2011 of 9.4 versus Illinois State at 4. I want to also note that is the students who are in default that particular year. If the next year they pay off that loan, we would really have no indication, so this just shows currently that year the percentage in regards to default rate. The last sheet is an addendum financial aid overview, it gives you more information in regard to financial aid that I felt would be very helpful.

Marc Strauss continued, if there are no other questions we will move on to another discussion.



Paul Julion responded, I have a question. Dr. Weldy, was the 120,000 students you found more recent students that applied to Northern or showed interest?

Eric Weldy responded, in regards to the Lipman Hearne information I shared, those were students that applied over the past four years.

John Butler responded, I'm not entirely clear as to the index and how it's used – my understanding is it's used to determine eligibility for financial aid?

Marc Strauss indicated, the colors basically correspond to level one, level two and level three as you go down. The level one, level two and level three are on another sheet.

John Butler added, level one includes presidential.

Marc Strauss responded, correct.

Eric Weldy added, actually academic level one does not include the presidential

Marc Strauss responded, Northern Academic Scholarship and Centennial Scholarship.

Eric Weldy added, anything 88.0 index or higher

John Butler responded, the significance of this table Noel Levitz helped assemble is that we are succeeding in going beyond our goal in attracting students within those level categories.

Eric Weldy, continued, yes that was our goal to attract more of those top tier students which means that we had to shift some funds. It's a catch 22 because even getting those top tier students, those students can also be very needy from the standpoint of financially what they're able to pay out of pocket. So it definitely posed some challenges for us, but those students also graduate as well.

John Butler asked, if this incoming freshmen we're talking about, what sort of programming do we have at the transfer level to attract the same high quality students?

Eric Weldy noted, we do have the transfer merit scholarships but we're also initiating a new program called NIU Bound as well that will allow us to create a deeper relationship with some of our top community colleges and graduating those students. There's a scholarship component with the NIU Bound program that guarantees added scholarship money for those students. There has been a heavy focus at least for us on the community college students, but also meeting them where they're at. Utilizing our satellite campuses as well the community colleges from the standpoint of offering programs so that it's easier for those students to attend classes and get their degrees. There's also additional things that we're doing in admissions to attract transfer students. There's some new initiatives that we've put together that I've mentioned before having overnight stays for transfer students. There's been a heavy focus of getting more transfer students to live on campus as well. So there's some different things that we're doing but still a lot that I feel we can do.

John Butler asked, Lisa, when you referred to the deans and the scholarships, there's more prevalence at the college level of the scholarships that would be available to third and fourth year students.

Lisa Freeman responded, I would say that our deans have been working very hard over the course of the past year to deepen relationships with the community colleges and to attract students from those venues and that goes not only in part of looking at scholarships and awarding those to incoming transfers along

with other division students who are at NIU. The more important piece about looking for degree completion pathways that are most efficient; having the dialogs on the campuses of the community colleges at the level of the academic officers who understand what's creating barriers that don't need to be there for students and moving those barriers as quickly as possible. And we've seen that in the enrollments of some of our colleges reflected already, so I think that there's a real appreciation for the importance of those relationships and a lot of action underlying that has not been as aggressive on that front perhaps in the past.

Denise Schoenbachler responded, I hear the questions you're asking and wanting to know is there financial commitment scholarships both for freshmen, sophomores ...

John Butler added, yes that's what I'm trying to find out.

Denise Schoenbachler responded, ...for recruiting as well as retention and the answer is yes the colleges that have resources to do that and we have shifted a lot of our scholarship support from retention and pure scholar recognition to recruiting and retention. We are looking at a financial need more aggressively asking if students have financial need so we can help them, but also allocating resources toward that recruiting at the freshmen level but also as Provost Freeman mentioned at that junior level when their coming in making it clear that students are coming in and transferring in, can have access to scholarships that might traditionally have just been retention scholarships.

Promod Vohra added, other than providing financial resources, the students are also paying for a 100 percent transfer of credit to make a seamlessly transfer into the degree condition programs and we've been doing that. Another important aspect to retain them once they're here, so more than giving them resources in terms of scholarships is to support their activities so that they can become embedded into the programs and they try to become professionals from the colleges that they're graduating from. That requires our resources, that's why you'd see that the retention is high and the students are able to get a job and find employment.

Marc Strauss asked, is it possible to tie the how students pay sheet to the need profile for students? So the need profile for students pages show an unmet aggregate need for costs across all four years of about 31 million dollars if I add all of it up. Is there a portion of that that is being met by institutional funds that isn't reflected?

Eric Weldy responded, there are no institutional funds reflected on that sheet. That is to show what the student looks like when we get all the other state and federal sources and the rest is left up to the family.

Marc Strauss asked, if I subtracted from the 31 million dollars what would I have to subtract for institutional funds to come up with the true amount of the unmet need?

Eric Weldy responded, for our first and second year students we provide approximately 15 million dollars exclusive of the waivers. I could take that number and run just that group of students through the same analysis of how students pay. Is that what you would like?

Marc Strauss added, I think so. The first and second unmet need is about 27 million dollars. You would have to take out the institutional funds and waivers. I'm interested in trying to understand what the magnitude of the gap is on an annual basis.

Doug Baker added, almost every school has this gap and ours is smaller than the last two schools I've been at, but it's a big one and people figure it out one way or the other. It puts a strain on families.

Eric Weldy added, from the standpoint of transfer students is the work that we're doing with the P20 Network and the states emphasis of graduating, getting more citizens to graduate from college. I chair one of the working groups and we're working with a group of community college as well as high schools in the area as well. It's been really good looking at what's being done at the K through 12 and then

what's being done at the community college level and how we can allow for a smoother transition. The focus has been on a number of subjects. Financial literacy has been a key, when we talk about looking at first generation students and their families, making sure they have a true understanding about the cost of a college education and what it's going to take for them in order to help pay for their education. Then there's other things that we're looking at from the standpoint of community college students transferring to NIU. We've talked about establishing some peer mentoring. Establishing various peer mentoring programs which we already have in place, but also having a larger peer mentoring conference because I think that transition is so very important that those in the community college if they're looking towards attending NIU, they have a close connection; a close connection with faculty, a close connection with current students in order for that transition to happen and for them to hit the ground running once they're here on campus. So there's a lot going on through the P20 Network and that's just from the standpoint of my particular workgroup, there's a couple of other workgroups.

Lisa Freeman added, when you think about financial literacy in the time you hear that term you think what does that really have to do beyond just basic financial management skills that might go toward covering that debt. It actually is broader than that and it goes to understanding the value proposition offered by a four year public versus a private or a proprietary school that may have better marketing but leaves students with a lot more debt. It also goes to understanding the lifetime earnings and interrupting the data you hear in the newspaper. So while we always hear these horror stories about six figure debt, actually 70 percent of students have debt that's 25,000 and below. If you look at the value of a four year degree across all disciplines like engineering, the return on investment so to speak will be higher, but if students and their families understand up front that the debt which seems so high is repaid by the age of 40 because of the actual earnings increase potential that's associated with the attainment of a four year degree. That's a piece of financial literacy and so using our resources and the P20 Network and our connections to get that out there is meaningful in terms of building our enrollment as well as building the economic infrastructure.

Doug Baker added, building on that, the cost to students is going to be the discount rate times how long they're in school. If they are ready for college coming in and they don't have to take remedial courses, they take off a semester or so. If they take fifteen credit hours or more, they will graduate in four years rather than five and a fifth year is very expensive. Tuition, room and board is expensive, but the opportunity cost of not being employed is very expensive. So you can add the lost salary, plus the tuition, room, board and living expenses that you would have in college and you may be making a \$50,000 decision by spending an extra year. So it's incumbent upon us to have good advising for students, but also incumbent upon them to do the work and get it done and get out. Students can get through here in less than four years if they go to summer school and if they take aggressive loads. You really can as a student affect your costs in addition to how opulently you live and how big your cell phone coverage plan is and all those kinds of things.

Promod Vohra added, the internships help. Every summer if they're working for three months and they're getting \$25.00 an hour, that helps them tremendously to pay for the fall tuition and then the loans are relatively smaller. If they are promised a good job, obviously the return on their investment is pretty safe.

Eric Weldy responded, that helps us out as an institution if a student is doing a paid internship over the summer and that means there's less out of our pocket that we would have to help them in regards to covering their costs.

Doug Baker continued, Eric and Academic Affairs have been working on early warning systems so that students who are going off track and going to have to spend extra semesters are warned early that that's a problem and they need to consider how much money they're spending by not taking the right courses.

Lisa Freeman added, I want to say that actually extends beyond our divisions coming out of the Bold Futures workshops. Both the Chair of the Board and the Chair had an incredible amount of staff effort that went into making sure we had the attendance and the early alert systems up and running, so we're seeing the beginnings of the efforts.

Marc Strauss responded, one of the things that we'll return to at some point is what the cost of those programs are and what systems we have in place to determine which of them are working in practice and which are not.

Lisa Freeman responded, absolutely.

John Butler added, what we saw today is a very accurate snapshot of the profile of the students that are coming in, how they are paying for college, what sorts of resources are available from the university. Have we arrived at any conclusions about the students of tomorrow, the profile of the college bound students by racial group? We know there's a large college bound population of Latino students, do we know if they as a general rule will follow the same patterns and trends, possess the same financial literacy and make the same kinds of decision and choices that we are seeing made by the students of today?

Eric Weldy responded, I really see that trend continuing. I think that the difference that can be made is from the standpoint of what we do as an institution and of the university. We know up front in regards to what the challenges are going to be for our students. We need to do some of the things that we discussed here today in order to put our students in a better position to be successful. I always say once we admit a student and they enroll, they're our students. Whatever their problems are, whatever their issues are we need to better prepare ourselves in order to address those issues.

John Butler replied, there's an assumption that students will take advantage of whatever opportunities exist for financial aid and I suspect that that doesn't actually ring true. Students have varying degrees of understanding financial aid and what's available to them and then even beyond that have various levels of capacity to pay attention to deadlines and so forth. How much programming do we devote to educating not our existing students, but students who we know are considering Northern, how quickly do we get to them and say here are the key crucial deadlines that are going to make you successful at Northern and are there best practice models for that?

Rebecca Babel responded, in our applicant pool information about the Illinois State monetary award there is a link to a web page that explains if they can't get their taxes done in a timely basis how they can still log in their federal application deadline date in order to not miss out on that. We have a series of information that goes to our applicant and our admitting pool from January to May and then we do require all of our incoming students to go through the orientation. We have a very high participation level, upper 90 percent. Part of their orientation is a financial aid session, we have identified the students coming to orientation who have not yet done anything about financial aid and we have set up individual counseling with those students to make sure it's just because they don't want it and don't need it, not because they didn't know to do it. That is some of the things that we do. We're very concerned about the issues for students at large. We present a lot of workshops at community events, high schools, public libraries, we will support a lot of FASFA completion workshops, we are in ten high schools in February so we're also trying to just in general help students and parents that don't have that information regardless of their choice.

Eric Weldy added, ISAC does a number of FASFA workshops. One of the big challenges, and this is something that my P20 group discussed earlier was how do you communicate these resources to today's student and families. It's not easy at all. You just can't post something on a website and think that people are going to find the information and just come. Even if you do set things up where you provide at a certain location information for parents and students, who's to say that they could even find the transportation in order to get there. When we talk about some of the challenges of our first generation students, these are some of the issues that we're facing. We need to figure out a better way of how we communicate and connect to get the information to them.

John Butler responded, thank you for those answers. I appreciate learning the details.

Marc Strauss continued, we should turn our attention to when and what we are going to do next. Provost Freeman continued with a presentation on programs, additions and deletions, policy practices that affect faculty or productivity and accountability that relate to her area.

Lisa Freeman continued, I've come to appreciate the vision that our trustees have for this committee as the intersection of things that may be in a standing committee. The intersection that impacts enrollment both recruitment and retention, the attractiveness of our institution to parents and families and the desire for the discussion, the narrative and the data that are shared at these meetings to be ones that allow the trustees to act on policies that are in their purview and where they can help guide the campus. I took that volume of understanding of the purpose of this ad hoc committee to a retreat with all of the deans from the academic colleges. We sequestered ourselves for six hours and talked through as a group the things that we thought would be the most helpful to bring to the next session of this committee. We didn't speak about the capital projects piece that you requested because that's not what we do. We felt that these themes and specifically if you look at the request for an action item, the fact that program prioritization enforcement of that policy could come forward of this committee to the full board because that policy is so much at the intersection of things and some of the things that were brought up about academic and program deletions and additions, not the transactional piece of it, but the market competitiveness piece, the ways that we do things without large policy directives and the way that policy directives might help us. Those were the things that we thought would be on the top of our list to make this work the most constructive, so I bring that to the committee for consideration today so that we can start working on the content for the next meeting of the ad hoc committee and when we look at calendars we all have a date that we can be here to support the important work that's being done.

Marc Strauss responded, I think that fits well with what I had in mind. Does the rest of the members of the committee think that's headed in the right direction for our next meeting?

John Butler responded, I appreciate the distinction you made regarding capital projects, but I do hope that we will as a committee discuss the relationship between not only capital projects that we've already approved such as the student center work that's being done, but things that we're thinking about and are perhaps in a more lower tier level of planning that we might be able to learn a little bit about as it develops so we can follow it and track it, then when it comes to the Board we can see it as related to the university's enrollment objectives and expectations. I'm hoping that does come but not necessarily in this presentation. I want to talk about scheduling. By that I mean when our courses are scheduled and whether or not the colleges are finding that the degree completion objectives of students within their majors are being accommodated from a scheduling standpoint. Are we seeing an increased demand for courses at night. Is that happening and are we able to accommodate that? Are the structures that we use to reward and incentivize faculty to teach at those times, are they sufficient to encourage the faculty to do that kind of teaching? Are there off-campus teaching needs that we're unable to fulfill? Those are some of the questions I'd like to get a better idea of how we flush that out. What I'm picturing here is a student who wants to go to Northern but the schedule is not working for him or her because the courses they need to graduate just aren't offered at the time that they can go because they work nine to five. Is that a problem? To what extent might it be a problem and how are we programmatically managing that problem? I suspect increasingly it's just natural that the students who are trying to complete their degrees are finding it difficult to get the course work they need at night.

Lisa Freeman noted, part of that intersection of scheduling, degree completion pathways, and our attractiveness as an institution because enrollment is made up of the recruiting students who may have these needs and retaining students who started and need to finish pathways, we might put in some elements not just of evening scheduling and the use of our outreach centers to be convenient, but the kinds of ways that we're prioritizing programs that are offered on line to meet needs. Programs that specifically target degree completion students as well as looking at overall scheduling strategies so that students who come in can see a pathway to graduation without falling short of that, maybe that could all be under a scheduling item and we can look at it a little more globally, but still address the question in a way that you framed it.

John Butler added, I have an interest in being assured that we are being nimble in developing our schedule in relation to the demand and needs of our target population, but beyond that and in the interest of what this committee was formed to do, there may be actual Board action items where the Board can help. I'm not sure what those are at this point, but as we talk about those subjects, we might think about what policies, procedures, tuition setting functions, differential tuition work on graduate level, would we ever consider that on the undergraduate level.

Lisa Freeman indicated, that's right on target. That's a very important point of discussion. When you look at the growing population and you know we've spoken about the rising number of students (with) Hispanic backgrounds, what we now call 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners instead of adult learners or non-traditional students, it's hard to actually draw those distinctions, that's such a growing demand for all universities and many of those students are place bound or working adults. This is a wonderful entrée to have that discussion and to really discuss what the Board, what can we do together, what policy changes are in line because obviously we want what we discussed with you, not just to be of general interest, but to be a place where a Board policy change or directive can really mean the difference for the institution and allow us to help students and our enrollment.

Marc Strauss indicated, that's exactly the direction I wanted us to head in. To the extent that there's some background information that's required in each one of these areas. We'll need that so we can understand any of the context for policy recommendations, but to the extent that we can get to the policy recommendations is part of the presentation that would be great from my perspective.

Lisa Freeman asked if we need a motion.

Marc Strauss noted, no I don't need a motion. Is everyone okay with heading in that direction?

Robert Marshall responded, a couple of the items may need to shift into Academic Affairs.

Marc Strauss added, we are going to have follow-up items in the day-to-day items for sure.

Robert Marshall indicated, yes.

Marc Strauss responded to Lisa, do you have an idea how long it would take you to be prepared to make that presentation?

Lisa Freeman continued, our preference would be to be on the other side of the standing committee meetings if possible, but we will obviously honor the wishes of the Board of Trustees.

Marc Strauss added, that's fair given we have got another ad hoc meeting and we have a short period of time until the other. How big a block of time would you expect we would need to get through those topics, two hours, four hours?

Lisa Freeman responded, two to two and a half hours at most. We can certainly continue to provide data in advance or after the fact, but being mindful of the trustees desires to get to the policy piece I'm thinking two to two and a half hours. We will do more work in advance. Liz and Mike will work together to do some comparison of key calendars here and get to the trustees for a poll so that we can find that date immediately. For that discussion, I would like to check the calendars of our active leadership so as many of them as possible can be here.

Marc Strauss indicated, we don't have to make the determination today and I want to be realistic about whether we can be prepared or not.

## **8. OTHER MATTERS**

Marc Strauss asked, any other business? Yes Trustee Marshall.

Robert Marshall added, since they're already at the national level proposals for free college tuition, they may pass or they may wind up as discounted tuition. Either way it could at a future date impact the university systems, so are we doing any type of planning to work with this should it come to pass? This is for our freshman and sophomores.

Marc Strauss responded, I don't know whether there's an answer to the specific question. On the policy issue involved, should the Board take a stance with regard to either how we set or what the level should be for tuition and fees? We haven't addressed that question yet in this committee and my thought was that we would wait to address that until we had been through all of these presentations and we had an idea about what the entire economic landscape looked like. I fully recognize there could be changes in the landscape between today and the time that we get to that conversation which could be six months or a year from now.

Doug Baker added, our Federal Relations person Anna Quider is working on this issue now. There's a significant concern about the impact of this proposal on four year schools in the country and some of the national organizations are weighing in on that like APLU and others. The president's proposal probably doesn't have much of a chance given the two houses and the legislature in Washington DC, but it does point to the need for lower costs for students. We are trying to partner closely with community colleges and understand that challenge the fiscal dynamic and some of the cost advantages of community colleges, so we're trying to partner as closely as we can with community colleges to give that pathway to students and recruit more heavily into our junior and senior year. I think if we keep our eye on what's right for the students perspective, then ultimately our enrollment will be enhanced by that.

## **9. NEXT MEETING DATE**

Actual date/time: TBD

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was made by John Butler and seconded by Robert Marshall. The committee voted to adjourn at 11:30am

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Wright  
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.*