Minutes of the
NIU Board of Trustees
Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment
October 14, 2015

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m. by Marc Strauss in the Board of Trustees Room, 315 Altgeld Hall. Recording Secretary Kathy Carey conducted a roll call. Members present were Chair Marc Strauss, Trustees John Butler, Robert Boey, Timothy Struthers, and Robert Marshall. Trustee Raquel Chavez was absent Also present: Board Liaison Mike Mann, President Doug Baker, General Counsel Jerry Blakemore, Eric Weldy, UAC Representative Greg Long, Harlan Teller, Abby Dean, Danielle Schultz, Anne Kaplan.

2. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM AND APPROPRIATE NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

General Counsel Blakemore indicated the appropriate notification of the meeting has been provided pursuant to the Illinois Open Meetings Act. Mr. Blakemore also advised that a quorum was present.

3. APPROVAL OF PROPOSED MEETING AGENDA

Chair Strauss asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Trustee Robert Boey so moved and Trustee John Butler seconded. The motion was approved.

4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 15, 2015

Chair Strauss asked for a motion to approve the minutes of June 15. Trustee John Butler so moved and Trustee Robert Boey seconded. The motion passed.

5. CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Strauss began, in terms of introductory comments, I simply want to set a context for our discussion today. Since we have some new members that are appointed to this committee now, I thought it would be good for us to summarize what we've been about for the last year. The materials that have been provided include a summary of what has happened at the last four meetings. It doesn't include the full detail of everything that happened at each one of those sessions nor the informal conversations that have occurred in the interim, but it will start to serve as a summary of what it is that we've been able to accomplish so far. At the end of the presentations today which will focus first on highlighting items in the summary of what has happened to date, and then bringing some focus to the one item in the committee charge that we haven't had discussion yet which would be financial matters, items that were capital expenses or expenditures that would exceed the presidential spending authority. We will have completed at least a first pass of all the issues that were within our initial charge and, as I see it at that point, we have at least three things we need to consider. First, whether the Ad Hoc Committee should continue or whether there are items that ought to be folded into standing committees. Second, whether we can define information series that need to be received in the future either by this Committee or by some other committee or the full Board. Finally, whether there are action steps that are required with regard to any of the subject matter that we have received thus far or will receive today. There may be other items that members of the Committee wish to consider, and I welcome some conversation after we receive the two presentations this afternoon on at least those three items and that will guide what we can do in the future. That concludes my opening comments and I would also like to recognize members of the University Advisory Committee that may be here. Dr. Long you're welcome to participate as appropriate, but if you have any opening comment we'd be happy to receive that now as well.

Greg Long responded, my only opening comment is to appreciate the opportunity to be here and participate. Certainly, as I've said before, I am representing the faculty and staff, we are very interested and available to provide input and support and would certainly like to, from an enrollment standpoint, recognize that we have emphasis on non-traditional students, on-line program support, as well as any cuts to student support right now. We have certain concerns in terms of its impact on retention. But those are some generic statements, I would stand by that comment that we are more than happy to help as we can to make the University Advisory Council a vehicle to communicate.

Trustee Butler asked for more clarification on the interests mentioned with respect to on-line curriculum. If the committee were to continue and that was the subject matter for the committee to review, what are you interested in learning about?

Greg Long responded, certainly the opportunities and support are available to do that, and there are bigger pictures in terms of what's the revenue that would be gained and what's the process for how that works. Are there supports for faculty to create these kinds of courses? That's a challenge that we face now as it does take a fair amount of effort to put one on, to monitor it and create accessible contact as well. It's really that idea of we're going to do more things on-line which may be a reasonable strategy for additional revenue, we need to build in the supports to have that happen as well as making sure that everything we do is this accessible. That's certainly an interest of mine and also a requirement.

Trustee Butler added, when you say opportunity, you're referring to the opportunity for faculty to transform their curriculum to an on-line platform?

Greg Long responded, correct. Whether it's courses or whether we're looking at programs, I've heard a lot of talk from different people about different options and so there is a notion of again, do we look at it as a class or do we look at as a course of study, but I think there are some opportunities there that faculty have talked about. It also supplies an opportunity to reach the more non-traditional student or perhaps students who don't have the ability to be on campus as readily.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

General Counsel Blakemore indicated that there were no requests for public comment.

7. UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS/REPORTS

Agenda Item 7.a. Report to the Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment

President Baker began, what we have in front of us is a review of what we've gone over for the last four meetings and, as I was thinking about this report, we've come a long ways. As I reviewed this year's work, I would say we've come a long way, but also know we've got a long way to go. A lot has been done across the university, but we're two years into a multi-year project including enrollment in a very competitive and rapidly changing environment as we face declining high school enrollments and increased competition from out of state and on-line all over the world. It's a competitive environment but we've taken some good step. I would invite anybody to ask questions as I go through this. I'm going to review some pieces and then Eric will review some and we'll back and forth depending on the topical area. We also have Harlan and Abby to speak about marketing and communications issues if you have any specific questions. We held four meetings. The first was on enrollment trends and where have we been; and then our recruitment/retention efforts in the face of that as well as some scholarship information. On the January 16 meeting, we talked about financial aid packaging and scholarship information and also tuition and fee trends and some comparisons. In March, we had a lengthy discussion around program prioritization. The University Council is looking at these processes to see if we can be more efficient and effective in program approvals and policies and practices that affect faculty work, productivity and accountability. Finally, in the June meeting, we looked at policies and practices that affect additions and deletions. Our playing field is a difficult one, and the institution over about a five year period has lost over 18% of our enrollments. We're not unique in the state. In fact, while the

University of Illinois has gone up and ISU has been relatively flat, all the other publics in the state have been down. The competitive forces are not just publics, there's over 1000 schools recruiting in Chicagoland and, 65 have recruiting offices physically in the Chicagoland. We have heavy competition from out of state with many students leaving the state, 3,300 students left in 2014 to go to school elsewhere. We imported 1,600 but we're also in that large exporter. Our high school enrollments are going to be dipping for a few years and then slightly increase after that, but will be below the level we're at now. Enrollment is not just about recruitment but retention as well. That is a function of a suite of activities including recruitment, orientation into the first year, social attachment, academic support, and on up through their curricula and the pedagogy and their engagement. That also includes the community and how engaged they are and welcoming. We are also working on those. I'm proud to say we've made stride the last two years. Five percent two years ago and another one percent this year, so a total of six percent in two years with a number of programs just hitting full stride now. I'm hopeful that that's going to build our enrollments over time as we fulfill our mission of getting students a great education and graduating them. In terms of our profile, 91 percent of our students come from Illinois and 87 percent from the northern part of the state and that's basically because that's where the population is. So we're actually very well suited to be in this part of the state. We're the only public research university between here and downtown Chicago and there's a lot of people in between so it's a great physical advantage to essentially be from the Mississippi River to downtown Chicago the only research university. We can capitalize on that.

President Baker continued, the demography of the state has been changing, and last year over 50 percent of the high school graduates were students of color in the state. The American Association of Colleges and Universities now call that student body the new majority rather than minority students. We've turned a corner and so we need to be very cognizant of that in having a welcoming and supportive environment. We also know that with increases, there are increasing needs for affordability and so we've been looking at our needs-based aid and know that it's critical for our students, 5,700 of our students get MAP grants. $20 million worth of money flows through the institution to students each year. As you know, we don't have a state MAP budget yet and so we're floating that money to the students now. It is critical for us to get that money in the budget as is for all the publics and privates who get this MAP funding. We also commit $18 million of institutional financial aid to students. That's money that comes out of our operating budget. That's money that could go to the bottom line and pay for faculty and staff or reduce tuition. That's a big chunk and we know that our students have increased need and so we have been trying to hold the line on tuition, fees, room and board. In terms of college costs, as those state support dollars have gone down, tuition and fees at NIU have increased an average of ten percent over the last nine years; ten percent per year from $5,000 to roughly $9,000. That's a significant increase, and that's why in the last two years we've tried to hold that down.

Trustee Struthers asked, how does that number compare to state universities say in Iowa, Wisconsin, Missouri, etc.? If you can give a playing field of academics and such.

President Baker responded, across the country we've seen, unfortunately, state governments cut higher education as one of the soft places in the budget, for example, as Medicaid, and other things, have driven costs up. There is a similar percentage kind of phenomena around the country.

Trustee Struthers added, so the fact that Illinois is far and away the worst migrater of students on a net basis, how much of that has to do with the cost of a similar education in Illinois versus other states and how much of it simply has to do with the fact that the other states are more competitive? Competitive meaning a better value in their eyes, a better experience, or maybe what's driving that big migration.

President Baker responded, Harlan is going to be doing a brand perception study and I think that's going to be an important piece of that answer. I don't have an aggression equation to predict the variance on how much is the cost and how much is other factors. Oddly enough, students do perceive a higher value out of state even though the statistics don't support that. I think it was Atlantic Monthly recognizes us as one of the top values, we were 26th value in the country for the return on investment.

Trustee Struthers asked if that trend was the same back five or ten years ago, what would that negative migration have looked like then. Is this a trend or one of those things that catches momentum with students? Some of this may be an NIU issue and some of it may be a State of Illinois issue.

President Baker continued, except for the University of Illinois and ISU, pretty much everybody has seen that migration out. The signaling that's going on from Springfield right now is also not helping. I think faculty, staff and students are all now considering what the commitment to higher education in this state is? We're in the second quarter of the year without a budget and that is a signal. I know the faculty and staff are quite concerned as are students about what' going to happen here. That uncertainty is raising questions and not helping enrollments across the state either. We have begun to try and address these issues by trying to keep tuition, and room and board flat, and it actually went down this fall with a significant reduction in our board rates. We also are trying to encourage students to graduate on time. One of the greatest ways to reduce your cost is to graduate on time and not spend another year. Both the tuition and fees costs, as well as the opportunities cost of not being employed or in graduate school or wherever it may be are big deals. So we've put in a course plateau such that over 12 credit hours you're not charged additional dollars so that's encouraging you to take a full load. We also know from research at places like Complete College America that if you take 15 credit hours or more per semester on average, your graduation rate goes up dramatically and one of the reasons is the longer you stay in school more life happens and the more expenses there are and you get washed out of higher education because of all those life factors. So we are trying to encourage it with our plateaued tuition policy. In number 10, I'll note that we do need to approve our programs in a timely fashion so we have the curricula in place to meet the emerging needs. We want to align the Board of Trustees schedule potentially here with a special meeting to approve those courses so they can be offered the next year in a timely fashion.

Trustee Strauss clarified, if people haven't seen it, an e-mail went out today with a proposed modification to the calendar to incorporate a special meeting on one of our committee dates that would allow us to take this up in the appropriate sequence if it was required. For those of you who have received the e-mail and haven't yet replied, please pay attention to it and let us know whether that schedule looks like it is one that still needs work or is going to be acceptable. We'll take it up more formally at a full Board meeting, but we're in the process now of conducting a poll to try to figure out whether we can get enough Board members that will be able to attend on the proposed dates.

President Baker continued, another issue we've discussed here and the Board has supported is program prioritization. We need to align our budget with our mission and with program prioritization we are trying to develop a broad range of inputs and metrics to examine and to have discussions on campus and through established faculty governance procedures so that we can review our allocations and look at them through the lenses of quality, efficiency, effectiveness and centrality to see if they are fulfill our mission. So are we investing in the places where we need to invest? You only don't do that if you know you're perfectly suited and the environment's not changing. Well we're not perfectly allocated and the environment is changing dramatically, so we need to have this process. I know it does cause some angst anytime you start looking at programs, academic and non-academic. We're going through this in an open process and trying to do what's right for our stakeholders. State funding support has gone down dramatically. If you just look at raw dollars, $27 million from 2002 to 2015 and if you look at inflation adjusted dollars, we're down 50 percent in our spending power from our state appropriations. That's a dramatic decrease. And, counter to what some see in the media about rising budgets for higher education, the budgets have gone up for pensions because the pensions were underfunded and they're trying to catch up, but operating budgets have dropped dramatically. Losing half of your spending power in 12 years causes a lot of challenges and builds up a lot of stress in the system. On top of that, we've had two proposals for this year's budget, one from the Governor for at 31.5 percent budget reduction in that operating budget, and from the legislature and 8 plus percent reduction that was vetoed by the Governor and we still don't have a budget. I will note that my fellow university presidents will be in Springfield next week for a series of meetings with legislators and the Governor. Some community college presidents will also be in attendance at those meetings and we've been trying to press our case. We'll see what happens next week. Affordability, we need to be very cognizant of that. We've gotten tuition to a point now where it's difficult for many students to pay, so we've got another reason for program prioritization. We've really got to look at what we're spending our money on and making sure we're as efficient and effective as possible. We're trying to do that through program prioritization as well as process re-engineering. So status quo is not the answer, we need to be more efficient, more effective, and we need to increase our enrollments and we'll work on that through recruitment and retention.

Trustee Struthers had two questions - with respect to the operating model and a little bit on the comment of alternative ways to teach and learn, are we structured in a way or considering being structured in a way that would have an e-learning channel or alternative teaching channels so that folks can focus on that and, is that in place today?

President Baker responded, I can tell you just a thumbnail on that and we can tour you through the facility. We had two e-learning groups when I got here, we've combined them into one, and we put the programs through a rigorous Quality Matters process. It's a nationally norm process about on-line learning and the steps to take to have high quality on-line learning. They do an excellent job on that. Now if you think of the portfolio of options for enrollment, on-line learning is one, recruitment of freshmen is another, transfer students is another, efforts to increase our retention is yet another way to increase, international programs, graduate programs, business to business, adult learners, branch campuses, all are NIU's portfolio opportunities, with on-line learning being one of them. Before we decide where we want to allocate our resources through program prioritization or another process, we need to look at the portfolio and see where the biggest impact that we can have is. There's some serious strategic analysis needed for that. In the on-line world you can take almost any topic currently on-line from somebody. So then you have to say what's our competitive advantage here, is that sustainable, and do we want to invest here. We're doing that and, for example, the College of Education last year had the number one ranked Masters of Education on-line program in the country, according to US News and World Report. I'll put an asterisk there and say I have a great deal of hesitation about using US News and World Report as a metric, but it is one that we're ranked number one. So we're looking at which programs we have a competitive advantage and where do we want to go, whether it be individual course or on-line degree programs.

Trustee Struthers added, so organizationally there is somebody on top of the pile for enrollment, and then within all those portfolios there is a manager per se and one of those is a manager of e-learning?

President Baker responded, correct, Meryl Sussman.

Trustee Struthers continued, and the other piece would be program prioritization. As you find the department X, Y or Z are not in demand or efficient/competitive, do we have within the construct of tenure and fixed costs kinds of obligations, a way we can truly reduce cost efficiently? In the private sector when a product isn't working, that market isn't working, you'd close it down. Is that an impossible?

President Baker responded no, that's why we're going through that process. We have classes that are turning away students also due to overcapacity. However, you might lose money on every student because of the costs involved in building another building or another whatever. So you have to look at both sides of the balance sheet before you make those decisions and then also strategically is that core to our mission for our kind of institution. So it's a complex mix, but yes, we're considering those. We have been overhauling our recruitment efforts. I'll turn to Eric to talk a little bit about that.

Vice President Weldy began, two years ago when I arrived one of the things that I felt was important was to provide some form of stability within undergraduate admissions lost due changes in staff. There had been a number of directors of undergraduate admissions. I had a good opportunity to look at the overall operation. Within the past couple of years, the leadership team within Admissions has changed completely since I first arrived, and all of the associate directors, including the Director of Admissions, are fairly new staff members in their positions. I looked at current staff and there were certain individuals that, if provided the opportunity to really excel with their specific skill set, could be moved into key positions at the associate director level. In addition, the hiring of a new Director of Admissions, Dani

Rollins, 8 or 9 months ago, and she is doing a wonderful job in regards to our admission overhaul. We looked at was not only restructuring Admissions in order to improve our overall operations, but also to improve our recruitment efforts and to increase enrollment. We changed the makeup of undergraduate admissions by dividing it into five key areas, one which is recruitment. The second is systems and processing. The third is events, tours, and customer service. The fourth is strategic communications and the fifth focus is administrative support. I will give a few highlights. First of all, in regards to recruitment, one of the things that was lacking was good training for our Admission counselors, our recruiters, as well as for other staff. So we implemented a program to provide complete training year-round for the Admissions staff which I think is something that is very appreciated by the staff. We also improved communication among staff. Just with the changes with the training and the improved communication, it really has reaped benefits for us. Some other things, as well, is from the standpoint of the recruitment side of things with the counselors, providing or creating key performance indicators so that each recruiter would pretty much know what's required of them during the course of the year, recruitment season, which I think is very important. We also re-examined our recruitment territories as well. In the past we recruited in certain areas of the state and for whatever reason we stopped recruiting in certain areas. For example, Southern Illinois is an area in which we used to recruit heavily and kind of went away from that as well as recruitment in certain areas surrounding the State of Illinois; in Wisconsin, Indiana, Iowa and so forth. We are taking a look and doing the research to find out if there areas where there is projected increases in traditional age students in those areas and putting ourselves in the position where we can go out and recruit. Other things that we're looking at from the standpoint of recruitment, we know that we can't be every place at one given time. We get a lot of requests during the course of the year to attend various college fairs and other events and we definitely have our own schedule, but many times we're asked to go places and we're all booked across the board. One thing that other institutions have done and have been successful at is utilizing alumni and friends to help them recruit around the country. That's something that we have been looking at. We've created a program which I believe once it really kicks in and we get the support from our alumni and friends, I think that it will go a long way. So there's an on-line training component for alumni and we would provide materials and so forth for them. As I noted, it's impossible to be every place at once, but this gives us an opportunity to be in places where our regular full time staff is just not able to be due to travel and expense and so forth. Another piece I want to talk about is systems and processing. Our communications system that we use to communicate with prospective students is called connect and it's created by a company called Hobsons. One of the things that Dani noted when she arrived here is that our Connect, our CRM system, our customer relationship management system, was in complete disarray and under Dani's leadership it has undergone a massive clean-up. What we did was we called in Hobsons to come in, to look at the system and basically help us do the overhaul. We cleaned up and organized over 12,000 contact filters and cataloged them in a way that the most useful filters we placed them in one place so it's easy for our staff to access those. What would happen is over the years that new filters would be created and utilized and then they would basically remain there and so we just kind of built up on that which is not a way to utilize that particular system. We did such a great job, Dani and her team did such a great job in cleaning up the system that Hobsons asked Dani and a member of our staff to visit their campus, attend a major national conference in San Antonio, and present in regards to the process we went through to clean up our system.

Trustee Struthers asked a question of the other trustees so the staffing was in disarray, lots of turnover in the last five years or so and the system was in disarray, did you guys know that? Did you have any sense?

Chair Strauss responded no

Trustee Struss responded, that would have been my speculation, but I just can't help but then fast forward right to make so you mention KPIs which I'm a big fan of to get not too many where you lose a portion of trees, are there measures on a single piece of paper that are trendable and also have an objective tied to it so we know that the staff and the systems are working in a really, clear, tight way so this never, ever happens again. This is really going to be at the very root of our biggest challenge. No one knew it was happening.

Chair Strauss added, this was a discussion that we had previously so everybody is aware at this point and one of things that I want to talk about after the presentations is how do we determine which of these performance indicators, our dashboard are important and which get reported to us as opposed to people who are charged with day to day administration and whether that happens within the context of this committee and other committee or the full Board. I think we started to hear from people that we knew at the end of last year that they had applications that weren't being processes. This roughly coincided with we were already at the stage where we had started to take a look at enrollment in this committee and we were nearly at the point where we were going to get a presentation on these matters. We obviously expressed concern as we heard about it, but many of these operational items happen on a day to day basis. They don't immediately get reported to us except if we happen to hear from people who are participating in that process.

Trustee Butler added, this was one of the reasons why this Ad Hoc Committee was created because we knew there were problems last year over the summer as we had an extended dialog with the President. We thought this would be a good platform for us to learn more about these issues and for the President and the staff to talk to us about those issues outside of the regular Board Meeting schedule where maybe the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee might be able to give 15 or 20 minutes to. This is a platform that provides more time to have these kinds of in depth dialog.

Trustee Boey responded, this brings me back to the point that when you started the meeting about enrollment whether it should be part of the BOT committee or whether it should stand alone. And after having sat through all the Ad Hoc Committee meetings, I would suggest that we leave this as a standalone because it's so important. It ties back in with all our other issues and I would not want it to be diluted in terms of missing our other committee meetings. Let it be a standalone committee meeting as far as I'm concerned on the subject.

Chair Strauss added, yes I appreciate that input. I think it reflects my point of view too. I don't want it relegated to 15 minutes in a standing committee but I thought it was important enough that we have a more general conversation about what the committee members had to say on the subject. It obviously requires a commitment of our time and the time of the administration to do these committees and it's not just the time that we take in the meetings, but the effort that is involved in putting together the minutes and we need to do that in a timely manner so that these Ad Hoc Committees can report in a meaningful way to the full Board before all of our colleagues get back together again to consider any recommendations that come out of the committee. After a year we've gotten to the point where we've received a lot of background information, but we haven't processed any action items back to the full board yet. Now seemed to be an appropriate time to tackle all of those issues and I am interested in having that conversation, but I do want to make sure that we get the rest of the backup, particularly for Trustees Struthers and Chavez, this background is important to be able to have the balance of the conversation. I think it's important to understand the topics that we have taken up, the level of detail that has been involved in these presentations and then understand that there's an additional level of detail added by questions that have been asked by committee members outside of the committee that I think will inform maybe some of the discussion about what it is that we do for the next steps.

Trustee Boey responded, let's face it Marc when you talk about enrollment, enrollment and financial are the two major issues to our survival.

Chair Strauss continued, well they're related. The fundamentals to being able to build a sustainable financial model, include what does our enrollment look like, what's our tuition, and what's the level of state support? So a portion of that is within our control and a portion is not. It's hard to build a sustainable financial model if you can't have a stable enrollment figure to plan to. At some point we have to be intentional about what that enrollment number is going to look like yet have a plan that allows us to be able to adjust up or down depending on what happens. Up to this point, we've discussed this in finance, facilities and operations for some time, but up to this point we've only looked at budgets that had revenue numbers in them. Quite frankly the revenue has been going down so quickly that you don't have the opportunity to do anything other than react to what has to be done in order to deal with the revenue declines and there's no purposeful planning behind it. That's an exaggeration and it may be sounds more pejorative than it is. People care about the way in which that gets administered. I don't mean to suggest anything to the contrary, but the amount of effort required to be able to process what happens when you're short that amount of money, leaves little time to be able to do the type of planning that I think everybody would like to have accomplished.

Trustee Boey commented, I think at the end of the day the importance of enrollment deserves its own attention on committees.

Chair Strauss responded, understood.

Trustee Butler added, I did speak last night with Trustee Chavez and I went over the history of both the Ad Hoc Committees with her in a rather extensive conversation. She couldn't make the beginning of this meeting, but she'll be here for sure for the three o'clock meeting, but she did ask me many questions about this report so I know that she's read it in terms of that background. What I want to add to this conversation just simply to say on a positive and reinforcing note, that I truly appreciate the bare the flaws of the system that you've done here, because I really think it helps us understand the meaningful nature of the changes that you've made here and the direction that you're taking. As I'll mention later, you've been on a journey. Both of you came in at the same time and you discovered at the same time these flaws and you've been correcting them and we've been walking by your side on that journey for about a year now of intensely working with you and learning from you, certainly not I would not say we are driving this change, you're driving this change, but we've learned from you and I have a great deal of appreciation for the manner in which you have outlined these issues and then framed your response to them for us.

Vice President Weldy responded, thank you very much. The good thing is that we've made a lot of progress in the past couple years and I have to remind even my staff of that because as we kind of tackle of these other issues and so forth we have made a lot or progress and I think that is evident from the standpoint in regards to our fall enrollment numbers. The projections were not all that positive, but I think that because of this commitment not just of my staff in admissions, but the entire university, I think we were in a better position than what we thought we would be. We're already looking a year, two years down the line, from the standpoint of the new cohort groups coming in.

Chair Strauss responded, that's a good point. Tim raises a good question too and part of the prior conversation that we had is while there are some things that were undertaken in the last year that did at the very end potentially impact the rate at which we had people who appeared as students. It's hard when you're changing so many variables to know which one works and so the committee has asked that we make sure that we put in place some program where we can measure which of these things that we're changing have a positive impact and determine the cost effectiveness of each one of those as well; because there were for each of these strategies projected return on investment as well as a cost figure. Again, there was attention paid to doing this as a purposeful exercise and we want to I think find a framework to make sure that this monitoring is continued in a constructive way because not everything is going to work as it was forecast.

President Baker commented, I was just going to frame one other issue, Trustee Butler's historical comments I think are right on target. Just to frame it, our first year as we got here we were well into the recruiting cycle and we realized we're not going to be where we wanted to be and it would be difficult for us at that time to move the needle very much because we're into it, so we focused on retention. That first year we had a five percent increase in retention and there are variety of things that may have influenced it, but we got a five percent increase in retention and another percent this year. And those things will build over time now. We're on the tracks, moving forward with those, and then last fall we saw our applications not where they needed to be, continuing the downward slide trend, and partway through the year contracted out with someone to help us and it made some impact but that was partway through a year. So now this year we're finally getting those pieces dovetailing together. So we are on a journey and we're catching up as we peel the onion and find more and more layers, we're addressing those. I appreciate Vice President Weldy and all the faculty and staff's work on this.

Chair Strauss added, and it's a calendar that has particular windows for particular activities so if you're going to have success getting people to the top of the enrollment funnel for traditional students, there's a time of year where traditional high school graduates are going to be exploring and filing an application. I think you've probably experienced that personally. So we get one shot a year to be able to make adjustments with regard to increasing the number of applications. It's not something you can do during the rest of the year and we have to run the experiment and see what we can accomplish that time around.

Trustee Struthers asked, give me an idea of how many staff you're talking about in the recruitment bucket, and has that number grown quite a bit?

Vice President Weldy responded, if you look at the undergraduate admission staff members there's roughly about 40 – 44 staff members.

Trustee Struthers responded, and how does that strike you relative to your peers and relative to history?

Vice President Weldy added, it should be a little bit larger in regards to our peers and that's from the standpoint of when we look at our processors, those who process our applications, as well as from the standpoint of our admission counselors that recruit. We're in the midst of addressing that issue as well.

Trustee Struthers replied, it just strikes me again as – half an hour into this thing, is clearly this is the biggest deal there is. How goes this, goes everything else. The fall students of course right, so that's a given, that effort and that success of that initiative is the elephant in the room and so if we have to move some allocations of people, dollars, etc. etc. we need to support in any way we can.

Chair Strauss added, so this is an elephant in the room, we actually have an entire herd of elephants and so we can at the appropriate time pick an elephant to focus on. This is one that we've been looking at. It's one segment of the recruiting and retention effort, so President Baker described that we've done some looking at retention and invested money and some approaches there. Now we're talking about one segment of student that's entering traditional undergraduate students. We have other streams that we have to look at too and those include whether or not you have on-line students; you have non-traditional students; you have transfers from community colleges which has traditionally been a very big segment for us; and you have special areas that also require attention for marketing because President Baker talked about whether or not our student characteristics are the same as they have been in the past. These are all areas that we've talked about with the confines of the committee and I think the discussion was good because it evidenced that the people who have dated a responsibility for it understand, at least at this point, understand what those trends reflect, were able to educate us and we were able to ask some questions about what support was required in order to be able to have us continue to make progress. One of our goals has been to see whether there are board level decisions that need to be made to support those efforts in a way that will produce a result. We've expressed that we're interested in seeing that whatever it is that we're doing to support that effort produces a positive return.

Trustee Struthers responded, right. Well said. Thank you.

Vice President Weldy continued, in transition, speaking of marketing, I was just going to say one of the things that we've done is we partnered with the Division of Marketing and Communications to centralize and standardize our marketing and university promotional efforts. And so whether it has to do with printed publications as well as social media and on-line or web information, that has proven to be very successful for us and so we're really joined at the hip which is the way that it should be and so with that I will pass that part to President Baker, but we have a question first.

Trustee Marshall asked, one or two items, you mentioned the newly formed southern region. I'm trying to get somewhat of a picture of the regions that we work with. I'm assuming it is south of Chicago, but where?

Vice President Weldy responded, yes, south of I80.

President Baker responded, thanks. So Marketing and Communications, I'll say a few words about this and then if you do have questions, Interim Vice President Teller and Abby Dean are here for more detailed answers. So Chair Strauss mentioned the top of the funnel and the top of the funnel is getting people interested in coming and looking at us and so how do we get them to do that so that we can then engage with them through the customer relations or the constituent and relations management system, the Hobsons product, and talk with them or have then just come visit, etc. A lot of competition, a lot of people vying for peoples eyeballs and in the past we've had fairly fragmented marketing at this university. Vice President Teller has come in and really trying to get a grip on that. He's done a number of things culturally and structurally and goal wise. Structurally, he's reorganized into the three units noted here around Institutional Communications, Campus Communications, and University Marketing as well as the Creative Services. Institutional communication is really very important and that includes media and public relations unit which deals largely with managing the institutions reputation. Universities always have good and bad things going on and you really have to do your best to put your best foot forward so that one or two negative things don't swamp all the amazing things that go on in universities and so they work on that piece of it. Campus communications is really, really important. One that we often don't think about in terms of the critical factor, but if you need to mobilize 4000 employees to work toward a common goal, you need to talk to them and you need to get everybody on board and you need to get their feedback. It's a two-way street with communications. The Campus Communications group has really focused internally on our staff, our faculty as well as our students on our various campuses and on-line and really trying to get pointed common directions and get feedback for corrections as we need those. Trustee Struthers, you may not know this, this summer we held over 20 meetings with middle level supervisors, department level chairs, on an academic/non-academic, what we had, a couple hundred people we talked to, really talking about communications. How do we get you the information you need and how do you get the information we need and what do we do differently? In these challenging times how we going to work as a team, how do we get you that information? Very positive feedback on things we can do. Candid conversations but very constructive conversations, so I was excited to do those and just the fact that we did them I think built communication channels that hadn't been there before. Thanks to Vice President Teller and his crew and Vice President Kaplan actually was the first one to poke us to think about doing that. University marketing charged with the management development of the NIU brand and getting our value proposition out there. We really do think we've got a value proposition here and the statistics bear that out. If you come here you will have a transformational experience and you'll go on to have a great career. And then finally, Creative Services, the video, photography, design, social media work that goes on in the background that's so critical to us and we have some great people working in those areas. As part of this process over the last two years, the tagline was changed to "Your Future, Our Focus" which builds on student career success as our keystone goal. We've done a lot of work trying to get everybody on the same page with communications and graphics standards, trying to complement each other's work, getting on the same page, trying to build a close relationship with Student Affairs that Vice President Weldy talked about and I think that's happening. The people that have come into those positions do work well together, they are tracked together and are trying to go the same way. You don't see that in every institution and probably didn't see it a couple years ago here. So I just want to complement everybody that's leaning forward and trying to work together and I think we're well on the way to doing that. One of the tools that Vice President Teller and his team are working on across the university is a University Marketing and Communications Council. So you can think of marketing and communications as a central function, but in fact almost every unit has somebody doing communications and if you don't have them rowing together then the boat's going in circles. So the Marketing and Communications Council is to get everybody on the same page saying here's where we're going and here's what we need to focus on in terms of the message about NIU. To do that, Vice President Teller has broken up those marketing and communications folks from the various units into teams. One is on marketing and social media, one on web governance, and another on public and media relations, internal communications. So those teams are meeting on a monthly basis and have objectives and are working toward them.

Trustee Struthers asked, help me understand that, so if within the Department of the College of Business say, they would have a communications person there, are they then matrixed reporting into this group?

President Baker responded, yes.

Trustee Struthers added, I think that's an excellent idea for exactly as you said if they're going out crafting their own message, even though there will be nuances of course between political science and business or whatever, that overarching general theme of the brand absolutely needs to be consistent.

President Baker continued, absolutely and this organization question is one that the Board's asked us to look at really for all units in terms of what's centralized and what's decentralized. So what we need is coordinated activity and there's multiple ways to get there. Vice President Teller, as an initial step has said let's leave the structure essentially out in the units where it is now, but let's matrix them in, let's meet on a regular basis and let's go forward in these topical areas before we're much more disaggregated.

Trustee Struthers added, do they all know from you directly that that is really, really important that they're coordinated as opposed to just some ad hoc hey let's get together and share ideas, it's kind of pretty hard…

President Baker responded, it's crystal clear. This is a saline issue for the whole institution. But you can think about that in almost every area. How much decentralization, centralization, how do we coordinate these functions? At one end of the continuum we could say we're going to take everybody in some functional unit and we're going to put them all under a vice president and nobody in the other unit, they'll have to have a client relationship. It may work in some area, I don't know, or you could do what Harlan is doing or you could leave it disaggregated; so there's a variety of different way to do it and we're looking at that. IT would be another one. You've got IT operations, desktop operations in every unit. Should that be part of IT or should that be part of the College of X or the Division of Y? In some cases you do want, local stuff is really important, you don't need to call central IT to get your printer fixed, maybe, but if you're talking about security for the whole system, maybe that needs to be under a common umbrella. So all the vice presidents are thinking about that and they have an assignment that we're working on around the centralization, decentralization; and so as Harlan might change centralization or decentralization or coordinating function of marketing, that's going to influence what's going on in academic affairs or in another division, athletics or somewhere. So a lot of moving parts we're pulling together.

Trustee Struthers asked, is Athletics in this fix by the way in the matrix piece I assume?

President Baker responded, yes, that's right. Absolutely, in fact they're one of our biggest brand identity items.

Trustee Butler added, from my perspective, the value proposition is very dynamic and I mean that as a compliment. I think the work that has been done here is very rich. I think that we have not lost sight of the fact that there is not only a consumer audience who's thinking about their career future but there's also a process that we're trying to sell, the transformational experience leading to career success, your future being the career, our focus being the effort that we are engaged in her to construct and develop and enrich the future of the student. There's nothing about any of this that concerns me, it's not as though you've just come up with a PR slogan that you think will work, which I think a lot of institutions of higher learning are doing, but I am wondering are you experiencing resistance? Are you learning from the faculty or any group of stakeholders that they think there's something that's missing here?

Vice President Teller replied, we'll find out because right now we're in the process of doing our benchmark brand survey which is a multi-stakeholder survey which includes staff and faculty. So the idea here is to kind of road test what we've got and see how creditable the value is and really look at inside out as well as the outside in. So we're looking at students, prospective students, parents, alumni and critically staff and faculty, and actually I've been very encouraged by the initial response. I think we had something like 500 staff members, we have about 500 respondents for staff and faculty and we've been in the field for about I'd say two weeks. So I think we're going to learn a lot. This is the first comprehensive multi-stakeholder benchmark that we've done of its kind I think. I think it's going to be very important because a lot of what we've done over the last 15 months that I've been here, as you know John, it's been very intuitive. Kind of getting a lay of the land and getting a sense of how people think and what our value proposition is and try our ideas in a way that holds water. And I think that to a lesser or greater extent, I do believe that the colleges and divisions have embraced a lot of the narrative that we've kind of laid on the table. We haven't got a lot of push back. It's uneven because to Doug's point, we have a relatively centralized operation. If you look at our paid advertising spend as an analog for our overall communications spending, it's something we talked about before, our estimate is that anywhere from 30 to 35% of the money that we spend on marketing and communications does not originate here in this division. That means it's being spent elsewhere. When you have that kind of expenditure going on in other places, that's a challenge to make sure there's alignment from the messaging and the consistency standpoint across all of those entities. I think the sum is that that kind of challenge is kind of baked into the cake of a major multi-college university. I don't think we're really any different that a lot of other institutions.

Chair Strauss replied, but people may be more accepting after they have a chance to see that you can produce a result. This debate about centralization and decentralization and an area where there is a service being performed, really comes down to whether or not the constituents believe that they're getting value as a result of the activity that's being undertaken. So if I'm in a college and I have somebody that's doing my marketing and I think I'm achieving success, I'm going to be a lot more reluctant to be able to say okay Harlan you take care of it. On the other hand, if you can show that you can achieve the same result, they may be more incline to part with those resources and I believe that a very important aspect of being able to demonstrate that is to first understand how our brand is perceived and the discussion that we had here before was, from my perspective, about why the branding study in particular is vitally important to us. Because if you don't know what the current state of believe is, there's no way to be able to determine what your messaging should be and not having had that information means that we've been throwing darts for decades. If we get that information back and we know what people think of us, then we can think about how we should construct a message to be able to move the needle to wherever it is that we want it to be.

Vice President Teller responded, right, no I addressed that, we are complete new and I've talked about this. We are totally on the same page about this. As you all know, even before I started here, the first thing I wanted to do here was a benchmark brand survey, but when I got here, I realized that there were a lot of housekeeping things and a lot of low hanging fruit that we had to pick off and we had to deal with just to make sure that this division was aligned with the mission of the university and that they were better integrated across the colleges and divisions and departments than we were, of course Abby has been a big part of that on the marketing side and Vice President Weldy has addressed that with regard to our integration with SAEM. So we kind of parked the brand survey, and we also had challenges with regard to you know going through the things that we necessarily and rightfully have to go through from a procurement standpoint. So we did the low hanging fruit, we did the realignments, we changed out a good part of our organization to really more appropriately balance our organization and what we needed to do. So that's number one. The second thing I would say to your point about showing value is that traditionally, and with apologies to Tim, we were kind of considered a banker in the division, we had money, and somebody would come to us to justify spending some of our dollars on their project, that we would basically free up those dollars to help that particular organization or college or whatever. My objective in coming over here was to migrate from being a banker to being a partner. That meant really kind of realigning our own thinking about who we are as division and what kind of service we were delivering. I come from a strategy consulting background and so my instinct is to be a consultant and to look at problems and issues and opportunities in a very strategic way and that's what I tried to do with regards to the way our whole division interacts with the rest of the university. For example, just to give you an example, the things that we're trying to do to bring people into the tents and to demonstrate value, we had a – one of the things that we're doing with one of our outside consultants Simple Truth, is a journey map project where we're trying to plot out all of the touch points through which we interact with students and perspective students and from the time that were first at the top of the funnel communicate to them to the time that they actually move on to achieving career success. And what we're doing there is we're looking at it from a general communications standpoint, looking at all the divisions that put out materials and touch students. We're also partnering specifically with the College of Health and Human Sciences specifically. So that what we're going to do is, the front to the road map is going to become the general touch points and then we're going to go drilling down with that college to a working partnership with them to see how that career map connects up with how they touch students and then we're going to build out an entire template for them as to how they'll interact and communicate with students going forward. What that does is two things, one is it gets a college involved with us in our work from the university marketing standpoint, and secondly hopefully from working with CHHS, it then gives us a template to build programs that are similar to that with the other colleges as well. So those are the kinds of things that we're trying to do. All that said, I think that the benchmark study is going to be crucially important. It's going to be one of the most vital things that we do all year as a division and to your point Marc it is going to help us kind of back up what we've been doing intuitively with the basic data.

Trustee Struthers asked, is there a copy of survey/questionnaire? I'd love to take a look at it.

Vice President Teller responded, sure, absolutely and the survey also went to alums.

President Baker added, one of the things we've found already is that there is at least 17 departments at the university level that interact with students when they get admitted to the place. That's too many. So you know you'd have admissions and orientation and testing and housing and dining and health services and on and on and on. That's a lot of people to coordinate right, so we need to better funnel, better coordinated communication with them to make it easier for students not just for the institution and it will help us reduce costs and have less redundant messaging, more coordinated activity. The creative services folks that are trying to deal with the 60,000 web pages or more, probably more than that actually. We use that number but it's a lot more. Brand feel with 60,000 and no central coordinating function, you're not going to get it. So they're working on those kinds of things. Working on search engine optimization. We're working heavily in social media and have a new social media director this year that's doing outstanding work using things like the student voice blog, the Huskie Tales, or a student run Instagram account, what to do at NIU, peer-to-peer communications, etc. They're all very effective. Social media tools, where our students live, maybe not where you maybe you and I live, but where our students live. And they're thinking about what the target populations are and how to best communicate with them. A highly competitive environment that we need a lot of strategic and tactical marketing thinking dovetailed with all of our other operations. We are peeling onions there like we are in every other area, but a lot of progress is made. So I'm going to turn it over to Vice President Weldy who's going to talk a little bit about the retention side of the house.

Trustee Struthers responded, one more question on the brand and the communications and such. I had a little exchange with the Clery Report which was quite positive I read and then we had the trends there. Sort of trends are improving in most cases, and as we compare ourselves against Illinois State in my mind would be our number one competitor right, peer-to-peer and they're beating us, this is a game and they're winning; and this ideas of environment, just anecdotally, over the last five years when I'm out and about having general conversations with anybody and everybody, the topic from grandmothers to kids to whatever comes up and talks about the environment and crime at NIU that's just what they think. This is no surprise to anybody. So we get this good data that's showing progress, it seems to me that that is not a – so the chief of police could construct a report, right it up and have a couple page document and talk about the results is one way, but to me it's a marketing thing that would take this data, and our society today is headline readers, snapchats, quick, boom, boom, what's the punch line, you know NIU making process, NIU crime less than Illinois State, so that that punch line everyone would know that, everyone, all of the high school counselors, all the centers of influence that are important in the future of our ability to raise enrollment and attract kids at the top of the funnel, everyone in this community who thinks, again stereotype right, crime or whatever, environment is an issue; would know that hurray we're making progress and we're better and get that message out. So I just think that that's a bit of a marketing thing. I don't know how that strikes you.

Trustee Butler responded, I guess I'd invite you and Vice President Teller to sit down and have a long conversation about that. He and I have spent a long time about that and what kind of messaging you want to do those kinds of things. I think in the marketing world there's the value proposition side and then there's kind of the playing defense side, and you need to figure out what the right balance is. So I guess, important topic, hugely important, I invite you and Harlan to just have that conversation. And then one other thing I'd add, you know Illinois State is a great example, I think they had three times the burglaries that we did last year, not commonly known, but can you go out and say hey Illinois State has three times the burglaries that. It seems to me that this might be an issue of linking people because it's there. I've gone on our website, I know that there's a lot of dialog about crime and safety and perception versus reality. It's there and I was actually surprised to see how much was there on these issues. The question is how we get people to that message, because I suspect in this larger, longer conversation. If we start an issues management campaign on crime and safety and simultaneously with a branding campaign, people are going to get confused as to what we're trying to achieve. I would think that that's one of your concerns. And the other would be you don't necessarily want to lead with issues management.

Vice President Teller responded, we've done a lot of thinking as you might expect about the issue because we get a lot of feedback about safety and perception or safety or misperception of safety. I think there's several things to think about. One of the things John said I think is very relevant, we've got to sell our value proposition. Value proposition is really what differentiates us from others. Safety is table stakes, it's one of those things, and you are not going to differentiate on the basis of safety no matter what kind of statistics you've got because you never know what's going to happen from one day to the next and so you may be selling a safety message one day and maybe dealing safety issue the next. So safety table stakes is reassurance message, it's not a message that you want to proactively market. So we have to be creditable, and we have to be precise and we have to have a very strong steward, but not make it a center piece of the value proposition from a marketing standpoint. I would think, again we're going to find out more when we see the benchmark data, safety comes us once a university is in the student's consideration set. It's not one of those things, I don't think, again this may be intuition on my part where I'm not going to put NIU into consideration set because I think it's unsafe. I think it's one of those situations, and we'll find that where a student decides I'm going to apply to 8 different schools, one of them is NIU, ISU, UFC, whatever we're going to look at, now I'm going to drill down. Do they have the programs I want? Do they have the professors that I think I can learn from? Do they have the environment on campus and what about safety? There is the issue, there the issue can com us where you're in the consideration set because you've small in your value proposition to the point that you're in that set and now you've got to have the reassurance message or that student that there comes the I'm going to feel safe and secure. So there's two fundamental issues there. One is to what extend does the safety message predominate for you, what's the calibration of the safety message, number one. The second is put the timing in place. When do you hit that student or prospective student with safety? The third thing is what John alluded to and that is we do have considerable amount of very reassuring information on our website how we should link things on the campus safety site. We just reworked our entire campus safety site. It's warm, it's inviting, it's not institutional, and it's very human. It features Tom Phillips and our police force in a very non-confrontational community oriented settings. We have videos of future students. We have some talking about their own perceptions of the campus and how they feel safe on campus because to Doug's point earlier, one of the strong things we can do from a communications standpoint to help support the retention effort, is peer to peer communications. Peer to peer communications is one of the key factors in once you have these students here, keeping them here. So we have peers talking to peers about their perception of safety on campus. The issue to John's point is how do you drive people to that site? And that's something that we have been thinking about quite a bit not just with the campus safety site, but with all the web access. We have a lot of very rich information about a lot of the times on the website so that's a challenge, a marketing challenge, it's a public relations challenge, but I would really encourage you to take a look at that campus safety website because I think a lot of the things you're talking about are things that really reside in that website. It's an interesting issue. It's an issue that we spent a lot of time – it's certainly something we need to communicate about, we just have to do it right and at the right moment and the right venue.

Chair Strauss continued, I want to make sure we have enough time to be able to get to the rest of our agenda and still get started our second meeting at three. I know that there's a lot more that we could say about this topic and we spent two hours previously talking about marketing and communication. Tim to the extent that if you have additional questions if you could follow up with Harlan and then Eric as we get back to talking about the retention effort, we've got the written materials, whatever you can do to speed us along that would be great.

Vice President Weldy began, the first thing that I want to say in regards to retention is that any institution are those institutions that have had success in increasing enrollment, the one major understanding that we have is that you need to or you must improve retention first and foremost. So you can bring in very large cohort groups every fall, but if you're not able to retain those students you're pretty much it's like filling up cup with the hole in the bottom. I think that we have that understanding as a community. As President Baker had noted earlier, a year ago our first and second year retention rate increased by five percentage points and this past year it was one percentage point. Last year I basically told anyone who spoke on this issue with me that it's not normal, it's not a part of the norm to increase your first or second year retention rate by five percentage points, so don't expect that okay in moving forward. But what you can expect is anywhere from one to two percentage points increase as time goes by and so I felt really good from the standpoint of where we were this fall. And so it notes that the things that we're doing are working and that we've making progress. There are obviously numerous retention initiative throughout the university community. Some of those are within the academic colleges, the Provost's office, and my division as well, as well as other areas throughout campus. What you have in this report I think is just really highlights some of those retention efforts. There are many more that are taking place and just within the past couple years, we've have a number of new retention initiatives as well and so I do want to not that. I guess what I want to do in just some final remarks in regards to the retention piece is that there has been a lot of collaboration across the board throughout the departments and units on campus. I don't know what it was like before I arrived here on campus, but I haven't seen the kind of collaboration that I have in the past couple of years as it relates to retention and our focus in on that. One particular highlight is that we established a program and it is mentioned within the report called the residential academic coaching program, and I mention that program because it really came out of a conversation that President Baker had with a group of students within the residence halls and staff as we were touring the residence halls and just talking about what is needed from the standpoint of improving retention and impacting our new freshman, new students coming in. And so a lot of that, there was conversation about another institution that had started this program, and so my staff we sat down with the Provost's office and a few members of their staff and we created this program. What this program does is it really bridges the gap between the student and their academic advisor. And so if a student is not all that willing to meet with their advisor, we have someone within the residence halls that will connect with that student and bridge that gap to make sure that the student goes in and meets with their advisor. People need to realize this is a very large campus. It's very easy to get lost. If you're a student and you want to get lost and you want to kind of blend in and so forth, you can do that, but what this allows us to do, this program allows us to be proactive and really seeking the students out before there is a major issue. There's nothing worse than connecting with a student who pretty much has kind of waiting until the last minute in order to address an issue when we could be very proactive to make sure that we touch base with them and connect with them before anything bad happens or before they get beyond that point from the standpoint of being able to receive assistance. Like I said, some very good things that are in the report, but there's a lot more that's taking place throughout the campus community.

Trustee Marshall replied, I have two comments that I would like to cover. Assuming that if a freshman goes on the radar as being in trouble and that person is attended to, do we go beyond the freshman year?

Vice President Weldy responded, yes very much so.

Trustee Marshall replied, and the other, is there any way that we can assess maybe as another variable measure the home support, and I'm not speaking of money or to reach out to the parents or significant others where they can help?

Vice President Weldy responded, we really start that process during orientation when we connect with families and so we split up the students and their families during orientation and we focus in on a lot of issues, but mostly from the standpoint of the resources that are made available to students on campus so that the parents are aware. We basically share a lot of information with students during orientation and we don't expect them to remember it all, but in regards to parents and family members, we know that they're really good at taking notes and making sure if their student is not aware of something or overlooks something during orientation, that parents are there to say hey I heard during orientation about this particular program. Another thing that we do is through our orientation and family connections department is that we connect with families and parents. We send them newsletters every month. I have a section there where I basically have a letter to the parents and family members and highlighting some of the things that are happening on campus as well as the programs that we have and resources that we have that are available for their students. So we are continually bombarding them this information.

Chair Strauss responded, before we get to the summary items that were on page 28, I thought that maybe we could take the presentation on capital requirements for 15 minutes or so and then we can talk about the continuing areas that the committee might be interested in and whether we're going to continue.

President Baker asked, there was also the community college piece. Do you want to say anything about that for two minutes worth?

Chair Strauss replied, if we can do it in two minutes.

President Baker responded, alright the two minute drill. Okay the two minute drill is that if you think about that funnel that I talked about with all the niches coming in. It's in fact a series on manifolds coming in. If you lay that manifold down horizontal it's the pipeline. It's the higher education pipeline from birth to death basically and all the pieces that come into it. We have a P20 initiative, pre-school and 20 being graduate school and career, where we're trying to look what fits in there. Community college are a key piece for transfer students. And then in high school is another key piece coming in and what we need to do with work with them. Just one thumbnail, this year 30% of high school seniors aren't going to graduate. 40% will graduate and not be ready to come to college. So you're only looking at 30% ready for college. That's the manifold coming to higher education. So we need to go back and work in high schools and middle schools and grade schools and pre-schools to deal with all those issues and that's what our P20 network in Northern Illinois has underway. The P20 Center under Anne's shop has been instrumental in leading there, tremendous leadership and research. We've got dozens of partners working on this and have been for a year and a quarter now making great progress and a state model. So in that conversation one of the key pieces is community colleges and we are reaching out aggressively to make stronger relationships with community colleges. Yesterday Lisa Freeman, Paul Crawford and I were in Sauk Valley Community College signing two things. One was a reverse articulation agreement so that students can transfer to NIU before graduating from Sauk, transfer the credits back to Sauk after whatever period of time and get their associates degree so that they don't have to stay there extra time and waste their time if they need to come here sooner than graduation time. Great for everybody. And the other was a three plus one technology baccalaureate so that students could stay in situ there, work, going to school, maybe working the local factories and what not, get their associates degree but then get a baccalaureate on line with our technology program in the Engineering and Technology College. Another wonderful opportunity for people to continue to earn a living, raise their families, and get the advance degree and rise up. So we're signing those kinds of agreements. One example, when we've been – there's a list here of the other community colleges we've been working with. We were at the College of DuPage two weeks ago. The week before that we had all the deans from Harper College here. The week before that we signed an agreement at Rockford where I'll be later today, with Rock Valley College, to have two bachelors and one master's degree program taught on their campus at Rock Valley in partnership with local industry. We're reaching out into that segment and that's just another niche I wanted to play up.

Chair Strauss replied, yes and the fact that we only took two minutes to talk about it doesn't reflect its importance. I'm appreciative of the activity. This is a topic that we've often referred to here and at the full Board. I would have otherwise skipped over it and made an error. So thanks for bringing it to my attention.

Agenda Item 7.b. Supplemental Information

Chair Strauss began, I want to take a little time so that we can at least lay the background for the one piece regarding Capital Expenditures that we want to advance. This relates to, as yet unused, bond proceeds from the most recent series of bonds that we issued. At the time that those bonds were issued it was contemplated that a portion of those proceeds would be utilized for renovations or repurposing of the Holmes Student Center. We've had two presentations at the Finance, Facilities and Operations Committee and also spend some time at the full Board level talking about the use of these funds. I want to be perfectly clear for all those in the audience that might have a more personal interest and proposed use for that money, that we're severely restricted. They're not operating funds and in fact they can only be used for certain buildings that were designated in the bond issuance. The nature of the question that has occurred today is whether we have a comprehensive idea about whether those funds, in an effort to be able to advance planning objective to make the center of campus more attractive, should be devoted to Holmes or to Neptune which is in need of some renovation and repurposing, or should we take a look at some other potential use, what the appropriate timing is, and whether the funds are going to be devoted to Holmes Student Center, and have we completely thought through what the best use of that facility would be. That's pretty much the background.

President Baker added, I think that was a good oversight, let me just add a couple pieces. We did do three architectural pre-design projects in the last year. One on Holmes, one on Neptune, and one on the broad campus core including what we need to be looking at so all these pieces fit in with a bigger vision for the development of the campus core over the next 50 years. We have some very interesting drawings and concepts on all three of those projects. Lots of input from faculty, staff and students vetted publically and adapted as such. As one might expect, we don't have enough money to do what we need to do, or what we'd like to do in an ideal world, so we're looking at prioritizing and identifying what the revenue sources might be. One of the key priorities is Holmes Student Center. Campuses in this, and other states, have vibrant student centers. Ours is a wonderful, bold facility and it's a 50 year old facility ready to be renovated and we need that energy on campus, the living room for campus, the social gathering place, technology, food, student services, etc. Chair Strauss mentioned we have Build America bonds that could get us most of the way through Phase I, and we have some auxiliary reserves we'd have to decide if we want to spend, but we're also exploring other revenue opportunities. Last week we took the Foundation Board members through a tour of Holmes Student Center which was an important first step. They came away energized about the opportunities. Another potential opportunity would be are there investors that could come in and who want to invest as a business proposition. We've got to balance those potential revenue sources with what we want to spend with Build America bonds or maybe auxiliary reserves. We have not brought those prioritized lists forward yet and we are currently verifying the timing on the arbitrage issues relative to Build America bonds before we move forward.

Chair Strauss responded, so clearly this isn't an action item for this committee today, but a potential action item that would be related to the charge of this committee to determine whether recommendations that needed to go to the full Board relative to either capital expenditures or operating expense items in excess of the presidential authority. This is an example of another portion of the charge to the committee that at present is unfulfilled. So in a discussion that I hope to launch into shortly about the future of this committee, that remains an open item.

Trustee Boey commented he was excited about the possible renovations of the Holmes Student Center.

Chair Butler added, I think that a number of the trustees know that this issue has been before the Finance and Facilities Committee twice. It had an extensive review on campus with multiple stakeholders. We've got a limited time period presumably with respect to the bonds series. I hope that we can move forward quickly in assembling a package for the Board to consider and vote on because I think as we move further into the state of financial insecurity in relation to the budget impasse, etc. that we might miss our opportunity as these resources are contemplated by stakeholders who are increasingly nervous about the future and with a full composition on the Board, I think there is support. We understand the funding source and its limitations and I do want to stress that I'm supportive of moving forward more quickly and I hope that we do.

Trustee Struthers responded, this is obviously a critical topic as it relates to the broader issue of enrollment and everything else. It's the environment of campus and the vibrancy of that. To create vibrancy you can't make that up, you have to have it. It is or it isn't and it's physical. I have a little reservation with the idea of a university owned single building there with a lot of dollars going into that. I realize there are limitation for those dollars to create an environment that would attract students and create that pop to the university kind of town and putting it inside of a building owned by the university doesn't create that kind of look. I would love to see it a little outbound. Somewhere where you could create this center, where there is a buzz physically outside the scene. So my question would be within the constraints of the proceeds of the bond, can you extend into the MLK Plaza if it was attached.

Chair Strauss replied, there were certain identified buildings. The Holmes Student Center is one of them so yes, it would need to be attached and there are a whole series of other issues we may not have time to discuss today. I understand your issues and I think they would be appropriate to start a conversation about it with either President Baker or Al Phillips as a first point of contact. I want to be crystal clear this money is not available for operating expenses. It's available for certain capital projects. We've delivered that message as clearly as possible every time this has been considered. I don't want any conversation about this to create a misperception about what the money is going to be used for and I think everybody is interested in seeing that we can get to something that the Board could approve in this regard. I believe people are working at it rapidly.

Trustee Butler added, I'm actually open to changes in the plans but what I'm hoping for is Board action to commit the funding to the project sooner than later. I think that if we can take that action and then, as we move forward, there actually has to be design work and a continued process to potentially find investors on the development side.

Trustee Struthers added, an important piece would to be able to show it off to prospective students and their parents to come and see the beautiful project in a way visible with traffic flow.

Chair Strauss recommended the committee move on to the conversation about what we want to do in the future in terms of continuing the committee and if we're going to continue the committee, provide some direction as to the items that we would like to see on the agenda the next time that we get together.

President Baker responded, there are six items listed in your packets. These are topical issues or themes that came out of last years of meetings.

Affordability, it's clear that we need to keep our education as affordable as possible and we are working on the fee processes and trying to keep the costs down. Access, we think access is critically important and we have been working on financial aid over the last two years. We've contracted with Noel Levitz Company to look at financial aid packages and how we can be more accessible as well as increase the quality of students. We did see all of our quality measure go up this fall with 31% increase in our Honors Program and increases in ACT, GPA and class standing. We are pulling together a team to better coordinate the allocation of our financial aid from Pell to MAP to appropriated dollars to Foundation raised dollars so that we coordinate the allocation of those to maximize our recruitment, retention and help students succeed. We're also working on time to degree through the retention activities. There are efficiency, program prioritization meeting campus wide going on right now as well as process reengineering activities. Programs, additions, and deletions; we need to think about our catalog and what are the things we're offering as well as the student experience to make sure we're hitting the timelines so that they're improved and in place and marketed at the right times. Collaborative partnerships with community colleges are a critical area for us. We're also reaching back into select high schools to do the same thing and forming pipeline relationships and even experimentations with them on how to transition students in to be successful. International programs, one of the potential big successes that this Board has approved earlier this year was the establishment of a joint college with Nankai University which at full bore will have over 1,000 students. A great addition to the institution, it enriches us intellectually and culturally as well as increasing our numbers of students, 500 of those students will be in China and 500 will be here in DeKalb, freshman, sophomore in China, junior senior here. We think this opens the door for additional programming with Nankai University, which is one of the top ten in China. Graduate program is another area that may be a niche for business-to-business or adult learners, with the MBA programs for example or other professional programs. So again we're looking at program additions and deletions and seeing where we can be successful with those collaborations. And finally, the capital activities that you all have talked about. We've mentioned Holmes and Neptune and the campus core. One that I would be remiss to not mention is Athletics. It's an area that's developed a master plan in conjunction with the core plan and they may have opportunities there for external people to come in, maybe not donors, but commercial venues to come in and put money into facilities and enhance our facilities.

Trustee Struthers asked about the land usage on both side of the road that extends westward behind the Chessick Center on Lucinda.

President Baker responded, that's going to be a continuation of kind of the park land for the residence halls that are out there, park and recreation kind of land.

OTHER MATTERS

Chair Strauss asked trustees to weigh in on whether or not the Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment should continue to meet. He also asked for proposed agenda items for the next meeting.

Trustee Butler responded, I think we should continue to meet and proposed seven items. I think they fit nicely in these thematic categories President Baker just reviewed. We heard from Professor Long on an interest on on-line curriculum and e-learning, the opportunities particularly for faculty to develop curriculum. Secondly, student support services that relate to retention and might actually be part of what attracts students to Northern. Also, our interest in looking a credit hour trends. We look at the number of students that are enrolled, but let's look at data that relates to the number of credit hours within the various categories over time to see if there's anything interesting that we could learned. A related item, number four, would be whether our cost structure, with respect to students who take over 12 hours, is working to encourage students to take a full load and could we derive that kind of data from the credit hour data. Five, what is the financial profile of our students according to the data and what are the needs of students. Generally, is there a strategy within that data that we either talk about overtly, or may not really think about, in terms of the type of student that we are attracting and the resources that we have available for them. I know there's been a lot of work in leveraging financial aid, but to what extent and is this compromising of our goals to do so. Sixth, migration trends and the correlation with costs. Is it possible to determine if students have thought about attending NIU and had then determined to go out of state due to cost, to what extent is that a factor. Seven, to learn more about the on-going brand survey and about the institution's strategic efforts with respect to branding.

Trustee Marshall added, possible proposals for utilization of alumni in the recruiting and retention efforts.

Trustee Struthers added to Trustee Butler's ideas of the e-learning to include information about the various portfolios, international, the adult learning, etc., and what are those avenues and what is our strategy for these.

Chair Strauss indicated the focus of this committee is supposed to be on activity at the Board level that requires our approval in order to implement. We've now got a list of things that we want information on, very few of which are action items. I'd like to make sure that we're using our time effectively. I don't mind receiving this information, but what we have not done so far is get to action items. A possible action item, as a result of this committee's deliberation, is a proposal regarding guidelines used for the setting of tuition and fees. Could we determine whether there is an action piece whether we have some information on the pricing list and demand and we can determine whether our goal ought to be to decrease price, hold it constant, or tie it to some sort of an index. Secondly, if the committee is going to continue, we need reports to determine, based on metrics, whether or not we're making progress. In this list we have several that would lend themselves to reports. Those would include items on access efficiency, programs, additions and deletions, collaborations and partnerships. Some of those could be process measures, some could be measures that are numeric. This would also apply to some of the items that were suggested by Trustee Butler. They might include such things as the debt level of our students who graduate, the number of classes that they have to take to graduate, what the persistence rates are and then some basic statistics regarding the admissions process as well. We are out of time but I think it appropriate if we could get some recommendation that we would be able to talk about regarding what those metrics might be. We could lead with those things that relate to action next time. The appropriate place to discuss some of these items may be here, and for some items it may be back in Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Personnel Committee and depending on what the agendas for the standing committees, and there may be some of these informational items that more appropriate there. On the other hand, if they require more time than those agendas would allow, I would be happy to have those presentations here, and we'll have an idea then about how much time we'll need for the meeting.

NEXT MEETING DATE

President Baker asked trustees a question about what depth of elevation is desired for the metrics the university is currently working on for per their request.

Chair Strauss responded, trustees will get a sense of what is needed once they have a chance to look at the first draft but added that the basic operational items are probably not what the board is interested

President Baker responded the university will work on the metrics and, also, the price elasticity.

The next meeting of the Ad Hoc on Enrollment Committee will be Thursday, December 17 from 1-3 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Strauss asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Robert Boey so moved and Trustee John Butler seconded. The motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 3:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Carey
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.