

Minutes of the
NIU Board of Trustees
Research and Innovation, Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee Meeting
February 7, 2019

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 12:13 p.m. by Chair Butler in the Board of Trustees Room, 315 Altgeld Hall. Recording Secretary Cathy Craddock conducted a roll call. Members present were Trustee Nathan Hays, Trustee Robert Pritchard, Trustee Tim Struthers, Board Chair Dennis Barsema, Committee Chair John Butler, and Trustee Veronica Herrero (non-committee member). Absent was Trustee Eric Wasowicz.

Also present were President Lisa Freeman, Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnership Gerald Blazey, Acting General Counsel Greg Brady, and University Advisory Committee Representative Therese Arado.

2. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM AND APPROPRIATE NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

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

3. MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Butler asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Trustee Dennis Barsema so moved and Trustee Nathan Hays seconded. The motion was approved.

4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Butler asked for a motion to approve the minutes of November 15, 2018. Trustee Dennis Barsema so moved and Trustee Tim Struthers seconded. The motion was approved.

5. CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Butler asked for comment. No comments were given by University Advisory Committee representatives.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Board Parliamentarian Brady indicated that there were no timely requests for public comment.

7. UNIVERSITY REPORTS

Agenda Item 7.a. – State Legislative Report

Vice President Blazey asked Chief of Staff Matt Streb to present the State Legislative Report. Chief of Staff Streb noted the new legislative session has begun and is very busy with over 2,200 bills introduced in the House alone. This does not include bills to be introduced on behalf of NIU. NIU is currently tracking about 100 bills that could have an impact on NIU. Two bills to be introduced by NIU soon are the property sales bill and the IPAC bill. The day of the meeting, the Senate was taking up the minimum wage bill that would raise the minimum wage over the next six years to \$15.00 per hour. The University is not taking a position on this bill, though we have worked with the governor's office, providing feedback on the financial impact to the university. The impact over six years would be estimated at \$12 million. Governor Pritzker's budget address will be given in the next two weeks. He is pushing for the minimum wage bill to reach his desk before his address. Chief of Staff Streb continued noting the Executive Director of SUCCS Jeff Brownfield and his general counsel visited campus in January, resulting in a very productive

meeting regarding civil service conversion and the challenges faced with the Civil Service code. President Freeman noted it was a collaborative meeting looking at ways that it would be easy for us, without legislation, to work together to help all of NIU's employees advance professionally and to help the University continue to meet its mission.

Trustee Dennis Barsema asked the timeline for hearing about the funding for NIU from the state. Chief of Staff Streb answered it should come with the governor's budget address. It would be the governor's proposal and would not be a final figure.

Chair Butler added that when the meeting occurred with Executive Director Brownfield, the issues discussed at the last board meeting concerning conversion were the significant topics of discussion. He continued by noting he thinks great progress was made in pressing forward with the University's concerns about the conversion of primarily SPS personnel who are working in various research lines and within the Division of Engagement and Outreach. He thanked President Freeman, her team, and Dr. Blazey for the preparation and execution of the meeting. He felt it was extremely productive and he was proud of the leadership for the work that went into it.

Agenda Item 7.b. – Federal Legislative Report

Vice President Blazey noted Dr. Anna Quider was available on the phone for any questions regarding this report. Chair Butler noted the report was written before the government shutdown concluded.

Dr. Quider began noting they are currently in a three-week reprieve from the government shutdown and another budget deal needs to be reached by February 15 to provide funding for those agencies affected by the shutdown. Current reports say the President and Congressional negotiators are reaching a deal with an internal deadline of February 8 to allow time for the normal legislative process to meet the February 15 deadline. The shutdown delayed the release of the President's Fiscal Year 2020 budget request. Expected release of the budget request is in March due to staff at the White House Office of Management and Budget being furloughed during the shutdown. The budget is normally released in February.

Chair Butler asked if any existing programs at the university have been adversely impacted by the shutdown. Vice President Blazey noted there has been no impact other than delayed solicitation dates. The National Science Foundation and its agencies have started rolling back deadlines to accommodate the delay.

Agenda Item 7.c. – Sponsored Programs Administration Quarterly Report

Chair Butler noted the Sponsored Programs Administration Quarterly Report included in the RILLA committee report. Vice President Blazey highlighted the cumulative funding for the year is \$22.2 million, up 12% from FY18. Overall sponsored funding is up 3% as well.

Board Chair Barsema asked if we are on track of expectations for the year. Assistant Vice President Dara Little answered we are on track. Research funding continues to inch up. They have been waiting on several consistent large state funding contracts to come in, and those came in the 2nd quarter putting the total at the \$20 million mark for the year. Some things are still outstanding, but they hope to be at last year's level at the end of the fiscal year. Trustee Barsema asked if that is where we forecasted to be at the beginning of the year. Assistant Vice President Little confirmed this.

Agenda Item 7.d. – NICCS Update

Vice President Blazey gave Northern Illinois Center for Community Sustainability (NICCS) update. He started with an overview of the make up of the network. NICCS is a hub of Illinois' Innovation Network (IIN). The largest and leading hub in the network will be the Discovery Partners' Institute (DPI), located south of the Chicago loop. Both IIN and DPI were initiated by

the University of Illinois system. DPI received \$500 million dollars in state appropriations in June 2018. Other existing hubs are located at the Urbana-Champaign, Chicago and Springfield campuses of the University of Illinois (U of I) system. NICCS is currently the only hub outside the U of I system. A proposal for the DPI and four hubs has been submitted to and is under review by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO).

NICCS will occupy a 30,000 sq. feet research facility, tentatively cited for construction on the west campus. Total cost of the facility is \$22.9 million, with \$15 million in the request to DCEO and \$7.9 million provided by NIU in new resources and in-kind contributions.

Organization of the IIN and DPI programs is progressing quickly since the last Board update. NIU has participated in all four meetings convened by the U of I system for the IIN and DPI to update the plans. Vice President Blazey continued, “The first IIN meeting was held November 28th at the temporary DPI site on 200 South Wacker and was open to all the public universities and featured announcement of a solicitation for additional hubs from those universities and I can say they were somewhat gob smacked that they were being invited to propose these hubs. The meeting also included preliminary discussions of IIN goals and governance. The second IIN meeting was held at the U of I-Springfield hub on November 30th and it focused on a three-year proposal named ENGAGE, which is not really an acronym, but they’re calling it ENGAGE for distributed computing models to enable collaboration between hubs. So that would include the board band pipe, internet pipes, as well as the video conferencing capabilities. I’m hopeful NICCS can serve as a first site or prototype site for ENGAGE. In a third meeting, the U of I system graciously invited NIU to a DPI working group retreat on December 10th, dedicated to the development of programs around DPI themes. That was particularly welcome because DPI is an internal U of I hub and for them to reach out for our involvement was quite encouraging. And we participated in the working group on food and agriculture. The third IIN meeting, also in Springfield, was January 24th with a primary goal of fully launching IIN in 2019. The meeting was attended again by all the other public universities, each of which had individually submitted their own hub proposals. The meeting included discussion of the official information of launch of the Illinois Innovation Network, IIN governance, opportunities for hub collaboration, funding needs and opportunities, and initial activities of the IIN. Governor Pritzker made a video appearance and expressed his support for IIN in several strong statements.”

The DCEO and the U of I system are still finalizing the first proposal with funding still expected this fiscal year. A third agency, Gamby, reviews contracts for compliance and regulatory issues. This has made a delay as that is worked out. A second proposal will be submitted to DCEO for all additional hubs. Outcomes from the meetings include an initial governance structure for the IIN, including the formation of an IIN council with representation from each hub and initial sets of working groups for the IIN including: Education and Workforce Development; Entrepreneurship and Corporate Engagement; Funding and Government Relations; and Research Collaborations and Technology Transfer. Each hub will be invited to nominate or assign staff to work on each working group. Follow-up for the meeting includes a joint press release announcing the launch of IIN, scheduling the first meeting of the council, and the population of the working groups. He noted it is an interesting development because it creates a public university organization for all campuses to work together toward a common goal, creation of the IIN. On December 14 and January 23, President Freeman and Vice President Blazey participated in ceremonies at the DPI site, marking the partnerships of Tel Aviv University and Hebrew University with the DPI, making the IIN international.

Planning has begun at NIU for the design of the NICCS facilities and programs. An oversight and strategy group has been charged to oversee the development and operation of NICCS. The group has met once to review the charge and again to begin the process of engaging stakeholders, particularly faculty, staff and the public, in the design of the facility and programmatic activities.

Facilities Management and Campus Services, responsible for the construction of NICCS, have begun the selection process for an A&E firm. NIU and staff from the U of I's College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) will meet next week to discuss the collaboration around one of the three themes of NICCS, food systems. Discussion is also underway to ensure NICCS and the proposed DeKalb County Food and Education Center are fully integrated. In summary, IIN promises a statewide university collaboration in which NIU has good representation, and internally, NIU is working toward realization of NICCS with the first operation steps. No questions or comments were received from the Trustees.

Agenda Item 7.e. – Faculty Artistry Presentation

Vice President Blazey introduced the item, noting faculty are invited from time to time to describe the impact of their scholarship on their discipline, the University, and our students. Assistant Professor Kay Martinovich will present today. She has been at NIU for five years, is head of Performance, and teaches acting and directing classes at NIU. An award-winning Chicago-based director and accomplished author, she will present on her current work, in production in downtown Chicago.

Assistant Professor Martinovich: “Good afternoon, and thank you so much for this opportunity to speak in front of this committee. The title of my presentation is: “To Practice What I Teach, Directing the Chicago Premier of Critically Acclaimed Play About Dementia”.

This past Tuesday night, I opened “The Father”, a theater production about aging and dementia, a subject matter of which I am familiar, and which relates to this country’s changing demographics and its affects. The play’s impact has already proven to be unsettling and profound as our audiences are put in the shoes of the dementia patient himself. In November 2017, I was asked to direct the Chicago premiere at the nationally recognized Remy Bumppo Theater Company following critical acclaim of the show in Paris, London and New York. As the director of *The Father*, I expand the body of knowledge in my field by my original concept and realization of the production by bringing my professional experience to my students and by enlisting several of my NIU colleagues and NIU alumni to be part of the production team. My involvement in *The Father* thus includes all three tiers of education: Research, including on aging and dementia; Artistry, the overall vision, original concept and design collaboration; and Scholarship, rehearsal room experience to the university classroom and vice-versa. This presentation focuses on how my directorial practice on the show impacts me professionally as well as my students and colleagues in the School of Theater and Dance and the CVPA and NIU communities overall.

In *The Father*, Andre, the play’s title character, and his adult daughter, Anne, must navigate the changing relationship as they move into a new territory called aging. Florian Zeller’s play engages with many things including loss, what it means to remember, and most crucially, the notion of perception and the ever-shifting ways we think we know something or someone. The challenges of growing older alongside a parent overlap with the pain of no longer seeming to be you anymore. Called a new form of thriller, the play takes the audience on a multifaceted journey of pathos and laughter along with a bit of intrigue and suspense.

Founded in 1996, Remy Bumppo Theater Company produces art in order to advance deeper understanding of the human condition and to elevate cultural discourse. The company’s tag line is “think theater”. It’s perfect for me. And they’re critically and publicly respected reputation is built on their consistent, high-quality presentations of the works of important playwrights. The vision of Remy Bumppo is to be a locally and nationally recognized arts organization based in Chicago renowned for world class theater and for excellence in ethical, inclusive arts aligned business practices in mentorship, and in championing the humanities in the community. Thus, being asked to direct for such a prestigious company was indeed an important career opportunity for me.

As I advance professionally, I am uniquely positioned to engage my colleagues at the School of

Theater and Dance in my productions as well as numerous NIU alumni. On this production alone, I have enlisted NIU professors Brandon Wardell as Lighting Designer, Jeremy Floyd as Costume Designer, Dr. Bob Schneider as Dramaturg, NIU BFA design tech alum Jamie Karis as Props Designer, NIU MFA acting alum Alys Dickerson as the character of Laura, and current MFA GA in costume design Liz Galba as Assistant Costume Designer. So, as you see it's a very NIU influenced production. Hence, this production not only showcases what NIU Theater is all about, but also elevates the status of our NIU Theater program in the most exciting theater town in America. As with any business there's a hierarchy of theater in Chicago. Directing at Remy Bumppo, located in the top tier of theater companies in Chicago, following Goodman, Stephan Wolf, Chicago Shakes, Writer's Theater, Victory Gardens, Northlight, Looking Glass, and Court Theaters, all those are ahead of Remy Bumppo, but they're being right behind them has allowed my work and the work of my colleagues and NIU alumni to be published in front of a new and broader audience and has brought our professional game to a new level.

Research. So, entering the design process, I was interested in many different artists. And primary among them was this artist named Kazimir Malevich who I've not really heard of before and I don't know how I happened upon him in the NIU library, I just did, and it was quite happenstance for me because it was one of the influencing design concepts for me. He's a Russian artist in the early twentieth century whose project was to play with geometric shapes in movement and that for him illicit a supremacy of feeling. Thus, his movement was called Supremacist Art, and these are some of his artworks if any of you are familiar. So, they are geometric shapes in space that for him illicit a supremacy of feeling. They're all very much – some of them are more complex than others and these are copies. Obviously, you don't see the great color in them, but I have a couple more here that just really are striking in terms of what color he's working with. Another artist I was drawn to conceptionally, which seems to be in complete contrast, is Jackson Pollock. With his drip paintings and the frenzied nature in them, Pollock too was interested in what it feels like to observe his paintings. And so, this is one that I really liked a lot that I kind of drew inspiration from and that is this. And so, if you know anything about dementia and the brain, it kind of reminded me of what's going on with the brain in terms of all these – all the firings of what's going on or the misfiring's of what's going on in the brain of the dementia patient. So, what I did in terms of design working with my NIU designer colleagues was to look at how we can utilize the pops of colors from Malevich throughout the set costume and lighting design; and then as the play progresses to look how we can start to lose the pops of color as the main character slips ever more slowly into the world of dementia and a lack of color. I worked with NIU Lighting Designer Brandon Wardell and the technical crew to have the effect of these moving particles of light which is what the Pollock painting reminded me of during the numerous scene transitions which relate to the Pollock paintings scholarship.

Working on a professional production in Chicago impacts my students in numerous ways. First of all, as a working professional, I'm constantly learning in the field. I am able to bring what I learned to the classroom. For example, one of the points of excellence in the NIU BFA and MFA acting program is that students are trained to be emotionally open and prepared and to be able to authentically work moment by moment under the imaginary circumstances of the given text. What I learned on this production by working with our MFA alum is that sometimes the director, me, needs an actor to hit a point or a line exactly the same way every single time. And that comes into conflict a little bit when you're just looking to emotionally express what's happening in the moment. So, what this requires is precision and technical skill and is a point of the training that I believe is not as emphasized in our program as other elements. So, what I will do, based on this learning, is when I work with students here either in scene work in class or in student productions is to effectively train them - number one, how to work with directors who don't necessarily work the way we do or have the same language as we do here at NIU, and number two, to be able to hit the mark and to not necessarily feel it each and every time. The value of having working

practitioners as faculty as opposed to professional academics in our program is that we have to constantly learn ourselves and then report back from the field what we discover. Therefore, the more I get to expose myself to the process of learning and having to learn in the field, the more lightbulbs of discovery go off and I am able to bring that to the classroom and to NIU productions. Second of all, and what seems to be on the flip side and to quote *The King and I*, “By your students you’ll be taught”. I also learn from my students and bring that knowledge into the professional world. On this production of *The Father*, my students taught me to be more one with them in the process of working on a role. For example, the actor playing the character of Pierre wanted to discuss the motivation of his character, why he would move at a certain line, or why he would speak a line in a certain way. Even though he’s an established, well-known professional actor in Chicago, I made it a point to work with him slowly and closely as he needed the extra time and attention to do what he needed to do for the role. The importance of the practice of patience when working with actors is something I engage with regularly with NIU students in the classroom and productions, and thus it is evident that a two-way street exists between the professional rehearsal room and the university classroom. The magnificent thing about the arts is that we artists are in constant discovery mode not only about what we think about the world, but also what and how we think about the art itself.

I’ll end today’s presentation with the good news that our production of *The Father* has been Jeff Recommended which is pretty cool in Chicago. The designation of Jeff Recommended is given to a production when after the opening night of its run at least one element of the show that is acting, directing, design, was deemed excellent by the opening night judges of the Joseph Jefferson Committee. The entire production is then eligible for nomination for awards at the end of the season. Thus, a Jeff award could be in the offing for Brandon’s lighting design, Jeremy’s costume design, Alys’ performance as Laura, or my direction. But we’ll have to wait until October to find out. That’s it. Thank you very much. Last, but not least, I have brochures and flyers for anyone who is interested in seeing the show.”

Committee Chair Butler thanked Assistant Professor Martinovich for the presentation. He noted he saw the production on Sunday after reading the play. He is interested in her concept of the overall design of the production. He asked her to talk more about that.

Assistant Professor Martinovich: “When I read the play, they call it a puzzle box mystery and it really is a puzzle and reading it, it took me a few times to read it just to know what’s going on, because it’s not the easiest read, first off. I don’t know if anyone had a chance to read it, but it’s not an easy read. So, when I first read it, I’m struck by that because that’s what an audience is going to get possibly when they see it. It’s really like the blank page for a writer. It’s like okay, I’ve got this, now what do I do? I’m not ever sure exactly. But one of the things that I knew exactly I wanted to do, the design needed to be seamless. Some of the elements that you saw, this idea of things have to move in the space and very effortlessly be able to do that so that we don’t see the mechanics of what is going on. So that’s one of the things that – it was really important to me that there was some kind of seamlessness to the design. So, with that we do take place in a French apartment. It takes place in Paris. So, this idea that okay, well, I wanted this modern aesthetic, very clean lines, because I had this idea of seamless kind of thing and how things are moving in this space. So, then my set designer and I started looking at French apartments and seeing what we could do in terms of furniture and in terms of just the overall design of the space. She initially had it very much like a – like this, like a block, like this. We’re in a presidium space which is the audience is straight up and she had it blocked like this and the couch was right there and I’m like uh – it’s just those kinds of plays kind of don’t do it for me because I’m like okay that’s very ordinary. So, I said what if – and because of the idea of perception and we’re not quite sure what’s going on, we need to kind of go like this to it. So that’s the idea of this angled perspective in the space that was really important that I get out of the, kind of like seeming, box of a living room set, and that I was able to, and so she would bring over her little model and I’d be like what about this,

and what about this, and so we'd work together on how to get the exact space of it to line up with what I have in my mind in that space. It's not a large space, the stage itself, but there's a lot of mechanics to it which if you see it, I don't want to give it away, but there are a lot of mechanics that had to accommodate the things that happen, so we had to use backstage space, because right back stage of the stage is the dressing room. So, we only had the space of the stage to work with. So, there's a lot of limits on what we could do with the space in terms of that. But in terms of overall concept of design, it was this idea of seamlessness, this idea of modern aesthetic, when I found Malevich it was like oh color, oh you know the grays and colors and how can we kind of punch that and then it happened. I mean if you saw the New York production, it would not be this production at all. I've seen pictures of this production. I didn't want to be influenced by it, but I did see some pictures and it doesn't look anything like it. So, ours is a very, it's a very original concept and design from the very beginning because of this initial idea of this seamless, color, color starts to go away, that kind of thing. I don't know it that answers your question."

Board Chair Barsema asked how many plays she has directed and if this is the largest stage of stature she has directed. Assistant Professor Martinovich stated she previously worked for Irish Repertory of Chicago for six years before they lost funding and closed. It was on par with the Remy Bumppo, but the reputation of the Remy Bumppo is really good, having been around for over 20 years. She noted pitching yourself as a director is like pitching yourself as an actor. She noted she has directed over 30 productions. Board Chair Barsema noted it is great for NIU students to receive the wealth of her experience. Assistant Professor Martinovich continued, "It's a great fit because I ran an acting studio before I came here, and the Meissner work is the acting technique is what we do here is the studio work that I did. Actually, Deborah Robertson if anyone knows Deborah Robertson, she actually taught at my studio back in the nineties and I actually taught for Kathryn Gately a couple times in the last nineties not knowing that years later I'd be here. So, it is a perfect match and the proximity to Chicago and allow students to come see work and for students to be involved and to engage my colleagues here, it's just perfect."

President Freeman: "I want to say that was a wonderful presentation. I want to just reflect on two aspects of it. The first is if you look at the research, vision for the university and you think about changing demographics in terms of age demographics and you think about the role of Arts and Humanities in our research vision as interpreting our changing world, this is an excellent example of how performing arts help us grapple with the same type of aging and place issues that the College of Health and Human Sciences is addressing through their social service type of research. I also want to say you did a beautiful job of explaining what it means to have a College of Visual and Performing Arts near Chicago theater able to engage students and actors. I want to share with you that last month, I got to see Joan Allen who is an actor/graduate of our MFA program, perform in *Waverly Place*, which is a play which takes a slightly different approach to address the theme of dementia and aging in place, and as I heard you speak about what you did with the scenes, I thought of how Elaine May in that play is costumed and colored and the art and to show that fading in. And so, you gave me more insight into something I was able attend with an NIU group, and I just encourage you to sort of make that connection to Joan and to that play because I think it would be a very rich dialogue. I'm so proud that we have NIU alums addressing contemporary topics in such a well-respected way. Assistant Professor Martinovich thanked President Freeman.

Trustee Herrero noted she is looking forward to seeing the production.

Committee Chair Butler concluded the discussion by noting he saw the play with his mother. She noted the paintings on the wall with the splotches of color, and that they would have meaning in the play. He said it was interested to hear the design concepts behind those. Assistant Professor Martinovich said, "It's really interesting, because initially, the set designer wanted the colors of the other set, the gray and whites in there, and it was actually Jeremy, the costumer, who said wouldn't it be much better if we had more color in there because we have so much color in the

flower painting? And I'm like 'oh my gosh' and it's how collaboration actually works. I'm like 'oh my gosh yes, yes, yes!' And so, when we get the color, and I talk to our set designer, Yu Shibagaki, I said, 'Can we get some color in there?' She said let me think about it and I'm like okay. I said please can we get and then she came back with that and I'm like yes, yeah. And then Jeremy said, 'Oh, you got your Malevich in there!' I said no not really, but yeah, that's how it works." Committee Chair Butler thanked her again.

8. OTHER MATTERS

No other matters were discussed.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for May 9, 2019.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Butler asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Robert Pritchard so moved and Trustee Dennis Barsema seconded. The motion was approved. The meeting adjourned at 12:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Craddock
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.