

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULATIONS RELATED TO ACADEMIC PROGRAM APPROVALS

Background Information:

NIU is committed to encouraging innovation and nimbleness in our curriculum. One mechanism for enabling innovation is through the development of emphases, specializations, and concentrations within major program degrees. An emphasis, specialization or concentration allows students to group courses together within their degree programs to meet their academic and personal goals. In addition, emphases, specializations, and concentrations allow for flexibility in curricular offerings and allow departments to explore new curricular areas without committing to offering full major degree programs. Currently, NIU BOT Regulation Section I.C.a.2.a requires that the Board of Trustees approve new Emphases, Specializations, and Concentrations. This results in delays in offering these focused areas to students and requires an approval process that is not mandated by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE).

Here is the language from the Illinois Administrative Code 1050.4 governing approval of curricular changes, which requires only new degrees and programs to be approved:

*Procedures of Obtaining Approval a) Approval of the Board of Control 1) Applications for new units of instruction, research and public service will be reviewed by the appropriate board of control. Upon approval by the appropriate board of control, the institution shall submit to the Board a completed notice of intent on the form provided by the Board. The notice of intent shall include the **degree and program name**, region located, description of the program, demographics of the intended students, estimated enrollment and contact person...3) If the appropriate board of control determines that the proposed unit is a reasonable and moderate extension rather than a new unit, the institution will so inform the Board. If the Board does not concur in this determination, the institution shall submit an application requesting approval of the new unit of instruction, research or public service to the Board.*

Currently, as approved by the IBHE staff, institutions report to the IBHE in June all curricular changes, including emphases, specializations and concentrations. This annual listing of changes is approved by the Board of Trustees before submission to the IBHE. The University will continue to bring the Annual Listing of Changes to the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee in May and to the full BOT in June before submitting to the IBHE.

Proposed Action: The amendment that is requested to the Board of Trustees Regulations is as follows:

Section 1: Academic Programs

Subsection C. Program Approval

Programs and Administrative Units Requiring Board Approval

a. Coverage

Board of Trustees approval is required prior to the addition or deletion of the following:

(2) Instructional Programs

(a) Minors, ~~Emphases, Specializations, Concentrations~~

Recommendation: The University recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the request to amend Board of Trustees Regulations Section I.C.a.2.a as presented above.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULATIONS RELATED TO ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES VACATION

Background Information:

Under the current Board of Trustees Regulations articulated in Section II (Faculty and Administrative Employees), Subsection D (Benefits), 1 (Vacation), supportive professional staff accrue vacation at a rate of two working days per month and do not accrue vacation based on years of service to the university. The regulation is at odds with Section III (Civil Service Employees), Subsection C (Benefits), 1 (Vacation), d (Exempt Employees), that allows “Employees in positions which would be defined as exempt by federal Fair Labor Standards Act criteria, who are eligible as defined in these regulations, [to] earn vacation in accordance with the following schedule:

- (1) For the first, second and third years of consecutive service, 25 work days in each year of service.
- (2) For the fourth, fifth, and sixth years of consecutive service, 26 work days in each year of service.
- (3) For the seventh, eighth, and ninth years of consecutive service, 27 work days in each year of service.
- (4) For the tenth year and beyond, 28 work days in each year of service

This disparity in vacation accrual was raised to the administration at a recent Supportive Professional Staff Council meeting.

Proposed Action: The University recommends the Board of Trustees approve changes to the Board of Trustees Regulations Section II.D.1 as follows:

Subsection D. Benefits

1. Vacation

Vacation shall be earned in accordance with the following schedule for those employees whose work schedules do not conform to the academic calendar.

1. For the first, second and third years of consecutive service, 25 work days in each year of service.
2. For the fourth, fifth, and sixth years of consecutive service, 26 work days in each year of service.
3. For the seventh, eighth, and ninth years of consecutive service, 27 work days in each year of service.
4. For the tenth year and beyond, 28 work days in each year of service.

Vacation may be accumulated up to a maximum of 56 days.

Pay in lieu of vacation accumulated while in a regular appointment status will not be allowed except upon termination of employment at the university, at which time a lump sum payment shall be made for the amount of vacation accumulated as of the last day of work.

Departmental faculty and other employees whose work schedules conform to the academic calendar shall not accrue vacation days but may observe university term or holiday break periods that are designated by the president.

Employees on temporary appointments and those whose positions are funded entirely on grants and/or fees for services, who are eligible to earn vacation, shall not accumulate vacation beyond the termination date for each specific temporary appointment and any balance shall be adjusted to "zero" as of the termination date specified in each temporary appointment unless there is a consecutive temporary appointment. In the event of consecutive appointments, vacation balances may be accumulated at the applicable leave-earning rate to a maximum of that earned in two service years. No pay shall be provided in lieu of vacation accumulated while in temporary appointment status and employees will not be permitted to extend their service to the University by taking vacation at the end of the appointment.

Leaves for vacation purposes shall be arranged with due regard for the operational needs of the university and shall require supervisory approval.

Recommendation: Given that the costs of these proposed changes are minimal and the changes benefit employees, the University requests Board of Trustees approval of the proposed amendment to the Board Regulations regarding Benefits to be effective July 1, 2020.