

Minutes of the  
**Board of Trustees of Northern Illinois University**  
**Research and Innovation, Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee**  
February 13, 2020

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

The meeting was called to order at 12:50 by Committee Chair John Butler in the Board of Trustees Room, 315 Altgeld Hall. Recording Secretary Jessica Cima conducted a roll call of the Trustees. Members present were Trustee Montel Gayles, Trustee Madalynn Mershon, Trustee Bob Pritchard, Trustee Eric Wasowicz, Board Chair Dennis Barsema, Committee Chair John Butler, and Committee Vice Chair Rita Athas. Trustee Veronica Herrero was absent. Also present were President Lisa Freeman, Committee Liaison and Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships Jerry Blazey, General Counsel Bryan Perry, and Board Liaison Matt Streb.

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

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

**3. MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL**

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Board Chair Dennis Barsema. seconded by Trustee Montel Gayles. All were in favor. None were opposed. The agenda was approved.

**4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion to approve the minutes of the August 15, 2019 meeting was made by Trustee Madalynn Mershon; seconded by Board Chair Dennis Barsema. All were in favor. None were opposed. The minutes were approved.

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

Trustee John Butler noted that Board of Trustees Professor Reed Scherer joined the meeting to discuss his research agenda and that the Board of Trustees understands and appreciates the critical function of faculty research in differentiating NIU as a national research university, classified as a Carnegie high research activity institution.

Trustee Butler welcomed the members of the University Advisory Committee representing the Research and Innovation, Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee and requested comments.

Kendall Thu express his gratitude to the Board for inviting Professor Scherer to discuss his research. Professor Thu noted that as President of the faculty senate, he advocates for tenure track faculty and noted the rigors that faculty members go through to advance through the ranks of the tenured system.

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Perry confirmed that there were no timely requests for public comment

## **7. UNIVERSITY REPORTS**

Chair Butler asked Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships Dr. Jerry Blazey to present item 7.a .

### **Agenda Item 7.a. Exceptions to Full-Time Requirements for Tenured Positions**

Vice President Blazey noted that the change to full-time tenure requirements was presented to and passed by the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee. He noted that the action allows an important exception to the requirement for tenure and it enables NIU to collaborate with other institutions, museums, laboratories, hospitals and clinics.

Chair Butler asked State Legislative Liaison to present item 7.a .

### **Agenda Item 7.b. – State Legislative Update**

Jenna Mitchell said that the Spring Legislative would be light with only 13 weeks scheduled and just under 2,100 bills filed, of which a large portion will impact the university. She reported that Governor’s budget address is Wednesday, February 19th, during which he will release his recommendation for NIU. She said that NIU expects the Governor to recommend an increase in Monetary Award Program (MAP).

Ms. Mitchell discussed NIU’s spring 2020 legislative agenda. The agenda includes \$93.6 million for FY21 operations—the level of funding passed by the board in August, the re-appropriation and release of the \$53 million for deferred maintenance capital, and, a re-appropriation of the \$15 million in funding for NICCS and \$77 million for the health IT building that was included in the Rebuild Illinois program this last spring. Additionally, the legislative agenda includes a bill that addresses outdated compliance requirements, a lease agreement extension, and GATA reform to help streamline reporting processes for grants.

Ms. Mitchell also reported on State Legislative engagement, which included two state-wide constitutional officers visiting campus, Lieutenant Governor Stratton attending the season’s first football game, and Treasurer Michael Frerichs co-hosted a forum on campus about investing in Illinois students and the treasurer’s office preliminary plans on the implementation of the Student Investment Act. Ms. Mitchell reported on upcoming engagement activities, which included the second annual advocacy day in Springfield in April. The committee discussed the importance of senior leadership participating in state relations engagement activities.

### **Agenda Item 7.c. – Federal Relations Report**

Dr. Anna Quider reported that the 2020 Federal appropriations were completed and FY20 funding is very positive for NIU priorities. She noted that there were no cuts to NIU priorities across education research and most programming saw an increase in funding. Dr. Quider reported that President Trump recently released his budget request on Monday of this week and it’s a very similar to his budget requests for the past three years, which includes cuts to many of NIU’s priorities. However, the budget negotiations between Congress and the White House have resulted in overall spending models for fiscal year 2021 and that budget increased relative to the President’s requests for fiscal 2021. Dr. Quider noted that being in a presidential election year makes it difficult to move legislation forward

Dr. Quider reported that President Freeman recently submitted comments to the US and Immigration Services regarding the impact of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services’

(USCIS) proposed Fee Schedule and Changes to Certain Other Immigration Benefit Request Requirements. President Freeman has also joined other Illinois universities in sending a letter to our congressional delegation regarding policies effecting international students and scholars.

Dr. Quider noted that Rep. Adam Kinzinger invited NIU faculty member Dr. Tao Xu to represent the 15th Congressional District at the Energy, Environment and Innovation showcase in December, with representatives from industry and academia across the country. Dr. Quider also discussed the upcoming NIU reception on capitol hill that is being held in partnership between Federal Relations, the Alumni Association, and the NIU Foundation.

#### **Agenda Item 7.d. – Sponsored Programs Administration (written Report)**

The committee reviewed the sponsored program administration quarterly written report submitted by Assistant Vice President Dara Little. Vice President Jerry Blazey noted that NIU currently receives \$21 million in external funding and that NIU has seen a continual increase in our research expenditures over the past few years. The committee discussed the sponsored projects funded by external sources as well as university investment and research. The committee also discussed funding and investment opportunities for NICCS.

#### **Agenda Item 7.e. – Dr. Reed Scheer**

Dr. Reed Scheer discussed his recent sabbatical at Columbia University's, the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory and noted the importance of sabbaticals to scholarship and instruction. He discussed the ways in which his recent sabbatical resulted in the confirmation of results that his research team had recently discovered, which led to a publication in Nature. Dr. Reed noted that the Nature publication provided NIU approximately \$2M in earned media. Dr. Reed further discussed the ways in which his sabbatical provided invaluable opportunities for collaborations and provided tremendous learning and engagements opportunities for NIU students.

### **8. OTHER MATTERS**

Chair Butler asked the Committee members if there were other matters to come before the committee. The committee confirmed that there were no other matters to be discussed.

### **9. NEXT MEETING DATE**

Chair Butler noted that the next meeting will be held on May 14, 2020.

### **10. ADJOURNMENT**

Trustee Montel Gayles motioned to adjourn; Trustee Madalynn Mershon seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 2:04PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Cima

Recording Secretary

*request. The minutes contained herein represent a true and accurate summary of the Board proceedings.*