

Minutes of the  
**Board of Trustees of Northern Illinois University**  
**Regular Meeting**  
March 18, 2021

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Board Chair Dennis Barsema virtually. This regular meeting was conducted through video conferencing communications pursuant to Section 6 of Executive Order 2020-7 (Suspending Open Meetings Act requirements of in person attendance by members of a public body). Recording Secretary Crystal Doyle conducted a roll call.

Trustee Rita Athas: Present

Trustee John Butler: Present

Trustee Montel Gayles: Present

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Present

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Present

Trustee Aidan Shields: Present

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Present

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Present

All members of the Board of Trustees were present.

Also present: President Lisa Freeman; Vice President and General Counsel and Board Parliamentarian Bryan Perry; Chief of Staff and Board Liaison Matt Streb; Executive Vice President and Provost Beth Ingram; Vice President for Administration and Finance and Chief Financial Officer Sarah Chinniah; Vice President for Enrollment Management, Marketing and Communications Sol Jensen; Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships Jerry Blazey; Vice President for Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Interim Chief Human Resources Officer Vernese Edghill-Walden; Associate Vice President for Information Technology Matt Parks; Vice President for University Advancement Catherine Squires; Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Kelly Wesener-Michael; Executive Director for Center of Innovative Technology and Learning Jason Rhode; Associate Professor in the Department of Engineering Technology Shanthy Muthuswamy; President of Longhouse Capital Michael Boisvert; and University Advisory Council (UAC) Representatives Greg Beyer, Cathy Doederlein, Katy Jaekel, Natasha Johnson, Sarah Marsh, and Kendall Thu.

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

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

**MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL**

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Vice Chair Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Gayles seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Yes

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to amend that motion, in order to approve a consent agenda for action items 8.a.1., 8.a.2., and 8.a.3. Trustee Pritchard so moved, and Trustee Athas seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Yes

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

### **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 18, 2021**

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve the minutes of February 18, 2021. Trustee Gayles so moved, and Vice Chair Wasowicz seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Yes

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

### **CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chair Barsema welcomed the members of the University Advisory Council who were present and asked for their comments.

UAC Representative Thu thanked the trustees for their appreciation and support of sabbatical leaves and noted their importance and how they benefit the university and the students. Thu also thanked everyone who played a part in getting a vaccine clinic here on campus. He also extended his support on President Freeman's presidential contract extension. Finally, Thu thanked Chief Thomas Phillips for all that he has done for NIU and congratulate him in his upcoming retirement in April.

UAC Representative Marsh showed support for President Freeman's presidential contract extension. Marsh thanked President Freeman and the trustees on all their hard work over the past year.

UAC Representative Jaekel showed appreciation and thanked the trustees and President Freeman for their wonderful leadership and getting the university through a very tough year.

UAC Representative Doederlein shared that the SPS council is very supportive of President Freeman's presidential contract extension and is very thankful to the trustees for bringing this forward.

UAC Representative Johnson shared that the Operating Staff Council is very happy that the trustees are moving forward with President Freeman's presidential contract extension.

Chair Barsema congratulated the NIU Indoor Track Team and the Woman's Cross-Country Team on their MAC Championship. He further welcomed Rashon Burno as the new Men's Basketball Head Coach and welcomed him to the Huskie family.

Chair Barsema thanked our Huskie family for working together to follow the Protecting the Pack pledge. He noted that it has been a great way to protect our students, faculty, staff, and our campus during this tough time.

Chair Barsema mentioned that the trustees are excited to honor the 2020 and 2021 graduates this June during the outdoor commencement ceremonies. Chair Barsema thanked Executive Vice President and Provost Beth Ingram and all that are involved in making the decision to go forward with this event and for all of the planning that goes into it.

Chair Barsema showed appreciation for Chief Thomas Phillips for all that he has done for the university and thanked him for his years of service. He continued that he has enjoyed working with Chief Phillips over the years and wishes him the best in his upcoming retirement.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Barsema introduced the public comment portion of the meeting. General Counsel Perry indicated that Mr. Joe Sener, Ms. Jasmine Sims, Mr. Mike Cullen, and Mr. Roderic Moyer all register to make a public comment. Mr. Joe Sener, Ms. Jasmine Sims, Mr. Mike Cullen, and Mr. Moyer all made public comments.

#### **REPORTS OF THE BOARD COMMITTEES AND BOARD LIAISONS**

Chair Barsema reminded everyone that the reports of the Board Committees and the Board Liaisons are information only.

Chair Barsema complimented the NIU Alumni Association on all their hard work on getting volunteers. He further complimented their efforts on hosting the Day of Giving program each year and the Thousands Strong program that was held in November 2020. It was very successful, and he asked Vice President for University Advancement Catherine Squires to comment on the strategy behind it.

Vice President for University Advancement Catherine Squires responded how the Day of Giving came about and how successful it was. She continued that with many of the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events canceled this past year, they decided to hold Thousands Strong around what would have normally been the date of the Red and Black event that happens yearly in the fall. Thousands Strong into a three-day event. The Thousands Strong event raised over \$2 million and surpassed expectations.

#### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT NO. 149**

Chair Barsema asked President Freeman to present the President's Report No. 149.

President Freeman took a moment to recognize the Huskie Community for their patience and perseverance this past year while being challenged with the pandemic. She also thanked Dr. Matt Streb, collaborators at Northwestern Medicine and the DeKalb County Public Health Department for working with us on the mitigation strategies, return to campus and events such as commencement. President Freeman recognized Chief Thomas Phillips for his tremendous service to the university and wished him well.

### **UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS FORWARDED BY THE BOARD COMMITTEES**

President Freeman presented the items that were moved to consent agenda including:

#### **Agenda Item 8.a.1. Request for New Minor in Financial Counseling**

#### **Agenda Item 8.a.2. Request for New Minor in Sport Analytics**

#### **Agenda Item 8.a.3. Request for New Minor in Sport Journalism**

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda items. Vice Chair Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Shields seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Yes

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

#### **Agenda Item 8.a.4. Recommendations for Faculty and Supportive Professional Staff Sabbatical Leaves for the 2021-2022 Academic Year**

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.a.4. for approval.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 8.a.4. Trustee Gayles so moved, and Trustee Herrero seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Yes

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

#### **Agenda Item 8.a.5. Surplus Real Estate Property Determination Hoffman Estates Campus**

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.a.5. for approval.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 8.a.5. Trustee Pritchard so moved, and Vice Chair Wasowicz seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Yes

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

**Agenda Item 8.a.6. Fiscal Year 2022 Division of Information Technology Microsoft Enrollment Contract Renewal**

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.a.6. for approval.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 8.a.6. Trustee Gayles so moved, and Trustee Athas seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Yes

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

**Agenda Item 8.a.7. Fiscal Year 2022 Master Agreement Facility Contract Renewals**

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.a.7. for approval.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 8.a.7. Vice Chair Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Herrero seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Abstain

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Yes

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

**Agenda Item 8.a.8. Fiscal Year 2022 Materials Management & Integrated Media Technologies Consumable Commodities**

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.a.8. for approval.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 8.a.8. Trustee Athas so moved, and Trustee Shields seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Yes

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

### **UNIVERSITY REPORTS FORWARDED BY THE BOARD COMMITTEES**

President Freeman briefly revisited agenda item 8.b.1. She noted that since the time the information item was presented last month, NIU successfully hired Rashon Burno for that position. A hire that has been met with great enthusiasm and Huskie pride!

President Freeman asked whether any Trustees wanted to revisit information items forwarded from the committees. Hearing none, she continued to the items directly from the President.

### **ITEMS DIRECTLY FROM THE PRESIDENT**

#### **Agenda Item 8.c.1. Fiscal Year 2022 Student Health Insurance**

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.c.1. for approval.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 8.c.1. Vice Chair Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Pritchard seconded.

Trustee Butler questioned how, if NIU has not finished negotiating, can a premium amount for this item be approved? CFO Chinniah responded that the information that has been brought forth is based on claims data to date. As time goes on and NIU gets clarity about our claims data, the hope is that the premium number will decrease. Trustee Butler followed up by asking if a student's insurance runs out under this plan can they continue coverage through some sort of premium under the COBRA provision. Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs Michael Stang responded that this coverage runs August 1-July 31, and you must be registered for classes to be on the student health insurance plan.

Trustee Gayles asked if students would receive a refund if premiums were reduced and payment was already made. President Freeman assured Trustee Gayles that that would absolutely be our practice.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Yes

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

#### **Agenda Item 8.c.2. Honorary Doctorate Recommendation**

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.c.2. for approval.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 8.c.2. Trustee Herrero so moved, and Trustee Athas seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Yes

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

### **Agenda Item 8.c.3. Resolution Authorizing Issuance of Auxiliary Facilities System Revenue Bonds and Related Matters**

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.c.3. for approval.

Michael Boisvert, President, from Longhouse Capitol was on hand to discuss the item and answer any questions the trustees had.

The Trustees showed support for this item and were very excited for the savings that NIU will see.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 8.c.3. Vice Chair Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Gayles seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Yes

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

### **Agenda Item 8.c.4. Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) Partnerships Overview and Progress Report**

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.c.4. Executive Director for Center of Innovative Technology and Learning Jason Rhode presented on the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) Partnerships Overview and Progress Report. Associate Professor in the Department of Engineering Technology Shanthi Muthuswamy also made comments during the presentation.

Trustee Athas asked how participants are selected for this program and how they can be motivated to participate in the program. Executive Vice President and Provost Beth Ingram said that NIU started with a cohort of 30 faculty members, and another cohort of 30 faculty members have started this spring. NIU will continue to offer this program to faculty in the coming year.

Trustee Herrero was very excited to see this offered to the NIU faculty and happy and excited to see so many faculty members wanting to be involved in this program. Trustee Herrero asked if the student evaluations will be utilized to get the students perspective on their feelings of these new practices being used in the classroom. Executive Director Jason Rhode responded that they are developing a way to take a holistic look to see the impact the program has had over time, and that will be developed over the next year.

Trustee Pritchard asked if there is a limit as to how many faculty members can participate in the program each year. Currently NIU has two cohorts with up to 30 faculty in each, that is the current

level NIU has partnered with ACUE. Going forward NIU can have discussions with ACUE with getting more faculty involved.

### **CHAIR'S REPORT NO. 97**

Chair Barsema presented the Chair's report No. 97.

#### **Agenda Item 9.a. President Lisa C. Freeman Contract Extension and Proposed Terms of Extension**

Board Chair Barsema presented agenda item 9.a. for approval.

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to approve item 9.a. Vice Chair Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Herrero seconded.

The Trustees congratulated President Freeman and expressed gratitude to what she has already done for NIU. All the Trustees are looking forward to seeing what she will do in the coming years and are excited to continue to work with her.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Yes

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

### **OTHER MATTERS**

No other matters were discussed.

### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

Chair Barsema announced that the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held June 17, 2021.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

Chair Barsema stated that the Board needed to go into closed session and would not take up new business following the closed session. He asked for a motion to close the public meeting to conduct closed session to discuss the following subjects as authorized by the Open Meetings Act: personnel matters as generally described under sections 2(c)(1)(2)(3) and (21) of the open meetings act; collective bargaining matters as generally described under section 2(c)(2) of the open meetings act; litigation and risk management matters as generally described under sections 2(c)(11) and (12) of the open meetings act; and closed session minutes matters as generally described under section 2(c)(21) of the open meetings act.

Trustee Shields so moved, and Trustee Pritchard seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Ms. Doyle to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes



Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Yes

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

The meeting closed at 11:33 a.m.

At 12:25 p.m. the Board returned from closed session.

Chair Barsema asked Dr. Streb to conduct a roll call.

Trustee Rita Athas: Present

Trustee John Butler: Present

Trustee Montel Gayles: Present

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Present

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Present

Trustee Aidan Shields: Present

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Present

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Present

The motion was approved.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Barsema asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Athas so moved, and Trustee Gayles seconded.

Chair Barsema asked Dr. Streb to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Aidan Shields: Yes

Vice Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Board Chair Dennis Barsema: Yes

The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Crystal Doyle  
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.*