

Minutes of the  
**Board of Trustees of Northern Illinois University**  
**Research and Innovation, Legal and Legislative Affairs**  
**Committee Meeting**  
November 10, 2022

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 a.m. by Committee Chair Veronica Herrero in the Board of Trustees Room, 315 Altgeld Hall. Recording Secretary Jessica Cima conducted a roll call of the Trustees.

Committee Vice Chair Rita Athas: Absent    Trustee Dennis Barsema: Present

Trustee John Butler: Present                      Trustee Montel Gayles: Absent

Trustee Tim Moore: Absent                      Trustee Bob Pritchard: Present

Board Chair Eric Wasowicz: Present              Committee Chair Veronica Herrero: Present

*Trustee Gayles joined the meeting at 9:41 a.m.*

Also present were President Lisa Freeman; Committee Liaison and Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships Gerald Blazey; Vice President and General Counsel and Board Parliamentarian Bryan Perry; Chief of Staff and Liaison to the Board of Trustees Matt Streb; Director of State Relations Katie Davison; Assistant Vice President for Federal Relations Dr. Anna Quider, and Assistant Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs Dara Little.

**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.

**MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL**

Committee Chair Herrero asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Trustee Gayles so moved, and Trustee Pritchard seconded. The motion was approved.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Committee Chair Herrero asked for a motion to approve the minutes of August 10, 2022. Board Chair Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Pritchard seconded. The motion was approved.

**CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Committee Chair Herrero reported that she was eager for the committee to learn more about NIU's possible collaboration with the USGS to develop a central Midwest water center. Committee Chair Herrero noted that the committee would receive a report from NIU's first campus sustainability coordinator. Committee Chair Herrero reported that the CHIPS and Science Act, which creates that definition for an Emerging Research Institution (ERI) was recently passed into law. She noted that NIU and particularly Dr. Anna Quider was instrumental in the development of the legislative

definition of an ERI. Committee Chair Herrero congratulated faculty on the continued strong growth of sponsored funding.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Committee Chair Herrero introduced the public comment portion of the meeting. General Counsel Bryan Perry confirmed that no public comments were received.

Board Chair Wasowicz requested that the August 10, 2022 minutes be updated to reflect his attendance at that meeting.

## **UNIVERSITY REPORTS**

Committee Chair Herrero asked Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships Dr. Gerald C. Blazey, to provide an update from the Division of Research and Innovation Partnerships. Dr. Blazey reported that he, President Freeman, Executive Vice President and Provost Ingram, VP Cotsones, and AVP Quider, recently attended the annual meeting of the Association of Public and Land Grant University in Denver, CO. Dr. Blazey reported that he presented to the Council on Research, Dr. Freeman presented to the Council of Presidents, and that Dr. Quider received the Jennifer Poulakidas Outstanding Achievement Award for “outstanding, specific contributions to, and achievements in, university governmental relations” during the meeting of the Council on Governmental Affairs. Dr. Blazey offered highlights of the sponsored funding report for FY23 Q1, noting that NIU received 69 sponsored awards totaling \$17.1M, and that relative to last year, funding for this same period with and without COVID funding is up 111% and 105%, respectively. Dr. Blazey reported that the Capital Development Board has selected Epstein and Sons, Chicago for development of the bridging documents for the NICCS facility, and that the design-build process could start in CY24. Dr. Blazey reported that NIU is working to strengthen a long-term partnership with the USGS Central Midwest Water Science Center with a collaborative agreement for research and shared space on campus. Dr. Blazey noted that the Office of Innovation recently held a Food Systems Challenge Huskie Hack and that seventy-four students participated. He noted that the students were highly engaged and that the Office of Innovation plans to make this an annual event. Dr. Blazey reported that a NICCS Research Instrumentation task force has been formed to prepare a report detailing recommendations for instrumentation. Dr. Blazey also reported that NIU is expecting the delivery of its new high-performance computer on December 8<sup>th</sup> and that the Center for Research Computing and Data is now fully staffed.

### **Agenda Item 7.a. Sponsored Program Administration Quarterly Report**

The Committee reviewed the sponsored program administration quarterly written report submitted by Assistant Vice President Dara Little. No questions were raised.

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

Ms. Katie Davison, Director of State Relations reported on the outcome of the 2022 state midterm elections, noting that Democrats maintain control of the executive branch along with both chambers of the legislative branch. She reported that Governor JB Pritzker will serve a second term, and that Alexi Giannoulias was elected as Secretary of State. Ms. Davison reported that incumbent Attorney General, Kwame Raoul, incumbent Treasurer, Michael Frerichs, and incumbent Comptroller Suzanna Mendoza will all retain their offices. Ms. Davison reported that the NIU caucus lost two members, which provides an opportunity to invite to the caucus Representative Benton who replaces Representative Batinick in the 97th District and

Representative Fritts who replaces Representative Demmer in the 74th District. Ms. Davison reported that the Workers' Rights Amendment, which would amend the state constitution to guarantee workers the right to organize and bargain collectively was still too close to call. Ms. Davison said that the spring legislative agenda is being finalized and that NIU plans to continue to seek increased appropriations.

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

Dr. Anna Quider, Assistant Vice President for Federal Relations reported on the outcome of the 2022 federal midterm elections, noting that all 435 members of the House of Representatives and one-third of the Senate including one Illinois seat were up for election. Dr. Quider reported that results are still being tabulated in several key races, and that it could be weeks until the outcomes are decided. Dr. Quider reported that the Illinois delegation gained one Democrat in the House, for a final composition of 14 House Democrats, three House Republicans, and two Senate Democrats. Dr. Quider reported that Senator Tammy Duckworth won re-election, and that incumbent Lauren Underwood prevailed in the 14th district and will now represent NIU. She noted that in the House, there will be four new members representing Illinois in the 1st, 3rd, 13th, and 17th districts. Dr. Quider reported that the Congress will now include three NIU alumni: incumbents Senator Tammy Duckworth, Representative Don Bacon of Nebraska, and Representative-elect Eric Sorensen in Illinois' 17th district. Dr. Quider reported that the House and Senate have drafted their versions of the FY23 appropriations bills, including selected projects to receive congressionally directed spending. Two of the projects selected were for NIU: \$1M from the National Institute of Standards and Technology requested by Senator Dick Durbin for the project entitled "Advanced electronics initiative." And \$1.5M from the Department of Education requested by Representative Lauren Underwood for the project entitled "Fabrication and Training Facility for Semiconductor Chips, Advanced Electronics, and Sensor Systems." Dr. Quider noted that for the NIU projects to receive funding, the FY23 appropriations legislation must pass Congress and become law. Dr. Quider reported that the CHIPS and Science Act passed into law, and that it includes significant authorizations for STEM research and workforce development programs, including creating an Emerging Research Institutions definition and pilot program at the National Science Foundation, which NIU spearheaded. She also noted that NIU is leading the national appropriations strategy for funding the Emerging Research Institutions provisions.

#### **Agenda Item 7.d. – U.S. Geological Research Partnership**

Dr. Blazey reported that NIU is working with the USGS Central Midwest Water Science Center to develop a collaborative agreement for research and shared space on campus. The Central Midwest Water Science Center collects and offers information on streamflow, water quality, water-use, and groundwater data for Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri. Dr. Blazey noted that the cooperative agreement will also support and promote a joint program of earth sciences research, education, and outreach. Dr. Blazey reported that the collaborative agreement has high potential to yield publications coauthored by NIU and USGS, to develop joint research and education proposals, co-sponsorship of scientific meetings and communication, and enhanced instructional opportunities for NIU students.

#### **Agenda Item 7.e. – Sustainability Report**

Dr. Courtney Gallaher, Campus Sustainability Coordinator, prepared NIU's first sustainability report, noting that NIU must address and prepare for climate change to fulfill its academic, research and outreach missions. Dr. Gallaher noted that NIU has completed baseline assessments of

sustainability, such as a greenhouse gas inventory, and is now prepared to create a formal sustainability and climate action plan for the university. Dr. Gallaher reported that a planning taskforce has been formed to propose goals for creating a more sustainable campus and tie NIU's climate action planning process to a "net zero" goal and date. She noted that taskforce will integrate sustainability planning into the master planning framework for the university. Dr. Gallaher said that a draft plan is expected early in 2023 and will then be presented for public comment and revised. Dr. Gallaher anticipates having a final sustainability plan by late 2023.

#### **OTHER MATTERS**

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

#### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

Committee Chair Herrero noted that the next meeting will be held on February 16, 2023.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Committee Chair Herrero asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Gayles so moved, and Board Chair Wasowicz seconded. The motion was approved.

Committee Chair Herrero asked Ms. Cima to conduct a roll call vote.

Committee Vice Chair Rita Athas: Absent      Trustee Dennis Barsema: Present

Trustee John Butler: Present                      Trustee Montel Gayles: Present

Trustee Tim Moore: Absent                      Trustee Bob Pritchard: Present

Board Chair Eric Wasowicz: Present              Committee Chair Veronica Herrero: Present

The motion was approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:57 a.m.

Jessica Cima/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.*