

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

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 10:49 a.m. by Committee Vice Chair Rita Athas. The Committee meeting was conducted through video conferencing communications and was conducted pursuant to Section 6 of Executive Order 2020-7 (Suspending OMA requirements of in person attendance by members of a public body). Recording Secretary Jessica Cima conducted a roll call of the Trustees.

Committee Vice Chair Rita Athas: Present Trustee Dennis Barsema: Present
Trustee John Butler: Present Trustee Montel Gayles: Present
Trustee Bob Pritchard: Present Trustee Jacob Sommer: Absent
Board Chair Eric Wasowicz: Present Committee Chair Veronica Herrero: Absent

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; and Assistant Vice President for Federal Relations Anna Quider.

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 Vice Chair Athas asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Trustee Gayles so moved, and Board Chair Wasowicz seconded. The motion was approved.

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

Committee Vice Chair Trustee Rita Athas: Yes Trustee Dennis Barsema: Yes
Trustee John Butler: Yes Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes
Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes Trustee Jacob Sommer: Absent
Board Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes Committee Chair Veronica Herrero: Absent

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Committee Vice Chair Athas asked for a motion to approve the minutes of August 26, 2021 and November 18, 2021. Board Chair Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Butler seconded. The motion was approved.

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

Committee Vice Chair Rita Athas: Yes Trustee Dennis Barsema: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes Trustee Jacob Sommer: Absent

Board Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes Committee Chair Veronica Herrero: Absent

CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Committee Vice Chair Athas reported that the Committee would be receiving verbal reports from State and Federal Relations regarding the status of legislation and funding as well as a written Sponsored Program Administration Quarterly Report. Committee Vice Chair Athas welcomed the members of the University Advisory Committee and requested comments. No comments were submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

UNIVERSITY REPORTS

Committee Vice Chair Athas asked Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships Dr. Gerald Blazey, to provide an update from the Division of Research and Innovation Partnerships. Dr. Blazey provided an update on the status of the Northern Illinois Center for Community Sustainability (NICCS), noting that faculty remain highly engaged with nearly a dozen research projects underway. He also noted that the Dr. Courtney Gallaher had been appointed Sustainability Coordinator and is currently working on NIU's greenhouse gas inventory. Dr. Blazey reported that NIU was selected as one of 38 finalists to compete for the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Driving Change Initiative, which is a \$2.5M grant opportunity focused on the cultural change necessary to promote diversity in the STEM fields, especially with respect to graduate degrees. Dr. Blazey reported that the Carnegie Classification of Institutes of Higher Education released a reclassification and that NIU retained its classification of Doctoral Research: High Research Activity.

Agenda Item 7.a. State Legislative Report

Director of State Relations Katie Davison reported that she continues to advocate on behalf of NIU for the release of state funds for NICCS. Ms. Davison reported that the Governor has planned a visit to NIU in March, where he will amplify his proposed budget. Ms. Davison noted that she is currently tracking 250 bills that relate to higher education, with specific themes around student debt assistance and college affordability. Ms. Davison reported that under the Governor's proposed FY23 budget, NIU would receive a 5% increase in funding. Of note, the Governor's proposed budget includes a \$122M increase in funding for the Monetary Award Program (MAP), and that the AIM High program would receive stable funding of \$35M, allowing for the continued funding of the Huskie Pledge program. The Governor's proposed FY23 Capital Budget reappropriates all funding that's been enacted and unexpended for FY22.

Agenda Item 7.b. – Federal Legislative Report

Assistant Vice President for Federal Relations Dr. Anna Quider reported that the House of Representatives recently passed the America COMPETES Act of 2022, which is the counterpart to the Senate’s U.S. Innovation and Competition Act, which passed the Senate last year. Dr. Quider noted that these bills would set policy for key research agencies such as the National Science Foundation, Department of Energy Office of Science, NASA, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology, as well as increase domestic manufacturing capabilities. Dr. Quider reported that NIU has been engaged in the development of the legislation for over two years and is engaged in the conference process to promote policies that would strengthen science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and research at NIU. Dr Quider reported that the federal government is currently operating under a continuing resolution until February 18th, and that Congress is likely to extend the continuing resolution until mid-March. She reported that House and Senate negotiators announced that they had reached an agreement on top-line spending levels for FY22, and that the negotiators are optimistic that they will complete FY22 appropriations in mid-March. Dr. Quider reported that the completion of the FY22 appropriations process is necessary for NIU’s two congressionally directed spending projects to receive their funding totaling \$1.16M. Dr. Quider also reported that in November, President Freeman submitted public comments to the Department of Homeland Security in support of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy.

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

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

OTHER MATTERS

Committee Vice Chair Athas 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 Vice Chair Athas noted that the next meeting will be held on May 12, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Committee Vice Chair Rita Athas: Yes

Trustee Dennis Barsema: Yes

Trustee John Butler: Yes

Trustee Montel Gayles: Yes

Trustee Bob Pritchard: Yes

Trustee Jacob Sommer: Absent

Board Chair Eric Wasowicz: Yes

Committee Chair Veronica Herrero: Absent

The motion was approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:37 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.