

Minutes of the
Board of Trustees of Northern Illinois University
Research and Innovation, Legal and Legislative Affairs
Committee Meeting
August 24, 2023

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 9:52 a.m. by Committee Chair Veronica Herrero in the Board of Trustees Room, 315 Altgeld Hall. Recording Secretary Rachel Jurs-Lauderdale conducted a roll call of the Trustees.

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

Trustee John Butler: Present Trustee Montel Gayles: Present

Trustee Tim Moore: Present Committee Chair Veronica Herrero: Present

Board Chair Eric Wasowicz: Present

Also present were President Lisa Freeman; Committee Liaison and Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships Yvonne Harris; Vice President and General Counsel and Board Parliamentarian Bryan Perry; Chief Strategy Officer and Liaison to the Board of Trustees Matt Streb; Assistant Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs Dara Little. Present virtually are Director of State Relations, Katie Davison and Director for Federal Relations, Julia Rowe.

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 Barsema so moved, and Trustee Gayles seconded. The motion was approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Committee Chair Herrero asked for a motion to approve the minutes of May 11, 2023. Trustee Gayles so moved, and Board Chair Wasowicz seconded. The motion was approved.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Herrero welcomed any University Advisory Committee Members. She also welcomed Yvonne Harris as the newest member of the Committee. Chair Herrero acknowledged that the Division of Research and Innovation Partnerships has an incredible team and recognized Dara Little and her department report indicating a 35% increase in funding year over year.

Chair Herrero congratulated Jada Samuels for her 1st place finish and \$7,000 win at the DePaul University Pitch Madness Competition. Jada is a management major in the College of Business and shared her vision to create Jada Juice as a way to support generational health with an emphasis on plant based products.

Chair Herrero shared that Governor Pritzker has made the electric vehicle industry a priority for Illinois. We are challenged with building out the infrastructure and talent pipeline with equity and inclusion. Governor Pritzker along with other leaders met in Decatur IL, to break ground on TCCI's electric vehicle innovation hub. NIU is one of the universities who is participating in building this pipeline through an articulation agreement with Richmond Community College. Through this agreement, students will be able to seamlessly transfer credits and enter directly into the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology, as well as the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Computer Science and Chemistry programs. According to President Freeman, NIU will offer new world class training academies in electrification.

Chair Herrero shared that we will be hearing from Dr. Thomas Skuzinski about impacting Illinois communities through sustainability policy.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

UNIVERSITY REPORTS

Committee Chair Herrero asked Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships Dr. Yvonne Harris, to provide an update from the Division of Research and Innovation Partnerships. Dr. Yvonne Harris reported that she had no additional information to add other than the congratulations to student, Jada Samules.

Agenda Item 7.a. – State Legislative Report

Ms. Katie Davison, Director of State Relations reported virtually to share remarks. Katie shared that during the slowed summer session, she is taking the opportunity to schedule on campus meetings with legislators, provide legislative summaries, and plan the coming year. She is getting ready for the fall veto session that takes place October 24-26 and November 7-9. The Governor has vetoed a few bills, but we do not anticipate that those will impact higher education. We are collaborating with sister institutions to develop a higher education legislative agenda which will build on successful work from previous sessions. Our House Representative Lance Yednock announced he will not seek reelection. NIU will see new representation in the House for the 104th General Assembly.

Agenda Item 7.b. – Federal Relations Report

Ms. Julia Rowe, Director for Federal Relations reported virtually. Julia shared the appropriations update and reported both the House of Representatives and the Senate were in recess for August break. She shared that when they return to session in September there is a list of priorities which includes passing twelve appropriation bills to fund the federal government for fiscal year 2024. There is a likelihood that we will see a government shutdown due to ongoing negotiations at the end of the fiscal year November 1. If the government does reach an agreement, we will likely see flat spending and budget cuts across the board. We are working to prevent a majority bill from passing that would eliminate the work study program and other cuts that would result in millions of reductions for student programs. These programs are important to us as many students rely on these to fund their education.

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.

Agenda Item 7.d. – Faculty Presentation

Dr. Thomas Skuzinski, Associate Professor and Director for the Institute for the Study of Environment, Sustainability and Energy presented about impacting Illinois communities through sustainability policy. To summarize, we want everyone to benefit from economic impacts without harming future generations.

OTHER MATTERS

Committee Chair Herrero asked if there were other matters to come before the Committee. Vice President and General Counsel, and Board Parliamentarian Bryan Perry briefed the Board regarding the Supreme Court case *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. Harvard and the University of North Carolina, et al.* This information is just to make us aware of the case and the Supreme Court ruling on June 29. The basis of the case is that institutions cannot use race as a factor for admission if you receive federal funding.

The ruling indicates there is no support for race conscious admissions including to achieve racial diversity. Race neutral strategies are permissible; however, they may not be used for admission. Outreach, recruitment, and collection of race information is permissible to achieve the mission of achieving a diverse campus. The Supreme court shared their opinion indicating that admissions or anything that flows from that should not be determined by race. There was no information shared about race based or targeted scholarships. There are still open questions about financial aid and scholarship that we will continue to watch.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Committee Chair Herrero noted that the next meeting will be held on November 9, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Committee Chair Herrero asked Ms. Jurs-Lauderdale 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: Present Committee Chair Veronica Herrero: Present

Board Chair Eric Wasowicz: Present

The motion was approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Rachel Jurs-Lauderdale

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.