Minutes of the
Board of Trustees of Northern Illinois University
March 21, 2024

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 a.m. by Board Chair Montel Gayles in the Board of Trustees Room, 315 Altgeld Hall.

Recording Secretary Liz Wright conducted a roll call.

Trustee Rita Athas: Present
Trustee Dennis Barsema: Present
Vice Chair John Butler: Present
Trustee Veronica Herrero: Absent
Trustee Tim Moore: Absent
Trustee Leland Strom: Present
Trustee Eric Wasowicz: Present
Board Chair Montel Gayles: Present

Also present: President Lisa Freeman; Vice President and General Counsel and Board Parliamentarian Bryan Perry; Interim Executive Vice President and Provost Laurie Elish-Piper; Vice President for Administration and Finance and Chief Financial Officer George Middlemist (virtual); Senior Associate Vice President and Chief Human Resource Office John Acardo; Vice President for Student Affairs Clint-Michael Reneau, Vice President for Outreach, Engagement and Regional Development Rena Cotsones; Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Carol Sumner; Associate Vice President for Facilities Management and Campus Services; College of Engineering Dean Dave Grewell; and University Advisory Council (UAC) Representatives Benjamin Creed and Natasha Johnson.

MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL

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

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to amend that motion, in order to approve a consent agenda for action items 8.a.1. through 8.a.8. Trustee Strom so moved, and Trustee Wasowicz seconded. The motion was approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 15, 2024

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to approve the minutes of February 15, 2024. Trustee Athas so moved, and Trustee Wasowicz seconded. Trustee Strom noted he was present for the meeting and requested the minutes be amended to reflect that. With the amendment, the motion was approved.

Trustees Herrero and Moore joined the meeting at 8:33 a.m.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Gayles welcomed the members of the University Advisory Council who were present.

Professor Creed thanked the Board for their continued support of faculty sabbaticals, noting the importance of advancing student and faculty success. Further, he thanked the members of the Executive Vice President and Provost search committee and noted his congratulations to the selected candidate, Dr. Laurie Elish-Piper.

Chair Gayles noted that recently Professor Courtney Hughes was named the 2024 Mid-American Conference Outstanding Faculty Award for Student Success award winner and asked colleagues on campus to congratulate her. Chair Gayles also mentioned that today is Huskies United Day of Giving. Together we have raised millions for scholarships, academic programs, campus initiatives and so much more. Any amount of money donated will make a difference. Chair Gayles shared his excitement in having the Illinois Supreme Court on campus to today to hear oral arguments.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Gayles introduced the public comment portion of the meeting. General Counsel Perry stated that several requests for public comment were received. The following individuals provided public comment Aaron Sebourn, Sue Phelps, Patrick Sheridan, and Jason Williams.

REPORTS OF THE BOARD COMMITTEES AND BOARD LIAISONS

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

Vice Chair Butler gave a verbal report for item 7.e.

Catherine Squires, Vice President for Advancement and President and CEO of the NIU Foundations provided a verbal report on agenda item 7.g.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT NO. 175

Chair Gayles asked President Freeman to present the President's Report No. 175.

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

Agenda Item 8.a.1. – Request for the Deletion of the Master of Science in Education in Educational Psychology

Agenda Item 8.a.2. – Request for the Deletion of the Minor in Social Change Leadership

Agenda Item 8.a.3. – Request for New Minor in Health Administration

Agenda Item 8.a.4. – Recommendations for Faculty and Supportive Professional Staff Sabbatical Leaves for the 2024-2025 Academic Year

Agenda Item 8.a.5. – Fiscal Year 2025 Campus Services Consumable Commodities and Charter Bus Services

Agenda Item 8.a.6. –Out-Lease with Illinois Association of School Business Officials (NIU as Lessor)

Agenda Item 8.a.7. –Division of Information Technology Renewal of OnBase Software Maintenance

Agenda Item 8.a.8. – Center for Early Learning Funding Equity

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda items. Trustee Strom so moved, and Trustee Wasowicz seconded. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 8.a.9. College of Law Graduation Fee

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.a.9. for approval.

Chair Gayles noted that he would be abstaining from voting on this agenda item.

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to approve item 8.a.9. Trustee Herrero so moved, and Trustee Barsema seconded.

Chair Gayles asked Ms. Wright to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes	Trustee Dennis Barsema: Yes
Vice Chair John Butler: Yes	Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes
Trustee Tim Moore: Yes	Trustee Leland Strom: Yes
Trustee Eric Wasowicz: Yes	Board Chair Montel Gayles: Abstain

The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 8.a.10. Fiscal Year 2025 Master Agreement Facility Contracts Renewals

President Freeman presented agenda item 8.a.10. for approval.

Chair Gayles stated that Vice Chair Butler will need to abstain from voting on this agenda item.

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to approve item 8.a.10. Trustee Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Moore seconded.

Chair Gayles asked Ms. Wright to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes	Trustee Dennis Barsema: Yes
Vice Chair John Butler: Abstain	Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes
Trustee Tim Moore: Yes	Trustee Leland Strom: Yes
Trustee Eric Wasowicz: Yes	Board Chair Montel Gayles: Yes

The motion was approved.

UNIVERSITY REPORTS FORWARDED BY THE BOARD COMMITTEES

President Freeman asked whether any Trustees wanted to revisit information items forwarded from the committees.

President Freeman continued to the items directly from the President.

ITEMS DIRECTLY FROM THE PRESIDENT

Due to Interim Executive Vice President and Provost Elish-Piper giving a welcome at the Illinois Supreme Court hearings on campus, item 8.c.1. was postponed until she returned.

Agenda Item 8.c.2. Room Furnishing Project for Neptune Complex

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

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

Agenda Item 8.c.3. Proposed Amendments to the Board of Trustees Regulations Regarding Academic Programs, Faculty and Administrative Employees, Financial Matters, and Physical Facilities

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

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

Vice Chair Butler asked to amend the motion to make grammatical and editorial edits to the Board regs purchases section. Under the section, he proposed adjusting numbers 15, 16, 17, and 18 to have semicolons prior to the next item to ensure the list was appropriately formatted. Both 17 and 18 will start with lowercase due to the continuation of the list. Further, he proposed adding "and" after 18 and ending the list with 19 and a period. 20 and 21 of list will become separate items and be (2) and (3) subsequently, followed by the former (2) becoming (4). Trustee Wasowicz, who made the motion originally, accepted these edits.

Trustee Herrero brought forward questions about the change related to the university authorization to enter into contracts under which it serves solely as an agent or pass-through for external funding. While she agreed fundamentally with that change, she wanted to clarify that the university had done its due diligence on the matter. President Freeman shared an example of a researcher having their work and grant funding in jeopardy due to not having the ability to get board approval in a timely manner due to the meeting schedule. Further, Trustee Herrero asked about the updated reporting obligation of $500,000 or more. Discussion ensued around both of these topics. It was noted, that other state schools have $500,000 or $1,000,000 reporting thresholds, so NIU is not seeking to do something unusual with the update. Further, the staff time utilized in reporting at lower levels is not sustainable, and the President, as well as the NIU leadership team, regardless, has the responsibility to bring items of significance to the board regardless of monetary amount.

The Board asked for Trustee Butler to review the reporting further prior to the next meeting, and to determine the best way forward related to suggestions that included criteria for the $250,000-$500,000 amount to be reported or perhaps a once a year report instead of quarterly in order to determine if this was necessary moving forward.

The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 8.c.1. Appointment of Executive Vice President and Provost

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

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to approve item 8.c.1. Trustee Strom so moved, and Trustee Athas seconded. The Board congratulated Interim Executive Vice President and Provost Elish-Piper on her appointment. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 8.c.4. College of Engineering and Engineering Technology Overview

College of Engineering Dean, Dave Grewell, presented Agenda Item 8.c.4.

OTHER MATTERS

There were no other matters.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held June 20, 2024 at 9 a.m.

CLOSED SESSION

Chair Gayles 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: closed session minutes matters as generally described under section 2(c)(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; real estate matters as generally described under section 2(c)(5) and (6) of the open meetings act; student disciplinary cases matters as generally described under sections 2(c)(11) and (12) of the open meetings act; and personnel matters as generally described under sections 2(c)(1)(2)(3) and (21) of the open meetings act.

Trustee Athas so moved, and Trustee Wasowicz seconded.

Chair Gayles asked Ms. Wright to conduct a roll call vote.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes	Trustee Dennis Barsema: Yes
Vice Chair John Butler: Yes	Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes
Trustee Tim Moore: Yes	Trustee Leland Strom: Yes
Trustee Eric Wasowicz: Yes	Board Chair Montel Gayles: Yes

The motion was approved.

The Board closed the public meeting at 10:41 a.m.

The meeting reconvened from closed session at 12:01 p.m.

Chair Gayles asked Ms. Wright to conduct a roll call.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes	Trustee Dennis Barsema: Yes
Vice Chair John Butler: Yes	Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes
Trustee Tim Moore: Yes	Trustee Leland Strom: Yes
Trustee Eric Wasowicz: Yes	Board Chair Montel Gayles: Yes

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Gayles asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Wasowicz so moved, and Trustee Herrero seconded.

Chair Gayles asked Ms. Wright to conduct a roll call.

Trustee Rita Athas: Yes	Trustee Dennis Barsema: Yes
Vice Chair John Butler: Yes	Trustee Veronica Herrero: Yes
Trustee Tim Moore: Yes	Trustee Leland Strom: Yes
Trustee Eric Wasowicz: Yes	Board Chair Montel Gayles: Yes

The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 12:02 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.