The NEIU Board of Trustees Committees met as follows on November 13, 2014 in the Golden Eagles room at Northeastern Illinois University, 5500 N. St. Louis Ave. The President’s Report is incorporated herein by reference. Chair Azcoitia called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes
Chair Azcoitia said that hearing no corrections, the Committee Minutes from September 18, 2014 stand as written.

Executive Committee – No report.

Academic and Student Affairs Committee
Committee Members present: Barbara Fumo, Jin Lee, and Amanda Slefo
Committee Members absent: Marvin Garcia
Other Trustees Present: Carlos Azcoitia, Ex-Officio; Bob Biggins, Omar Duque, Darlene Ruscitti, and Jonathan Stein
University Liaison: Vicki Roman- Lagunas

Trustee Fumo gave an informal report on questions that were submitted to the Provost regarding the institution of a doctoral program. The Academic and Student Affairs Committee will meet once before the next Board of Trustees meeting to go over the questions in more detail in order to provide answers. Trustee Stein asked if there is a timeline of events to get resolution on the doctoral program. Trustee Fumo responded that there is not a specific timeline yet. President Hahs added that the initial steps that need to be taken are: 1. The Board of Trustees needs to announce its support and approve of the program, 2. IBHE has to grant the University status to provide a doctoral program, 3. IBHE has to then approve the specific program. The Provost added that a timeline of 1 to 1 ½ year is reasonable.

Review of President’s Report Items

- Information Item II. A. Open Access to Research Articles Act Report, page 11

The Open Access to Research Articles Act (OARAA, Public Act 098-0295) was signed into law by Governor Quinn on August 9, 2013. The OARAA stipulates that each public university appoint an Open Access to Research Task Force by January 1, 2014 to “review current practices and design a proposed policy regarding open access to research articles, based on criteria that are specific to each public university’s needs”.

The full text of the OARAA can be found at http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=098-0295.
As detailed in the OARAA, the work of the NEIU Task Force for the 2014 calendar year was to provide a report detailing their findings. The Task Force reviewed the current state of general awareness of the issues pertaining to Open Access (OA) among the various constituencies at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU). Aside from a few individuals who possess a solid understanding of OA issues, the majority of faculty, staff, and administrators within the NEIU community had not previously engaged deeply in issues pertaining to OA and are not yet adequately familiar with the issues to discuss and adopt an OA policy that is appropriate for the University community. In lieu of designing an OA policy, this report outlines the plans formulated by the Task Force first to inform the NEIU community about the relevant OA issues and then to have the community-wide discussions that will enable the adoption of an appropriate OA policy. The Task Force unanimously recommended the development and implementation of an OA policy for NEIU and strongly opposed a statewide policy approach.

This report is being submitted with the unanimous consent of the voting members of the Task Force, and includes a Publisher Perspective section composed by the non-voting publisher representative. The Faculty Senate has agreed to designate a task force or similar body of representatives to guide the process leading to the adoption of an OA policy through the three phases of educating the community, broad discussion, and policy adoption. The Task Force has also assembled a list of departmental OA representatives who will insure the engagement of the broad array of disciplines represented at NEIU. The report details the steps taken by the Task Force to initiate the process of informing the NEIU community about OA issues and adopting an appropriate OA policy. The recommended target date for adopting an OA policy is January 1, 2016.

Chair Azcoitia asked how the research information will be accessible to the public, President Hahs responded that it would be available through the web whether through the NEIU web site or a statewide web site.

Trustee Fumo asked what types of research is made available. President Hahs replied that ultimately, all research will be made available to the public.

**Buildings and Grounds Committee**
Committee Members present: Omar Duque, Chair and Barbara Fumo
Committee Members absent: none
Other Trustees present: Carlos Azcoitia, Ex-Officio; Bob Biggins, Marvin Garcia, Jin Lee, Darlene Ruscitti, Jonathan Stein, and Amanda Slefo
University Liaisons: Michael Pierick and Nancy Medina

- Information Item II. D. Construction Update, page 26

Trustee Duque read the construction update provided in the President’s report.

**Finance Committee**
Committee Members present: Omar Duque, chair; Bob Biggins, Darlene Ruscitti, and Jonathan Stein
Committee Members absent: none
Other Trustees present: Carlos Azcoitia, Ex-Officio; Barbara Fumo, Marvin Garcia, Jin Lee, and Amanda Slefo
University Liaisons: Michael Pierick and Robert Filipp

Items on agenda:
Review of President’s Report Items

- Action Item I. A. Tuition and Fee Recommendations, page 2
- Action Item I. B. Expenditure Recommendation for $100,000 or more, page 8
- Action Item I. C. University Facilities System Revenue Bonds Series 2014, page 9

Trustee Duque represented the Finance Committee and briefly introduced each action and information item. President Hahs explained that the Finance Committee held a special meeting on October 20, 2014 to examine the issues surrounding tuition and fee rates. The consensus reached in that meeting is reflected in the recommendations for the FY2016 tuition and fees presented below:

a) A tuition rate change for incoming Fall 2015 undergraduate students that is 5.9 percent higher than the rate for incoming Fall 2014 undergraduate students. (Note that the original consensus from the Finance Committee is 6 percent, based on rounding percentages. The amounts listed here are based on rounding to the nearest whole dollar.)

b) A tuition rate change of 6.8 percent for graduate students; and

c) A tuition rate change of 12.6 percent for undergraduate students who will have been at the University for more than six academic years.

d) A decrease in the Parking fee and implementation of a new Campus Improvement fee.

e) A change in the Campus Recreation and Student Health Services fees.

In regard to the tuition and fee increase, Trustee Lee suggested we provide incoming students information that exhibits the University’s efforts to cut costs and the need for an increase. He gave examples of other Universities across the United States that have done the same. He would prefer to see cost cutting measures instead of tuition increases. President Hahs noted that despite the tuition increase, the University will still need to make budget cuts and/or forego certain UPBC initiatives.

Chair Azcoitia asked if Northeastern would receive the distinction of being ranked one of the best investments in the country by US News and World report. President Hahs responded that they have redefined their ranking formula and therefore it is unlikely that we will be ranked that high again.

Student Trustee Slefo asked for an explanation of the decision making process behind budget cuts at Northeastern. President Hahs responded that the decisions are experience driven. She and the Provost and Vice Presidents sit down to discuss priorities, and then the Provost and Vice Presidents work with those in their respective divisions to identify where cuts can be made. For example, not filling positions after an employee retires, programmatic needs, safety, etc.

Trustee Duque added that it is never easy to vote to increase tuition but as a board, they have a responsibility to ensure the financial stability and vibrancy of the University. It is also important to provide existing students with a quality experience. There is a great opportunity to sustain financial stability by retaining current students who will not see a tuition increase unless they stay at the University past 6 years. In regard to budget cuts, every cut has the potential to hurt the student experience but they are done in a way that doesn’t hurt the overall outcome of the student experience. We have a responsibility to our current students so that they don’t leave for another institution.

Provost Helldobler responded to Trustee Lee’s examples of larger institutions saving millions of dollars. The types of cost savings experienced don’t translate in Illinois because of differences in
governance structure. Affordability is also subject to a large range of income levels. Northeastern’s tuition rate is 84% of other Illinois state institutions. We have been recognized nationally for the lowest debt our students carry after graduating both in dollar amount and percentage of debt. At the same time, we are graduating the most students in Northeastern’s history. President Hahs added that we are finding savings by participating in the Illinois Public Higher Education Commission.

With Trustee Duque’s permission, President Hahs also explained the two additional items related to tuition that were not discussed at the October meeting but are up for vote at this meeting. They are:

a) Beginning fall 2015, offer in-state tuition rates to new students from neighboring states (IN, WI, MI, IA, KY, and MO).

b) Beginning fall 2015, offer in-state tuition rates to spouses and dependent children of active members of the military and honorably discharged veterans, regardless of residency.

Chair Azcoitia, asked about the average student debt amount for Northeastern students. President Hahs replied that the average debt is $13,000 to $14,000 and the lowest amount in the midwest region. The percentage of students who graduate with debt is approximately 12% and it is the lowest percentage of debt in the nation. There is approximate $1.4 million in scholarship funds available out of the operating budget and the foundation’s budget has also dramatically increased the amount of scholarship funds available through endowments. Chair Azcoitia quoted an article that read the average student loan debt amount is $27,300.

Trustee Lee requested that recruitment, enrollment, and retention rates be included in future discussions regarding tuition increases.

Trustee Stein noted that based on the information regarding scholarship money that is available to students and the low ratio of debt after graduation, the University may not be doing as good of a job of highlighting what a great value Northeastern is to the public, students, and stakeholders.

Student Trustee Slefo asked if there is a forum for faculty to present their ideas on creative ways to increase recruitment and retention. The Provost noted that Janice Harring-Hendon, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Services, puts a call out every year to all faculty to submit their ideas to her office for consideration. Dr. Harring-Hendon also noted that the “Meet the professor” program is one example of a faculty member’s idea that was implemented. Faculty members are also invited to participate in information sessions offered to prospective students.

Trustee Slefo also mentioned that the Student Government Association met with Vice President Pierick and Vice President Ross regarding tuition increases. Mr. Pierick and Dr. Ross informed members of SGA that a tuition increase would ensure a living wage for employees and would help keep class sizes small; Trustee Slefo would like to see that happen. The members of the SGA recognize that the tuition increase is necessary and will benefit future students and the University.

Trustee Duque, while referencing the map of Chicagoland universities and their tuition rates, asked if the recently announced decision by the City Colleges of Chicago to offer free tuition to qualified CPS students would hurt our recruitment efforts. President Hahs noted that the University has a partnership with the City Colleges of Chicago and that while it may lose students in their freshman year, the University may certainly acquire them their junior year and those students tend to stay, do well and graduate from Northeastern.
President Hahs reviewed Action Item I. B. Expenditure Recommendation for $100,000 or more which is for retaining Drinker, Biddle & Reath for legal services related to the student housing project.

Chair Azcoitia asked for more information on what the expense covers. President Hahs replied that it will cover the law firm’s expertise in developing a contract with American Campus Community (ACC) which includes conditions of their land use, architecture and construction services, and financing. Ultimately, the housing project will belong to Northeastern. ACC has done this type of project for many institutions across the nation. President Hahs noted that the engineering firm chosen for the project is headed by a Northeastern alumnus and the architect for the project lives in the neighborhood.

President Hahs reviewed Action Item I. C. University Facilities System Revenue Bonds Series 2014. This item involves refinancing the University Facilities System Revenue Bonds Series of 2004 and is analogous to refinancing a home and it will save the University money.

Adjourn: 1:57 p.m.