



**UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT'S  
ANNUAL SELF-PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REVISED  
FISCAL YEAR 2022  
Submitted: APRIL 1, 2022**

**INTRODUCTION / ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Since March 2020, NEIU has experienced the effects of the global pandemic. While conditions improved during fall 2021, we “pivoted” back to remote learning after the return to campus in August 2021. The omicron variant spread across the United States, Illinois and Chicago causing additional havoc while at the same time, students, faculty and staff continued to receive vaccinations and booster shots available on campus. Beginning January 11, 2022, NEIU once again went remote during the omicron peek until January 28, 2022. COVID-19 cases are now declining, as we return to a “new normal.” Recently, the governor and mayor of Chicago removed mask mandates. Some universities have followed while other universities, like NEIU, have not removed the mask mandate yet. You may ask, why discuss COVID-19 at the beginning of my self-evaluation – because, as I will highlight, it is still relevant and especially impactful to our black and brown students and communities, especially with regard to enrollment and retention.

As the 7<sup>th</sup> President of Northeastern Illinois University, a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and a Minority Servicing Institution (MSI), I am grateful for the opportunity to submit a self-evaluation outlining successes and lessons learned from the 2022 fiscal year. I remain honored to serve as NEIU’s University President as I diligently seek strategies and opportunities to transform our university into one of Illinois’ most stellar institutions. So, in the midst of a world-wide pandemic or an economic downturn, we do as we have done for 155 years - we press forward.

It is impossible for me to properly review my work and achievements this fiscal year without acknowledging the contributions and dedication of our University Community – the students, staff and faculty. This Community also includes alumni, donors, friends, key stakeholders and other supporters. I am also most appreciative to our governmental officials and the University’s Board of Trustees for their continued support. Together, we embrace our Mission Statement, “to provide an exceptional environment for learning, teaching and scholarship as we prepare a diverse community of students for leadership and service in our region and in a dynamic multicultural world.”

## PERFORMANCE METRICS

As stipulated in the May 2018 agreement between the University President and Northeastern Illinois University Board of Trustees, a performance evaluation will be conducted to assess the University President's progress in four key areas: recruitment (access / opportunity), retention (student success), graduation rates and fundraising. During my inauguration speech in September 2018, and in subsequent communications, I continue to voice my strong commitment to the areas of access / opportunity and student success.

During the past year, the Illinois Board of Higher Education completed its strategic plan with the goals of equity, sustainability and growth. I have structured the President's FY22 priorities in alignment with IBHE: recruitment/retention (equity), graduation (growth) and fundraising (sustainability). Performance indicators also intersect with the University Strategic Plan.

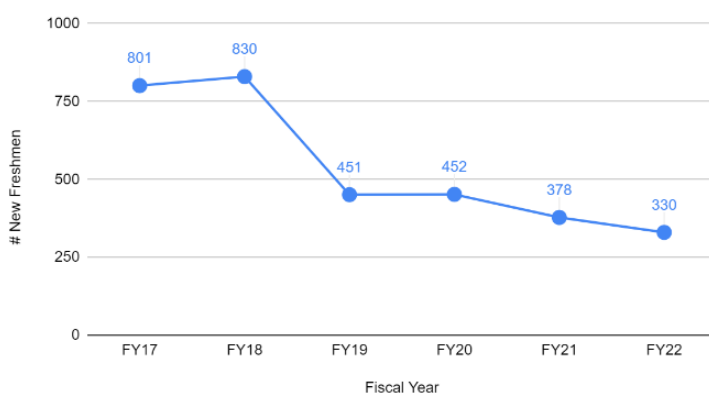
These areas represent my highest priorities and are critical to the strength and vitality of our institution. The following sections summarize the key metrics and data to be considered for my evaluation by the Board.

### RECRUITMENT (Goal unmet)

Northeastern's FY22 first time/full time (FT/FT) freshmen fell by 48 students from FY21 to FY22. The metric set by the Board for FY22 was a 2% increase; this metric was not met. A number of factors contributed to not meeting this metric:

- 1) No senior leadership in Enrollment Management; VP Buster-Williams was hired in November;
- 2) Ongoing implementation of Slate (new CRM); major implementation completed January 2022;
- 3) Ongoing implementation of the Common App; completed January 2022
- 4) Impact of COVID-19 remaining a looming factor, especially in recruiting black and brown students
- 5) Delayed implementation of NEIU for You (late spring 2021)

Recruitment of New Freshmen



However, even with declining overall enrollments, the percentage of Hispanic students grew from 39% to 42%, African-American students increased .2% totaling 10.6%, and White and Asian student enrollments remained relatively flat at approximately 25 and 9.2 percent of the total enrollment. Fourteen FT/FT students registered this semester (Spring 22).

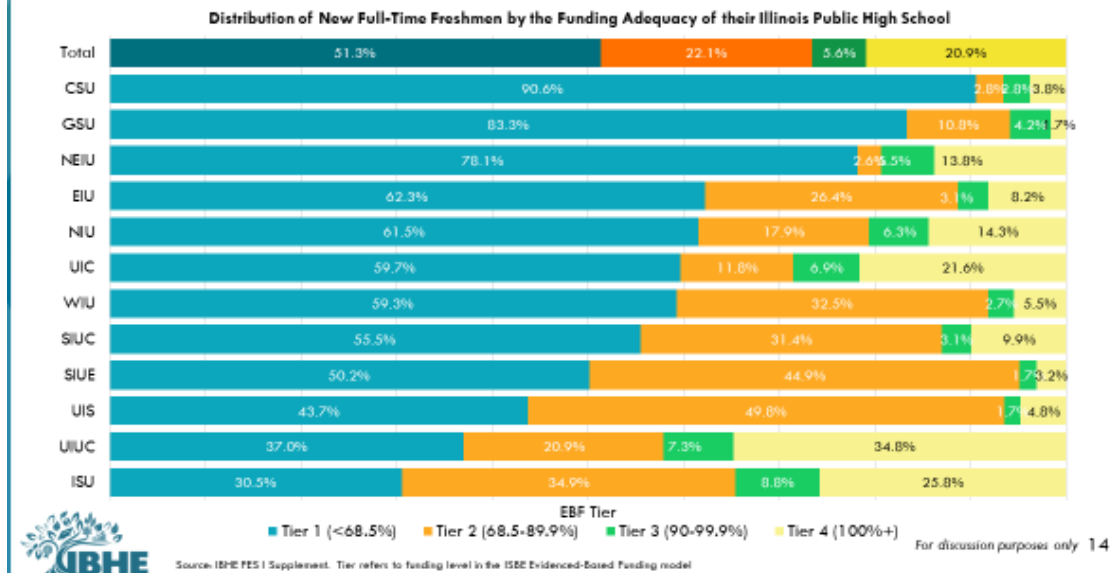
Between the environmental, economic and university factors, it became increasingly difficult to increase enrollment. I do feel, however, if we had not implemented the “NEIU for You” program, our enrollments may have suffered an even more drastic decline. We were not the only state institution with declining enrollments (see chart below). Even with ISU, CSU and SIUC indicating increases, taken together, there are only 102 students; and the total increase state-wide was only 7.8%.

First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen by Illinois Public Universities

Institution	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Change	% Change
SIUE	1,509	1,936	427	28.3%
UIC	3,457	4,024	567	16.4%
UIUC	7,474	8,273	799	10.7%
NIU	1,998	2,147	149	7.5%
SIUC	1,322	1,387	65	4.9%
CSU	144	150	6	4.2%
ISU	3,324	3,355	31	0.9%
<b>NEIU</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>-22</b>	<b>-6.3%</b>
GSU	202	189	-13	-6.4%
UIS	292	260	-32	-11.0%
EIU	890	770	-120	-13.5%
WIU	1,052	905	-147	-14.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,016</b>	<b>23,726</b>	<b>1,710</b>	<b>7.8%</b>

The IBHE chart (next page) is also relevant. Over 50% of full-time freshmen at the public universities are from the least-funded school districts. At CSU, GSU and NEIU it is over 75%. In addition, according to IBHE, 90% of NEIU’s FT/FT freshmen are from Illinois high schools. The IBHE strategic plan states, “Students who attend HSIs and MSIs traditionally face a variety of unique challenges in attaining a postsecondary degree. These individuals are more likely than their white counterparts to be low-income, academically disadvantaged, and first generation college students who may have otherwise been denied access to higher education. These factors directly contributed to IBHE’s focus on equity.”

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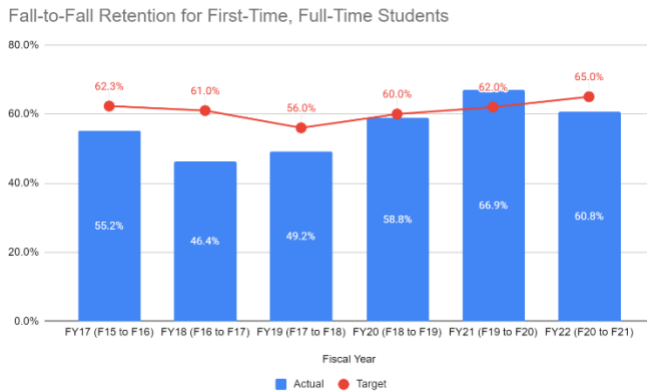
As president, I understand that many of our students come from underfunded high schools, a high percentage are first-generation and are Pell-eligible, and that many have family challenges; however, NEIU students BREAK BARRIERS! While not always reflected in IPEDS or even IBHE data, our students graduate and become successful professionals. And now, we boast that Northeastern’s alumnae Keeanga Yahmatta Taylor is a MacArthur Fellow (Genius Scholar) who endured many of the same struggles that our students still face today. So where do we go from here?

- VP Buster-Williams will provide leadership for the development of a strategic enrollment management plan
- The Office of Enrollment Services is being restructured into the Division of Enrollment Management (DEM); additional activities include hiring of staff, holding staff accountable and adhering to best practices
- DEM is closely examining the SEM Works report and making recommended changes
- UTS and DEM continue to fine-tune the CRM
- EM is working to expand new markets; three regional recruiters were just hired
- VP has restructured the Onboarding Team to orchestrate every detail of the onboarding process (testing, advising, registration, etc.)

In addition, NEIU’s new VP has made the use of data a top priority. Planning tools being utilized include but are not limited to SWOT analysis, flowcharting, cause-and-effect diagrams, responsibility matrix, and goal attainment teams and targets. Certainly since my arrival, and I suspect even before my arrival, there has never been this level of strategic analysis and intentionality pertaining to enrollment. Early indicators are positive as it relates to the Fall 2022

applications which are up; now, our focus is turning to yield. (See p. 18-19 to fully understand the challenges VP Buster-Williams has encountered in her three months at NEIU.)

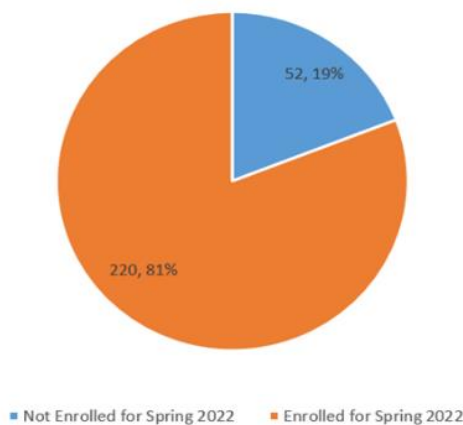
**RETENTION (Goal unmet)**



Since my arrival at NEIU, retention rates have improved. This year we lost ground. The target was a 3% increase from last year’s 62% which would be 65%. Many of the reasons for decline in retention are the same for declining enrollment. Students did not return to the university in Fall 2021. These students were not eligible for the NEIU for You, and so many simply did not have the funding.

The chart below indicates the number of NEIU for You students who persisted from Fall 2021 to Spring 2022. So, while overall retention was down from Fall 20 to Fall 21, for first-year students who received the NEIU for You 1.0 scholarship, retention was a resounding 81%. At census, 330 first year students were enrolled of which 272 received NEIU for You. Of this number 220 (81%) enrolled this spring 2022. We are contacting the 52 students who did not return to assist them in registering this upcoming fall.

Fall 2021 Freshmen Spring 2022 Progression



In addition, Dr. Tiffany Mfume was hired to do a SWOT analysis of our existing retention programs. Dr. Mfume is a scholar practitioner and author who provides problem solving, strategy, mentorship, analysis, and planning assistance. She visited campus in February (2022) to gather information regarding current retention strategies and how NEIU might improve.

Following her visit, Dr. Mfume provided a written report which includes both short and long term recommendations. The strategies outlined are designed to help NEIU foster student success, build engagement, and improve retention and graduation rates. A few of Dr. Mfume's student success recommendations are as follows:

A few of the short term recommendations are:

- Identify customer service trainings and professional development opportunities for NEIU staff and administrators
- Educate students, parents, and families about the myths and benefits surrounding financial aid and student loan debt
- Provide targeted retention metrics for the El Centro and Carruthers Centers

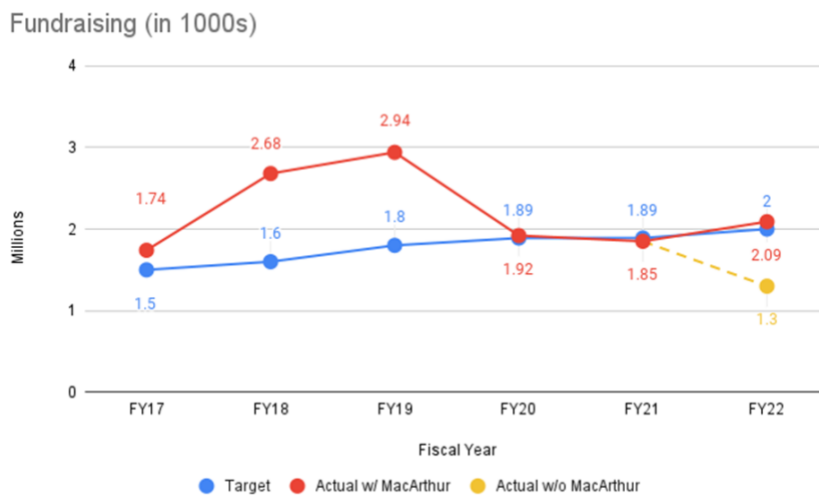
A few long-term recommendations include:

- Re-organize student success and retention departments under the division of enrollment management
- Appoint a university-wide retention committee to meet at least quarterly to discuss established targets, goals, strategies, and overall progress.
- Recruit and hire an assistant or associate vice president for student success and retention who will work closely with Vice President Kimberley Buster-Williams to implement and monitor recommendations
- Identify best practices at NEIU to scale-up for undergraduate students across the board
- Outline a comprehensive recruitment strategy to include recruitment for specific programs and centers

As an immediate next step, we will search for an associate vice president for student success and retention. Dr. Frank Gaytan previously held this position. The AVP will be responsible for creating the retention strategies and tactics to be included in the strategic enrollment management plan. Working in collaboration with the university colleges, the various academic support programs of the university, and the administrative offices, the AVP will facilitate and integrate a system of continuous, quality support for students from matriculation to graduation. Special attention will be placed on: fostering financial access; providing high levels of academic support through faculty and peer mentoring and tutoring programs and creating a supportive social environment.

## FUNDRAISING (Goal exceeded w/MacArthur \$2,093,367; unmet w/o MacArthur \$1,343,367)

The goal for private funding this year agreed upon with the Board was an increase of 5.8% or \$110,000 from FY21 goal of \$1,890,000. The fundraising goal for FY22 was established at \$2,000,000. As of March 14, 2022 cash raised year-to-date is \$2,093,367, or 104.6% of goal. This goal includes a substantial grant of \$750,000 from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation for the “Truth Telling Project,” for which the NEIU Foundation is fiscal sponsor. If we factored out the MacArthur Foundation grant, our adjusted cash raised year-to-date is \$1,343,367, or 67% of the goal. Additionally, Institutional Advancement staff are aware of another \$549,351 in pending gifts from individuals, private foundations, and Title V grant transfers slated to arrive before June 30, 2022. These funds will put us within \$107K of \$2M.



### *MacArthur Foundation Grant*

The Institutional Advancement team, in particular John JB Butler, Director of Corporate and Foundation relations, Vice President Downey, Brandon DaPrato, executive assistant to the VP, and Dr. Cris Toffolo, Interim Director of International Programs, performed significant work to prepare submission of the Truth Telling Project (TTP) proposal to the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

The NEIU Foundation staff worked with NEIU’s Acting General Counsel (Potts), President Gibson, and TTP leadership to execute a Memorandum of Understanding between TTP, the NEIU Foundation, and the University on July 22, 2021. This was a requirement for the proposal submission to MacArthur and is a relationship similar to that which exists between the Foundation, University and Ensemble Espanol as well as the Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement. **All financial assets related to the MacArthur grant are under the sole purview and fiduciary responsibility of the NEIU Foundation.**

In early 2021, the Prison + Neighborhood Art / Education Project indicated that it was actively pursuing incorporation as a stand-alone nonprofit entity that, once established, would exit its relationship with the NEIU Foundation in the near term. The uncertain time-frame for this departure, which was thought to have potential impact on FY21 fundraising totals, necessitated notification to the Board.

In contrast, the Truth Telling Project has no plans to exit its relationship with the University or NEIU Foundation. NEIU's collaboration with TTP is stable, over five years. The MacArthur grant will remain part of the NEIU Foundation's assets until the grant's conclusion.

TTP's mission is to sustain grassroots, community-centered truth-telling processes to amplify the voices of the traditionally silenced and disenfranchised. They hold public events at which family members of Black people killed by police tell how this violence has impacted their families and their community. Their testimonies are recorded and amplified to educate people about police violence and systemic racism beyond the communities immediately affected by this violence. The TTP's ongoing work at the national level fits the mission of not only the NEIU Justice Studies department, but also the broader university.

The TTP project involves NEIU faculty, staff and students. In recent years, NEIU Justice Studies students have completed internships with TTP, and for the last two years, Dr. Melinda Salazar, TTP's Co-Executive Director, has been in conversations with the Goodwin College to host students at the "Teachers Gotta Tell the Truth" events. In August 2019, as president, I traveled to Ferguson, MO, with Dr. Cris Toffolo, Dr. David Ragland, and others to speak at a TTP sponsored truth telling event.

Lastly, next year, TTP will partner with our annual Genocide Conference. Funding from the MacArthur grant will be used to pay NEIU expenses. In summary, **NEIU faculty, staff and students are active participants in the grant and NEIU serves as the fiscal agent.**

#### *Other Activities*

As president, I have been highly active in the fundraising and donor relations space in FY22. The listing below represents examples:

- Supported Lilly School of Philanthropy workshops (May 17 and 18) for university leadership
- Represented NEIU at NMPRAC Gala in September with Trustees Marvin Garcia, Charlie Serrano, Foundation Board Chair John Roskoff, VP Terry and Kathy Mena, EDI Executive Director Shireen Roshanravan and provided remarks at IHCC Breakfast
- Worked closely with the NEIU Foundation Board to secure funding for the NEIU for You Scholarship



- Visit to key donors in Oklahoma in October, which secured a total gift of \$300,000 to establish a new full-ride scholarship for a future student.
- Solicitations from Zakat Foundation and Akhras Foundation for the Afghan Transition Program (\$66,000 received thus far)
- Appointments with key connections including Karen Freeman-Williams, Acacia Wilson-Feinberg, Sandra Finley, Miguel del Valle, Daniel Contreras, chair of Ensemble Espanol Board and an Executive at Microsoft, Sunny Chico and others

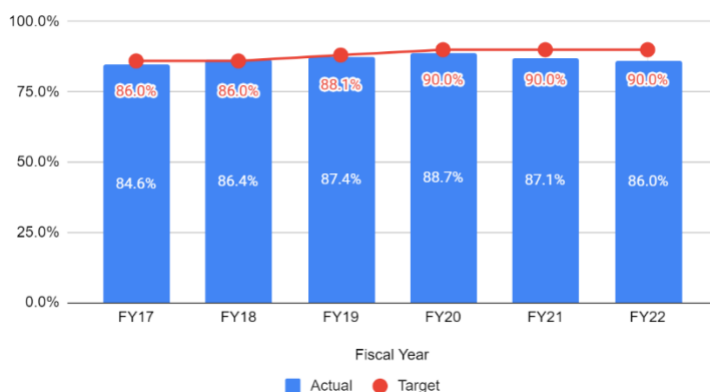
### *Endowment Drawdown*

In the last five fiscal years (FY2017 to FY 2022), the Northeastern Illinois University Foundation doubled its endowment drawdown from \$182k to \$373k (205%). In consideration of the favorable market year ending June 30, 2021, the Foundation’s fiduciary responsibility and endowment drawdown process, and with my support and advocacy, the NEIU Foundation Board was able to significantly increase drawdown for Fiscal Year 2023, approving \$574,000 in order to support the University’s recruitment, retention, and programming. This means more scholarship support for our students. Lastly, NEIU is in the beginning planning stages for the next campaign. Tentatively named, “The Power of Possibility,” Carter Consultants continues to develop the case for the “support report” due this summer. As we move forward, I continue to seek increased donor engagement and increased alumni engagement to find new and unique ways to demonstrate that our students are worthy of their gifts and investment.

### **GRADUATION RATE (Goal: Unmet)**

I am completing my fourth year at Northeastern. NEIU’s ability to graduate its students and help them achieve their career goals will always represent a high priority. To evaluate my progress in this area – agreed upon by the Board of Trustees – is an analysis of the percentage of undergraduate students with a declared major (or pre-major) at the end of each fall term AND who enter the spring term with 45 credit hours or more. **The goal set for FY22 was level.** A few reasons why the goal was not met could be that students did not enroll or they took fewer courses because of funding or the impact of the pandemic.

Declared Majors (proxy for Graduation Rates)



The graduation rate is directly tied to retention. As we move forward on the short and long-term recommendations listed in the retention section, along with hiring more faculty of color, increasing scholarship support, continuing forms of professional development for faculty, I am confident more students will declare their majors and graduate earlier.

## CONCLUSION

Although my self-evaluation, per my contract, covers four major areas, I am pleased to report other key accomplishments:

- Searches completed for: General Counsel; Executive Director for Equity, Diversity & Inclusion; Vice President for Enrollment Management (upgraded from AVP); and Chief of Staff
- Campus-wide Climate Study was concluded in September (2021). The co-chairs delivered a report to campus with several recommendations. The next steps are being developed by the EDI Executive Director, along with a campus-wide community.
- Fall 2021, 55 students were readmitted through our “Come Home to NEIU Stop Out Program.” Spring 2022, 67 students were readmitted; each student received \$3K debt forgiveness (this program is very popular with state legislators)
- Recommendation by SGA to return sports to NEIU; received positive endorsements from shared governance groups
- Although it is not been publically announced yet, NEIU will be one of the universities participating in the Hope Chicago Initiative
- NEIU has received approval for the new Education Building; the design phase should be complete by the end of the year, with a spring 2023 groundbreaking
- Increased mental health services for our students
- Afghan Transition Program provides tuition and housing for 17 Afghan refugees (approved by the Board)

- Dual enrollment has been impacted by COVID-19; plans are being developed for growth
- The Vatican Choir will perform two concerts at NEIU in April 2022
- The Senior Executive Director of Government Relations and I continued to meet with members of the General Assembly to keep them informed and to prepare and deliver annual appropriations testimony

As I complete my fourth year as University President, with the exception of one position, Executive Director of Marketing & Communications, I have hired my leadership team. The search for EDMC will conclude this Spring semester. I am very proud of the team I have assembled. Together, we are positioning our University for continued growth and prominence.

## **AREAS OF FOCUS**

### **1. STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TO STRENGTHEN AND DEFINE NEIU’S FUTURE**

Last year, I commented on two specific ways to strengthen and define NEIU’s future through: *conducting external assessment audits; and exploring and implementing new degree programs.*

To briefly summarize, a detailed restructuring has taken place under VP Kumar, including hiring a new CIO and a cybersecurity specialist. The restructuring updates have been presented at several ASAET meetings, and the CIO and security specialist will deliver a presentation at the April BoT “Lunch & Learn.” Abby Murray became Executive Director of Human Resources in December 2021. This critical position reports directly to the VP for Finance and Administration, and provides strategic leadership and establishes best practices for the University on all human resources (HR) matters. Restructuring and implementation in HR, UTS, Facilities and other areas in Finance & Administration continue.

Regarding new degree programs, the Goodwin College of Education has hired the Founding Director of the Ed.D. program and he is making significant progress towards completion of the program curriculum. He will make a presentation at an upcoming ASAET meeting before the program seeks approval from HLC and IBHE. The BS in Cybersecurity will be presented at the April 2022 Board of Trustees meeting for approval. Each college is working on an intact online degree and the hiring process continues for the Director of Nursing.

#### *Strategic Enrollment Planning*

To strengthen and define NEIU’s future, we must discuss, design and implement a strategic enrollment management (SEM) plan. NEIU has never had a SEM plan, further, up until most recently, we have not had the leadership in the area of enrollment that was needed. (I appreciate the Board allowing me to hire a search firm to conduct this search.) The current VP

has been employed for three months. However, within three months, she has diagnosed innumerable challenges in this unit, many of which were identified in the SEM Works report.

The Board approved funding for NEIU for You 2.0, including funding for tuition, additional staff and additional program support. This targeted funding, along with the SEM plan, dynamic leadership in EM, new technology, restructuring, and heightened accountability will strategically undergird the improvement processes and help us “to define NEIU’s future.”

### *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion*

As stated earlier, IBHE seeks alignment between its strategic plan and university priorities. This year, the President’s FY Strategic Priorities have focused on equity, sustainability and growth. Our newly hired Executive Director Equity, Diversity and Inclusion provides leadership for our efforts. In addition to moving forward with recommendations from the Climate Study, NEIU is developing a campus-wide equity plan as directed by the Illinois Equity In Attainment Initiative (ILEA). The Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative (ILEA), works to “galvanize direct and urgent action with a group of two-year and four-year, public and private non-profit colleges and universities across the state.” As a member of ILEA, NEIU publicly commits, “to eliminate racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps by 2025 and aggressively prioritize increasing completion rates on their campuses.”

The Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (OEDI) also has several initiatives in place and presented some of them at a recent BoT “Lunch & Learn.” The OEDI mission is to: provide leadership, vision and accountability on NEIU’s commitments to foster diversity, institutionalize culturally responsive teaching, learning, and programming, resolve systemic inequities, and, create a welcoming, supportive and respectful environment for all. Becoming a campus focused on equity, inclusion, diversity and caring certainly contributes to strengthening and defining our future.

## **2. COMMUNICATE THE STRATEGIC AGENDA TO THE BROADER UNIVERSITY STAFF AND FACULTY**

In August 2021, the leadership team engaged in a two-day retreat facilitated by an external consultant. She was a member of the team that developed the IBHE Strategic Plan, “A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth.” IBHE’s plan highlights a reality familiar to us at NEIU: first, not all Illinois residents have the same opportunities to thrive, and second, significant gaps exist that disproportionately leave behind Black, Latinx/a/o adult and rural learners. In an effort to support IBHE’s strategic plan of equity, sustainability and growth, and to emphasize Northeastern’s dedication to recruitment and retention, I worked with members of the University Executive Team to develop several strategic priorities for Fiscal Year 2022. The focus is on three main areas: equity, sustainability and growth. During

our leadership retreat in August 2021, we developed the “President’s FY22 Priorities” in alignment with the IBHE plan.

Equity centers on our efforts for recruitment and retention. We must advance outreach and recruitment to reinforce Northeastern as a diverse, inclusive “university of choice” for Latinx/a/o, African American and other students from underserved backgrounds. We will also develop and advance best practices for academic and social support structures that enhance student success and retention.

Sustainability will focus on our fundraising efforts. In doing so, we can increase affordability of and access to a Northeastern education; leveraging public and private philanthropy, partnerships and shared fiscal responsibility.

Growth refers to increasing placements of Northeastern graduates in high demand positions to diversify the workforce and address historical inequities.

The elements of this strategic agenda have been communicated over the past year in numerous formats, including: at a Board of Trustees meeting, president’s targeted announcement, 2021 State of the University Address, all shared governance groups, “A Time of Change, A Time of Coming Together: 2020-2021 President’s Report,” Administrative Team meetings (all NEIU administrators) and numerous other meetings and publications. Going forward, we will continue to build on these areas and they will be integrated into the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan and our Equity Plan.

### **3. EXECUTE ON TASKS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### *Seal of Excelencia*

One of the most important tasks where we have made significant progress is our application for the Seal of Excelencia. The Seal credential was created in October 2018 by Excelencia in Education, a national nonprofit organization advocating on behalf of Latinx/a/o postsecondary educational attainment. Excelencia in Education awards the Seal to institutions that demonstrate intentionality in serving LatinX students in a university-wide scan aligning data, practices and leadership. Northeastern plans to submit its final application for the Seal of Excelencia in June 2022. The university-wide committee has over 40 members.

On December 6, 2021, I delivered the Charge to the committee. One element of the charge states: “Understand in the critical areas of practice and leadership, where NEIU excels and where there are areas that need to improvement.” This is a campus-wide initiative with a committee totaling over 40 members, with major subcommittees, among them: Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Retention, Enrollment Services. Many of the co-chairs of the

subcommittees are members of the president's cabinet. Two faculty members co-chair the Seal of Excelencia Committee. Those faculty members each receive two course releases, totaling \$36,000 to provide leadership for this initiative. The president's office has also provided additional funding to assist with this work. As I concluded in my charge, "As president, I make a commitment of moral support and financial support to this work to the greatest extent that I am able. I will also continue to keep the Board of Trustees apprised of our progress." The committee gave a full briefing at the March ASAET meeting. I am confident that a strong application will be submitted in June.

#### **4. WORK TO RESOLVE LARGER CHALLENGES, INCLUDING REAL ESTATE MATTERS AND UNIVERSITY HOUSING (Nest)**

##### *The Nest:*

During the FY21 academic year, because of the pandemic, the university followed Illinois Public Health guidelines, and the occupancy was limited because of health and safety concerns. This year, we returned to pre-COVID occupancy limits.

The university continues to work on several strategies to improve the occupancy at the Nest. First, as stated last year, we are working with American Campus Community (ACC) to provide increased marketing of the Nest. Second, we continue to develop Living Learning Communities (LLC) to attract students to live in the Nest. Housing is without cost the first year and then pro-rated subsequent years. Third, we are working to increase occupancy through recruiting more international, out of state, and collar-county students.

The Nest occupancy increased from 157 (35.7%) in Fall 2020 to 248 (56.4%) in Fall 2021. The Spring 2022 occupancy rate is 62.60%. In Fall 2021, 91 students were part of an LLC cohort, including Social Justice Year 2. The paid-equivalent occupancy rate, net of subsidies, went from 33.9% in Fall of 2020 to 38.1% in Fall of 2021. The occupancy contribution to ACC in FY2021 was approximately \$2.6 million. The occupancy contribution in FY2022 is anticipated to be approximately the same, subject to a final revision.

Current Communities - **The Social Justice Leadership Program** allows first-time, full-time freshmen students the year learning about social justice issues through courses, guest speakers, on-campus events, and off-campus outings. The **Discover Yourself @ NEIU Living Learning Community** is a leadership development program designed for first-time, full-time freshmen aspiring to be student leaders. The **Future Teachers Living Learning Community (FTLLC)** is open to new and current NEIU students planning on a career in teaching and are interested in living on campus with peers who are on a similar path. Social Justice Leadership Program and Discover Yourself @NEIU will continue for the next academic year. The Future Teacher's LLC will

split into two living learning communities. Fall, 2022, we will add two additional communities: the **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics** (STEM) LLC and the **Honors** (LLC).

Through collaboration with Enrollment Management and Finance and Administration, we have set a target goal to increase the occupancy rate by 10% of paid leases from its current rate at 56.4% to 66.4% for Fall 2022. Each year, the target goal will be a 10% paid occupancy increase per academic year from the previous year's occupancy rate.

*Bryn Mawr / Avondale properties:*

In the second phase of the real estate properties project, VP Kumar and his staff issued an RFP to procure real estate broker services to carry out the recommendations provided by JLL in the first phase. An initial RFP, published on September 20, 2021, was unable to solicit any interested vendors to bid on the project. The RFP was revised and reissued on October 18, 2021 with an extended Q&A period to provide additional information on required services and pricing. The initial RFP did produce a recommended vendor, but the Board of Trustees rejected the award at its meeting on February 10, 2022. A second RFP was created and published on March 4, 2022 to exclude the Avondale properties per the Board's request. We will know soon whether any proposals were submitted.

## **5. BUILD A LEADERSHIP TEAM THAT BETTER REFLECTS THE COMPOSITION OF THE STUDENT BODY**

The following summarizes the four senior level positions filled last year: General Counsel – African American selected (one Latina finalist; did not have experience of selected candidate); Executive Director for Equity, Diversity & Inclusion – Indian-American selected (no LatinX applicants; 2 African Americans applicants); Vice President for Enrollment Management – African American selected (one Latino finalist from California; no experience working in Illinois, no understanding of our markets in the Midwest; and overall not as strong of a candidate as the individual selected); Interim Chief of Staff – Latina (finalist pool included 1 African American, 1 Caucasian; candidate selected has experience with CPS and executive leadership).

I have one additional leadership position to hire: Executive Director of Marketing & Communications. This search is underway. As with the other searches, I strongly encourage a diverse pool of applicants, including LatinX.

## **6. IMPROVE NEIU'S FISCAL STABILITY AND GROWTH, AS WELL AS ANTICIPATE AND ADDRESS THE BOARD'S FISCAL CONCERNS**

*FY22 Update – Improve Fiscal Stability:*

Due to our strong fiscal management, Northeastern has received an increase of three points to our credit rating. Moody's cited:

- The "notable strengthening" of the University's balance sheet through management of operating revenues, expenses and debt.
- Significant improvement since 2017 in cash and investments for the University - up 30% in FY21
- Successful management of \$43M in Federal pandemic relief funds also contributed to the boost

Three factors that could support additional upgrades in the future include: (1) Improvements in the state's fiscal condition and credit quality over multiple years; (2) Improved operating environment for NEIU; (3) Continued growth in balance sheet reserves and (4) Significant improvement in enrollment and net tuition revenue growth. (The NEIU for You scholarship is critical to our financial health, as one of its goals is to grow and stabilize enrollment.)

#### *Restructuring / Cost Cutting:*

Finance and Administration has filled the following key positions that had been vacant or filled by interim placements for an extended period: Beni Ortiz, Executive Director for Finance and Administration; Abby Murray, Executive Director of the Office of Human Resources; and Arman Rashid, Chief Information Officer. Student Payment Services, which previously reported to the Provost through Enrollment Services, now reports to Finance and Administration.

#### *Paper Processing / Operational Efficiencies:*

The Division of Finance and Administration has worked tirelessly to significantly reduce the amount of paper forms used to perform business transactions. An added benefit to the reduction of paper processing is the improvement of our operational efficiency. The list of improvements include:

Electronic Timesheets – All university employees are now able to submit their time sheets and leave reports electronically, eliminating the need for paper timesheets

eProcurement – Benefits of this initiative include: eliminates signature cards, signature cards will be replaced with electronic routing workflows; eliminates paper forms such as requisitions, purchase order; accelerates the procurement and vendor payment cycle; users will have real-time access to track status of all their requisitions, purchase orders and invoices

Workday - Workday will enable NEIU to streamline our processes, move away from paper processes, and have better access to our data – all while giving mobile access to data and



payment information. With Workday, NEIU will have more services, have more information at our fingertips, and be able to make more informed decisions due to an integrated system.

One Payroll - Beginning in January 2022, all NEIU employees who are being paid semimonthly have been moved to a biweekly payroll schedule in 2022 as part of a Process Improvement Initiative.

## **SUMMARY**

The discussion above provides concrete examples to address the six areas of focus outlined by the Board. Along with the four contractual evaluation areas, they reflect my leadership accomplishments for the year and help identify areas for FY23. Again, I am appreciative for the support and contributions of my administrative team, the campus at large and the Board of Trustees.

THIS DOCUMENT WAS RECOMMENDED BY CHAIR PALOS AND WRITTEN BY VP BUSTER-WILLIAMS TO OUTLINE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES SHE HAS FACED OVER THE PAST THREE MONTHS IN THE NEWLY FORMED DIVISION OF ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT. THE PURPOSE IS TO HELP THE BOARD BETTER UNDERSTAND THE “REBUILDING PROCESS” IN ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT.

### **Undergraduate Admissions**

- No Director of Admissions was in place when I arrived on January 4th. Initial search failed and a second search was done in early January. Ryan Trout arrived on Jan. 28th. Until his arrival, I provided guidance and direction to the Admissions staff. While Terry Mena was assisting, he was not knowledgeable about admissions details to give specific direction.

### **Graduate Admissions**

- No Director of Graduate Admissions in place when I arrived in January. I supervised the one staff member in graduate admissions office until mid-March when the new director arrived. This position has been vacant since October. This means that I had 1:1 meeting with the graduate recruiter, signed off on her timesheet, gave her weekly assignments, etc. In essence, I was the interim director of graduate admission.

### **Registrar**

- Dan Weber departed on my second day of work. I had to immediately begin supervising his direct reports (assistant director, associate director, veteran’s coordinator) until our interim registrar arrived in mid-February. This also means that I had to sign off on these three timesheets and, in essence, served as the interim registrar. The veteran’s coordinator went on a scheduled deployment in January. I served as the Veteran’s point of contact until she returned. No coverage plans were put in place prior to my arrival.

- I chaired all the committees Dan had chaired (i.e. Banner Users Group) and attended all the faculty related committee meetings in the role of interim registrar.

- Upon my arrival, I discovered that the Degree Works sole source had not been completed by Dan Weber. I began working on that and the new CIO completed the process when he arrived. Together, we moved this project along and will be kicking this project off soon.

- Upon my arrival, I discovered that we had a major issue with our Clearinghouses file with hundreds of error messages. I scheduled a meeting with the vendor, our ITS department, the associate registrar and Jerry to fix the coding issue.

- Upon my arrival, I discovered that we have **no Reverse Transfer agreements** in place as required by a 2019 law passed in Illinois. I have met with staff and we are working to get in compliance with this state mandate.

- I interviewed and hired a new Registrar.

### **International programs**

- This department was moved to Enrollment Management from academic affairs in the fall. No supervision provided.
- The director had outstanding p-card charges from fall travel that I had to resolve along with having her 6 budget lines moved to my division. This should have all happened before I arrived.

### **Financial Aid**

- Responded to complaints regarding phones and poor customer service. I have since worked with UTS to secure new phone technology which will launch in the summer. In addition, I requested quotes to have someone join us this summer to assist and observe operations in the unit. This will tentatively happen in June with recommendations to follow.
- Last year six presidential merit awards were not awarded. Upon my arrival, I discovered that we do not use a scholarship software like Scholarship Manager to manage scholarship awarding.
- The financial aid portal was not included in the Slate implementation like it should have been. This was a major oversight when this project launched. I secured a vendor to set this up. At the moment, students cannot see their Financial Aid packages in Slate.
- We need a more modern cost-calculator. We are using the free one that reflects 2019 costs (estimates for 2022). This is not helpful to students and is not best practice.

### **Admissions processing**

- The team was implementing Slate and Common Application. Without a director of admissions, I played a major role in guiding both projects over the finish line. By the time I arrived in January, the staff was demoralized and overwhelmed. The Slate implementation timeline was way too aggressive.
- We were denying students without a 2.5 GPA which was in conflict with NEIU for You 2.0. I put a new workflow in place and notified students who had been denied along with our HS Counselors.

### **Onboarding**

- In February, I met with the onboarding committee and gave them a new charge. I have been meeting with this group monthly to address issues with the following steps in our process for students who have been admitted.

(BOARD MEMBERS MAY ALSO REVIEW THE "SEM WORKS REPORT" TO REVIEW AND UNDERSTAND ALL RECOMMENDATIONS; IT CAN BE FOUND ON NEIUPORT)