

Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University  
**Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee Meeting Minutes**  
January 26, 2023

The Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee of the Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University was convened on Thursday, January 26, 2023 in the Golden Eagles Room located at 5500 N. St. Louis Avenue, Chicago, IL. Trustee Ann Kalayil, Chair of the Committee, called the meeting to order at 8:39 a.m.

**Roll was called and the following Trustees were present:** Shyrice Howell and Ann Kalayil

**Also present:** Gloria Gibson, President; G. A. Finch, University Counsel; Mary Pat Burns, Board Counsel; Karl Voigt, Assistant Secretary to the Board; vice presidents; staff; and University community members

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**Opportunity for Public Comment in Accordance with P.A. 91-0715**

Trustee Kalayil announced the opportunity for public comment. There were 10 requests to speak.

1. **Dr. Olivia Perlow**, as Chair, Department of Sociology  
**Topic:** addressing the current state of the university.
2. **Dr. Ashley Elrod**, as faculty, Department of History  
**Topic:** response regarding proposed department restructure.
3. **Dr. Stacey Goguen**, as self, faculty member Department of Philosophy  
**Topic:** to remind the Board about the current leadership's troubling failures and unprofessionalism surrounding enrollment, and encourage the Board to take decisive action to prioritize university enrollment and retention.
4. **Dr. Timothy Scherman**, as self  
**Topic:** the need for actual cost/benefit analysis in the current "right-sizing" directive from Academic Affairs.
5. **Dr. Tracy Luedke**, as member of the faculty in the Department of Anthropology  
**Topic:** expressing concerns about the academic reorganization plan proposed by Academic Affairs.
6. **Lauren Meranda**, as faculty in the Department of Art & Design  
**Topic:** statement about the implications of restructuring on the art + design department.
7. **Dr. Lesa Davis**, as Chair of the Departments of Anthropology, English Language Program, Global Studies, Philosophy, SAELL, and TESOL  
**Topic:** the reorganization directive process.
8. **Dr. Kristin Over**, as faculty in the Departments of English and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies  
**Topic:** to request that the Committee and Board demand that out-going President Gibson and out-going Provost Evans delegate the task of addressing the University's budget deficit to the stakeholders who will live with the decisions made.
9. **Dr. Christopher Merchant**, as faculty in the Departments of Psychology, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and Child Advocacy Studies  
**Topic:** speaking from the heart about the University
10. **Dr. Matthew Graham**, as faculty member in the Department of Mathematics  
**Topic:** regarding the proposed department chair reorganization addressing the lack of risk assessment supplied in the current plan and present figures that indicate the proposed savings may be inaccurate.

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**Chair's and President's Remarks**

Trustee Kalayil announced that the Board will be addressing the concerns raised by the University community. Trustee Kalayil expressed her decades-long ties to Northeastern, both as an alumna and now as a Trustee. Everyone with ties to Northeastern cares about it and the success of its students.

Dr. Gibson echoed these sentiments.

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## **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### **Enrollment Management**

Due to illness, Vice President Buster-Williams was unable to attend the meeting. The written Enrollment and Retention Update report is incorporated herein by reference. The material will be presented at a later date.

### **Academic Affairs: Addressing Budget Impact**

Vice President for Finance and Administration, Manish Kumar, provided an overview of the FY24 preliminary budget, including an estimation of expenses, and four scenarios for revenue/expense projection. The University's two main revenue components are state appropriations and tuition, representing 94% of the historical operating budget. While appropriations are much easier to determine, tuition is driven by credit hour enrollment. Credit hour enrollment trends since 2018 have fallen year-over-year, with new undergraduate credit hours falling from a high of 32,136 in 2018 to a projected 17,000 for FY24. Slight variations in enrollment have multi-year impacts, both good and bad. With a consistent decline in enrollment/credit hours, and with the mandate that the University's annual expenses must equal its projected operating revenues, fixed personnel expenses are not flexible enough to keep pace in a deflating environment.

Scenario #1 (credit hour reduction in FY24 over FY23) New freshmen 565 (or a positive change of 49); 710 transfers (or a positive change of 126); and a new student credit hour total of 14,766 (just below fall 2020 credit hours of 15,432). Continuing student credit hours presents a significant challenge. Undergraduate continuing enrollment is projected to decrease in FY24 between 8,415 – 8,994 credit hours relative to FY23, or by an equivalent of 392 new undergraduate students. Continuation of trends into FY24 would yield a projected 100,667 total credit hour enrollment compared to 112,423 in FY23. Expenses are projected to remain the same into FY24, however factoring in 2% for inflation, bargained increases and other increases, this raises expenses to \$87,851,679 from \$83,940,000 in FY23. In order to counter the effects of a 10.5% decrease in projected credit hours with the projected increase in expenses, the University would realize revenues of \$76,508,090 leaving a projected deficit of \$11.3MM.

Scenario #2 (slight increases in new and continuing credit hours) With slight increases in credit hours for new and continuing undergraduate students (with no change in new and continuing graduate credit hours) is projected to yield a total of 101,377 credit hours, a reduction in credit hours over FY23 by 9.8%. Given the same expense projections, the deficit would be \$11.0MM.

Scenario #3 (no change in credit hours from FY23) Transplanting the current credit hour totals across the board into FY24 with projected expenses would yield a projected deficit of \$6.9MM.

Scenario #4 (break-even) Getting to a break-even point in FY24 would require a 16.3% increase in student credit hours (130,756) across the board over FY23 (112,423).

All of the scenario income projections factor in board approved FY24 tuition increases, 12% waiver/bad debt allowances (down from 12.5%), net tuition differentials, flat state appropriations, interest income of \$1MM, and expiration of COVID relief funds. In contrast, the expenses for the same period remain unchanged throughout each scenario, factoring in a salary salvage pool ~ \$2MM, NEST occupancy contribution ~ \$2MM, and cost inflation of 2%. The University will continue to monitor enrollment projections and work with financial managers to meet expenditure targets throughout the spring and early summer.

Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Andrea Evans, reported that discussions about the FY24 enrollment and expense projections began in Fall 2022, with discussions about mid-year budget recessions across all units. By late November, Academic Affairs shared ideas and options for near-term strategies to reduce costs and met with Deans on December 1. Low producing academic programs were reviewed based on IBHE criteria. Of the 86 programs reviewed, 31 are considered low-producing; 22 programs currently flagged, and 9 are in danger. Across 26 academic departments, there are wide variations in numbers of degree-seeking students; e.g., 7 departments have fewer than 50 degree seeking students and 3 departments have over 300 degree seeking students.

Strategies that were proposed included: increasing student-to-faculty class sizes by program from approximately 11:1 to 14:1; ensuring that full-time instructors teach full load of 24 CUs; and reorganizing programs and departments into new department structures reducing total number of departments from 26 to 14. Functionally, College of Business and Technology from 3 departments to 2; Goodwin College of Education from 6 departments to 4; and College of Arts and Sciences from 17 departments to 8. In addition to promoting operating and academic efficiencies, the proposals could increase cross-college collaborations, innovate academic programming, spur new investments in programs, create unique career clusters through the support of grants, and entice students and inspire their academic progress.

Trustee Garcia joined the meeting at 10:24 a.m.

Interim Dean of Graduate Studies, Analytics and Research, Marcelo Sztainberg, reported on the historical data of enrollment and credit hours from fall, spring and summer FY13 and FY22, and the data distribution, along with data comparing the current administrative structure of the academic departments and units to FY22 enrollment.

#### Enrollment and Credit Hours

In FY13, enrollment for all terms totaled 26,196 for the academic year. In FY22, enrollment for all terms totaled 15,047, a difference of -42.56%. In FY13, credit hours for all terms totaled 231,133. In FY22 credit hours for all terms totaled 127,653, a difference of -44.77%.

In FY13, undergraduate enrollment represented 80.8% of total enrollment and 88.39% of total credit hours. Graduate enrollment represented 19.2% of total enrollment and 11.61% of total credit hours. In FY22, undergraduate enrollment represented 69.05% of total enrollment and 78.42% of credit hours. Graduate enrollment represented 30.95% of total enrollment and 21.58% of total credit hours.

In FY13, lower division enrollment represented 29.48% of total enrollment and 33.5% of total credit hours. In FY22, lower division enrollment represented 25.27% of total enrollment and 26.92% of total credit hours. In FY13, upper division enrollment represented 70.52% of total enrollment and 66.5% of total credit hours. In FY22, upper division enrollment represented 74.73% total enrollment and 73.08% of total credit hours.

#### Distribution by College of Overall Enrollment

FY13:

- College of Arts & Sciences: 59.4%
- Goodwin College of Education: 25.02%
- College of Business and Technology: 15.54%

FY22:

- College of Arts & Sciences: 44.25%
- Goodwin College of Education: 32.79%
- College of Business and Technology: 22.97%

Distribution by College of Overall Credit Hours

FY13:

- College of Arts & Sciences: 71.76%
- Goodwin College of Education: 15.64%
- College of Business and Technology: 9.44%
- Academic Development: 3.16%

FY22:

- College of Arts & Sciences: 53.84%
- Goodwin College of Education: 24.69%
- College of Business and Technology: 20.24%
- Academic Development: 1.23%

Administrative Structure of Colleges in FY22

- College of Arts and Sciences

Programs	U. Enroll.	G. Enroll.	Dept. Ch.	Pr. Coord.	T/TT	FT Inst.	Ratio S:F
59	1335	375	17	9	116	70	9

- College of Business and Technology

Programs	U. Enroll.	G. Enroll.	Dept. Ch.	Pr. Coord.	T/TT	FT Inst.	Ratio S:F
10	715	157	3	1	31	5	24

- Goodwin College of Education

Programs	U. Enroll.	G. Enroll.	Dept. Ch.	Pr. Coord.	T/TT	FT Inst.	Ratio S:F
49	415	800	6	9	50	17	18

Dean of the College of Business and Technology, Michael Bedell, reported the College has been exploring ways to economize and presented the two organizational structures being discussed and considered, as balanced against the current organization of the College. One model mirrors the organization of the Business College at Eastern Illinois University, the other mirrors the organization of the Business College at Governors State University.

Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), Katrina Bell-Jordan reported on the college’s response to the directives surrounding CAS department consolidation plans. While the college did engage in deliberations and return the requested work, it was ultimately not an endorsement of the plan. Several factors were identified in the conduct of this exercise which place significant administrative burdens on the delivery of academic programs. Notably, morphing several smaller departments into mega or giga departments while reducing chair and coordinator roles doubles the oversight responsibility for student credit hours for the remaining chairs and coordinators. Other factors that need consideration are program accreditation requirements, safety protocols, grant and research outcomes that are not currently being adequately addressed. Dean Bell-Jordan also addressed other considerations of the proposed consolidation including actual costs of department consolidation, the implications of expanded administrative responsibilities for larger departments, and student customer service outcomes.

Dean of the College of Education, Thomas Philion opened his presentation with remarks about the University’s unprecedented and shameful behavior at the January 24, 2023 Town Hall. Dean Philion continued that the Goodwin College of Education leadership held strategy sessions in November and December and made recommendations about department consolidation proposals. The college’s leadership understands that this is a necessary exercise, and while difficult, there are opportunities to

operate more efficiently and move on from the past. The proposals being considered have broad support from the college leadership.

### **Student Affairs**

Due to time constraints, this report is incorporated herein by reference.

### **University Technology Services Update**

Manish Kumar introduced the University's new Chief Information Officer, Eliot Rodriguez. He began his duties in December 2022.

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### **Old / New Business**

At 11:32 a.m. Trustee Kalayil asked if there was any old or new business to present. Hearing none, there was no further business.

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### **Motion to Adjourn**

At 11:32 a.m. Trustee Kalayil, seconded by Trustee Howell, moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned by acclamation.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Kalayil, Chair of the Committee  
Karl Voigt, Assistant Board Secretary  
Approved April 13, 2023