

Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University

Board Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2023

A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University was convened via video conference on Monday, March 6, 2023. Trustee Marvin Garcia, Officer *Pro Tem*, called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Roll was called and the following Trustees were present: Marvin Garcia; Shyrice Howell; Ann Kalayil; J. Todd Phillips; José Rico; and Paula Wolff

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

Meeting by Video Conference

Today's proceedings are being held by video conference in accordance with the recently renewed Disaster Proclamation and Executive Order 2023-02 by the Governor of Illinois effective February 3, 2023. And, in accordance with Public Act 101-0640, each matter acted upon requires a roll call vote.

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

Trustee Garcia announced the opportunity for public comment. There were 19 requests, with 16 actual presentations. Trustee Garcia suspended the Board's time limitation for public comment as outlined in the Board's Regulations, Section I. Board Procedures, F. Board Meetings, 3. Presentations d. for today's proceedings.

1. **Pepe Vargas**, as Founder and Executive Director of the International Latino Cultural Center of Chicago
Topic: to introduce a proposal for development of a new center on the undeveloped El Centro parcels
2. **Nancy Wrinkle**, as Chair of the Faculty Senate
Topic: welcome to new Trustees on behalf of the faculty
3. **Olivia Perlow**, as representative of the University
Topic: the state of NEIU
4. **Tim Barnett**, as representative of the University Without Walls Program at Stateville Correctional Center
Topic: to seek support for the program at Stateville that will cease without faculty release time
5. **Steven Wolk, Amina Chaudhri, and Hector Morales**, as Teacher Education Department faculty
Topic: the current state of NEIU and recommendations for the new Board
6. **Mateo Farzaneh**, as representative of the NEIU History Department
Topic: to urge the new Board to carefully select the Interim President
7. **Nancy Matthews**, as President of the UPI Local 4100
Topic: welcome to the new Trustees and comments on the need for more productive bargaining
8. **Emily Garcia**, as representative of the Departments of English, Latinx & Latin American Studies, and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies
Topic: welcome to new Trustees and reflections from a first-gen faculty member on the tenacity of NEIU's student and institution
9. **Timothy Scherman**, as self
Topic: welcome to new Trustees and hopes for the future

10. **Michael Tuck**, as faculty member
Topic: to discuss his research and the importance of supporting research efforts at NEIU
11. **Tim Libretti**, as self
Topic: immediately addressing enrollment issues and empowering NEIU community
12. **Olivia Cronk**, as representative of Instructors and creative writing students
Topic: the way in which the enrollment crisis affects students' literary lives
13. **Kristin Over**, as faculty in the Department of English
Topic: the need for stabilized enrollment and recruitment, and good-faith contract negotiations
14. **Erica Meiners**, as representative of NEIU
Topic: status of the campus
15. **Steven Frankel**, as self
Topic: comments on the direction of the University
16. **Joseph Mapp**, as representative of the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation
Topic: the impact and need for education for incarcerated and returning citizens

President's and Chair's Remarks

President Gibson expressed her thanks to Governor Pritzker for proposing a 7% increase in appropriations for Northeastern. Vice President for Enrollment Management, Kimberley Buster-Williams, resigned effective February 20, 2023. A message to the University was sent on March 2 announcing the structure of Enrollment Management effective immediately and continuing through the selection of a new Vice President. The most recent Fall 2023 enrollment projections are 565 first-time/full-time students, representing a 10% increase over Fall 2022, and 710 transfer students, which represents a 21.6% increase over the same period. As a result of implementation of the Common App, Fall 2023 applications are up significantly. Over 7,000 first-time/full-time applications for Fall 2023 have been received and 5,312 students have been accepted. Of note, as of March 3, 331 of these accepted students have filed an 'intent-to-enroll', compared to 69 students at this same time last year. Over 600 transfer applications have been received with 267 being accepted. 91 transfer students have filed an 'intent-to-enroll' compared to 60 students for the same time last year. The Slate CRM has now been active for one full cycle and it is working well. There are twelve new student orientations scheduled to begin on May 6 and will run through the summer. Additional recruitment events will happen throughout the summer. Enrollments for the current year are down 7% compared to last year, but Spring enrollments are up. Fall-to-fall freshman retention is 76.2%, which is represented as 81% retention in Project Success and 86.4% in Proyecto Pa'Lante, El Centro 85%, and overall retention is 79.3%. Fall to Spring retention for freshmen is 80.1%.

Trustee Garcia welcomed the new members to the Board: J. Todd Phillips, José Rico, and Paula Wolff. The Board looks forward to additional appointments by the Governor's Office.

COMMITTEE REPORTS and ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee

Trustee Kalayil reported that the committee met on January 26, 2023 and received several informational briefings and will meet again on March 16. Trustee Kalayil welcomed new Trustees to the Board.

Committee-of-the-Whole

Action Item I. A. Consideration and Approval of Recommended Purchases \$100,000 or Greater: Merchant Services and Banking Services Agreements

Trustee Kalayil, seconded by Trustee Phillips, moved to approve contracting with JP Morgan Chase, NA for both banking services and merchant services. The initial period for each contract will be five-years.

Banking Services: not to exceed \$70,000 per year. Merchant Services: not to exceed \$400,000 per year. Each contract for services will have options for renewal of up to five-years.

Discussion: Trustees asked Vice President for Finance and Administration, Manish Kumar, how much the \$400,000 per year merchant services fees will be recoverable by pass-through charges to customers. The answer is not yet known, but the University will be negotiated fees with credit card companies separately. Additional questions included an approximate date by which any reduction in costs might be realized. The University would ideally like to pass through all of the projected fees, but a timeline estimate will likely be ready by the June Board meeting. Trustees would like to revisit this cost area from time-to-time at later meetings to review its progress.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Garcia: Yes	Kalayil: Yes	Rico: Yes
Howell: Yes	Phillips: Yes	Wolff: Yes

The motion carried.

Action Item I. B. Consideration and Approval of Recommended Purchases \$100,000 or Greater:
Sole Source Website Development Project

Trustee Wolff, seconded by Trustee Rico, moved to approve the expenditure for implementation of Phase 2 of the University's new website development with vendor support from Carnegie Dartlet, LLC. for a cost not-to-exceed \$214,000.00.

Discussion: Trustees asked about other companies and why the University did not do competitive pricing bids for Phase 2. The Phase 1 proposal process revealed Carnegie Dartlet as the least expensive in consideration of the work product being implemented. The University feels that the costs to find another vendor would far outweigh the benefits, and would delay the project significantly. As well, other vendors are unlikely to step into a Phase 2 project unless Phase 1 was also their work product.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Garcia: Yes	Kalayil: Yes	Rico: Yes
Howell: Abstain	Phillips: Yes	Wolff: Yes

The motion carried.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Information Item II. A. Purchases of at least \$50,000 but less than \$100,000 Report

VP Kumar presented the list of purchases within the approved threshold made by the University since the last meeting in November, 2022.

VENDOR	DESCRIPTION	PURCHASE ORDER AMOUNT
Bob Carter Companies, LLC. (Non-BEP)	Campaign Study	\$99,000.00
Gabe's Installation Services (BEP)*	Flooring Project for Police Department	\$60,460.00
Davis & Campbell (Non-BEP)	Legal & litigation services for collective bargaining matters	\$90,000.00

Information Item II. B. Consideration of Recommended Revision to Board's Regulations:

Section V. Administrative Affairs, B. Purchases, 1. Approval a. and 2. Reports (First Reading)

VP Kumar reported that this particular Board Regulation has remained unchanged since April 7, 1998. Since the dissolution of the Board of Governors and creation of the Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University in 1996, all other Illinois public universities have increased the monetary thresholds by which Board approval is required for procurement. Northeastern Illinois University is the last remaining public university to abide by the threshold amounts carried over from the Regulations of the former Board of Governors.

The University is recommending increasing the spending amount requiring Board approval from its current level of \$100,000 to the proposed level of \$250,000. This would concurrently change the reporting amounts from (presently) 'at least \$50,000 but less than \$100,000' to (recommended) 'at least \$100,000 but less than \$250,000.' Overall, all University costs are increasing. Without increasing the current lower approval threshold, Trustees will be asked to review increasing numbers of transactions that would otherwise be *pro forma* purchases. Furthermore, this could necessitate more meetings to do so, slowing the University's administrative response time. Board Regulations regarding changes in governing documents may be found in Section I. Board Procedures. This recommended revision is being presented as a "first reading" in accordance with these regulations. Trustees will be asked to consider approval at their April 13, 2023 regular Board meeting. Trustees would like to know, at the next meeting, how this change would benefit the University, and an approximate number of transactions this increase might affect.

Update on FY202 Budget

VP Kumar presented an overview of the FY2024 budget development cycle, as well as some updated enrollment information. In February, the Governor, in his FY2024 Budget Address, recommended an increase of 7% in Northeastern's FY24 appropriations; from current \$37,345,300 to \$39,959,471. The Legislature is expected to take action on the state's budget in May, at which time Northeastern's appropriation figure will be known. The Board will be asked to take action on the University's FY2024 preliminary budget at its June meeting, with final budget approval at its September meeting following the Fall 2023 student census.

An early budget projected credit hour enrollment for FY2024 at 101,377. Following the Spring 2023 student census, that projection was revised to 110,506. Enrollment will continue to be the driving force in budget uncertainty.

Motion to Convene in Closed Session

At 3:11 p.m. Trustee Kalayil, seconded by Trustee Phillips, moved to convene in Closed Session pursuant to Sections 2(c)1 and 2(c)11 of the IL Open Meetings Act to discuss personnel matters.

Discussion: there was no discussion.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Garcia: Yes	Kalayil: Yes	Rico: Yes
Howell: Yes	Phillips: Yes	Wolff: Yes

The motion carried. Trustees moved to a separate video meeting for Closed Session.

Motion to Reconvene in Open Session

At 3:58 p.m. Trustee Phillips, seconded by Trustee Kalayil, moved to reconvene in Open Session. The motion carried by acclamation.

Legal Report

Trustee Garcia announced that the Board received a copy of the Legal Report in advance and will defer questions to the University's Counsel at its April meeting.

Election of Officers

Action Item I. C. Election of Board Officers

Trustee Wolff, seconded by Trustee Howell, moved to nominate the following slate of officers:

- Trustee Rico, Chair
- Trustee Garcia, Vice Chair
- Trustee Phillips, Secretary

Discussion: there was no discussion.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Garcia: Yes	Kalayil: Yes	Rico: Yes
Howell: Yes	Phillips: Yes	Wolff: Yes

The motion carried. Trustee Garcia congratulated the newly elected officers and requested that the new Chair keep the Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee as currently constituted, and to keep Trustee Kalayil as Chair. There was no objection.

Old/New Business

Old Business

Trustee Garcia deferred action on the approval of release of prior closed session minutes and approval of destruction of verbatim records until the April meeting.

New Business

- Next Committee meeting:
 - Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee, March 16, 2023
- Next Board meeting:
 - April 13, 2023 at the El Centro location
- Upcoming Events:
 - Academic Honors Ceremonies May 1
 - Master's Hooding Ceremonies May 2
 - Commencement Exercises May 12 at the Credit Union One Pavilion, 4:00 p.m.

Motion to Adjourn

At 4:31 p.m. Trustee Kalayil, seconded by Trustee Howell, moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned by acclamation.

Respectfully submitted,

Marvin Garcia, Officer *Pro Tem*
Karl Voigt, Assistant Board Secretary
Approved April 13, 2023