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# Letter from the President

Finance and Administration is truly the backbone of our university—a support system that keeps our organization running without question, and whose long hours, unwavering commitment and fastidious achievements are often overlooked. On behalf of the University, I want to say thank you. Their work is appreciated by so many, and I am proud to be able to share with the University community the many accomplishments they’ve achieved under extraordinary circumstances in just the last year and a half alone. I give my gratitude to all of those who have worked tirelessly to ensure our safety and continued operations so that we can focus on our uniting mission of empowering through learning.



**Gloria J. Gibson, Ph. D.**  
*President, Northeastern Illinois University*



**Gloria J. Gibson, Ph. D.**  
*President, Northeastern Illinois University*



# Office of Finance & Administration: Providing strategic direction and leadership in support of daily operations across the entire university.

Finance and Administration provides service to the campus community in all aspects of the university's financial affairs, including financial planning, policy and analysis, financial records and reporting, budget development, cash management, risk management, management of the audit process, and the development and implementation of a comprehensive technology plan.



WELCOME

**Over the past year, we have made significant progress in modernizing our division and digitizing processes to make work from home possible amidst an unpredictable pandemic. These efforts were a tremendous undertaking and only achieved through the collaboration and dedication of all departments.**

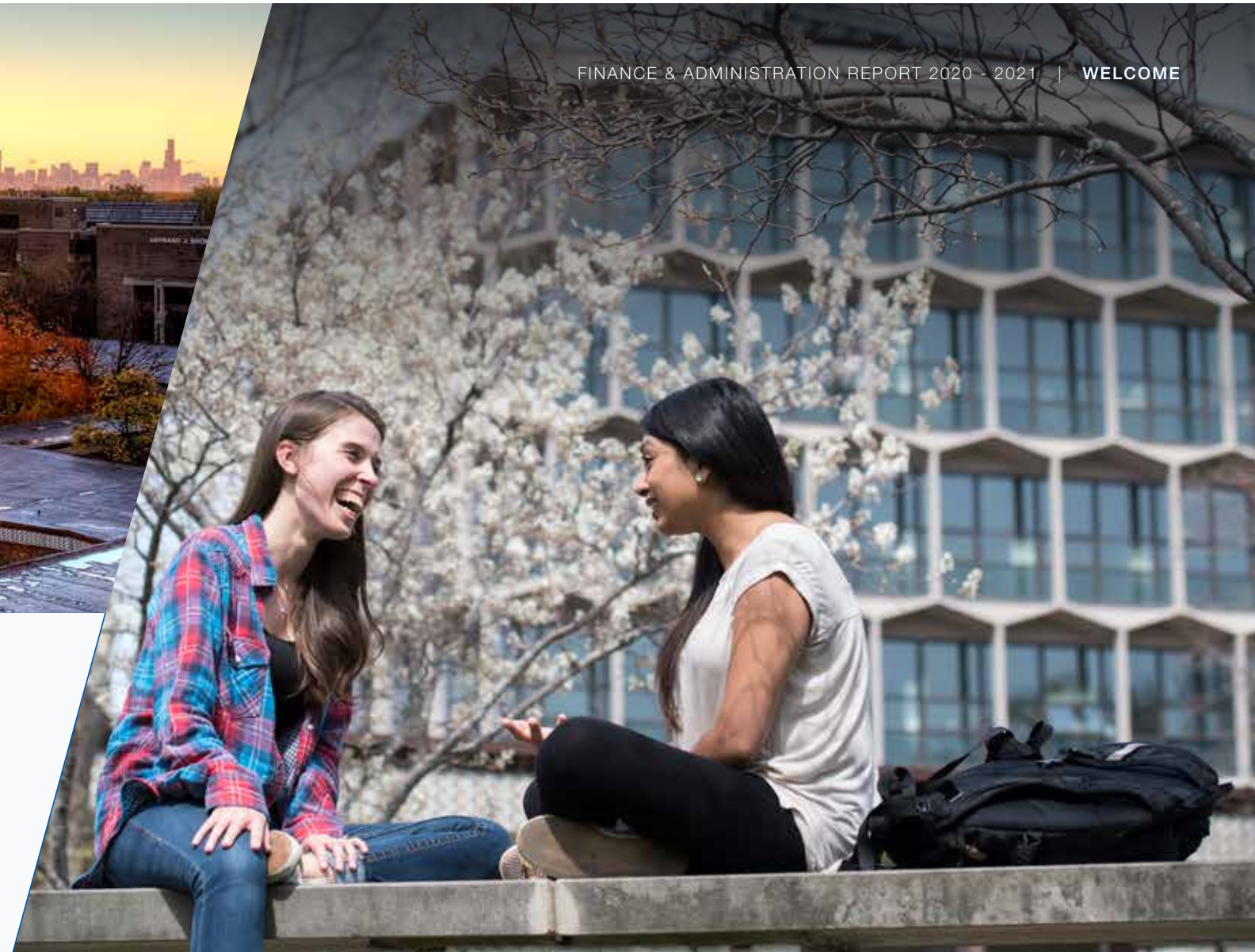
The information on the following pages transparently communicates this work and efforts put forth to support the university at large. The initiatives were accelerated by the pandemic, but as you will see, our office is committed to continuing momentum and making enhancements that positively impact every corner of NEIU.

It is important for us to especially acknowledge the continued and dedicated hard work of University Technology Services staff, along with the University Police Department and Facilities Management staff, who remained on campus to provide in-person services during this pandemic. By working together, these departments ensured that the campus remained operational, fully functional and will now make sure we are ready for the full return of our students and employees this fall.

**Manish Kumar**  
*VP Finance and Administration*







## Unprecedented Times = Opportunity

Though last year brought unexpected challenges, it provided opportunity to enact meaningful change that will continue to benefit the university this academic year and beyond.

In collaboration with Academic Affairs, Student Government Association, The Center for Teaching and Learning and the Faculty Council on Technology, Finance and Administration identified projects and prioritized investments that would make the greatest impact for the university at large.

### Finance and Administration staff truly went above and beyond with a keen focus on the following:

- **Improve processes** to create efficiencies better supporting our goals and the goals of the university.
- **Prepare for the safe return** of students, faculty and staff this fall.
- **Provide technology enhancements** and upgrades that support the change in academic education with hybrid learning solutions.
- **Focus on training** to improve skillsets and knowledge in departments.
- **Restructuring of departments** for greater efficiency with the right individuals in the right place to provide the highest levels of customer service:
  - **Student Payment Services** now reports to the Office of Finance and Administration as a result of the enrollment services audit.
  - **Human Resources** will implement the key structural changes identified through the external audit performed this passed spring in order to improve levels of customer service.
  - **University Police** welcomed staff and operations of the NEIU Parking Office and Vending to NEIUPD.
  - **Facilities Management** welcomed Property Control, Shipping and Receiving and Mail Services into their unit.

NEIU received three awards of the Institutional portion of Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) funds totaling \$20.9M and two awards of the Minority Serving Institutions portion of HEERF totaling \$1.2M. These funds were instrumental in not only helping the university continue operations during the pandemic, but to prepare for the safe return of students, faculty and staff for the coming year. In order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and lower exposure risk, \$4M was dedicated to making upgrades to infrastructure including HVAC ventilation, PPE, no-touch fixtures and enhanced cleaning and sanitation practices.

Additional funds have been allocated for Health Services related to COVID-19 testing and the implementation of a vaccine incentive program. NEIU also plans to expand student disability services by adding services to address anxiety, stress and mental health concerns throughout the pandemic.

NEIU also recognized the extraordinary financial challenges that students faced over the last year and dedicated \$1M in mandatory fee refunds and \$2M to relieve tuition and fee debt to help students continue their education.

In addition to prioritizing the health and safety of our community, the pandemic highlighted an urgent need for technological improvements to allow the university to pivot to remote work and learning. The university invested \$7M in IT infrastructure and technology upgrades and provided workshops to assist faculty and staff with the transition to new digital platforms and processes. Investments in video conferencing, digital data transfer, automation software and hybrid classrooms not only made the last year possible, but put the university in a better position for the continued evolution of education.



# University Technology Services



Marsha Henfer, Interim CIO

*UTS played a critical role in supporting the university through the work from home period. Despite challenges with funding and staffing, the team was able to set up and maintain the necessary infrastructure for business to continue in uncertain times.*



**150 laptops were rapidly distributed to faculty and staff in order to provide the technology necessary to continue academic and business operations during the work from home period.**

University Technology Services (UTS) provides the technological baseline on which all other programs and operational areas of the university rely. NEIU recognized the urgency to significantly invest in systems, management tools and security measures to protect our intellectual property and personal data. These investments will enable students, faculty and staff to gain quick and secure access to the technologies needed for their success. With a new and secure infrastructure in place, UTS will be positioned to proactively implement new solutions that will automate operations and provide tools to promote student engagement.

## Students

- In collaboration with Academic Affairs, The Ronald Williams Library, and the Pedroso Center, 250 Chromebooks and 30 Hot Spots with built-in internet Wi-Fi were acquired for students with little or no access to personal computers, enabling them to attend class remotely and continue their academic progress with minimal disruption.
- A Mini Student Lab was established in the Student Union for students to reserve time to take tests, quizzes, and work on projects and assignments.

## Technology Enhancements

- 8 classrooms were designed, developed, and upgraded with hybrid technology to support multiple modes of instruction (i.e., simultaneous in-person and remote learning).
- The university's phone system was upgraded to facilitate remote main switchboard operations and Technology Help Desk support services. In addition, new physical hardware was installed and software was upgraded to the latest version. A new phone circuit was also deployed at El-Centro to provide redundancy to the main campus.

## Health and Safety

- Implemented a digital queue management system to protect student health by eliminating the need to wait in line for services or assistance.

## Training

- Implemented various initiatives to improve security at NEIU including multi-factor authentication and security awareness training.
- Collaborated with the Center for Teaching and Learning to train and prepare faculty for online course delivery.

## Faculty and Staff

- Over 300 VPN (Virtual Private Network) accounts were disseminated to ensure that faculty and staff could connect to university network resources while teaching and working remotely.
- 900 Zoom Education licenses were acquired, providing employees with the preferred video hosting platform to continue academic and business operations, instruction, meetings, events, and conferences. These licenses will continue to be available throughout the upcoming academic year.
- Critical teaching and support software licenses (i.e., SPSS, Adobe Creative Cloud, Office 365 on-line) were issued to provide students and employees access to this software remotely. These licenses will continue to be available throughout the upcoming academic year.

## Looking Ahead

Continuing to build on the progress to date, our team is hard at work delivering the following initiatives.

### Faculty and Staff

- UTS is in the process of replacing approximately 800 laptops for employees whose current computer has been in use for more than 5 years, is no longer covered by a repair or replacement warranty, or is no longer functioning reliably. Details on logistics of the replacement distribution are forthcoming.
- Webex phone service that enables remote use of university phone extensions for faculty and staff is being rolled out. Our phone system's hardware will be upgraded along with the move to a new e911 solution. We are also working towards making speech-to-text voicemail available.
- Technology Enhanced Classrooms B-104, BBH-242, CBM-114, CBM-158, FA-104, FA-108, and LWH-2054, and LWH- 2108 are in the process of having computers in those classrooms replaced.
- Building on the successful design and development of 8 previously installed hybrid classrooms, we are currently in the process of upgrading all (approximately 175) classroom spaces to minimum standard hybrid (simultaneous in-person and remote learning) classrooms with technology upgrades to support multiple modes of instruction.

### Students

- Student Open Computing Labs located in B-103, LWH-2104/Atrium, ELC-107, and CCICS-501 will have all computers replaced.

### Health and Safety

- University Police and Key Control will soon implement an access control initiative that will create touch-free, automatically opening public access doors at all three university locations. This is a complex long-term project; however, an effort to convert at least one door in most buildings for the start of the fall semester is currently underway. This partial conversion of outer public access doors to touch-free operation will depend on the availability of parts required for the modifications and an available contractor to perform the work.

### Technology Enhancements

- We are currently working to upgrade Wi-Fi access points across the main campus. We are reviewing locations, equipment and vendor qualifications and availability in order to develop a timeline for completion.
- Several conference spaces across the university will be upgraded to the technology needed to provide hybrid options (simultaneous remote participation and in-person attendance) for meetings, conferences, seminars, and other public events. We are reviewing spaces and vendor qualifications and availability in order to develop a timeline for completion.
- We have determined that our current public emergency notification message board system is in need of replacement. A new emergency notification system is being developed, which will include a visual component.





# University Police



**John Escalante**  
Chief of University Police

*NEIUPD was essential through the past year, providing continued service through the pandemic while implementing additional health and safety protocols. The department adapted to take on new roles to keep university operations in motion despite most employees working from home and took significant steps to ensure a safe return to campus in the fall.*

The University Police Department members work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year to provide a safe and secure environment for the NEIU community to allow students, faculty and staff to focus on educational goals. NEIUPD strives to adhere to the highest standards of service and is working on various safety initiatives and improvements to further our mission. Among these initiatives and programs are the university emergency notification system Campus Shield/N-Safe, crime and Clery reports, safety escorts on campus, safety seminars on request, safety orientations for all new students and employees, and maintenance of our website [neiu.edu/police](http://neiu.edu/police) that provides safety tips and other useful links to our community.

## Health and Safety

- NEIUPD continued 24/7 coverage throughout the pandemic, providing safety and security for university locations while strictly following COVID safety protocols. The department handled 12,905 calls for service in this time.
- In collaboration with UTS and our vendor, CampusShield, NEIUPD updated the emergency alert system to allow text notifications and automatic alerts to all NEIU email accounts. Previously, emails were opt-in only, creating a safety concern.
- NEIUPD served as the drop-off site for departments working from home facilitating the exchange of Enrollment Services documents and payments, Food Pantry donations, Foundation donations, UTS computer support appointments and equipment pick-ups for students, faculty, and staff.
- New reporting mechanisms were established and integrated into NEIUPD webpages to provide easy access to online safety resources.

## Training

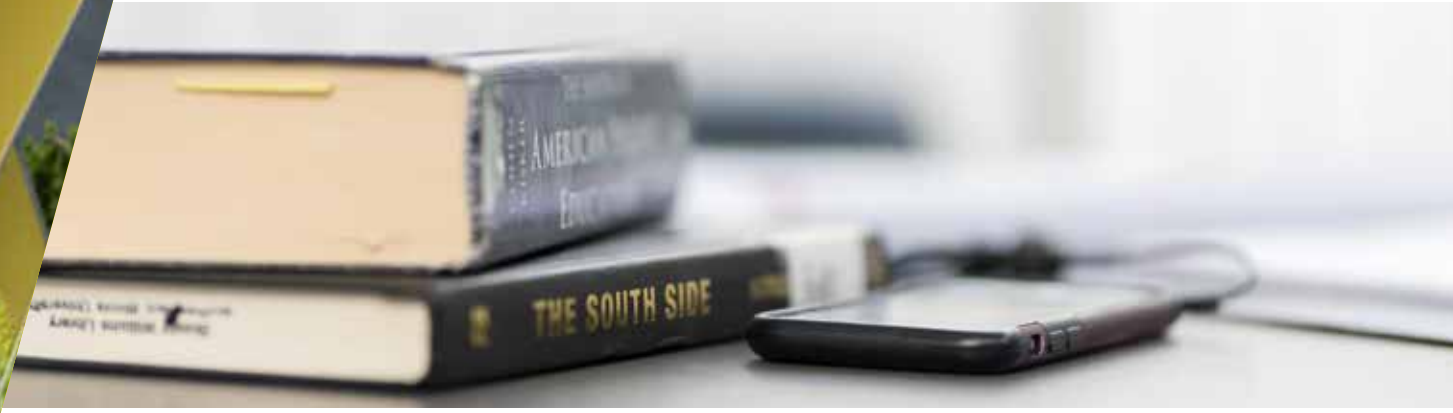
- NEIUPD earned re-accreditation from Illinois Law Enforcement Accreditation Program to ensure NEIUPD has met or exceeded best practice recommendations in all aspects of policing.
- NEIUPD virtually attended the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators conference that included training sessions for trauma informed response to sexual violence, recognizing and responding to campus stalking, clery reporting, stress management and de-escalation practices.
- NEIUPD received the Silver Award for training with Lexipol, signifying NEIUPD as one of the top agencies in Illinois in compliance with state mandated training requirements.

**Maintained a strong presence and security plan despite a \$650,000 budget reduction.**

## Looking Ahead

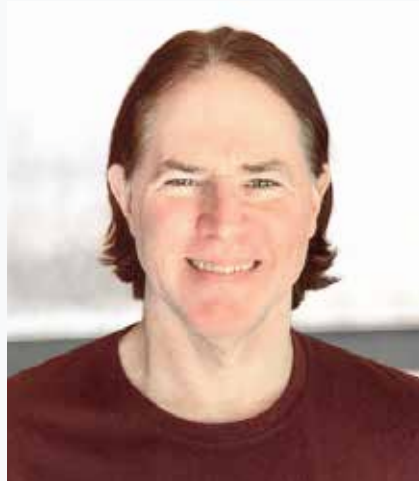
- Significant campus safety upgrades including security cameras, message board emergency notifications and access door controls featuring contactless entry.
- Continued training and scenario planning for fire, active shooter, and weather-related events.
- A major upgrade to further serve parking customers includes the installation of two new parking kiosks that will have state of the art technology and offer a variety of payment options for daily visitors.





The Student Payment Services department is made up of three groups: cashiers, accounts receivable representatives, and student loans representatives. The cashiers assist students with making payments for tuition and fees and other related services. They also assist university employees and faculty who wish to make deposits into university accounts for such things as departmental events. Accounts receivable representatives answer students' questions about tuition and fees charged to their accounts and assist them with establishing a payment plan for their account balances. If necessary, accounts receivable representatives also review holds that have been placed on a students' record due to an outstanding account balance in which case, a payment plan may be arranged to continue enrollment. Student loan representatives process refunds for students each semester and can answer questions related to student refund amounts and timing. They also assist students with Federal Perkins Loan repayment questions as well as with Emergency Loan requests.

# Student Payment Services



**Tom Lambert**  
Director of Student Payment Services

*The Student Payment Services office is committed to providing services in the most efficient and effective way possible through a process of continual improvement and collaboration across departments. Through changes and challenges in 2020, the department worked to provide support and resources for NEIU students.*

## Students

- Worked with Enrollment Services to encourage students to sign up for direct deposit accounts to facilitate electronic disbursements of relief funds resulting in 3,400 new accounts.
- Posted approximately \$180,000 of debt forgiveness funding to encourage students to return and complete their degrees.
- Participated in the implementation of the State of Illinois' AIM HIGH program by posting nearly \$1.7 million to many undocumented student accounts, helping them pay tuition and mandatory fees.
- Posted mandatory fee reduction transactions to student accounts due to course delivery adjustments.

## Faculty and Staff

- Supported university initiatives for multiple educational/contract cohorts including teacher education, ASPIRA, dual credit, and dual enrollment, by performing manual posting of charges and making special billing arrangements.
- Restructured reporting protocols as a result of the Enrollment Services audit.

**Distributed over \$7 million in multiple rounds of CARES and HEERF funding to students.**

## Looking Ahead

### Process Improvements

- Collaborate with other departments to implement a digital solution for account collections in order to better assist students with unpaid account balances and make internal processes more efficient.
- Explore changing the process for reviewing exception requests to allow registration and the release of transcripts for students with unpaid account balances.
- Establish an automated procedure for cashiers to enter miscellaneous receipt information when processing departmental deposit transactions to reduce manual work.
- Establish communication plans for student billing statements and payment plan options.



# University Budgets



**Dr. Michael Wenz**  
Executive Director of University Budgets

*Over the past year, the Budget Office demonstrated the ability to adapt and overcome unforeseen budgetary challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The department worked to secure and disperse relief funding for the university and students and adjusted budgets to accommodate for shifting priorities. Increased administrative efficiencies and process adjustments will continue to benefit the university moving forward.*

The Office of University Budgets is responsible for managing the allocation of over \$150 million in resources to support our students, faculty and staff. We provide both financial controls and analytics support to safeguard the university's funds and provide guidance to financial managers and decision-makers throughout the NEIU community. Last year created challenges for the budget office including declining enrollment and the COVID-19 pandemic, but we have still been able to produce a balanced budget and strengthen our finances. Our work is anchored in the principles of integrity, accountability, transparency and responsiveness.

## Faculty & Staff

- Worked with academic departments to build schedule-driven budgeting and improve the integrity of instructional budgets—reduced over \$3.5 million in planned, unbudgeted instruction.

## Process Improvements

- Reorganized budget office staff to increase analytical support capacity to the university.
- Constructed a fully paperless system for managing document flow at the onset of the work from home period and processed over 2,200 document packets electronically for FY2021.

## Technology Enhancements

- Developed a quantitative enrollment forecasting tool in collaboration with Institutional Research and College of Arts and Sciences faculty to support the Enrollment Services and Marketing departments in targeted recruitment strategies.
- Initiated implementation of the Banner Faculty Load and Compensation (FLAC) module for adjunct faculty, overloads and instructors.

**Developed budgets for \$41.9 million in federal and state COVID relief funds across five grants including distribution of \$15.9 million in direct aid to students.**



## NEIU Community

- Worked with UTS to address a budget shortfall of over \$500,000 related to the IT modernization project and leveraged federal funding to create a \$3.7 million fund to support stabilization of critical infrastructure.
- Prepared the Annual Resource Allocation and Management Program (RAMP) Report for IBHE, including historical, operating and capital request budget tables. The report helps support the IBHE request for funding increases for the university and higher education in general.
- Conducted five budget town hall presentations in conjunction with the University Planning and Budget Council (UPBC) to hundreds of students, faculty and staff that led to initiatives that generated over \$500,000 in budgetary savings to the university and kick-started living-learning communities within the university and the NEST.
- Prepared the Illinois State Legislature (ISL) Report and participated in hearings with the Illinois State House of Representatives and Illinois Senate. Provided detailed explanations of university operations and performance, which helped secure state level appropriations for FY2022.
- Prepared and presented an FY2021 budget that protected instructional costs and avoided furloughs despite continued enrollment decline.
- Developed contingency planning strategies to balance the budget at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic against a potential 10% reduction in state appropriations and 20% decline in enrollment.

## Looking Ahead

### Process Improvements

- Continuous improvements and more timely reconciliation of budget-to-actual for FY2022.
- Develop real-time schedule-costing mechanism for Academic Affairs to allow improvements in budgetary integrity, planning, hiring and decision-making in the future.
- Provide early reporting of FY23 budget projections to key decision-makers to support university planning.
- Improve reporting to aid understanding and present more detailed information on the university's balance sheet and unrestricted net position to facilitate long-term planning for local funds and allow for the creation of capital and multi-year budgets.



# Purchasing



**Victoria Santiago**  
Director of Procurement Services

*Despite the challenges faced when the pandemic hit, purchasing staff adapted quickly to think of creative solutions and developed digital processes that not only allowed for uninterrupted work from home, but allowed us to streamline efficiencies for the department moving forward.*

The Purchasing Office is exclusively responsible for ensuring that goods and services are purchased in the most cost-effective manner on behalf of all NEIU departments and offices. We oversee the competitive bidding process in accordance with the Illinois Procurement Code and NEIU Board of Trustee Regulations and encourage use of minority, women, and persons with disabilities owned businesses through the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) and Small Business Set Aside Program (SBSA). We are committed to sound procurement ethics and demonstrate responsible environmental stewardship of resources.

## Process Improvements

- Digitized signature cards to facilitate expedited remote approval and signature verifications.
- Digitized all procedures including filing and Contract Obligation Documents (COD).
- Revised the purchase order format to be more user-friendly so that departments can trace funding sources and easily track budgets.
- Implemented emailing process for purchase orders and contract documents for faster turnaround.

## Faculty & Staff

- Revised the chart of accounts. Account codes for procurement and business services were updated to be more current and user-friendly.
- Updated P-Card and university credit card procedures to provide clear guidelines to cardholders including appropriate use and spending thresholds. Created a process for cardholders to upload receipts directly to the P-Card system.
- Worked with vendors to ship necessary supplies directly to staff and faculty during the work from home period.

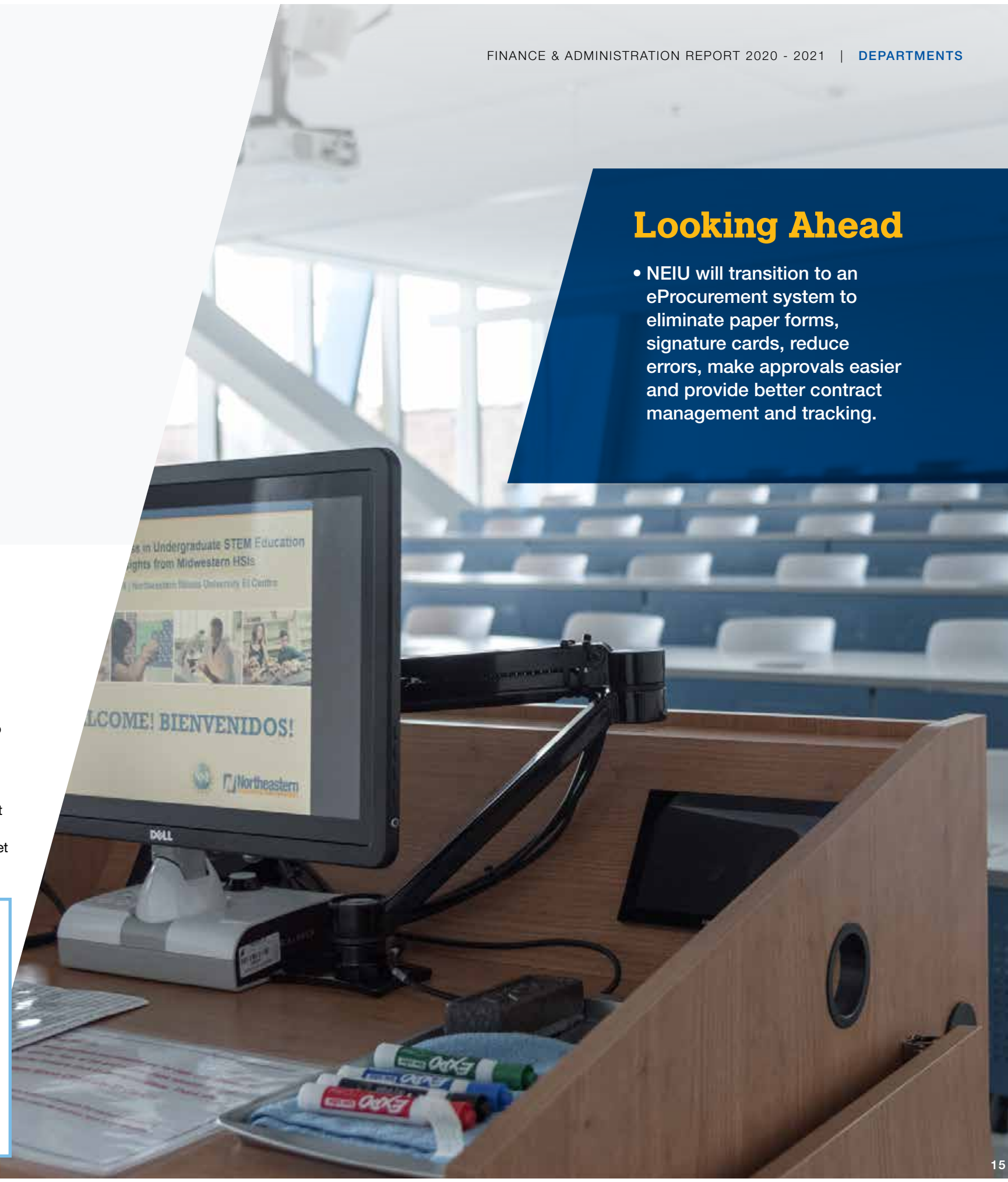
## Training

- Completed BEP and SBSA training with university staff on how to identify and contract with businesses that help meet goals required by the state.
- Collaborated with Central Management Services (CMS) to provide current vendors and NEIU alumni with training on how to register as a BEP and SBSA vendor. This effort helps alumni increase their business with state agencies and provides the university with new vendors to help meet BEP goals.

**Implemented electronic requisitions, eliminating paper requisitions sent by end-user departments via interoffice mail, allowing for quicker approvals.**

## Looking Ahead

- NEIU will transition to an eProcurement system to eliminate paper forms, signature cards, reduce errors, make approvals easier and provide better contract management and tracking.





# Internal Audit



**Rita Moore**  
Director of Internal Audit

*Internal Audit plays a proactive advisory role to ensure NEIU meets or exceeds best practices across departments and compliance with state and federal regulations. The ongoing work is a process of continual improvement to increase efficiencies and workflows throughout the organization.*

The Internal Audit Department assists management and departments in meeting their goals and objectives by providing independent, objective assurance and consulting services that evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of risk management, internal controls and governance processes. Through a disciplined approach, the Internal Audit Department identifies potential barriers, weaknesses or issues that may prevent the university from meeting its strategic objectives. This occurs by conducting assurance audits and providing independent guidance to management on the effectiveness and efficiency of operations, the adequacy of internal controls, the reliability of financial reporting and compliance with state and federal statutory requirements for all areas of the university.

## Process Improvements

- Coordinated the annual Certification of Internal Controls and assisted in the submission to the Office of the State Auditor General.
- Conducted audits on the annual Audit Plans relative to identified high-risk areas.
- Evaluated vendors, assisted in the contracting process and was the university liaison for the ITModernization Project review.
- Provided consulting services in relation to software acquisitions and testing methods, process improvements and policy and procedure updates.
- Conducted Internal Audit orientation sessions for the VP of Finance and Administration, VP of Student Affairs and additional employees.
- Conducted follow-up activities to ensure audit recommendations were implemented.
- Conducted and managed the external validation for the Northeastern Illinois University Quality Assessment Review.

## Training

- Met and exceeded the State Internal Audit Advisory Boards (SIAAB) and continuing professional education requirements.

**Developed and obtained approval of the Annual Two-Year Risk-Based Audit Plan with the coordination and input of approximately 40-45 managers and executive management.**

## Looking Ahead

- Complete implementation of audit management software within project timeline and budget.
- Meet audit compliance requirements relative to IIA Standards, Fiscal Control & Internal Auditing Act and SIAAB requirements.
- Dispose of departmental records as approved through the records retention schedules.
- Continue to provide advisory services as assigned or required.



# Human Resources



**Abby Murray**  
Interim Executive Director of Human Resources

*Over the past year, Human Resources tackled process changes and employee training to provide exceptional support for faculty and staff despite unforeseen challenges. In collaboration with other Finance and Administration departments, HR spearheaded efforts to digitize forms, files and procedures to modernize university practices and make work from home possible.*

**Human Resources is excited about the journey we are embarking on in pursuit of improved customer service for our university community. NEIU worked with external auditors to conduct a comprehensive assessment of Human Resources. We solicited feedback from a diverse group of stakeholders to help us identify areas that could be improved to meet the current and future needs of our university. We are committed to advancing the university's mission and strategic priorities by implementing innovative solutions that foster a culture of productivity, engagement and inclusion to attract and retain a diverse and talented workforce.**

## Process Improvements

- Produced and published all fillable personnel forms for remote work and made available on NEIUpport for download. Transitioned traditional offline processes to digital workflows.
- Streamlined email processes for HR to create accountability and reduce paperwork. Created **HR-Office@neiu.edu** for the NEIU community to submit inquiries and paperwork and **Benefits@neiu.edu** for specific inquiries related to employee benefits.

## Compliance

- Completed State University Civil Service (SUCCS) audit. Human Resources staff came into the office during the pandemic to ensure a successful audit. Every three years an audit is completed to ensure that testing procedures, hiring and pay practices, etc. are in compliance.
- Completed compliance training for I9 verification with tools from US Citizenship and Immigration Services.

## Faculty & Staff

- Developed Human Resources FAQs to assist employees with questions regarding processes and access to COVID-19 related employee benefits during the pandemic.
- In partnership with the Ombuds Office and the Equal Opportunity and Ethics Office, co-hosted a session titled, *Leading Through Change: Managing Return to Work Concerns* for staff and faculty that drew over 150 participants from across the university.
- Assisted university employees with over 175 fraudulent unemployment claims by providing information and education—how to handle fraudulent claims, who to contact and tips to keep personally identifiable information safe.
- Successfully launched electronic timesheets for Faculty, Administrative and Professional (A&P), Academic Support Professional (ASP), Resource Professional (RP), and exempt Civil Service employees. The implementation of this process improvement fulfills the requirement for state employees to submit timesheets on state business, provides internal accounting between departments, and shows eligibility requirements for leaves of absence.



**An external audit of the department was conducted to ensure department policies and procedures are in line with best practices and identified where improvements could be made for customer service.**

## Looking Ahead

### Technology Enhancements

- Advancing automation efforts to include digital employee records, applicant tracking, electronic personnel action forms (EPAF) and digital signature software.

### Process Improvements

- Overall policy documentation for university employees.
- Transitioning to a universal payroll schedule for all employees.



# Facilities Management



**Nancy Medina**  
Associate VP of Facilities Management

*Facilities staff have and continue to put forth a tremendous effort over the last year to ensure the health and safety of personnel working at all university locations and to prepare for the return of students, faculty and staff in the fall. We have been working diligently to make upgrades and accommodations to provide a safe space and peace of mind during changing circumstances.*

**Facilities Management is responsible for maintaining university facilities and grounds in a safe, functional, attractive and cost-effective manner. Day-to-day operations, as well as long term planning for all university locations are handled through this department. In addition, all aspects of the heating plant and construction are also managed by Facilities Management.**

## Health & Safety

- Facilities staff remained a constant presence on campus throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure health and safety protocols were being met for personnel working at university locations.
- NEIU has met or exceeded all industry standards for infectious aerosols set by the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE).
- Adjusted schedules for Building Service Workers (BSWs) to support enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of washrooms, classrooms, labs, public areas, offices and high-touch surfaces.
- Supplemented equipment with electrostatic sprayers to apply EPA-registered virucidal and bactericidal cleaners.
- Provided hand sanitizing stations, sanitizing wipes, personal protective equipment (PPE), social distancing signage and masks for all university locations.
- Hired additional BSWs to maintain enhanced cleaning protocols in preparation for an increased population for the fall semester.

- Performed inspections, cleanings and preventative maintenance to maximize airflow while continuing to control temperatures within university standards.
- Upgraded all buildings to MERV 13 filters for improved air filtration as recommended by ASHRAE.
- Vacuumed, power washed and steam cleaned HVAC units throughout campus by contracted HVAC specialists.

## Operations

- Continued to operate on a reduced schedule and worked with faculty and staff to accommodate deliveries and pickups while following health and safety protocols.
- During the pandemic, the university purchased a folding/inserting machine and worked with Pitney Bowes to install the Sendsuite Tracking system. Pitney Bowes provided training to staff and assisted with system customization to reflect departmental needs. Sender and recipient directories were updated to enable automated tracking emails.
- Property Control conducted a university-wide inventory of assets and re-tagged assets as mandated by law despite the challenges of COVID-19.

## Students

- In collaboration with Student Union staff, Mail Services sent all graduates unable to attend in-person graduation ceremonies commemorative boxes containing their diplomas in May, August and December.
- Mail Services coordinated the shipment and return of materials to students taking classes with a lab component to ease the process of turning in the materials at the end of the program.



Morris Brown, Rogelio Edrington, and Omar Cardenas

**Engineers continued to work 24/7 through the pandemic to prepare for the safe return of students, faculty and staff in the fall.**

## Looking Ahead

### Health & Safety

- Continue diligence to ensure proper cleaning, ventilation, PPE distribution and distancing guidelines are followed.
- Convert exterior doors to “no touch” entry.
- Create “no touch” restrooms at CCICS, and in BBH and LWH buildings.

### Facilities Improvements

- Install equipment to increase the Wi-Fi signal throughout the main campus.
- Complete various maintenance projects including space renovations, building upgrades, and landscaping.



# Controller



**Beni Ortiz**  
Interim Executive Director of  
Finance and Administration



**Ole Flores**  
Interim Controller

*Through a tumultuous and unpredictable fiscal year, our department managed to implement time and cost saving measures that are now permanent processes in part of an overall improved workflow.*

Northeastern Illinois University's Controller's Office serves as a central hub interfacing with both internal and external customers. Our customer base ranges from students, faculty and staff to external auditors, government agencies, and various vendors just to name a few. Although our teams work independently to cover their main focus areas, we've learned to work more cohesively and collaboratively within our department and organization-wide. The Controller's Office has kept up with financial, compliance, and tax reporting to meet the needs of the university, our governing bodies and agencies.

## Process Improvements

- Revised and updated The Chart of Accounts to more accurately track expenses, revenues and assets.
- Worked with Purchasing to revise the P-Card and university credit card procedures.
- Transitioned to a more efficient email approval system to expedite vendor, student and employee payments during the work from home period and beyond.
- Implemented the use of software that allows uploading documents to Banner so that they can be shared across departments.
- Digitized invoices dating back to FY20 to improve response time to audit requests.
- Worked with students, faculty and staff to set up direct deposit accounts so that payments could be made remotely and avoid delays.
- Overall digitization efforts greatly reduced the department's environmental impact, streamlined workflows and made processes for approvals and document retrieval more seamless.

## Technology Enhancements

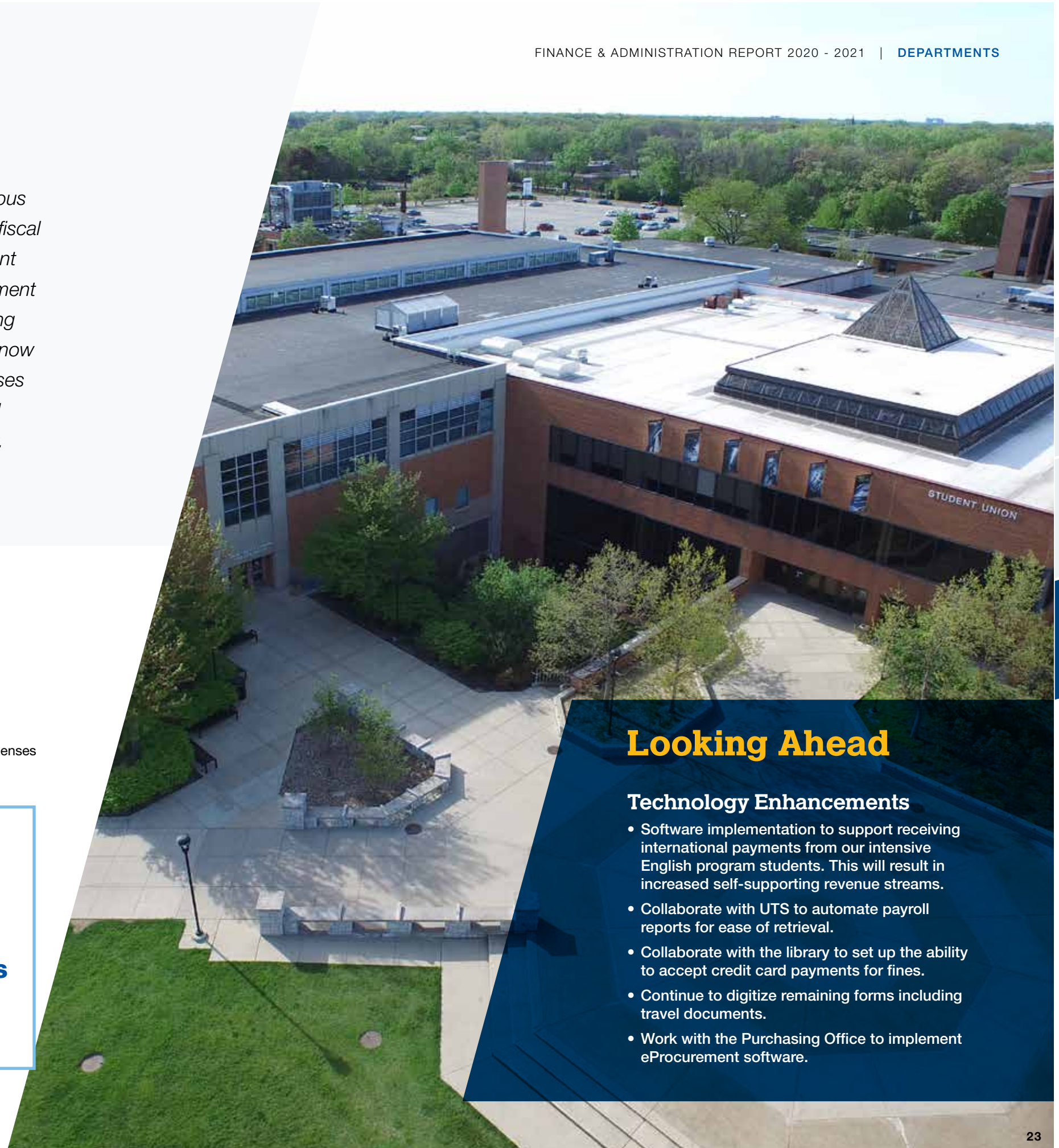
- Upgraded departmental Adobe Acrobat Pro Licenses to aid in the digitization process of all forms.

**Increased number of direct deposit accounts to 85%, reducing fraud and expediting payments to students, faculty and staff.**

## Looking Ahead

### Technology Enhancements

- Software implementation to support receiving international payments from our intensive English program students. This will result in increased self-supporting revenue streams.
- Collaborate with UTS to automate payroll reports for ease of retrieval.
- Collaborate with the library to set up the ability to accept credit card payments for fines.
- Continue to digitize remaining forms including travel documents.
- Work with the Purchasing Office to implement eProcurement software.







## Dedication to Service

### Brian Skrabacz - Building Service Worker, Facilities Management

I've worked at Northeastern as a Building Service Worker for over 26 years. During this time, I've had the opportunity to work with and around some of the kindest, most thoughtful employees and students. It's those people that still continue to make me enjoy my time here. Those same people are what I missed during the pandemic. During that time, we still had students coming to school for music, science, and theater classes. To ensure their safety and the safety of faculty and staff, we've implemented the use of electrostatic sprayers that completely sanitize all surfaces and increased cleaning schedules. I look forward to working at the university and meeting many new faces for many more years to come.

# Collaboration Across Campus

## Liesl V. Downey

Vice President for Institutional Advancement / Executive Director, NEIU Foundation

In July 2020, NEIU representatives including Vice President Kumar and Vice President Downey worked with representatives from Credit Union 1 who chose to make an unsolicited, unrestricted contribution of \$20,000 to the NEIU Foundation. The gift was directed by President Gibson to benefit the recently-established George Floyd Social Justice Scholarship. With this support, the Foundation was able to provide three scholarships of \$5,000 each to the inaugural George Floyd Social Justice Scholars in October 2020.

## Michael Bedell

Ph.D., Dean and Professor

The College of Business and Technology is working with Finance and Administration to develop new capabilities for the College. Among these is a new training program that will create two internship positions and numerous student positions to support a cyber security, accounting research, and SAP computer lab.

## Katrina E. Bell-Jordan

Ph.D., Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Professor of Communication, Media and Theatre

Vice President Manish Kumar and the Division of Finance and Administration have worked closely with the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) to help support the academic and administrative operations of the College, recognizing that many of the teaching and learning spaces in the CAS have been underserved for many years. These efforts have included addressing issues and essential repairs in labs and studio spaces that are necessary to provide safe and engaging teaching and learning experiences as we return to primarily on-campus operations in Fall 2021, and to provide CAS faculty and staff more efficient and effective spaces to interact as they return to work at university locations. VP Kumar and the Division of Finance and Administration have worked with the CAS to identify and prioritize facility and/or technology improvements, repairs, installations and upgrades for programs across all CAS spaces, including Bernard Brommel Hall, Lech Walesa Hall, the Fine Arts Building and the F-Wing.

## Francisco X. Gaytán

Ph.D., Associate Provost for Student Success and Retention

In the fall of 2020 Academic Affairs collaborated with Finance and Administration to move the location of the Center for College Access and Success from its location at 770 N. Halsted to offices spread across our three locations, El Centro, CCICS, and the North Campus. This resulted in significant savings in rent, facilities up-keep, and parking, but more importantly, it has created new opportunities for the grant funded programs at CCAS to collaborate with other units across the university, better serve students, and create efficiency through partnership and shared costs.