

The Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University

**Board Meeting Minutes**

September 23, 2021

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University was convened on Thursday September 23, 2021 in Alumni Hall located at 5500 N. St. Louis Avenue, Chicago, IL. Jim Palos, Chair of the Board called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

**Roll was called and the following Trustees were present:** Carlos Azcoitia, Marvin Garcia, Ann Kalayil, Javonti Mordican, Jim Palos, and Jonathan Stein.

Trustee Charlie Serrano joined by phone at 2:25 p.m.

**Others present:** Gloria Gibson, President; Mary Pat Burns, Board Counsel; Karl Voigt, Assistant Secretary to the Board; vice presidents, staff, and university community members

Chair Palos recited the following statement:

“Governor Pritzker has continued in place his prior disaster proclamation in response to COVID-19, the most recent Proclamation being dated September 20, 2021, and, as a result, some trustees may be joining this meeting remotely, via video conference.

Since some of the trustees will be participating remotely, Public Act 101-0640 requires a roll call vote be taken on each matter acted upon.

We are proceeding by video and audio conference because we continue to believe that due to the pandemic it is not prudent for everyone to be physically present in the same space. We have posted notice of this meeting in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. The open portion of the meeting is being recorded and transcript of the proceedings will be prepared and ultimately, after approval, will be made available to the public on the NEIU website.”

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**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Trustee Azcoitia, seconded by Trustee Garcia moved to approve, by consent, the open and closed minutes from the following meetings: May 17, 2021 Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting; May 17, 2021 Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee meeting; June 8, 2021 Audit Committee meeting; June 10, 2021 Regular Board meeting; July 29, 2021 Executive Committee meeting; August 23, 2021 Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee meeting; August 26, 2021 Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting; and the September 13, 2021 Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee – special meeting.

Discussion: there was no discussion

The motion carried by acclamation.

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

Chair Palos announced the opportunity for public comment. There were three requests to speak.

1. Dr. Nancy Matthews: NEIU faculty member and President of the UPI Local 4100  
**Topic:** Faculty concerns about the university's enrollment situation
2. Dr. Timothy Libretti: NEIU Interim Associate Dean of College of Arts & Sciences  
**Topic:** Ethics complaints and lack of accountability structure at the university
3. Dr. Nikolas Hoel: NEIU Instructor and Chair of the University Advisory Council  
**Topic:** To encourage the board to ratify the faculty rollover agreement

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

Chair Palos welcomed everyone back to campus and thanked the University President and staff for their hard work in keeping the campus safe and for making today's in-person meeting possible. Trustees received a briefing on student wellness issues at today's board luncheon. Special thanks to Dr. Gibson, Dr. Terry Mena, and Dr. Nancy Easton for putting together an enlightening program. Chair Palos introduced the new Student Trustee, Mr. Javonti Mordican. Javonti is a junior in the Communication, Media and Theatre Program, as well as a resident assistant in the Nest. Javonti is expected to graduate in Fall 2022. Chair Palos introduced and welcomed the university's new General Counsel, Mr. G. A. Finch, and thanked Natalie Brouwer Potts, Gwen Morales, and Peter Land for serving in various interim roles in the General Counsel's office.

Chair Palos recognized retired Trustee, Barbara Fumo with the following board resolution:

#### Resolution Honoring Barbara Fumo

WHEREAS, Barbara Fumo was appointed in 2011 by Governor Pat Quinn to serve on the Northeastern Illinois University Board of Trustees; and

WHEREAS, Barbara Fumo was reappointed in 2013 by Governor Pat Quinn, and in 2019 by Governor J.B. Pritzker; and

WHEREAS, Barbara Fumo is a graduate of the Chicago Teachers College North with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education and a graduate of Northeastern Illinois University with a Master of Arts degree in Gifted Education; and

WHEREAS, Barbara Fumo taught students in all ability levels from Kindergarten through Junior High, and developed the gifted education program at Hanson Park Elementary School; and

WHEREAS, Barbara Fumo having retired in 2007 is a veteran Chicago Public Schools educator with nearly thirty years as a classroom teacher and Assistant Principal; and

WHEREAS, Barbara Fumo has demonstrated her commitment to Northeastern and her dedication to the future of the institution while serving on the Board of Trustees;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University does hereby express its deep appreciation and gratitude to Barbara Fumo, for her exemplary service to higher education and Northeastern Illinois University.

Presented on behalf of the Board of Trustees and University, September 23, 2021.

Trustee Stein, seconded by Trustee Azcoitia moved to adopt this resolution and to present a plaque in recognition to former Trustee Fumo on behalf of the Board.

Discussion: applause

The motion carried by acclamation.

Chair Palos announced that Trustees attended an event with the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus organized by Suleyma Perez on August 20.

President Gibson invited the newest faculty to introduce themselves:

- Dr. Sharon Chung, Counselor Education
- Crystal Cleggett, Social Work
- Dr. Chika Ejike, Health Sciences and Physical Education
- Dr. Hulya Ermis-Demirtas, Counselor Education
- Dr. Beth Gilfillan, Counselor Education
- Dr. Sheng Liu, Accounting, Business Law and Finance
- Dr. Lindsay Moldonado, Teacher Education
- Dr. Amirhossein Maleki, Management and Marketing
- Dr. Yejin Shin, Communication, Media and Theatre
- Dr. Mohammad Tavakolifar, Accounting, Business Law and Finance
- Dr. Yi Yang, Computer Science

President Gibson welcomed everyone back to in-person learning, teaching, and work. A special thank you to everyone who helped prepare the University facilities and for keeping everyone safe. Dr. Gibson introduced Dr. Shireen Roshanravan, Executive Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; Dr. Kamau Rashid, Founding Director of the Ed.D. program; and Mr. G. A. Finch, University General Counsel. Dr. Gibson recognized and thanked everyone who participated on the COVID-19 Task Force and who guided the University through one of its most difficult periods in the University's history. President Gibson reminded everyone that the University is operating under its Interim COVID-19 Return to Work policy. Of the 6,440 students registered for the fall term, approximately 60% have verified their vaccination status. 83% of employees have verified their vaccination status. President Gibson reiterated the University's commitment to being aligned with the IBHE's strategic goals of equity, sustainability, and growth. Dr. Gibson introduced Maywand Poyhar, an international student from Afghanistan, who made remarks about the recent arrival of Afghan emigres. Dr. Gibson encouraged the Board to support today's action item in response to the resettlement of Afghans in and around Chicago. President Gibson asked the community to join her in extolling the values of Northeastern by embracing those who are unhomed, and she condemned the recent treatment of Haitian refugees at the U. S. border. Dr. Gibson thanked everyone who participated in the recent climate study, and invited everyone to the October 7 campus climate forum and celebration. The University continues to work to obtain the Seal of Excelencia and will submit a formal application in June 2022. While the fall enrollment fell short of its goal, the University is pleased to welcome 330 new first-time freshmen, and 769 transfer students. Finalists for the Vice President for Enrollment Management will be on campus in the coming weeks. The University is pleased to announce a \$750,000 grant from the MacArthur Foundation for "The Truth Telling Project." The grant recipient is Dr. Cris Toffolo.

Chair Palos asked Trustee Ann Kalayil to introduce guest speaker, Ahlam Jbara, Chief of Staff of the Division of Family and Community Services of the Illinois Department of Human Services, who provided an update on the Afghan resettlement efforts in Illinois.

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## Shared Governance Presentation

Chair Palos introduced Dr. Nancy Wrinkle, Chair of the Faculty Senate. Dr. Wrinkle presented the Faculty Senate's priorities this year to the Board. On behalf of the faculty, Dr. Wrinkle expressed concern over the current enrollment figures, as well as the University's enrollment operation. The Faculty Senate looks forward to working with Dr. Gibson to this year to continue improving the faculty – administration relationship. Trustees expressed their gratitude for the thoughtful presentation.

## Committee Reports

### Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met on July 29, 2021 via video conference. The committee received briefings on the NEIU for You tuition initiative, return to campus plans, reviewed the committee's list of remaining education topics, and considered, as its first reading, recommended revisions to the Board's regulations to include Juneteenth in the list of official university holidays beginning in 2022. The committee also approved the President's FY2022 goals and compensation, as well as approved its official response in matter #21-40460.

Chair Palos announced a special meeting to be held on September 29, 2021 to consider the approval of the UPI contract extension agreement.

### Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee

Trustee Kalayil welcomed Javonti Mordican as the student member of the committee. The Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee met on August 26, 2021 in the Golden Eagles Room on the main campus. The committee received informational briefings on several items and presents 3 items for board approval today:

#### Action Item I. A. Recommendation of Tenure and Rank for Dr. Shireen Roshanravan

Trustee Kalayil, seconded by Trustee Garcia, moved to approve the granting of tenure and rank at full professor to Dr. Shireen Roshanravan. This recommendation comes with support from the Department of Philosophy and Provost Dennis Rome. (The Student Trustee may not vote on this item).

Discussion: there was no discussion

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Azcoitia: Yes	Garcia: Yes	Mordican:	Serrano: Yes
Eagle:	Kalayil: Yes	Palos: Yes	Stein: Yes

The motion carried.

#### Action Item I. B. Recommendation of Tenure and Rank for Dr. Kamau Rashid

Trustee Kalayil, seconded by Trustee Garcia, moved to approve the granting of tenure and rank at full professor to Dr. Kamau Rashid. This recommendation comes with support from the Department of Educational Inquiry and Curriculum Studies, and Provost Dennis Rome. (The Student Trustee may not vote on this item).

Discussion: there was no discussion

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Azcoitia: Yes	Garcia: Yes	Mordican:	Serrano: Yes
Eagle:	Kalayil: Yes	Palos: Yes	Stein: Yes

The motion carried.

Trustee Serrano left the meeting.

Action Item I. C. Consideration and Approval of Tuition and Fee Waivers for Afghan Refugees in Academic Year 2021-22

Trustee Kalayil, seconded by Trustee Garcia, moved that tuition, fees and housing costs be waived for up to 15 continuing and prospective Afghan student refugees for the 2021-2022 academic year, at a cost to the University not to exceed \$150,000.

Discussion: Chair Palos thanked Trustee Kalayil for taking leadership on this matter. Trustee Kalayil thanked Dr. Gibson for her help and support for making Northeastern the first Illinois public university to take this action.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Azcoitia: Yes	Garcia: Yes	Mordican: Yes	Serrano:
Eagle:	Kalayil: Yes	Palos: Yes	Stein: Yes

The motion carried.

Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee

The Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee met on August 23, 2021 in the Golden Eagles Room on the main campus, and on September 13, 2021 via hybrid in-person/video conference. The committee received informational briefings and reviewed and discussed the following items recommended for approval today:

Action Item I. D. Approval of Recommendation of Purchases \$100,000 or Greater: Renewal of Contract with Fischer International Identity, LLC

Trustee Azcoitia, seconded by Trustee Stein, moved to approve the recommendation of purchases \$100,000 or greater: renewal of contract with Fischer International Identity, LLC on the terms presented.

Discussion: there was no discussion

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Azcoitia: Yes	Garcia: Yes	Mordican: Yes	Serrano:
Eagle:	Kalayil: Yes	Palos: Yes	Stein: Yes

The motion carried.

Action Item I. E. Approval of Final FY22 Operating Budget

Trustee Azcoitia, seconded by Trustee Stein, moved to approve the final FY22 operating budget as presented.

Discussion: Trustee Kalayil asked if the current budget addresses some of the concerns raised in Dr. Wrinkle's earlier presentation. Dr. Gibson replied that it does and additional information regarding staffing and technology upgrades would be presented at the next Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Azcoitia: Yes	Garcia: Yes	Mordican: Yes	Serrano:
Eagle:	Kalayil: Yes	Palos: Yes	Stein: Yes

The motion carried.

Action Item I. F. Approval of Recommendation of Preliminary FY23 Operating and Capital Budget Requests

Trustee Azcoitia, seconded by Trustee Stein, moved to approve the preliminary FY23 operating budget and capital budget request as presented.

Discussion: Trustee Kalayil recommended ensuring sustainability plans become part of all construction projects.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Azcoitia: Yes	Garcia: Yes	Mordican: Yes	Serrano:
Eagle:	Kalayil: Yes	Palos: Yes	Stein: Yes

The motion carried.

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**Motion to Convene in Closed Session**

At 2:52 p.m. Trustee Azcoitia, seconded by Trustee Stein, moved to convene in Closed Session.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Azcoitia: Yes	Garcia: Yes	Mordican: Yes	Serrano:
Eagle:	Kalayil: Yes	Palos: Yes	Stein: Yes

The motion carried.

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**Motion to Reconvene in Open Session**

At 3:28 p.m. Trustee Kalayil, seconded by Trustee Azcoitia, moved to reconvene in Open Session.

The motion carried by acclamation.

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**Legal Report**

Chair Palos announced that the Trustees received the legal report in advance of the meeting and had the opportunity to ask questions about it in Closed Session.

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**Old/New Business**

Chair Palos asked if there was any old or new business. Trustee Kalayil thanked the staff who worked tirelessly to ensure the University facilities were ready for safe operations in person.

Karl Voigt asked Trustees to let him know who will attend the IBHE virtual training on October 13.

Please review the 2022 meeting calendar to be finalized at the November meeting.

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**Motion to Adjourn**

At 3:38 p.m. Trustee Azcoitia, seconded by Trustee Stein, moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned by acclamation.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Palos, Chair of the Board  
Karl Voigt, Assistant Board Secretary  
Approved November 18, 2021