

Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University

**Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting Minutes**

October 25, 2021

A meeting of the Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee of the Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University was convened on Monday October 25, 2021 in the Student Union Golden Eagles Room located at 5500 N. St. Louis Avenue, Chicago, IL. Trustee Sherry Eagle called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**Roll was called and the following Trustee committee members were present in person:**

Carlos Azcoitia; Charlie Serrano; and Sherry Eagle

**Other Trustees present in person:** Jim Palos and Jonathan Stein

**Other Trustees present via video conference:** Ann Kalayil joined at 10:44 a.m.

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

**Also present via video conference:** Mary Pat Burns, Board Counsel

Trustee Eagle recited the following statement: "Governor Pritzker has continued in place his disaster proclamation in response to COVID-19, the most recent proclamation being dated October 15, 2021, and as a result this meeting is being held by video conference, as well as in person. I note, for the record, that I am physically present on campus for the meeting as are Carlos Azcoitia, Charlie Serrano, and President Gibson. We have posted notice of this meeting in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, the open portion of which is being recorded, and a transcript of the proceedings will be prepared and ultimately after approval will be available to the public on the NEIU website. Consistent with Public Act 91-0715 and reasonable constraints as determined by the Board of Trustees, that each meeting of the Board or its committees, members of the public may request a brief time to address the Board or committees on relevant matters within its jurisdiction. I understand from our Board Secretary there are numerous individuals who would like to speak today. We have also received numerous written statements from individuals commenting on the NEIU for You 2.0 initiative. We will accept those written statements as part of our public record. Also, we are going to hear from some of our public commentators in the order in which they signed up. Each individual is limited to three minutes and overall the Finance Committee has allocated 30 minutes to public comment as permitted by our Board rules."

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

There were 14 requests to speak. In accordance with the Board's Regulations regarding presentations, 10 speakers have been approved as all requests were on the same topic. Additionally, there were 8 written student statements submitted which are incorporated into this record.

1. Timothy Libretti, Interim Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences  
**Topic:** to speak about the proposed NEIU for You 2.0 initiative
2. Tim Scherman; Interim Chair of the Department of English  
**Topic:** support for NEIU for You 2

3. Nikolas Hoel; NEIU Instructor and Chair of the University Advisory Council  
**Topic:** to speak in support of NEIU for You 2.0
4. Shireen Roshanravan; Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
**Topic:** to speak in support of NEIU for You 2.0
5. Christopher Maxwell; Assistant Dean of Students  
**Topic:** to speak in support of NEIU for You 2.0
6. Anthony Gunderson; NEIU student  
**Topic:** to speak in support of NEIU for You 2.0 as a recipient of the award
7. Anthony Rodriguez; President NEIU Alumni Association  
**Topic:** to ask the Board to vote in favor of NEIU for You 2.0
8. Edwin Medina; NEIU student and President of the Student Government Association  
**Topic:** to address the committee pertaining to NEIU for You
9. Nancy Wrinkle; NEIU faculty and Chair of the Faculty Senate  
**Topic:** to speak in support of the NEIU for You 2.0 initiative
10. Sudha Srinivas; Interim Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences  
**Topic:** NEIU for You 2.0

Written statements submitted:

1. My name is Denasia Smith. I am a freshman living in the Nest. The First year Scholarship has helped me in many ways. As far as saving money and not having to stress about how I'm going to cover the cost of college. In general this scholarship has been very beneficial for me.
2. Hello my [name is] Mirlinda Resulova. I am in the Discover Yourself Living Learning Community in the Nest and I received the NEIU for you Scholarship. Having this scholarship has been very helpful because I spend my time doing homework and studying instead of going and working extra. It helps me stay focused on what really matters.
3. My name is Yasmine Prendiville. I am in the Discover Yourself Living Learning Community in the Nest. As a recipient of the NEIU For You Scholarship, the Scholarship has markedly improved my progress towards my personal goals in post-secondary education. Before I was offered the scholarship, I was most likely going to attend a local 2-year university simply because I was not sure if I would be able to dedicate myself to it, at the potential cost of the quality of my education. When I was informed that I would be receiving the NEIU For You Scholarship I made the immediate decision to formally apply to NEIU and my university journey began. This scholarship has made it possible for me to be curious and investigate the potential of my post-secondary path with the freedom I am now so generously afforded. Now with my experiences just within my first semester of college, I am happy to say that the scholarship has allowed me to confidently pursue a full college education within Anthropology, a field I have been passionate about for my entire life. The scholarship has made it possible for me to better myself, and I cannot be more grateful.
4. My name is Ashley Garcia. I live in the Nest in the Discover Yourself LLC. The NEIU For You scholarship means I have succeeded. I was nervous about balancing school and work my freshman year, which could have been rocky since I took a gap year, but because of this scholarship, I am focused on getting good grades while not having to worry about working full time to pay off any debt. Without the scholarship, I would have had to commute, which could have potentially affected my attendance.

Being able to have my own space right next to NEIU has tremendously improved my focus on classes. Your living environment can significantly affect your concentration, which would have been a problem at home. I feel confident now that my focus and attendance have improved compared to me in high school. The scholarship for me is not the end but just the beginning of my path toward my goal; a bachelor's degree in computer science.

5. My name is Lizet Bernal. I am living in the Nest in the Discover Yourself Living Learning Community. Receiving the NEIU for you scholarship has been a great help to me this academic school year. Because it covered my freshman year of college I have been able to save so much money and I have been able to completely focus on school. If I hadn't received the scholarship I would probably have to be working more to save up and pay for school. Instead of stressing about being able to afford school and my parents have been able to save time and money for the future.
6. My name is Shakiba Rehman. The NEIU For You scholarship has helped me immensely to cover up my college fee which encourages me to continue my studies and pursue my goals. If someone's family isn't financially stable, this is a great help any student could receive.
7. My name is Imari Canon. I live in the Nest with the Discover Yourself program. Getting the NEIU for You scholarship is helping me achieve my goals because it's allowing me to be more selective in how I spend my free time. My living expenses reduce and it reduces the risk of others dropping out. I have better ways of studying which helps me get better grades and increases my chances of continuing my journey of graduating.
8. My name is Arlette Villar and I currently live in the nest. The NEIU for You scholarship has helped me be more focused in my class. Not having to worry about how I am going to get to class or who can take and pick me up has been a stress-relief because I wouldn't have no one and that would have made me very stressed. Also being able to accomplish a big goal is being undocumented and showing those people that it is possible to have a full ride and live on campus because there are people willing to help out and that has impacted a lot of my friends who are also undocumented because now they know they can accomplish that as well. Another goal this scholarship has helped me accomplish is moving forward and not giving up this scholarship really changed my life, made me into a different person, made me proud of myself and know that I can do anything.

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

Trustee Eagle thanked everyone for their thoughtful comments.

President Gibson stated that NEIU for You 2.0 complements the University's recruitment and retention priorities, which are in alignment with the IBHE strategic plan. Dr. Gibson announced that the new Vice President for Enrollment Management, Kimberly Buster-Williams, will begin in January 2022.

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### **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION**

#### Consideration and Recommendation Regarding FY23 Tuition and Fees

Mike Wenz, Executive Director of University Budgets presented the FY23 Tuition and Fees recommendations. In order to enhance the University's competitive position and complement enrollment strategies, the University is recommending holding undergraduate tuition flat for FY2023. In each of the last three years, the University has increased tuition by 2.0 percent.

With level enrollments, such an increase would lead to approximately \$292,000 in additional tuition revenue in FY2023, and potentially over \$1.1 million over time as the Fall 2022 entering students progress toward graduation (impact of the NEIU for You Program). While the University faces increasing cost inflation pressures, there is also an acute need for enrollment growth, and holding undergraduate tuition level for FY2023 recognizes the importance of tuition and affordability in supporting this area.

The University is recommending a 2.0 percent increase in graduate tuition for FY2023 to help support recent growth in key graduate programs in recent years. This increase is anticipated to generate approximately \$289,000 in increased revenue during FY2023. Northeastern is near the median in comparison to its Illinois public peers in graduate tuition, but below the state average.

The University is recommending an across-the-board 1.9 percent increase in mandatory Student Fees.

Trustee Azcoitia, seconded by Trustee Serrano moved to recommend that the Board approve the Fiscal Year 2023 Tuition and Fees Recommendations as presented by the Board Finance Committee at its October meeting, providing a zero percent tuition increase for undergraduate students not covered by the guaranteed tuition program, a 2 percent increase for graduate students, and a 1.9 percent increase in mandatory Student Fees.

Discussion: Trustees asked clarifying questions and support the efforts to keep tuition flat. Trustee Eagle asked that the fee increases reflect the value to students of the fees being assessed.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Azcoitia: Yes            Eagle: Yes            Palos, e.o.: Yes            Serrano: Yes

The matter is recommended.

**Consideration and Recommendation Regarding FY21 Strategic Planning Development Fund Request and Status Update**

Manish Kumar, Vice President for Finance and Administration provided this report. In September 2015, the Board approved the formation of a Strategic Planning Development Fund (SPDF) within the unrestricted Income Fund balance. The purpose of the SPDF fund is to foster enrollment growth, improve retention, address equity gaps, support capital improvements, as well as funding projects established as priorities by our University Planning and Budget Council (UPBC). The SPDF is financed by surpluses from the previous fiscal year's actual operating results of the Income Fund.

On November 19, 2020, the Board approved a one-time \$2.0 million transfer from the FY2020 Income Fund operating surplus to the SDPF in FY2021.

On an annual basis, the University reports to the Board actual spending made from the SPDF fund during the past fiscal year. In FY2021, the University spent \$332,534 on the following initiatives:

<b>FY21 Initiative</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Enrollment	254,454
Other	78,080
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$332,534</b>

In addition, the University has the following anticipated initiatives that will fully deplete the remaining SPDF balance:

<b>Additional FY21 Encumbered/ Anticipated Initiative (In progress)</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Enrollment	200,000
Retention*	417,466
Other	1,050,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,667,466</b>

Based on unaudited figures, the University will end FY2021 with an estimated year-end overage of \$9 million in the unrestricted Income Fund. The increase in unrestricted fund balance was partially due to a \$5 million reimbursement from HEERF funding. The University requests approval from the Board to transfer \$2 million of the surplus to the SPDF. The University plans to use the SPDF on Recruitment and Retention.

With a \$2 million allocation from the Strategic Planning Development Fund (SDPF), NEIU will be able to spend as per President's discretion with an emphasis on retention. While retention is improving, there are still significant equity gaps for Black and Latinx students and enrollment has continually declined in the past five years. Upon consultation of various departments across campus, including within Academic and Student Affairs, this is the outline of initiatives that will utilize the excess funds and make an impact on these areas of enrollment, retention and equity.

<b>FY22 Proposed Projects</b>	<b>Amount</b>
President's Discretion	\$2,000,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$2,000,000</b>

Trustee Serrano, seconded by Trustee Azcoitia moved to recommend approval to transfer \$2 million from the unspent FY21 budget into the FY22 Strategic Planning Development Fund to be used for expenses at the discretion of the President.

Discussion: Trustees asked clarifying questions about the source of the funds.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Azcoitia: Yes      Eagle: Yes      Palos, e.o.: Yes      Serrano: Yes

The matter is recommended.

Consideration and Recommendation for Utilization of FY22 and FY23 Unrestricted Funds for NEIU for You 2.0

Manish Kumar, Terry Mena, Vice President for Student Affairs, and Matt Byerly, Interim Director of Marketing provided this report. Declining enrollments in the past several years have hit NEIU particularly hard. NEIU needs to come up with an enrollment initiative that can boost growth. To accomplish this, a financial model was created which projects the financial value of the size of the incoming class, estimates what portion of the incoming class is eligible for various other forms of financial assistance (Pell, Map, AIM High and Golden Opp.), and determines the University support required to fund the recruitment incentive. A substantial portion of NEIU's undergraduate student body already receives a significant amount of financial support.

It is crucial to understand the impact of funds students currently receive as it significantly reduces the amount of funds required for any enrollment incentive, and thus significantly expands the number of students to whom an incentive can be offered.

This tuition and fees incentive will provide a top-off award to eligible students. The financial impact of these incentives will depend upon the type of student applying and enrolling, their eligibility for state and federal aid programs, and their net financial need. Additionally, discussions have begun to enhance the first-year experience (FYE Program) at NEIU to address retention concerns.

The University is requesting the Board establish a Strategic Enrollment Fund for the following purposes:

- Staffing support to expand recruiting efforts in new areas and enhance applicant yield strategies for two years.
  - Year 1: \$530,000 personnel costs; \$100,000 technology and travel support
  - Year 2: \$550,000 personnel costs, \$100,000 technology and travel support
- Additional marketing campaign to complement outreach to new markets.
  - Year 1: \$350,000
  - Year 2: \$450,000
- Scholarship support to create a two-year bridge funding program and eventually institutionalize this program if it is successful.
  - Year 1: \$780,000
  - Year 2: \$890,000

The scholarship portion of this investment will be recoverable at least in part with enrollment growth, and with large enough increases in enrollment can create a sustainable long-term program. This request will cost \$1,760,000 in the first year and \$1,990,000 in the second year. Trustees also received briefings about the recruitment and marketing efforts currently underway.

Trustee Serrano, seconded by Trustee Azcoitia moved to recommend approval for utilization of \$3,750,000 of unrestricted net assets for use in funding NEIU for You 2.0 with distributions of \$1,760,000 in FY22, and \$1,990,000 in FY23.

Discussion: Trustees engaged in a lengthy discussion about the presentation. Trustee Eagle clarified that while the allocations for FY22 and FY23 are known, the costs of FY24 and FY25 are not yet known. The program's effectiveness will be closely monitored and reported to the Board. The Board encouraged the administration to begin work on this program straight away.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Azcoitia: Yes

Eagle: Yes

Palos, e.o.: Yes

Serrano: Yes

The matter is recommended

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## ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The Purchases, Construction, Update on NEIU for You 1.0, and Update of RFP for Real Estate reports are incorporated by reference.

First Quarter Budget to Actual

Mike Wenz presented the FY22 First Quarter Budget to Actual report.

Update on Small Purchase Policy Related to BEP Vendors

Trustee Eagle clarified the committee's prior conversation regarding BEP vendors. The Board wants the University to continue to find ways to increase its use of BEP vendors.

Update on Signage

Manish Kumar reported that the University re-started the procurement process for the El Centro sign. The Executive Committee, at its October 15, 2021 meeting, after failing to gain support for the University's universal signage program QBS, referred the matter of signage back to the Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee to work on approval of an RFP for the El Centro sign. The state procurement office will determine whether the process for the new request will be an RFP or QBS. The proposed timeline was presented to Trustees.

Trustee Palos left the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

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**Old/New Business**

Trustee Eagle asked if there was any old or new business. There was no further business.

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**Motion to Adjourn**

At 11:54 a.m. Trustee Azcoitia, seconded by Trustee Serrano moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned by acclamation.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Eagle, Chair of the Committee  
Karl Voigt, Assistant Board Secretary  
Approved November 18, 2021