

Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University
Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee Meeting Minutes
September 11, 2025

A meeting of the Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee of the Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University was convened on Thursday September 11, 2025 in the Student Union Golden Eagles Room located at 5500 N. St. Louis Avenue, Chicago, IL 60625. Trustee Ann Kalayil, Chair of the Committee, called the meeting to order at 1:18 p.m.

Roll was called and the following Trustee Committee members were present: Carlos Garcia; Ann Kalayil; and Michelle Morales

Trustee Committee members not present: Betty Fleurimond and Daniela Navarrete

Also present: Katrina Bell-Jordan, President; Karl Voigt, Assistant Secretary to the Board; vice presidents; students; faculty; staff; and University community members attending both in person and viewing online

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

Trustee Kalayil announced the opportunity for public comment. There were no registrations to speak.

Chair's and President's Remarks

Trustee Kalayil reported the new academic cycle is underway and the Board welcomes all students. Trustee Kalayil made a point to remind the community of the importance of higher education institutions as spaces for open dialogue and the preservation of democratic ideals. Violence is condemned and has no place in any setting, and Northeastern has as much a responsibility to continue fostering respectful discussions regardless of differing opinions as any other institution.

President Bell-Jordan reported that the fall semester is in full-swing, and the University welcomes its new and returning students. The new education building groundbreaking ceremony was held on August 18th to great fanfare. The building, under construction for several months, is expected to be completed by Summer 2027. The University is looking forward to the opening of its new Veteran Students Center at a ribbon cutting ceremony on October 6. The Strategic Planning process continues this fall with goals and tactics to be presented to the Board by December.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Committee Recommendation Regarding the Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence

Trustee Garcia, seconded by Trustee Morales, moved recommend approval of the Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence on the terms presented.

Discussion: A new Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence program is being proposed for launch in Fall 2026. Developed by the Computer Science Department, the program aims to prepare students for diverse career options in the rapidly evolving field of AI.

The 62-credit hour program integrates software engineering practices, foundational computer science courses, core AI learning opportunities, with a focus on ethics and responsibility. Students will learn to use popular AI and machine learning tools like GPT, Gemini, TensorFlow, PyTorch, and Scikit-learn. Students will build strong foundations in programming, algorithms, and AI principles; participate in core AI learning opportunities with hands-on projects; focus on data and advanced topics like large language models and generative AI; and learn applications like prompt engineering.

The curriculum emphasizes professional development, including effective communication, collaboration, and critical thinking skills, while preparing students to be innovative and ethically aware problem solvers through strong technical and analytical skills. Other curricular resources offered include technical interview

preparation, internship opportunities, and career mentorship. The demand for AI roles is high, with job postings doubling in early 2025 and consistently making up 10-12% of software-related jobs. The program has been reviewed and approved by the department, college, and University-level governance bodies, and now requires a recommendation from the Committee to present it to the full Board for approval to move on to the IBHE. If approved, it will be only the second academic program of its kind in the state's public higher education forum and only the third program of its kind in the state.

Trustees expressed enthusiasm for the program and are pleased with the work that has gone into rolling out this important endeavor. Trustees also expressed concerns about AI in general and its impacts on the environment and democratic values. There was a brief discussion about understanding both the benefits and pitfalls of AI and ensuring students will receive adequate instruction in managing it responsibly.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Fleurimond: Garcia: Yes Kalayil: Yes Morales: Yes Navarrete:

The motion carried.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Academic Affairs

New Tenure-Track Faculty Hires

Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Shayne Cofer, welcomed the following new tenure-track faculty members to the University:

Dr. Neha Chauhan, Computer Science

Dr. Ruth Llana Fernandez, World Languages and Cultures

Dr. Judith Landeros, Bilingual/cultural Education

Dr. Amanda Greenbacker-Mitchell, Music

Dr. Emily Esposito, Psychology

Dr. Robert Holmes, Physical Education

New Program Updates

Shayne Cofer reported that NEIU's inaugural doctoral program, the Ed.D. in Leadership, Equity and Inquiry, was approved by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) in July 2025 and will launch Fall 2026.

The Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.) Entry into Practice program was approved by the IBHE in June 2025. The simulation labs are under construction pending application for accreditation and approval by the HLC and Illinois Board of Nursing (2025-26) for an anticipated launch date of Fall 2027.

National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) Program Review of NEIU

Sandra Beyda-Lorie, Executive Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning reported that the University is currently conducting a program review of academic advising methods, focusing on improving existing structures, particularly on the advising experience, and advising processes that benefit both incoming and continuing students without changing the decentralized advising model. The Integrated Comprehensive Advising for Retention and Excellence (ICare) initiative aims to:

- increase the use of NEIUstar, which was relaunched at the most recent Faculty Institute, and which included updated training protocols for student progress monitoring, and
- create and deploy a document outlining the expectations and duties of faculty advisors, and
- work to standardize the academic course record (ACR) form in coordination with the Registrar.

The University is also working with consultants from the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) to receive guidance on best practices in academic advising. The NACADA consultants will be on campus September 29th and 30th to meet with various advising areas, including students, deans, registrar, admissions, financial aid, and other key stakeholders.

Higher Learning Commission Accreditation Cycle: 10-Year Review of NEIU

Acting Associate Provost, Sudha Srinivas, reported that NEIU's current HLC review is part of a 10-year cycle: an assurance review in year four, quality improvement projects from years five to eight, and a comprehensive evaluation in year ten. The assurance review focuses on four criteria: mission, integrity, teaching and learning for student success, and institutional sustainability. This review includes studies of all of the University's processes and programs, not just academic programs, but support programs and the like. A team from across the University will be formed in Fall 2025 to draft the assurance argument ultimately demonstrating compliance with HLC's criteria. The HLC will conduct its comprehensive evaluation of the University in 2027-2028.

University Professionals of Illinois (UPI) Collective Bargaining Update

Interim Associate Provost and Contract Administrator, Effie Kritikos, reported the current NEIU UPI Collective Bargaining Agreement runs through 2026. The University will begin contract negotiations October 14th.

Enrollment/Retention

New Student Credit Hour Updates

Interim Vice President for Enrollment Management, Claudia Mercado, reported on the University's three guiding enrollment goals: new student growth (freshmen, transfer, and graduate students), credit goals, and retention measurement. Fall 2025 enrollment data indicates a shortfall in the freshman headcount goal, despite a 10% increase in admissions and a 68% increase in financial aid packages, but surpasses goals for transfer and graduate enrollments. The University primarily attracts transfer and adult students, with growth in these areas aligning with NEIU's demographics. Overall headcount increased by 1.8%, primarily driven by an increase in returning freshmen. The current enrollment gap between Summer 2025 and Fall 2025 translates to a potential revenue shortfall of just under \$200,000. The Fall 2025 international student population experienced a 44% decline, impacting both undergraduate and graduate programs, mainly due to visa access issues and the broader political climate in the United States. Enrollment information, including trends over the last three years, will be presented at the Board meeting in November.

The University measures annual credit hour production chronologically over four terms: ① the second half of summer, ② fall, ③ spring, and ④ the first half of summer. Summer 2024 saw a shortfall in the goal by 30 credit hours. Summer 2025 experienced the same shortfall of 30 credit hours to goal. Fall 2025 credit hours are close to the goal, with a current shortfall of just over 400 credit hours, which is significantly improved compared to the same period last year. Overall credit hours are currently up by 3.6% compared to the prior year, resulting in additional revenue of over \$870,000. Spring semester credit hours typically help the University surpass its annual goal.

Fall 2025 Retention Updates

Interim Associate Vice President for Student Success and Retention, Irma Ortiz, reported that 60.4% of first-time, full-time students who started in Fall 2024 returned in Fall 2025, slightly below the FY26 retention goal of 64%. Nevertheless, this is an 8% growth in retention compared to the Fall 2024 retention which was 52%. 23.3% of the Fall 2024 class had a high school GPA below 2.25, the highest percentage to date. The incoming class GPA is expected to be similar to the prior year. Students with GPAs within a certain bracket will be required to participate in a success program for additional academic support.

The Project Success cohort saw a significant retention rate increase of over 10% compared to the prior year. This success is attributed to improved onboarding processes, increased faculty participation in academic progress surveys, and early financial aid outreach. While challenges remain, such as unresponsive students and financial holds, the team is committed to addressing these issues and ensuring student success toward completion.

Student Affairs

NEST Updates

On September 2, 2025 NEIU refinanced a significant portion of its debt portfolio and in the process has acquired the Nest facility; the University officially owns the property outright. NEIU entered into a nine-month agreement with American Campus Communities to operate the facility until it officially transitions to University control. In the meantime, the University will be searching for a new director of housing, as well as implementing a housing management system.

In FY25, \$3.9 million in room charges were issued, \$3.6 million was collected, and \$363,000 remains uncollected. The uncollected rent aligns with the anticipated bad debt of around 10%, which is consistent with previous years.

The Nest occupancy for Fall 2025 is 91.9%, with 385 students occupying 419 rentable beds. The University invests in partial housing scholarships for a variety of student cohorts called Living/Learning Communities (LLCs). Students in these cohorts receive their housing at a 50% discount. The Nest is home to other externally funded student initiatives such as the Afghan Refugee Transition Program (ARTP) cohorts and HOPE Chicago cohorts. As the University transitions its control of the facility, the operating financial statements will be much more straight forward, eliminating use of concepts and terms associated with the former Collegiate Housing Foundation (CHF) agreement, which have led to some confusion in the past.

Motion to Convene in Closed Session

At 3:10 p.m. Trustee Garcia, seconded by Trustee Morales moved to convene in Closed Session pursuant to Section 2(c)8 of the IL Open Meetings Act.

Discussion: there was no discussion. Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Fleurimond: Garcia: Yes Kalayil: Yes Morales: Yes Navarrete:

The motion carried.

Motion to Reconvene in Open Session

At 3:49 p.m. Trustee Morales, seconded by Trustee Navarrete moved to reconvene in Open Session. The motion carried by unanimous acclamation.

Trustee Navarrete joined the meeting during Closed Session at 3:13 p.m. Trustee Garcia left the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

New Business

Next Committee meeting: Thursday, October 23, 2025

Motion to Adjourn

At 3:50 p.m., Trustee Navarrete, seconded by Trustee Morales, moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous acclamation.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Kalayil, Chair of the Committee
Karl Voigt, Assistant Secretary to the Board
Approved December 11, 2025