

Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2025

A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University was convened on Thursday, December 11, 2025 in the Student Union Golden Eagles Room located at 5500 N. St. Louis Avenue, Chicago, IL 60625. Trustee J. Todd Phillips, Chair of the Board, called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

Roll was called and the following Trustees were present: Carlos Garcia; Ann Kalayil; Jorge Leon; Daniela Navarrete; J. Todd Phillips; and Paula Wolff

The following Trustees were not present: Betty Fleurimond; Anna Meresidis; and Michelle Morales

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

Motion to Permit Remote Participation by Trustees

Trustee Wolff, seconded by Trustee Garcia, moved to permit remote participation by Trustees Betty Fleurimond and Anna Meresidis pursuant to Section 7(a)(ii) of the Illinois Open Meetings Act and Section 2 A. 2. of the Board's Bylaws.

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

Garcia: Yes Leon: Yes Phillips: Yes

Kalayil: Yes Navarrete: Yes Wolff: Yes

The motion carried.

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

Chair Phillips announced the opportunity for public comment. There were 2 registrations placed in advance and 2 presentations made.

1. **Name:** Brandon Bisbey, representing University Professionals of Illinois, Local 4100
Topic: Contract negotiations begin in January with a link to activism in favor of equitable funding
2. **Name:** Henry Stewart, self-representing
Topic: Appeal for amending parental leave rules in the Board's Regulations

Chair's and President's Remarks

Dr. Bell-Jordan thanked the University community for their resilience and dedication during a successful Fall semester. Excitement is building for the upcoming Spring semester when the finalized the strategic plan will be presented to the Board, and University construction projects continue to progress. The University is looking forward to celebrating its students' achievements at Sunday's commencement ceremony at the Credit Union One Arena beginning at 2:00p.m. President Bell-Jordan extended an invitation to all Trustees to tomorrow's University holiday celebration reception at 4:00 p.m. in the Student Union cafeteria.

Vice President for Finance and Administration, Beni Ortiz, introduced Scott Sophier, the University's new Chief of Police and Executive Director of Campus Services. Chief Sophier began his duties on November 3 and comes to Northeastern following a 22-year tenure with the Evanston Police Department.

Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Shayne Cofer, introduced Christian Bello-Escobar, the new Director of El Centro. Dr. Bello-Escobar began his duties on November 3 and comes to Northeastern from the University of North Georgia where he was most recently the Director of Academic and Community Engagement in the College of Education.

Chair Phillips expressed his gratitude for the University community's continued commitment and dedication to the mission, for the regular participation in the Board's meetings and bringing important matters to its attention, and for the work undertaken to ensure a second consecutive year of enrollment growth. All of this is having a positive impact the at both the University and state levels. Chair Phillips also acknowledged the support from the Governor's Office and is looking forward to Sunday's commencement ceremony and the upcoming spring semester.

University Initiatives

Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Shayne Cofer, reported that the final documents of the 2025-2030 University strategic plan are being prepared for Board review in the new year. Provost Cofer thanked everyone involved in this undertaking.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee

Trustee Ann Kalayil, Chair of the Committee, reported that the committee met on Thursday, October 23, 2025 at the main campus and received informational briefing on the following matters:

Academic Affairs: announcement of new director of El Centro, Dr. Christian Bello-Escobar; Illinois state equity plan timeline and institutional updates; modifications and enhancements to the First Year Experience

Enrollment Management: overview of the One Stop Center progress; presentation on two new IBHE initiatives, Re-Up and Direct Admissions; overview of the Spring 2026 enrollment goals and progress; and retention and student success programs updates

Student Affairs: Nest financials overview and Nest management transition plan; Afghan Refugee Transition Program (ARTP) status and updates

Technology: University technology initiatives underway and timelines for various projects completion

Finance, Building and Grounds Committee

Trustee Phillips, Chair of the Committee, reported that the committee met on Thursday, October 23, 2025 at the main campus and presents the following items for Board approval today:

Action Item I. A. Board Action on Committee Recommendation to Approve the Naming of the University Auditorium for Sasha L. Gerritson

Chair Phillips, seconded by Trustee Wolff, moved to approve the Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee's recommendation to approve the naming of the University Auditorium for Sasha L. Gerritson on the terms presented.

Discussion: the Board expressed its deep gratitude to Sasha Gerritson and Eugene Jarvis for their dedicated and unwavering support of the arts at Northeastern and for their support for NEIU students.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Fleurimond: Yes Kalayil: Yes Meresidis: Yes Navarrete: Yes Wolff: Yes
Garcia: Yes Leon: Yes Morales: Phillips: Yes

The motion carried.

Action Item I. B. Board Action on Committee Recommendation Regarding Expenditures of \$250,000 or More: Approval of Contract with American Campus Communities for Temporary Management of the Nest

Trustee Wolff, seconded by Trustee Leon, moved to approve the Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee's recommendation to approve the contract with American Campus Communities on the terms presented.

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

Fleurimond: Yes Kalayil: Yes Meresidis: Yes Navarrete: Yes Wolff: Yes
Garcia: Yes Leon: Yes Morales: Phillips: Yes

The motion carried.

Action Item I. C. Board Action on Committee Recommendation Regarding Approval of the FY26 Strategic Planning Development Fund Request

Trustee Leon, seconded by Trustee Wolff, moved to approve the Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee's recommendation to approve the FY26 Strategic Planning Development Fund Request as presented.

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

Fleurimond: Yes Kalayil: Yes Meresidis: Yes Navarrete: Yes Wolff: Yes
Garcia: Yes Leon: Yes Morales: Phillips: Yes

The motion carried.

Action Item I. D. Board Action Regarding Expenditures of \$250,000 or More: Request to Approve a Sole Source Agreement with American 3B Scientific

Trustee Leon, seconded by Trustee Kalayil, moved to approve the request for a sole source contract with American 3B Scientific in the amount of \$286,660.30 for the purchase of its proprietary Echo Complete system to be installed at the University's new nursing simulation lab.

Discussion: Trustees engaged in a dialogue with Dr. Gretchen LaCivita and Vice President Ortiz about the EchoComplete simulator and how it will benefit the nursing program. A short video was presented which gave a high-level overview of the technology in use. Trustees support this purchase and thanked the University administration for securing special pricing at a significant savings. NEIU will be the first public university in Illinois to implement the simulator. Trustees are eager to see the simulator in action.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Fleurimond: Yes Kalayil: Yes Meresidis: Yes Navarrete: Yes Wolff: Yes
 Garcia: Yes Leon: Yes Morales: Phillips: Yes

The motion carried.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Information Item II. A. FY26 1st Quarter Budget to Actuals Report

Beni Ortiz, Vice President for Finance and Administration, reported that at its September 18, 2025 meeting the Board of Trustees approved the University’s final operating budget, which represented spending plans for fiscal year 2026. The operating budget for FY2026 totals \$159,408,000. Of that total, \$93,785,000 is the University’s unrestricted general operating budget supported by State appropriation and student tuition. In addition, the University’s restricted funds budget amount of \$65,623,000 is supported by student fee programs, auxiliary services, grants, and contracts. This report provides an update on first quarter spending in the unrestricted budget and is summarized in Table 1, which also includes a comparison with year-to-date spending for both FY2025 and FY2024.

**Table 1
 NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
 FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISONS
 FOR THE PERIOD ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2025
 UNAUDITED FIGURES**

	FY2024 Q1			FY2025 Q1			FY2026 Q1				FY26 vs FY25 ACTUALS	
	Adopted Budget	FY24 Actual YTD	% of Budget	Adopted Budget	FY25 Actual YTD	% of Budget	Adopted Budget	Current Budget	FY26 Actual YTD	% of Current Budget		
Revenue												
State Appropriations	\$ 39,960,000	\$ 10,376,923	26.0%	\$40,758,700	\$ 12,283,426	30.1%	\$ 41,166,300	\$ 41,166,300	\$ 13,955,576	33.9%	\$ 1,672,150	(A)
Net Tuition Revenue	41,874,400	21,955,530	52.4%	45,134,178	23,286,420	51.6%	47,001,700	47,001,700	23,997,168	51.1%	710,748	(B)
Net Differential Tuition Revenue	689,000	395,480	57.4%	820,122	470,732	57.4%	1,617,000	1,617,000	656,286	40.6%	185,554	(B)
Investment Income	2,276,600	1,025,049	45.0%	3,700,000	1,050,446	28.4%	3,400,000	3,400,000	828,155	24.4%	(222,291)	(C)
All Other Sources	500,000	173,499	34.7%	500,000	157,982	31.6%	600,000	600,000	250,889	41.8%	92,907	
Total Revenue	\$ 85,300,000	\$ 33,926,481	39.8%	\$ 90,913,000	\$ 37,249,006	41.0%	\$93,785,000	\$93,785,000	\$39,688,074	42.3%	\$ 2,439,068	
Expenditures												
Personnel Services	\$ 67,901,380	\$ 13,345,164	19.7%	\$70,829,802	\$ 14,379,819	20.3%	\$ 73,613,490	\$ 74,002,133	\$ 14,869,588	20.1%	\$ 489,769	(D)
Contractual Services	14,631,783	1,222,477	8.4	14,821,712	1,830,600	12.4	14,032,107	12,855,055	1,764,380	13.7	(66,220)	
Equipment	431,986	53,821	12.5	383,386	120,150	31.3	379,486	469,419	69,084	14.7	(51,066)	
Commodities	807,401	48,884	6.1	818,150	99,323	12.1	758,917	780,069	107,346	13.8	8,023	
Telecommunications	176,700	643	0.4	176,700	1,081	0.6	176,700	181,250	16,473	9.1	15,392	
Travel	197,750	1,458	0.7	193,650	46,034	23.8	171,800	257,044	27,494	10.7	(18,540)	
Permanent Improvements	25,000	-	-	25,000	-	-	25,000	25,000	-	-	-	
Operation of Auto Equip	21,000	2,008	9.6	24,000	8,570	35.7	23,500	38,100	9,270	24.3	700	
Tuition Scholarships	1,299,000	788,821	60.7	1,299,000	799,048	61.5	1,299,000	1,871,930	752,764	40.2	(46,284)	
Debt Service	2,308,000	571,800	24.8	2,341,000	578,408	24.7	3,305,000	3,305,000	827,870	25.0	249,462	(E)
Total Expenditures	87,800,000	16,035,076	18.3%	90,913,000	17,863,033	19.6%	93,785,000	93,785,000	18,444,269	19.7%	581,236	
<i>RLT Reserve Allocation</i>	(2,500,000)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Net Expenditures	\$ 85,300,000	\$ 16,035,076	18.8%	\$ 90,913,000	\$ 17,863,033	19.6%	\$93,785,000	\$93,785,000	\$ 18,444,269	19.7%	\$ 581,236	
Excess Revenue Over Expenditures	\$ -	\$ 17,891,405		\$ -	\$ 19,385,973		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 21,243,805			

Notes:

1. Adopted Budget column reflects the FY2026 budget approved by the Board of Trustees on September 18, 2025.
2. The Current Budget reflects budget transfers processed between organizations and accounts.
3. "Actual Year to Date" or "Actual YTD" is current year expenses recorded or booked through October 9, 2025 and does not include encumbrances.
4. All Other Sources includes space rental and other miscellaneous fees/income (lab, transcript, NSF, late fees, etc.)

- {A}** Change from PY (totaling \$1.7 million) relates to timing of requesting reimbursements from the State. Full State appropriation amount is expected to be exhausted by Q3.
- {B}** The increase in Net Tuition Revenue and Net Differential Revenue (\$896K) was primarily driven by higher credit hour enrollment in FY2026 compared to FY2025, along with the increase in graduate tuition rates and the implementation of additional tuition differentials beginning Fall 2025.

{C} Investment income is mostly attributable to income earned from the Illinois Funds. Note that reimbursements from the State are deposited to the Illinois Funds. The following table presents the investment income earned per month:

	Investment Income Earned		
	As of September 2025	As of September 2024	Difference
July	\$ 283,646	\$ 374,486	\$ (90,841)
August	274,167	344,166	(70,000)
September	270,343	331,793	(61,451)
	\$ 828,155	\$ 1,050,446	\$ (222,291)

The \$222K decrease in investment income can be attributed to a combination of factors, including the Federal Reserve's decision to reduce rates starting September 2025 and fluctuations in the investment balance.

{D} The increase in Personnel Services of \$490K was driven by across-the-board raises for union and non-union employees, promotions, and equity adjustments.

{E} The increase in Debt Service of \$249K is primarily due to new University-issued debt used to refinance the NEST student housing and parking obligations, and to support critical campus improvements. Previously, NEST-related payments were made through a PPP agreement paid under the contractual line, typically around December and March timeframe; starting in FY2026, the University directly covers principal and interest, which are recorded monthly under the debt service line.

Table 2 provides a financial forecast for the unrestricted operating budget. The revenue forecast is forward-looking and based on existing models used to build the University's operating budget. The expense forecast is based on average historical spending by category and utilized data, adjusted to account for new initiatives/funding sources, any anticipated new spending, and current commitments/ encumbrances.

Table 2
 NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
 FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET TO FORECAST COMPARISONS
 FOR THE PERIOD ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2025
 UNAUDITED FIGURES

	Adopted Budget	Budget Adjustment	Adjusted Budget	Actual Year to Date as of 09/30/2025	Forecasted Revenue/Expenses Thru 06/30/26	Annual Forecast	Adjusted Budget Vs Annual Forecast
Revenue							
State Appropriations	\$ 41,166,300	\$ -	\$ 41,166,300	\$ 13,955,576	\$ 27,210,724	\$ 41,166,300	\$ -
Net Tuition Revenue	47,001,700	-	47,001,700	23,997,168	23,063,493	47,060,661	58,961
Net Differential Tuition Revenue	1,617,000	-	1,617,000	656,286	1,011,265	1,667,551	50,551
Investment Income	3,400,000	-	3,400,000	828,155	2,550,000	3,378,155	(21,845)
All Other Sources	600,000	-	600,000	250,889	349,111	600,000	-
Total Revenue	93,785,000	-	93,785,000	39,688,074	54,184,593	93,872,667	87,667
Expenditures							
Personnel Services	73,613,490	388,643	74,002,133	14,869,588	59,058,543	73,928,131	74,002
Contractual Services	14,032,107	(1,177,052)	12,855,055	1,764,380	11,018,563	12,782,943	72,112
Equipment	379,486	89,933	469,419	69,084	384,309	453,393	16,026
Commodities	758,917	21,152	780,069	107,346	672,708	780,054	15
Telecommunications	176,700	4,550	181,250	16,473	144,819	161,292	19,958
Travel	171,800	85,244	257,044	27,494	222,334	249,828	7,216
Permanent Improvements	25,000	-	25,000	-	-	25,000	-
Operation of Auto Equip	23,500	14,600	38,100	9,270	28,158	37,428	672
Scholarships, Awards and Grants	1,299,000	572,930	1,871,930	752,764	1,119,166	1,871,930	-
Debt Service	3,305,000	-	3,305,000	827,870	2,477,536	3,305,406	(406)
Total Expenditures	93,785,000	-	93,785,000	18,444,269	75,151,136	93,595,405	189,595
Excess Revenue Over Expenditures	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 21,243,805	\$ (20,966,543)	\$ 277,262	\$ 277,262

Notes:

1. Adopted Budget column reflects the FY2026 budget approved by the Board of Trustees on September 18, 2025.
2. The Current Budget reflects budget transfers processed between organizations and accounts.
3. "Actual Year to Date" or "Actual YTD" is current year expenses recorded or booked through October 9, 2025 and does not include encumbrances.
4. All Other Sources includes space rental and other miscellaneous fees/income (lab, transcript, NSF, late fees, etc.)
5. "Forecasted Revenue/Expenses Thru 06/30/26" is based on historical trends, adjusted for knowledge of new initiatives/projects or spendings.
6. "Budget Adjustment" reflects net budget transfers processed between organizations and accounts.

Information Item II. B. Institutional Advancement Framework

Liesl Downey, Vice President for Institutional Advancement and the Executive Director of the NEIU Foundation, presented on the NEIU Foundation. As a structured ecosystem, the Foundation is interconnected with areas such as development, alumni relations, advancement services and the Foundation itself, all working together to foster long-term transformational philanthropy. The Foundation is focused on building the University's future through strategic philanthropy. Its advancement framework emphasizes relationship building with individuals, alumni, and community leaders, while also maintaining corporate and foundation support. Individuals comprise the largest donor base to the Foundation.

The alumni team's strategic plan focuses on collaboration, engagement, philanthropy, communication, and volunteerism. The Foundation board, composed of 12 members with diverse expertise, stewards donors and provides governance. The endowment has grown significantly, and provides student support through scholarships and academic grants, with a focus on sustainable, long-term support.

Vice President Downey highlighted the importance of engagement and investment in NEIU's mission, emphasizing the role of the Board of Trustees in partnering with institutional advancement through learning about priority funds, connecting with potential donors, and contributing to the University's success. In 2026, the Foundation will launch a comprehensive campaign, aligned with the University's soon-to-be-unveiled strategic plan, which will require leadership, a compelling case for support, and adequate resources. The Foundation is looking to extend its reach by embedding fundraising experts within each of the colleges to work on focused support for student scholarships.

Vice President Downey looks forward to working with the Board, NEIU Foundation Board, University leadership and the University community to realize a process focused on student success, academic excellence, and celebrating the University overall. Trustees were encouraged to leverage their connections to support the institution's outreach and fundraising efforts, highlighting the importance of donations from the Board of Trustees in the philanthropic endeavor.

Trustees asked how they could donate to the Student Emergency Fund and engaged in a general discussion about Foundation activities.

Motion to Convene in Closed Session

At 11:01 a.m. Trustee Wolff seconded by Trustee Leon, moved to convene in Closed Session pursuant to Sections 2(a)1, 2(a)6 and 2(a)11 of the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

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

Fleurimond: Yes Kalayil: Yes Meresidis: Yes Navarrete: Yes Wolff: Yes

Garcia: Yes Leon: Yes Morales: Phillips: Yes

The motion carried.

Motion to Reconvene in Open Session

At 11:58 a.m. Trustee Wolff seconded by Trustee Garcia, moved to convene in Closed Session. The motion carried by unanimous acclamation.

Trustees Fleurimond and Leon left the meeting.

Open Session

Board Action Item: President's FY26 Salary

Trustee Wolff, seconded by Trustee Meresidis, moved to approve the President's FY26 salary increase of 2.75% retroactive to July 1, 2025.

Discussion: Chair Phillips announced that the Board has completed the President's FY25 performance review and contemplated this increase based on that.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Fleurimond:	Kalayil: Yes	Meresidis: Yes	Navarrete: Yes	Wolff: Yes
Garcia: Yes	Leon:	Morales:	Phillips: Yes	

The motion carried.

President Bell-Jordan thanked the Board for their support and trust in her leadership and respectfully declined the salary increase. After some discussion, Trustees requested to reconvene in Closed Session for further discussion.

Motion to Reconvene in Closed Session

At 12:12 p.m. Trustee Wolff, seconded by Trustee Garcia, moved to reconvene in Closed Session pursuant to section 2(c)1 of the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

Discussion: there was no discussion. The motion carried by unanimous acclamation.

Motion to Reconvene in Open Session

At 12:32 p.m. Trustee Wolff, seconded by Trustee Kalayil, moved to reconvene in Open Session. The motion carried by unanimous acclamation.

Chair Phillips thanked President Bell-Jordan for her selfless act in declining the Board's increase to her FY26 salary and for her request that those funds be allocated to other areas of the University.

Trustee Wolff, seconded by Trustee Navarrete, moved to accept the President's declination of the increase to her FY26 salary.

Discussion: Trustees again thanked President Bell-Jordan for her integrity and leadership.

The motion carried by unanimous acclamation.

New Business

Karl Voigt proposed two new meeting scenarios for 2026 which would compress the number of overall meeting days to better manage Trustees' time. Trustees discussed the merits of moving to a model where committee meetings would take place the morning of regular Board meetings or reverting to the prior practice of having a Committee-of-the-Whole meeting directly ahead of regular Board meetings then rolling right into the regular Board meeting. Karl also suggested considering meeting on a different day of the week. After some discussion, neither recommendation garnered much support and Trustees decided to leave the established annual meeting pattern as is.

Karl reminded Trustees to complete their mandatory Ethics Training before the end of the month.

Trustees discussed the possibility of holding a special meeting at the end of January to recommend approval of the 2025-2030 University Strategic Plan. Karl will poll the Board.

Chair Phillips announced the Board's upcoming meetings in 2026:

January 15, 2026

- Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting
- Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee meeting

February 19, 2026

- Regular Board meeting

Motion to Adjourn

At 12:55 p.m. Trustee Kalayil seconded by Trustee Navarrete, moved to adjourn. The motion carried by unanimous acclamation.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Todd Phillips, Chair of the Board
Karl Voigt, Assistant Secretary to the Board
Approved February 19, 2026