

Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University
Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee
January 15, 2026

A meeting of the Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee of the Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University was convened on Thursday, January 15, 2026 in the Student Union Golden Eagles Room located at 5500 N. St. Louis Avenue, Chicago, IL 60625. Trustee Betty Fleurimond announced that the committee is unable to achieve a quorum and that today's meeting will be an informal information session. The session began at 1:12 p.m.

The following Trustees were present: Betty Fleurimond and Daniela Navarrete

The following Trustees were not present: Carlos Garcia; Ann Kalayil; and Michelle Morales

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

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

Despite the lack of a quorum, Trustee Fleurimond invited the registered speakers to make their presentations. 3 individuals registered in advance to speak and 3 presentations were made.

1. **David Canola**, representing the NEIU student body
Topic: to address concerns about Campus Recreation leadership, Student Affairs and University administration as a whole that continue to get in the way of student success
2. **Kevin Baez**, representing University soccer clubs
Topic: treatment of club members by staff of Campus Recreation and lack of accountability by Student Affairs
3. **Angel Nunez**, representing the NEIU student body
Topic: to raise concerns over how Campus Recreation is being managed

Chair's and President's Remarks

President Bell-Jordan welcomed everyone back from the winter break. The new semester brings exciting developments, including the finalization of the NEIU strategic plan. Advocacy efforts for higher education funding will continue in earnest. The University will have a clearer idea about FY27 appropriations when Governor Pritzker delivers his State of the State address on February 18. Several infrastructure projects are underway at the University including the new education building, the nursing simulation lab, the One Stop Center, and construction on the new Business Innovation and Growth (B.I.G.) Center. The community is also celebrating a recent credit rating upgrade from Moody's, highlighting the University's financial health. President Bell-Jordan thanked everyone for their collective stewardship in bringing this ratings upgrade about.

Trustee Fleurimond welcomed everyone back for the Spring term.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Academic Affairs

Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Shayne Cofer, reported that Summer 2026 registration will open on February 9th, and Fall 2026 registration opens March 2nd. The new Computer Science AI program is being reviewed by the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the University hopes to have the program up and running by the Fall term. Each of the Deans will present on their colleges and the various initiatives to help grow enrollment, promote student success, and engage with community partners. Dean Bedell will make his presentation at the March committee meeting.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Timothy Libretti, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), began his presentation by stating that the college's mission is to serve the region by addressing the needs of its students, the community, and the workforce. CAS's programs are valued not only for preparing students for various careers but also for tackling societal issues like inequality, racism, and environmental destruction. Additionally, the college offers unique research opportunities, career readiness mentoring, and graduate school advising.

CAS is actively working to enhance its existing academic programs by repackaging courses to create new minors in forensic psychology, neuroscience, and pre-law. Furthermore, a post-baccalaureate pre-health certificate has been developed for students interested in medical, dental, and veterinary school. All of these initiatives provide students with a broader range of academic options and expand the college's offerings. In tandem with and funded by Chicago Public Schools (CPS), CAS is piloting a curriculum for transitional bilingual first-year English language learners.

Collaborations with local organizations further enhance the college's programs and offer students hands-on problem-solving opportunities in the community. Supported by various offices across the University, college-community partnerships contribute to increased student credit hours, overall retention, and demonstrate the University's commitment to serving the region. Some collaborations include partnerships with the Friends of the Chicago River Student Congress, the Field Museum, and the Chicago Suzuki Institute, which will host an inaugural week-long session at NEIU in July 2026. Partnerships provide students with in-person opportunities to showcase the University's excellence. The success of these partnerships is evident in the positive feedback from community partners like Peterson Elementary School, and the various partnerships aid in CAS fundraising efforts and fundraising participation.

DANIEL L. GOODWIN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Tom Phillion, Dean of the Goodwin College of Education reported that he recently received positive feedback about NEIU from a neighborhood art store owner who happily highlighted the University's recent successes and positive reputation. Dean Phillion was grateful for this interaction with a community business that serves the University.

The College of Education is implementing several projects to sustain its recent growth and development. A new apprenticeship program for teacher preparation, which is being funded by a \$400,000 grant from the state of Illinois, was developed in collaboration with Chicago Public Schools. It provides paid clinical and student teaching experiences for undergraduate students pursuing teaching opportunities in high-need areas. NEIU is seeking additional funding to expand the program and to support 10 additional apprentices.

The counseling faculty are working to move the Rehabilitation Counseling program to an online format to increase program accessibility for students, including boosting enrollment from out-of-state students. Thanks to Craig Johnson and Sharon Todd, the program has received a five-year \$1,000,000 grant to provide student stipends, which will further support program recruitment and retention efforts.

Before the winter break, the administrative positions in the Dean's Office were re-imagined. To maintain a balance in both office operations and student recruitment, one administrative position is focused on operational needs, while the other, now an outreach coordinator, is exclusively focused on recruitment and marketing for the college.

The Ed.D. program is preparing to launch in Fall 2026, with a goal of enrolling 15-20 students. A curricular pathway is being developed aimed at attracting school principals into the Ed.D. program whereby they can earn a doctorate and a superintendent endorsement.

Progress is being made towards in the BSN program. Initial staff and faculty hires, the completion of the nursing simulation lab that is set for early February, and subsequent program approval by the HLC are all active components at the moment. Some curriculum adjustments are being made to the BSN program to give students an additional semester to complete the program. And finally, a decision on the college's Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) re-accreditation is expected soon.

COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

Marcelo Sztainberg, Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research reported after canvassing dozens of academic programs to understand their particular challenges, goals, and opportunities, the college is working to support all graduate programs and to foster effective collaboration and communication. Some initiatives include proactively developing policies that support graduate students, investigating accelerated academic pathways like 4+1 to earn a Bachelors and Masters degree simultaneously, and adding micro credentials such as certificate programs. The college is seeking ways to enhance the overall graduate student experience since graduate programs are not as activity-focused as undergraduate programs. Increasing funding opportunities for more graduate assistantships and scholarships is a continuing priority, as well as collaborating with the Center for College Access and Success to expand educational pathways for community members.

Enrollment Management

Executive Director of Financial Aid and Student Employment, Maureen Amos, reported on enrollment for Spring 2026, highlighting a 2% increase in both headcount and credit hours compared to the previous year. The Spring semester credit hour goal is 49,660 and the University is currently at 88% of the goal. While there is a slight shortfall in credit hours at this point, enrollment is still open and the semester has three distinct academic parts to it; full term, 8-week term 1 and 8-week term 2. Optimism remains that the goal will be met or exceeded after Spring registrations conclude.

Interim Associate Vice President for Student Success and Retention, Irma Ortiz reported that the early A/R hold pilot program successfully reduced outstanding student balances by 72% last Fall, helping students start the Spring semester without unresolved balances. As a result, the University was able to recover \$2.15 million of outstanding tuition and fee revenue in the Fall term. Faculty participation in the early alert system improved in the Fall term. This participation remains a crucial step for identifying students in need of support. Fall to Spring retention rates rose by 3% compared to the same period last year, with Project Success showing a 17-percentage point increase compared to the same time last year.

Student Affairs

Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, Terry Mena, reported the transition to operational ownership of the Nest is expected to be complete by June 30, 2026. Significant progress has been made since the beginning of the academic year, including the selection of a new housing CRM system, E-Res Life, and the reintroduction of Goldie Bucks at NEIU. Students and staff will be able to add value to their ID cards to purchase goods at the University. The national search for the Director of Housing and Residential Life has just concluded and an announcement is expected very soon. The team is also finalizing the Nest's next fiscal year budget, and updating its website and marketing plan, all to ensure a seamless transition for residents.

Technology

Chief Information Officer, Eliot Rodriguez reported UTS is developing a governance and policy framework for the secure and compliant use of AI tools across the University prior to providing wide access. Work is on track for the Workday Finance system go-live date of July 1, 2026. The University will be transitioning to a cloud-based phone platform soon to reduce costs and improve efficiency. UTS is investing in

technology refresh cycles for administrative computing, printers, and classroom technology to ensure equipment is up-to-date.

At 2:42 p.m., Trustee Fleurimond thanked everyone for presenting and the Information Session concluded.

Karl Voigt, Assistant Secretary to the Board