

Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
February 19, 2026

A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University was convened on Thursday, February 19, 2026 in the Student Union Alumni Hall North located at 5500 N. St. Louis Avenue, Chicago, IL 60625. Trustee J. Todd Phillips, Chair of the Board, called the meeting to order at 1:23 p.m.

Roll was called and the following Trustees were present: Betty Fleurimond; Ann Kalayil; Jorge Leon; Anna Meresidis; Daniela Navarrete; and J. Todd Phillips

Trustees not present: Carlos Garcia; Michele Morales; and Paula Wolff

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

Motion to Permit Remote Participation

Trustee Fleurimond, seconded by Trustee Meresidis, moved to permit remote participation by Trustees Carlos Garcia and Paula Wolff in today's meeting 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:

Fleurimond: Yes Leon: Yes Navarrete: Yes

Kalayil: Yes Meresidis: Yes Phillips: Yes

The motion carried.

Administration of Past Meeting Minutes and Records

Trustee Leon, seconded by Trustee Fleurimond, moved to approve the open and closed minutes and to keep the closed minutes closed for the December 11, 2025 Regular Board meeting and the January 15, 2026 Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting pursuant to Sections 2.06(b) and 2.06(c)(2) of the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

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

Trustee Kalayil, seconded by Trustee Fleurimond, moved pursuant to Section 2.06(d) of the Illinois Open Meetings Act, that the confidential written minutes of the closed session portion of the January 16, 2025 Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment and Technology Committee meeting; the February 13, 2025 Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting; and the February 13, 2025 Regular Board meeting require confidential treatment and will remain confidential.

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

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

Chair Phillips announced the opportunity for public comment. There were 5 registrations placed in advance and 4 presentations made.

1. **Olivia Cronk**, representing University Professionals of Illinois, Local 4100
Topic: to encourage widespread support for the Adequate and Equitable Funding for Illinois Universities Bill

2. **Ken Voglesonger**, representing the College of Arts and Sciences
Topic: invitation to Trustees and others to the Friends of the Chicago River Student Congress on Saturday February 28th.
3. **Xiwei Wang**, representing the Faculty Senate
Topic: to provide an update on the Faculty Senate's work so far this year.
4. **Emily Erblich**, representing AFSCME, Local 1989
Topic: requesting action toward the Adequate and Equitable Funding for Illinois Universities Bill

Chair's and President's Remarks

President Bell-Jordan welcomed Trustees to their first meeting of 2026. The University achieved its Spring 2026 credit hour goal by 100.5%. Dr. Bell-Jordan thanked everyone involved in making this important milestone happen. The Spring credit hour goal represents 94.1% of the fiscal year overall credit hour goal. There is one term to go in the fiscal year: the first Summer session. Fall 2026 registration begins on March 9th. The Governor's State of the State address took place yesterday and Illinois public universities got a glimpse into FY27 appropriations. NEIU is on track to receive a 1% increase in FY27 appropriations. Additionally, the state will not be providing the promised 2% in the current fiscal year appropriations that was previously announced. Monetary Award Program (MAP) funding will stay flat in FY27. The University hosted a Latino policy forum at El Centro on February 9 and continues working on other advocacy efforts in 2026 such as preparing for the legislative higher education hearings in March. Dr. Bell-Jordan asked Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, Terry Mena, to introduce two new staff members. Dr. Amanda Ngola, Director of Student Counseling Services, and Dr. Brandon Johnson, Director of Housing and Residential Life.

Chair Phillips thanked everyone for their work in meeting the University's Spring 2026 credit hour goals.

University Initiatives

Action Item I. A. Consideration and Board Action on the University's 2026-2031 Strategic Plan

Trustee Kalayil, seconded by Trustee Meresidis, moved to approve the 2026-2031 University Strategic Plan.

Discussion: Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Shayne Cofer, introduced co-leads of the strategic planning endeavor, Dr. Claudia Mercada, Interim Vice President for Enrollment Services, and Chris Childers, Executive Director of Marketing and Public Relations. Each of the co-leads provided an overview of the strategic planning exercise and Dr. Cofer asked each of the goal team leaders to present on the five goals that were identified as part of the planning process. Goal team leaders entertained Trustees' questions and suggestions, and provided responsive feedback. Trustees expressed their gratitude for the hard work of the strategic plan leadership, and to everyone at the University and from within the community who took time to share their ideas and observations that brought the plan together.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

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

The motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee

Trustee Fleurimond reported that the committee met on January 15, 2026 but was unable to achieve a quorum. The meeting was conducted as an informal information session and the notes from that session are posted to the website. Trustee Fleurimond thanked Deans Libretti, Philion and Sztainberg for their presentations, and CIO Eliot Rodriguez for his technology initiatives updates.

Finance, Buildings and Grounds

Chair Phillips reported that the committee met on January 15, 2026 and made one recommendation for Board approval today.

Action Item I. B. Board Action on Committee Recommendation Regarding the FY2027 Tuition and Fees

Trustee Phillips, seconded by Trustee Wolff, moved to approve the FY27 Tuition and Fees Recommendations as presented.

Discussion: Vice President for Finance and Administration, Beni Ortiz, provided a brief overview of the proposed increases. There was no discussion.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

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

The motion carried.

The committee also received informational reports on the FY26 2nd Quarter Budget to Actuals and notice of the University's recent purchase of a new Steinway Model D concert grand piano at a cost of \$208,330.00.

Motion to Convene in Closed Session

At 3:12 p.m. Trustee Fleurimond, seconded by Trustee Leon, moved to convene in Closed Session pursuant to Sections 2(c)1, 2(c)2, 2(c)6 and 2(c)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	Phillips: Yes
Garcia:	Leon: Yes	Navarrete: Yes	Wolff: Yes

The motion carried.

Motion to Reconvene in Open Session

At 3:57 p.m. Trustee Fleurimond, seconded by Trustee Kalayil, moved to reconvene in Open Session. The motion carried by unanimous acclamation.

Trustees Fleurimond and Wolff left the meeting. Chair Phillips was apprised that a quorum was no longer present.

Legal Report

Chair Phillips reported that Trustees received the Legal Report in advance of today's meeting and had an opportunity to discuss it in Closed Session.

New Business

Chair Phillips acknowledged that the Administration has presented draft language to Trustees for consideration in response to the request to revise the current Board Regulations regarding parental leave. More information will be presented at an upcoming meeting.

Next Board Committee meetings at the main campus:

- Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee
- Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee on Thursday, March 19, 2026

Next Regular Board Meeting: April 16, 2026. There was no further business.

Adjourn

In the absence of a quorum, the meeting concluded at 4:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Todd Phillips, Chair of the Board
Karl Voigt, Assistant Secretary to the Board
Approved April 16, 2026