



# President's Report

to the  
Board of Trustees

February 19, 2026

 **Northeastern**  
ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

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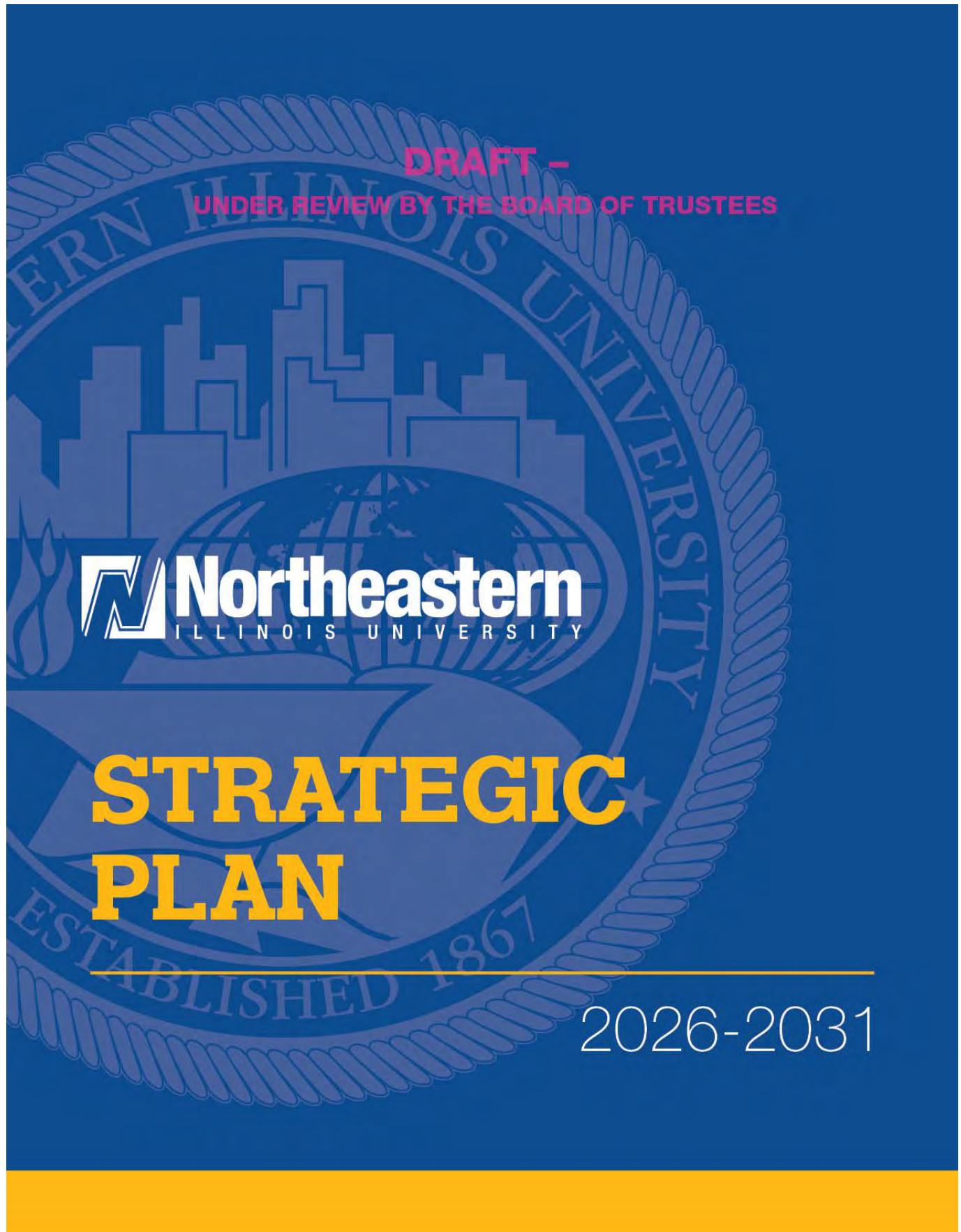
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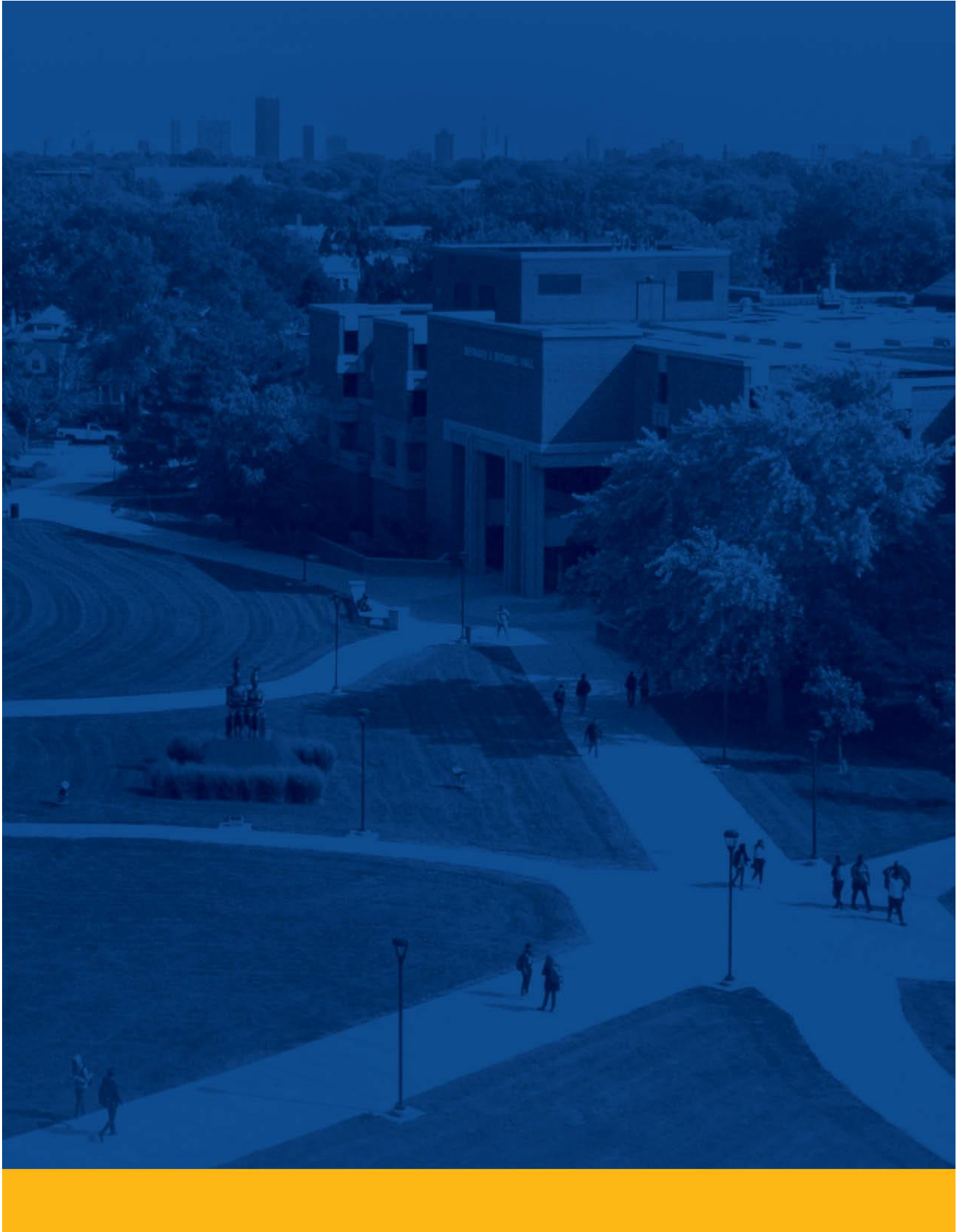
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**ACTION ITEM I. A. CONSIDERATION AND BOARD ACTION ON THE 2026-2031 UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN**



**ACTION ITEM I. A. CONSIDERATION AND BOARD ACTION ON THE 2026-2031 UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN**





**ACTION ITEM I. A. CONSIDERATION AND BOARD ACTION ON THE 2026-2031 UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN**



## STRATEGIC PLAN

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2026-2031

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**UNDER REVIEW BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN

**ACTION ITEM I. A. CONSIDERATION AND BOARD ACTION ON THE 2026-2031 UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

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NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN

## ACTION ITEM I. A. CONSIDERATION AND BOARD ACTION ON THE 2026-2031 UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN

### 2026-2031 STRATEGIC PLANNING

#### INTRODUCTION

For more than 150 years, Northeastern Illinois University has met the needs of each new generation of students. The 2026–2031 Strategic Plan has been guided by the priorities of rebuilding, stabilization, and growth—strengthening core systems, restoring institutional momentum, and positioning the University for long-term success. The plan positions NEIU to advance opportunity, elevate its identity, and expand its regional impact at a time when public higher education demands clear outcomes, accountability, and relevance.

By aligning priorities, resources, and partnerships around a shared vision for the future, this Strategic Plan affirms NEIU's commitment to student success, institutional excellence, and measurable progress, while reinforcing the University's role as an urban, public comprehensive university serving Chicago and the region.

#### BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The University's last Strategic Plan was created in 2008 and refreshed in 2014. Our goal is to develop a new plan to guide us forward, enabling NEIU to strengthen its impact as a minority-serving and Hispanic-serving institution committed to providing a high-quality and accessible education.

#### NEIU's Strategic Planning will be informed by three major frameworks:

1. Best practices for HSIs and MSIs
2. Core components of the Excelencia framework
3. Data-informed methods and analysis

#### KEY FEATURES OF NEIU'S NEW STRATEGIC PLAN:

- **Commitment** — Uniting our community around institutional priorities that support our mission
- **Goals** — Defining actionable goals to guide NEIU's direction and decisions
- **Planning** — Identifying resources and investments that foster growth and impact
- **Assessment** — Establishing metrics to measure progress and ensure accountability
- **Adaptability** — Creating a framework that anticipates future trends and challenges

#### FRAMEWORK

The framework for NEIU's Strategic Planning process is one shared by the Society for College and University Planners (SCUP). SCUP is an association of higher education professionals that fosters an inclusive community of practice in integrated planning to advance colleges and universities.

According to SCUP, five coordinating actions occur in strategic planning.

- Assess the Landscape
- Develop a Planning Roadmap
- Create a Plan

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- Implement a Plan
- Evaluate the Outcomes

### **STRATEGIC-PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW**

The NEIU strategic planning process was guided by the five coordinating actions of strategic planning and designed to outline the work required to build a new comprehensive strategic plan. This plan focused on developing the strategic framework, with implementation and evaluation phases to follow upon adoption. Aligned with this framework, a phased planning model was used to organize the process, structure engagement, and ensure a data-informed and inclusive approach to plan development.

The strategic planning process was led by the Strategic Planning Leadership Team, which included:

- R. Shayne Cofer, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Chris Childers, Executive Director of Marketing and Communications
- Claudia Mercado, Interim Vice President for Enrollment Management

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING CORE TEAM**

The Strategic Planning Core Team included a cross-section of Northeastern Illinois University faculty, staff, and student volunteers who facilitated the University's strategic planning process. The team drove the planning effort by engaging University stakeholders, analyzing institutional and external data, supporting the development of strategic priorities and goals, and contributing directly to the drafting of the plan.

The Core Team led the strategic-planning development process and was composed of representatives from key internal constituent groups. A stakeholder mapping matrix was used to inform team composition and ensure broad representation. The Core Team's purpose was to coordinate the planning process, facilitate stakeholder engagement, organize opportunities for input and feedback, review and synthesize data, and collaborate on communication and engagement activities throughout the planning cycle.

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING GOAL TEAM**

The Strategic Planning Goal Team guided NEIU's comprehensive strategic planning process by translating the university's mission, vision, and values into clear, actionable priorities. The team engaged campus and community stakeholders, synthesized institutional and external data, and identified key challenges and opportunities. This work directly informed the development of NEIU's five strategic priorities and the drafting of the five institutional goals, including associated key performance indicators as measures of success.

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## **NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY: A BRIEF HISTORY**

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Northeastern Illinois University traces its origins to 1867, when it was founded in Blue Island, Illinois, as the Normal School—Cook County's first teacher-training institution. From its earliest days, the university has been committed to educational innovation and to preparing teachers and administrators who make a meaningful impact in Chicago. Over time, that mission has broadened to include all of the university's academic disciplines, allowing NEIU to fully embrace and serve the diverse communities in the metropolitan area it calls home.

Although the university's name, location, and scope have evolved over the decades, its dedication to learning and teaching has remained constant. Northeastern has continuously adapted to meet the changing needs of an urban population and, in doing so, has established a strong tradition of engagement, access, and community partnership.

A number of signature initiatives mark this growth. The Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies (CCICS), founded in 1966, represents a significant commitment to serving inner-city communities, particularly Chicago's African American community. In 1969, the university opened its El Centro location to better serve the city's large and growing Latinx population. The university expanded again in 1978 with the Chicago Teachers' Center—now the Center for College Access and Success (CCAS)—which provides professional development for urban teachers and administrators.

In 1973, Northeastern acquired the 104-acre Gensburg-Markham Prairie, preserving one of the region's last high-quality prairie ecosystems for education, research, and future generations. The university further extended its regional reach in 1996 by joining the University Center of Lake County as a founding member, offering baccalaureate- and master's-level coursework through a public-private consortium.

More recent milestones reflect NEIU's continued growth. In 2014, the university opened its award-winning El Centro facility along the Kennedy Expressway, creating a highly visible and modern learning environment. In 2015, Northeastern broke ground on its first residence hall, marking a significant step toward enhancing the student experience and campus life.

This rich history mirrors the dynamic evolution of Chicago and the surrounding region. While remaining faithful to its founding mission of serving Illinois students, Northeastern has grown into a globally-engaged public university that attracts learners from around the world. The university's educational environment is strengthened by the ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and age diversity of its community—an enduring hallmark of NEIU's identity.

Today, Northeastern serves approximately 10,000 students and offers more than 80 undergraduate and graduate programs across the arts, sciences, education, and business. Faculty encourage students to connect classroom learning with real-world experience through fieldwork, research, service, and global engagement—preparing graduates to succeed as leaders in their professions and communities.

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### **THE PLANNING PROCESS**

#### **NEIU Community Strategic Planning: Empowering our Mission, Vision and Values Development Process**

This document describes the development process used to create Northeastern Illinois University's 2026–2031 Strategic Plan. It outlines the overall approach, timeline of activities, and stakeholder involvement. The framework used to design this planning process was informed by the Society for College and University Planners (SCUP).

The NEIU planning process considered these five coordinating actions and outlined the work needed to develop the University's new Strategic Plan. This plan focused on the process used to create the Strategic Plan, with implementation and evaluation occurring after plan adoption. Aligned with this framework, a phased model was used to organize the planning process.

#### **PHASE 1-GROUNDWORK**

The groundwork phase included preparation for planning and initial actions in the plan-development process. This work was completed by the university's Executive Leadership Team.

##### **Assess institutional context**

- Examined past planning processes
- Reviewed outcomes of previous strategic plans
- Analyzed institutional structure and culture to inform the planning process

##### **Identify stakeholders**

- Identified internal and external individuals, groups, and organizations impacted by the plan
- Mapped stakeholders and defined their roles in the planning process

##### **Identify the Core Planning Team**

- Include representatives from key stakeholder groups

##### **Design the planning process**

- Developed a process aligned with NEIU's institutional context

##### **Create a communication plan**

- Established how information would be shared and how feedback would be collected
- Defined timeline, audiences, messages, delivery methods, and frequency

##### **Launch the planning process**

- Introduced the process through the President's State of the University

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### **PHASE 2-COORDINATION**

The coordination phase occurred after the Core Planning Team was established. Activities in this phase were led by the Core Planning Team following onboarding.

#### **Onboard the Core Planning Team**

- Issued a call for self-nominations
- Developed a formal charge and communicated expectations
- Ensured members were equipped to lead the planning process

#### **Engagement opportunity / Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Input survey**

- Administered a university-wide SWOT input survey to gather perspectives on NEIU's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

### **PHASE 3-ENGAGEMENT**

The Core Planning Team designed and facilitated multiple engagement activities to involve stakeholders in identifying the strategic issues facing the university.

#### **SWOT analysis development**

- Drafted a SWOT analysis based on survey input, institutional data, and research
- Shared the draft for feedback and finalized it

#### **Data summits**

- Hosted two data summits for stakeholders to review and discuss key institutional data
- Developed a core data set, benchmarking framework, and data glossary
- Sessions were facilitated by Core Planning Team members and held in person and virtually

#### **Stakeholder roundtables**

- Convened in-person and virtual discussions to gather input framed around strategic prompts
- Provided multiple methods for feedback

#### **Stakeholder survey**

- Conducted a final stakeholder survey prior to drafting the Strategic Plan
- Solicited feedback on emerging themes and the future direction of NEIU

### **PHASE 4-ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS**

The Core Planning Team conducted analysis and synthesis with support from the Office of Institutional Research.

- Reviewed all data from surveys, roundtables, and data summits
- Created session summaries and analyzed survey responses
- Consolidated and themed outputs from all engagement activities

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Through this process, the Core Planning Team identified strategic priorities and began drafting strategic goals. By the conclusion of this phase, an initial set of strategic goals had been developed.

### **PHASE 5-FINALIZATION OF GOALS**

Feedback on the draft of strategic goals was gathered from stakeholders and institutional leadership. This feedback informed revisions to goal statements and supported the identification of key performance indicators. A full draft of the Strategic Plan was completed.

### **PHASE 6-DEVELOPMENT OF ACTION STEPS AND KPIs**

The final Strategic Plan document, including strategic goals and key performance indicators.

Pending final approval February 2026.





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### PHASE 1-GROUNDWORK

- Assess institutional context (August/September 2024)
- Identify and map stakeholders (October 2024)
- Identify the core planning team (October 2024)
- Design the planning process (October 2024)
- Create communication plan (October 2024)
- Analyze the environment (October/early November 2024)

### PHASE 2-COORDINATION

- Onboard the Strategic Planning Core Team (mid-November 2024)
- Conduct SWOT survey (November 2024)

### PHASE 3-ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK

- Plan engagement opportunities (January 2024)
- SWOT input survey (December 2024/January 2025)
- Data summits (February/March 2025)
- Stakeholder roundtables (February/March 2025)
- Stakeholder survey (Early March 2025)

### PHASE 4-ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

- Review and thematize data from all engagement opportunities (mid-March/mid-April 2025)

### PHASE 5-FEEDBACK

- Gather stakeholder feedback on draft strategic goals (August through October 2025)

### PHASE 6-ADOPTION

- Final strategic plan document completed and approved
- **Final strategic plan document adopted February 2026.**

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### THE STRATEGIC PLAN

#### ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

**Mission** — Our enduring purpose: whom we serve and how we are distinct.

**Vision** — Our shared aspirations for the future.

**Values** — How we interact as a learning community.

**Strategic Goals** — The most critical outcomes advancing mission and vision.

**Action Steps & KPIs** — Translate goals into work with measurable progress.

**Assessment & Improvement** — Continuous evaluation and course correction.

#### MISSION

As a public comprehensive university with locations throughout Chicago, Northeastern Illinois University provides an exceptional environment for learning, teaching, and scholarship. We prepare a diverse community of students for leadership and service in our region and in a dynamic, multicultural world.

#### VISION

NEIU will be a leader among metropolitan universities, known for its dedication to its urban mission, the quality of its programs, the success of its graduates, and the diversity of its learning environment.

#### VALUES

##### Integrity

NEIU is accountable to those we serve and to those from whom we receive support. We are committed to honesty, respect, and transparency in our words and actions. We work to be good stewards of the human, physical, fiscal, and environmental resources entrusted to us.

##### Excellence

In our pursuit of and commitment to excellence, we value the highest quality of learning and teaching, scholarship, and service. We value opportunities and experiences that support personal and professional development for all members of our community. In all that we say and do, we are committed to the process and products of excellence.

##### Access to opportunity

NEIU values access to opportunity; we value a welcoming environment that provides appropriate support as well as encourages mutual responsibility for and commitment to learning.

##### Diversity

NEIU values the inclusion of a broad spectrum of students, staff, and faculty in the life of the university. We celebrate and foster global perspectives and encourage the open, respectful expression of ideas and differences.

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**Community**

As a commuter institution, NEIU has a special obligation to provide an environment that is supportive, nurturing, and participatory. We foster civility, humanity, engagement, and a sense of community through inclusion, mutual respect, and empowerment. We value our metropolitan setting as a laboratory for learning and cultivating partnerships throughout the region to promote the public good.

**Empowerment through learning**

NEIU is dedicated to creating a culture that provides lifelong learning opportunities for all members of the University community. We are committed to transforming students' lives by engaging them in educational experiences that empower them to lead and succeed.

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## **ACTION ITEM I. A. CONSIDERATION AND BOARD ACTION ON THE 2026-2031 UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **STRATEGIC GOALS AND TACTICS**

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#### **GOAL 1: STRENGTHEN STUDENT SUCCESS AND RETENTION**

Improve student progression, engagement, and persistence to support the success of NEIU's diverse student body. This goal will ensure students have the resources, support, and sense of belonging needed to thrive from initial enrollment through graduation.

##### **Tactic 1: Improve first-year student retention and persistence**

Develop and implement a coordinated first-year retention strategy that integrates academic advising, proactive outreach, and data-informed decision making. Use predictive analytics as a tool—not the focus—to identify at-risk students early, personalize interventions, and ensure that each student receives the right support at the right time. Emphasize relationship-building, inclusive communication, academic planning, and financial support to create a seamless and affirming first-year experience that leads to higher retention and continued engagement.

##### **Tactic 2: Advance equity-driven retention and graduation for African American and Hispanic students**

Engage in intentional, culturally responsive efforts to understand and address the unique factors influencing African American and Hispanic student retention by leveraging the CBD framework and increased student progression tracking. Conduct deep qualitative analyses of student experiences to identify what fosters or hinders persistence. Pilot and refine micro-initiatives that promote academic planning, financial planning, sense of belonging, student empowerment, and academic success, and scale effective models across the institution in quick measures.

##### **Tactic 3: Enhance student engagement and sense of belonging**

Cultivate a vibrant and inclusive campus environment where students feel seen, supported, and connected. Expand student peer leadership and coaching, and first-year experiences that foster personal and academic growth. Provide a student-success marketing guide and supporting materials. Strengthen the campus climate by increasing opportunities for cultural celebration, community engagement, and dialogue that affirms student identity and voice.

##### **Tactic 4: Strengthen pathways to completion and career readiness**

NEIU will strengthen pathways to completion by integrating academic advising, career development, and experiential learning into a coordinated, student-centered framework. Advisors and faculty will use data-informed tools and technology to align degree planning, career exploration, and real-world learning. The university will expand practicums, internships, cooperative education, and workforce partnerships to connect classroom learning with professional opportunities. This integrated approach ensures that every student graduates prepared to succeed in their career and contribute meaningfully to their community.

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### **GOAL 2: ENHANCE CURRICULAR INNOVATION, SCHOLARSHIP, AND FACULTY/ STAFF EXCELLENCE**

Advance program innovation, expand learning modalities as appropriate, and provide faculty and staff development to meet evolving student and workforce needs. This goal affirms NEIU's dedication to academic excellence and continuous professional growth.

#### **Tactic 1: Continuous review and improvement of academic programs to expand and strengthen cross-disciplinary collaboration and scholarship and to drive tangible outcomes in research excellence, curriculum development, and instructional innovation.**

This tactic establishes support structures to facilitate collaboration between academic units across campus and create a network for peer-to-peer support in the areas of scholarship, pedagogy and professional development to position NEIU to better serve our student and community needs.

#### **Tactic 2: Systematically expand the adoption of student-centered, evidence-based curricular and instructional practices to achieve consistent, high-impact learning outcomes across the university.**

This tactic provides incentive and support for scaling evidence-based practices that contribute to student learning, engagement and success. Grows use of evidence-based teaching practices by department, tracking the percentage of faculty in each department that consistently uses evidence-based teaching practices. Data will be collected to build a repository of implemented practices.

#### **Tactic 3: Develop and expand pathways for certificates and micro credentials to advance learners' intellectual and professional development while strengthening alignment with workforce needs and community engagement.**

This tactic adds credential pathways that align with learner, community, and workforce needs, offered in expanded modalities of learning, and provides flexibility that serves a wide variety of students. Examples of additional credentialing pathways are micro credentials, certificates, digital badges, bundle/ladder options, etc.

#### **Tactic 4: Enhance faculty capability to design and integrate inclusive, high-impact learning experiences that measurably advance equitable access, participation, and success for all students.**

This tactic ensures that faculty have the knowledge and skills to create accessible, inclusive learning environments essential for meeting legal compliance requirements while also advancing educational equity for students with diverse learning needs. NEIU can proactively remove barriers to student success rather than reactively addressing accessibility issues. This investment in faculty development ultimately creates a more equitable learning community where all students, regardless of ability or learning preference, can fully engage with course content and demonstrate their knowledge.

#### **Tactic 5: Foster a culture of inclusivity, collaboration and well-being**

This tactic recognizes that creating a strong, connected community begins with ensuring every employee feels seen, supported, and included. Through transparent communication, increased participation in shared governance, expanded wellness programming, and intentional recognition of values-based behaviors, we will cultivate a workplace rooted in belonging and collective care—ensuring employees have the support they need to thrive personally and professionally.

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### **Tactic 6: Strengthen employee skills and career growth opportunities**

This tactic will build a supportive, equitable environment where all employees have access to meaningful professional development. By expanding learning opportunities, creating clear pathways for growth, and investing in mentorship, training, and modern learning systems, we will cultivate a skilled, engaged workforce equipped to advance both individual careers and institutional excellence.

### **Tactic 7: Develop a university-wide 'Start with Care' Initiative**

This tactic launches the Start with Care Initiative, a human-centered, equity-driven, and culturally responsive framework designed to transform how colleges and universities serve their students. Built on three foundational pillars—Understanding, Listening, and Action—this initiative strengthens institutional culture in ways that directly support student success, sense of belonging, and persistence.

The initiative equips all employees—faculty, staff, administrators, and student workers—with the shared knowledge, skills, and practices needed to deepen their understanding of who their students are and the systems students navigate; to listen with care, curiosity, and cultural humility; and to take meaningful action through warm handoffs, timely follow-through, and supportive problem-solving. This approach ensures that every student interaction is grounded in care, clarity, and responsiveness, ultimately driving improved student satisfaction, retention, and completion.

## **GOAL 3: IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR A SUSTAINABLE, ACCESSIBLE, AND STUDENT-CENTERED UNIVERSITY**

### **Tactic 1: Conduct a master planning process that considers accessibility, sustainability, and equitable access to current and future physical spaces and technological resources.**

Conduct a comprehensive, university-wide audit and master plan integrating accessibility, sustainability, technology, and universal design across all campuses (Main, El Centro, and CCICS). Develop and implement a coordinated Master Plan and Sustainability Framework aligned with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), and campus technology standards to enhance both physical and digital environments.

### **Tactic 2: Enhance student experience and overall university experience through technology standardization and modernization.**

Prioritize and elevate the student and overall university experience through the deployment of sustainable, innovative classroom and lab technologies, enhanced enterprise systems, and a reliable, scalable infrastructure. Integrate AI models and advanced digital platforms that empower students and employees to streamline official university business processes, help students excel academically, and equip graduates with the technological skills required for future career success.

Simultaneously, optimize and modernize student-facing services by streamlining redundant support models, standardizing processes, systems, and workflows; and implementing defined technology refresh cycles. These efforts will drive operational efficiency, optimize costs and sustainability and strengthen the University's overall IT security posture.

### **Tactic 3: Re-envision student union, centers, student wellness, and student engagement spaces across campuses.**

Re-envision and modernize student union, cultural centers, and wellness-related engagement spaces across NEIU campus locations — including the Main Campus, El Centro, and the Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies — to foster a stronger sense of belonging, well-being, and community.

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This initiative will reimagine and modify student engagement spaces so that every NEIU student has a place they can call “home away from home.” It will integrate student health, counseling, wellness, and safety supports into redesigned spaces that promote holistic student development and engagement. The project will incorporate inclusive design principles, technology-enhanced collaboration tools, and flexible layouts that support student services, student organizations, cultural programming, leadership development, and cross-divisional engagement.

The enhanced environments will serve as vibrant, welcoming hubs that connect wellness, engagement, and belonging—creating spaces that celebrate NEIU's diversity, strengthen student success, and reflect the university's commitment to a sustainable, accessible, and student-centered campus culture.

### **Tactic 4: Modernize classrooms, laboratory spaces, art studios, and performance spaces across campuses.**

Modernize classroom, laboratory spaces, art studios and performance spaces across NEIU campus locations—including the Main Campus, El Centro, and the Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies—to provide access for our students to dynamic educational environments.

These enhanced environments will provide access to modern technology, equipment, and resources and provide inviting spaces for learning, research, creative activities, and educational exploration. Spaces may be redesigned, renovated or updated as needed.

## **GOAL 4: ELEVATE NEIU'S IDENTITY AS AN URBAN UNIVERSITY WITH REGIONAL IMPACT**

Position Northeastern Illinois University as a premier urban-serving university in the Chicago region by elevating the positive perception of NEIU as an affordable, academically excellent, accessible, and workforce-aligned institution. NEIU will strengthen its reputation for delivering high-value education through hands-on learning, experiential opportunities, and career-ready outcomes. This goal focuses on increasing recognition of NEIU's programs and community impact, and positive perception among traditional undergraduate, transfer, graduate, and adult learners at all three university locations.

### **Tactic 1: Measure brand perception**

NEIU will implement a brand perception and competitiveness study to measure positive perception across key stakeholder groups—to inform marketing strategy directly.

### **Tactic 2: Improve the University brand and messaging system**

NEIU will create a brand messaging platform that establishes universal language, tone, visual standards, and best practices for marketing, website, and social media communications for use across all colleges and units.

### **Tactic 3: Improve digital and AI visibility**

NEIU will adopt the latest digital marketing technologies by optimizing its website, content architecture, and academic program pages for both Google search and emerging AI-driven search platforms—ensuring top-tier visibility for priority academic programs and key enrollment pathways.

### **Tactic 4: Improve culturally responsive outreach to Latinx markets**

NEIU will expand culturally responsive marketing by translating high-impact enrollment materials into Spanish to strengthen engagement and enrollment of Latinx students across the Chicago region.

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### **Tactic 5: Improve academic program visibility**

NEIU will promote new academic programs in partnership with the Office of the Provost through coordinated marketing campaigns, refreshed program-marketing materials, and integrated digital outreach.

### **Tactic 6: Highlight signature events and institutional visibility**

NEIU marketing and communications will identify signature NEIU events and elevate their visibility through comprehensive promotion strategies to strengthen campus pride, community connection, and regional brand recognition.

### **Tactic 7: Improve strategic storytelling and reputation building**

NEIU will expand internal and external storytelling efforts to elevate its reputation by consistently distributing high-impact narratives featuring students, faculty, alumni, community partnerships, and institutional achievements across paid and earned media.

### **Tactic 8: Strengthen political and stakeholder relationships**

Using the Strategic Plan as the foundation to advance NEIU's identity as an urban-serving institution by cultivating and strengthening relationships with city, county, state, and federal policymakers, as well as community and civic leaders. Through proactive engagement, coalition leadership, and clear communication of NEIU's economic and social value, the university will position itself as a trusted regional partner and essential contributor to public policy, workforce development, and community advancement. This approach emphasizes building long-term, transformational relationships that connect academic expertise with community priorities — creating shared value and systemic change that advances both educational attainment and community well-being.

## **GOAL 5: ADVANCE FISCAL STABILITY AND GROWTH**

Diversify revenue streams, build strategic partnerships, and support enrollment growth to ensure long-term financial sustainability. This goal will secure the resources needed to invest in students, faculty, staff, and the future of the university.

This goal is focused on building a resilient and forward-looking financial framework that aligns resource stewardship, revenue innovation, and philanthropic engagement. By integrating enrollment-informed financial planning, strategic partnerships, and diversified funding strategies, this work will support both near-term stability and long-term growth. Together, these efforts will position NEIU to respond proactively to changing economic conditions while advancing institutional priorities.

Collectively, these strategies will create a sustainable financial ecosystem for NEIU—one that balances fiscal responsibility with strategic investment. By strengthening revenue diversity, and fostering external partnerships, NEIU will ensure its capacity to fulfill its mission and support student success for generations to come.

### **Tactic 1: Strengthen Long-Term Financial Performance and Returns (\$)**

Develop and implement a coordinated, state-compliant investment strategy that strengthens NEIU's long-term financial performance and overall return on investment. This tactic emphasizes prudent diversification, peer-aligned practices, and disciplined oversight—using enhanced investment tools as a support mechanism to balance risk, liquidity, and growth. The approach prioritizes compliance, transparency, and sustainability while creating additional revenue capacity beyond tuition and state appropriations.

### **Tactic 2: Optimize University Properties to Support Strategic Use and Increase Rental Revenue**

This tactic focuses on two complementary approaches that can be explored to enhance the value of university-owned properties and increase rental income where feasible: strategically planning for the long-term use of

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## **ACTION ITEM I. A. CONSIDERATION AND BOARD ACTION ON THE 2026-2031 UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

vacant Bryn Mawr and El Centro properties and optimizing the university's centralized reservation system to maximize external space rentals. For the vacant properties, the emphasis is on envisioning potential uses—academic, community, or revenue-generating—engaging stakeholders, and integrating concepts into the University Master Plan for long-term consideration. For the reservation system, the focus is on ensuring all available spaces are fully loaded, promoting adoption across units, and maximizing revenue from external users while preserving academic and student priorities.

### **Tactic 2.1: Evaluate long-term opportunities for vacant Bryn Mawr and El Centro properties**

Develop long-term strategies for the vacant Bryn Mawr and El Centro properties, recognizing their current poor condition, to inform capital planning, community engagement, and future university priorities. This work will focus on envisioning potential uses, gaining stakeholder input, and ensuring any concepts are incorporated into the University Master Plan for future consideration.

### **Tactic 2.2: Optimize space rental through the centralized reservation system to increase rental revenue**

Maximize the use of university space and increase external rental revenue by ensuring all academic and non-academic spaces are fully identified, loaded, and available in the centralized reservation system. While prioritizing academic instruction and student activities, this work will improve transparency and utilization, and increases potential revenue generation.

### **Tactic 3: Advance a fundraising campaign for strategic priorities and grow annual baseline fundraising outcomes**

Diversify revenue streams by cultivating donor relationships with alumni, corporate and private foundation partners, and individual and community stakeholders. This will be achieved through two complementary strategies: (1) executing a fundraising campaign focused on strategic priorities, and (2) strengthening baseline annual fundraising outcomes to build a sustainable foundation of donor support.

The fundraising campaign will focus on strategic plan priorities organized within broad categories to be determined through comprehensive planning and donor engagement. Each category will include specific initiatives aligned with campaign goals. The campaign structure will allow responsive alignment with donor interests while advancing institutional goals. Campaign parameters will be determined through a comprehensive planning study. Concurrently, baseline fundraising metrics including donor retention, participation rates, gift progression, and annual fund performance, will be strengthened to build sustainable support independent of campaign cycles.

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## ACTION ITEM I. A. CONSIDERATION AND BOARD ACTION ON THE 2026-2031 UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This strategic plan is the product of the work of the NEIU community. We thank the Strategic Planning Leadership Team, Core Team, and all faculty, staff, students, and community partners who contributed.

#### STRATEGIC PLANNING CORE TEAM MEMBERS

- Kimya Barden, *Director of Non-Traditional Degree Programs (NDP)*
- Brandon Bisby, *Faculty, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)*
- Akua Cason, *Interim Director of the Jacob H. Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies (CCICS)*
- Rona Castaneda, *Senior Director of Budget, Planning, and Forecasting, University Budgets*
- Amanda Dykema-Engblade, *Acting Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)*
- Gretchen LaCivita, *Executive Director, Master of Science in Nursing Program*
- Arshia Mohammed, *Computer Science, Student Representative*
- Brittany Pines, *Senior Director, Grants and Sponsored Initiatives*
- Ryan Poll, *Faculty, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)*
- Richard Prescott, *Nontraditional Degree Programs, Student Representative*
- Isaura Pulido, *Faculty, Goodwin College of Education (GCOE); Special Assistant to the President for Hispanic-Serving Institution Affairs*
- Eliot Rodriguez, *Chief Information Officer*
- Sudha Srinivas, *Acting Associate Provost*
- Paola Vargas, *Associate Dean of Students, Student Affairs*
- Karl Voigt, *Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trustees; Chair, University Policy Coordinators Group; Business Operations Manager; Legal Affairs*
- Sandy Vue, *Director of Institutional Research and Assessment*

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## **ACTION ITEM I. A. CONSIDERATION AND BOARD ACTION ON THE 2026-2031 UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **GOAL 1: TEAM LEADS:**

**Claudia Mercado, Interim Vice President for Enrollment Management;  
Terry Mena, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students**

#### **Goal Team:**

- Yolanda Aguilera, *Deputy Director of Human Resources*
- Maureen Amos, *Executive Director of Financial Aid*
- Jeremy Babcock, *Director of First-Year Experience (FYE)*
- Ann Carter, *Director of Student Payment Services (SPS)*
- Ebony Jiminez-Lee, *Staff Psychotherapist and Case Manager, Student Counseling Services*
- Paula Hanley, *Director of the One Stop Center*
- Brexel Limon, *Student Representative*
- Jaime Mendoza, *Academic Advisor*
- Aisha Moosani, *Office Administrator, President's Office*
- Irma Ortiz, *Interim Associate Vice President for Retention and Student Success*
- Veronica Rodriguez, *Office Support Associate, Student Leadership Development*
- DeWitt Scott, *Director, Angelina Pedrosa Center for Diversity and Intercultural Affairs (APCDIA)*
- Rahshida Walker, *University Registrar*
- Michael Zarobe, *Director of Alumni Affairs*

### **GOAL 2: TEAM LEADS:**

**R. Shayne Cofer, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs;  
Claudia Mercado, Interim Vice President for Enrollment Management**

#### **Goal Team:**

- Kimya Barden, *Director, Non-Traditional Degree Programs (NDP)*
- Sandra Beyda-Lorie, *Executive Director, Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)*
- Ru Dawley-Carr, *Faculty, Graduate College / Goodwin College of Education (GCOE)*
- Lesa Davis, *Faculty, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)*
- Cassaundra Garcia, *Student Representative*
- Matt Graham, *Faculty, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)*
- Jolanta Jonak, *Faculty, Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education (GCOE)*
- Max Kruczek, *Acting Associate Vice President for Human Resources*
- Elizabeth Lehl, *Faculty, El Centro*
- Timothy Libretti, *Dean, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)*
- Tammy Martin, *Interim Director of Career Services*
- Abby Murray, *Associate Vice President for Human Resources*
- David Nissim-Sabat, *Director, Pre-Health Programs, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)*
- Sudha Srinivas, *Acting Associate Provost*
- Mary Thill, *Faculty, Ronald Williams Library*
- Diana Valdez, *Associate Director, College of Business and Technology (CBT)*
- Sandy Vue, *Director of Institutional Research and Assessment*
- Yi Yang, *Faculty, College of Business and Technology (CBT)*
- Ymelda Robles, *Business Manager*

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## ACTION ITEM I. A. CONSIDERATION AND BOARD ACTION ON THE 2026-2031 UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN

### GOAL 3: TEAM LEADS:

**Terry Mena, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students;**  
**Nicki Bazer, Interim General Counsel**

#### Goal Team:

- Akua Cason, *Interim Director, Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies (CCICS)*
- Andy Dutil, *Executive Director of Student Union, Event and Conference Services, and Campus Recreation*
- Christine Guerges, *Deputy Director of Human Resources*
- Amie Jatta, *Director, TRIO Student Support Services*
- Jennifer Knuepfer, *Interim Assistant Director, Student Counseling Services*
- Eliot Rodriguez, *Chief Information Officer, University Technology Services (UTS)*
- Steve Saba, *Director, University Technology Services (UTS)*
- Hemant Shah, *Architect III, Facilities Management*
- Josh Sumner, *Executive Director of Facilities Management*
- Harrison Mwaura, *Institutional Data Research Specialist*
- Patricia Lopez, *Graduate Student, Master of Social Work*

### GOAL 4: TEAM LEADS:

**Chris Childers, Executive Director of Marketing and Communications;**  
**Blanca Jara, Interim Executive Director of Government Relations**

#### Goal Team:

- Doni Alecia, *Director of Integrated Marketing and Communications*
- Mike Bedell, *Dean, College of Business and Technology (CBT)*
- Sylvia Daniels, *Director of Development*
- Amanda Dykema-Engblade, *Acting Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)*
- Effie Kritikos, *Interim Associate Provost and University Contract Administrator*
- Jennie Lasko, *Director of Student Health Services*
- Timothy Libretti, *Dean, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)*
- Richard Prescott, *Student Representative, Nontraditional Degree Programs*
- Ryan Trout, *Director of Undergraduate Admissions*
- Kenneth M. Voglesonger, *Acting Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)*
- Karl Voigt, *Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trustees; Chair, University Policy Coordinators Group; Business Operations Manager; Legal Affairs*
- Russell Wartalski, *Department Chair, Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education (GCOE)*

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**UNDER REVIEW BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

## **ACTION ITEM I. A. CONSIDERATION AND BOARD ACTION ON THE 2026-2031 UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **GOAL 5: TEAM LEADS:**

**Liesl Downey, Vice President for Institutional Advancement; Executive Director, Northeastern Illinois University Foundation; Beni Ortiz, Vice President for Finance and Administration**

#### **Goal Team:**

- Amanda Dykema-Engblade, *Acting Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)*
- Jeremy Babcock, *Director of the First-Year Experience Program (FYE)*
- Marcelo Sztainberg, *Dean, College of Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR)*
- Rona Castaneda, *Senior Director of Budget, Planning, and Forecasting*
- Ryan Trout, *Director of Undergraduate Admissions*
- Aaron Cortes, *Program Director, STEAM Pathways®, Center for College Access and Success*
- Garo Agopian, *Faculty, College of Business and Technology (CBT)*
- Paola Vargas, *Associate Dean of Students, Student Affairs*
- Sudha Srinivas, *Acting Associate Provost, Academic Affairs*
- Tom Phillion, *Dean, Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education (GCOE)*





## ACTION ITEM I. A. CONSIDERATION AND BOARD ACTION ON THE 2026-2031 UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN

### ABOUT THE PRESIDENT



**Katrina E. Bell-Jordan, Ph.D.**

Dr. Katrina E. Bell-Jordan currently serves as President of Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) and is a Professor in the Department of Communication, Media and Theatre. Appointed in August 2024 as the 8th President of Northeastern Illinois University, Dr. Bell-Jordan's tenure at NEIU began in 1997, when she joined the Department of Communication, Media, and Theatre (CMT) as an Assistant Professor. She has since held various leadership roles at the University, including serving as CMT Department Chair, Associate Dean in NEIU's College of Arts and Sciences, and Interim Dean. She was appointed Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in 2020 and served in this position until being appointed NEIU's Interim President in 2023. She has served in leadership roles on various advisory, curriculum, and hiring committees during her time at NEIU, including serving on the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Team for the University's 2017 accreditation visit, the NEIU Baccalaureate Goals Working Group, and the University's first Writing-Intensive Faculty Advisory Committee as Co-Chair. She also co-led a two-year Economic Inequality Initiative at NEIU, a partnership between the College of Arts and Sciences and the NEIU Division of Student Affairs.

Dr. Bell-Jordan earned a Ph.D. in Rhetorical Studies and Media Studies and a M.A. in Rhetorical Studies at the Ohio University School of Interpersonal Communication. She earned a B.S.J. in News Editorial Journalism from the Ohio University E.W. Scripps School of Journalism. Her teaching background includes media literacy and media theory, rhetorical theory and criticism, and news writing/journalism. Her research has focused on critical media studies, including the politics of gender, race, and representation in the media; the rhetoric of popular culture; and news culture. She has served on the editorial board of academic journals such as *Critical Studies in Media Communication* and *Women's Studies in Communication*, and she has written for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and the *New York Daily News*.

Dr. Bell-Jordan serves as a Governing Board member of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), on HACU's Commission on International Education, and as a member of the Alumni Advisory Council of the School of Communication Studies at Ohio University. She is a member of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences, and the Economic Club of Chicago. She is also an elected member of the Board of Education for Skokie, Illinois, District 68, where she has served four terms since 2011, including four years as Board Vice President and two years as Board Secretary.

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**ACTION ITEM I. A. CONSIDERATION AND BOARD ACTION ON THE 2026-2031 UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN**





## **ACTION ITEM I. B. BOARD ACTION ON COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE FY2027 TUITION AND FEES PROPOSAL**

### **Background**

Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) reviews and adjusts tuition and fees annually to keep up with inflationary cost pressures, address essential operational needs, and ensure the continued quality of its academic programs. Equally important is the effort to maintain affordability for students.

In support of this commitment, NEIU held base undergraduate tuition flat for two consecutive fiscal years (FY2025–FY2026), despite periods of reduced State appropriations and significant additional costs. It is important to note that 9 of the 12 Illinois public universities increased their undergraduate base tuition in FY2026, ranging from 2.0% to 9.1%.

Tuition rates for graduate students have increased modestly, averaging 2.5% for the last five years. In contrast, inflation, as measured by the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI), has risen at a much higher rate, particularly in recent years, averaging 3.8% per year over the past five years and 3.6% in the last 12 months. Additionally, the truth-in-tuition guarantee locks in a student's tuition rate for 4 to 6 years, but the costs of teaching those courses rise each year the student remains enrolled.

Adding to these challenges, the University has not yet received the 2% FY2026 contingent general funds appropriation. This delay has created significant operational strain and ongoing uncertainty that is already affecting day-to-day operations. To remain fiscally responsible, NEIU has implemented a hiring freeze, limiting its ability to fill critical positions in student services, campus safety, and in enrollment management—areas that are essential to institutional stability and growth.

As a result, the University's capacity to provide vital support services, including academic advising, disability services, mental health counseling, and enrollment outreach, has been constrained. These services are directly tied to student retention, academic success, and overall well-being.

In this context, as many Illinois public universities have acknowledged—particularly those facing financial pressure—tuition and fee increases become increasingly difficult to avoid. Institutional costs continue to rise while State appropriations have not kept pace, creating a growing gap between available resources and the funding required to sustain high-quality education and student support.

### **FY 27 Tuition and Fees Recommendations:**

After extensive discussions at the University through its shared governance process, the administration is proposing the following modest increase in tuition and fees: The proposal includes a 1% increase in undergraduate base tuition and a 3% graduate base tuition increase for both in-state and out-of-state students. The recommendation also includes a \$25 increase in mandatory fees, raising the fee from \$100 to \$125.

Undergraduate base tuition	1% increase	<b>IL Resident:</b> from \$430.95 to \$435.26 <b>Out-of-State:</b> from \$861.90 to \$870.52
Graduate base tuition	3% increase	<b>IL Resident:</b> from \$477.40 to \$491.72 <b>Out-of-State:</b> from \$954.80 to \$983.44
Mandatory General Fee	\$25 increase	From \$100 to \$125 per credit hour (up to 16 credit hours)

## **ACTION ITEM I. B. BOARD ACTION ON COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE FY2027 TUITION AND FEES PROPOSAL**

### **Peer Institution Comparison Analysis**

#### **Undergraduate Base Tuition**

NEIU's undergraduate base tuition currently ranks 2nd out of 12 among all Illinois public universities for FY26. Although NEIU's undergraduate base tuition ranks near the top among Illinois public universities, it does not tell the full story, because base tuition is only part of what students actually get charged. It is important to view this in context, because there is no straightforward way to compare universities given the wide variation in how tuition and fees are structured across institutions.

#### **Graduate Base Tuition**

NEIU's graduate base tuition currently ranks 4th out of 12 among all Illinois public universities for FY26. Even with the proposed 3% increase in graduate base tuition for FY27, we believe the university will maintain its competitive position relative to other Illinois public institutions.

#### **Mandatory General Fee**

Since 2018, NEIU has had the lowest fees of any public university in Illinois for both undergraduate and graduate students. This followed the decision to discontinue the mandatory health insurance fee and instead guide our students to purchase more comprehensive and cheaper health plan options through the Affordable Care Act.

While this positioned NEIU as an affordable option for its students, the low fee structure has impacted our ability to invest in student support services and facilities. While we strive to keep costs affordable, it has limited the resources available for maintaining and enhancing campus infrastructure and providing the full range of services that support student success.

### **Budget Impact and other Strategies**

To address the estimated \$6.6 million FY27 fiscal gap, several strategies are being considered. One approach involves advocating for increased State funding. For example, a 1% increase in state appropriations would generate approximately \$412K toward closing the gap.

In addition, enrollment growth and retention initiatives are projected to generate approximately \$1.582 million in additional revenue. Initial targets assume a 2.56% increase in credit-hour enrollment for FY27. These projections will continue to be refined as Spring 2026 enrollment data becomes available and as applications for incoming students are reviewed.

Tuition and fee adjustments, recommended today for FY27, are anticipated to contribute an additional \$3.4 million. This includes \$158K from undergraduate tuition increases, \$306K from graduate tuition increases, and \$2.958 million from fee adjustments.

Even with these measures, an estimated remaining gap of approximately \$1.17 million will require targeted cost management initiatives. Cost management refers to a range of actions that may be implemented by University management to address a fiscal gap, with particular focus on personnel and academic operations, which represent the institution's largest cost areas. These actions may include managing position levels through attrition; selective reorganization or consolidation of units; moderating reliance on adjunct overloads, consultants, or other temporary staffing; and reviewing labor usage for efficiency and compliance.



**ACTION ITEM I. B. BOARD ACTION ON COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE  
FY2027 TUITION AND FEES PROPOSAL**

In the academic area, cost management may also include academic program review; evaluation of low-enrollment or high-cost programs; improvements to course scheduling efficiency, including course fill rates and instructional modality mix; and consideration of shared services where applicable. Additional measures may include hiring freezes or delayed hires, overtime controls, deferral of capital projects, delays in nonessential maintenance or equipment purchases, and shifting expenses across fiscal years where permissible.

The next steps in the budgeting process involve finalizing revenue and expense estimates, allocating necessary adjustments to vice presidential areas, and working within these areas to determine specific budgetary modifications.

Overall, these recommendations acknowledge the financial needs of the colleges after long periods of modest but inadequate tuition and fee increases and growing inflationary pressures while being mindful of the need to maintain access and affordability for resident students.

**Recommended Action 1**

I request that the Board approve the Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee's recommendation to increase the FY2027 undergraduate base tuition by 1%.

**Recommended Action 2**

I request that the Board approve the Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee's recommendation to increase the FY2027 graduate base tuition by 3%.

**Recommended Action 3**

I request that the Board approve the Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee's recommendation to increase the FY2027 mandatory student fee from \$100 per credit hour to \$125 per credit hour up to 16 credit hours.

## ACTION ITEM I. B. BOARD ACTION ON COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE FY2027 TUITION AND FEES PROPOSAL

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Table 1  
NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
Schedule of Proposed Tuition and Fees

	Schedule of Proposed Tuition and Fees						Change	
							FY26 to FY27	
	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	Dollar	Percent
<b><u>TUITION (per credit hour)</u></b>								
Undergraduate - post 6-year (enrolled prior to Fall 2021)*	\$ 420.44	\$ 420.44	\$ 430.95	\$ 430.95	\$ 430.95	\$ 435.26	\$ 4.31	1.00 %
Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2021 <sup>1</sup>	420.44	420.44	420.44	420.44	420.44	420.44	-	-
Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2022 <sup>1</sup>	-	420.44	420.44	420.44	420.44	430.95	10.51	2.50
Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2023 <sup>1</sup>	-	-	430.95	430.95	430.95	430.95	-	-
Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2024 <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-	430.95	430.95	430.95	-	-
Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2025 <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-	-	430.95	430.95	-	-
Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2026	-	-	-	-	-	435.26	n/a	n/a
<b><u>CBT Undergraduate Differential</u></b>								
Undergraduate - post 6-year (enrolled prior to Fall 2021)*	462.48	462.48	474.05	474.05	495.59	500.55	4.96	1.0 %
Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2021 <sup>1</sup>	462.48	462.48	462.48	462.48	462.48	462.48	-	-
Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2022 <sup>1</sup>	-	462.48	462.48	462.48	462.48	474.05	11.56	2.5
Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2023 <sup>1</sup>	-	-	474.05	474.05	474.05	474.05	-	-
Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2024 <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-	474.05	474.05	474.05	-	-
Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2025 <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-	-	495.59	495.59	-	-
Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2026	-	-	-	-	-	500.55	n/a	n/a
Graduate	441.46	450.29	463.53	463.53	477.40	491.72	\$ 14.32	3.0 %
CBT Graduate Differential	15% of Base Graduate Rate				549.01	565.48	16.47	3.0
Master's Education Leadership (School) Differential	15% of Base Graduate Rate				549.01	565.48	16.47	3.0
Master's Counselor Education Programs Differential	10% of Base Graduate Rate				525.14	540.89	15.75	3.0
Master's Social Work Programs Differential	10% of Base Graduate Rate				525.14	540.89	15.75	3.0
Doctorate in Leadership, Equity and Inquiry (Ed.D.) Program Tuition Differential	20% of Base Graduate Rate				-	590.06	n/a	n/a
Non-resident Undergraduate - post 6-year *	840.88	840.88	861.90	870.52	861.90	870.52	\$ 8.62	1.0 %
Non-resident Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2021 <sup>1</sup>	840.88	840.88	840.88	840.88	840.88	840.88	-	-
Non-resident Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2022 <sup>1</sup>	-	840.88	840.88	840.88	840.88	861.90	21.02	2.5
Non-resident Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2023 <sup>1</sup>	-	-	861.90	861.90	861.90	861.90	-	-
Non-resident Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2024 <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-	870.52	861.90	861.90	-	-
Non-resident Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2025 <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-	-	861.90	861.90	-	-
Non-resident Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2026	-	-	-	-	-	870.52	n/a	n/a
<b><u>CBT Non-Resident Undergraduate Differential</u></b>								
Non-resident Undergraduate - post 6-year *	924.97	924.97	948.09	957.57	991.19	1,001.10	9.91	1.0 %
Non-resident Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2021 <sup>1</sup>	924.97	924.97	924.97	924.97	924.97	924.97	-	-
Non-resident Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2022 <sup>1</sup>	-	924.97	924.97	924.97	924.97	948.09	23.12	2.5
Non-resident Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2023 <sup>1</sup>	-	-	948.09	948.09	948.09	948.09	-	-
Non-resident Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2024 <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-	957.57	948.09	948.09	-	-
Non-resident Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2025 <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-	-	991.19	991.19	-	-
Non-resident Undergraduate - newly enrolled Fall 2026	-	-	-	-	-	1,001.10	n/a	n/a
Non-resident Graduate	882.92	900.58	927.06	927.06	954.80	983.44	\$ 28.64	3.0 %
CBT Graduate Differential	15% of Base Graduate Rate				1,098.02	1,130.96	32.94	3.0
Master's Education Leadership (School) Differential	15% of Base Graduate Rate				1,098.02	1,130.96	32.94	3.0
Master's Counselor Education Programs Differential	10% of Base Graduate Rate				1,050.28	1,081.79	31.51	3.0
Master's Social Work Programs Differential	10% of Base Graduate Rate				1,050.28	1,081.79	31.51	3.0
Doctorate in Leadership, Equity and Inquiry (Ed.D.) Program Tuition Differential	20% of Base Graduate Rate				-	1,180.13	n/a	n/a
<b><u>MANDATORY FEES</u></b>								
General Student Fee	\$ 81.95	\$ 83.50	\$ 85.00	\$ 85.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 25.00	25.0 %
U-Pass (Full-time Students only)	155.00	155.00	155.00	155.00	155.00	155.00	-	-

\* Post 6-year students in FY2027 are those enrolled prior to Fall 2021 (or FY2022).

<sup>1</sup> Per Public Act 93-0028 starting Fall 2004, Illinois undergraduate students newly enrolled will have their tuition held constant



## INFORMATION ITEM II. A. FY2026 2<sup>ND</sup> QUARTER BUDGET TO ACTUAL REPORT

The Northeastern Illinois University Board of Trustees at its September 18, 2025 meeting approved the University final operating budget, which represented spending plans for fiscal year 2026 (FY2026). The information herein reflects a comparison of actual expenditures to that budget, as well as previous year-to-date actual expenditures.

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.

At the Board's request, quarterly reports are provided for the unrestricted operating budget, which supports most University departments and ongoing operations. This report provides an update on second 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.

Moreover, Table 2 provides a financial forecast for the unrestricted operating budget. This financial forecast builds upon the existing quarterly reporting and presentation structure of the budget-to-actual reports and incorporates separate forecasts for revenues and expenses. 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 1  
NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISONS  
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2025  
UNAUDITED FIGURES

	FY2024 Q2			FY2025 Q2			FY2026 Q2				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	
<b>Revenue</b>											
State Appropriations	\$ 39,960,000	\$ 27,478,656	68.8%	\$ 40,758,700	\$ 30,007,897	73.6%	\$ 41,166,300	\$ 41,166,300	\$ 30,116,265	73.2%	\$ 108,368 (A)
Net Tuition Revenue	41,874,400	37,872,272	90.4%	45,134,178	38,682,614	85.7%	47,001,700	47,001,700	40,438,105	86.0%	1,755,491 (B)
Net Differential Tuition Revenue	689,000	684,179	99.3%	820,122	759,412	92.6%	1,617,000	1,617,000	1,192,907	73.8%	433,495 (B)
Investment Income	2,276,600	2,206,396	96.9%	3,700,000	2,057,297	55.6%	3,400,000	3,400,000	1,708,036	50.2%	(349,261) (C)
All Other Sources	500,000	363,314	72.7%	500,000	290,338	58.1%	600,000	600,000	356,532	59.4%	66,194 (C)
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 85,300,000</b>	<b>\$ 68,604,817</b>	<b>80.4%</b>	<b>\$ 90,913,000</b>	<b>\$ 71,797,558</b>	<b>79.0%</b>	<b>\$ 93,785,000</b>	<b>\$ 93,785,000</b>	<b>\$ 73,811,845</b>	<b>78.7%</b>	<b>\$ 2,014,287</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>											
Personnel Services	\$ 67,901,380	\$ 30,951,015	45.6%	\$ 70,829,802	\$ 30,485,923	43.0%	\$ 73,613,490	\$ 73,999,621	\$ 31,215,589	42.2%	\$ 729,666 (D)
Contractual Services	14,631,783	4,443,108	30.4	14,821,712	5,026,331	33.9	14,032,107	12,850,687	4,074,137	31.7	(952,194) (E)
Equipment	431,986	101,140	23.4	383,986	129,275	33.7	379,486	363,075	169,613	46.7	40,338
Commodities	807,401	234,893	29.1	818,150	236,423	28.9	758,917	764,529	238,025	31.1	1,602
Telecommunications	176,700	31,279	17.7	176,700	147,452	83.4	176,700	281,453	158,030	56.1	10,578
Travel	197,750	57,380	29.0	193,650	64,493	33.3	171,800	274,193	80,727	29.4	16,234
Permanent Improvements	25,000	-	-	25,000	-	-	25,000	22,418	-	-	-
Operation of Auto Equip	21,000	14,009	66.7	24,000	20,244	84.4	23,500	42,100	18,714	44.5	(1,530)
Tuition Scholarships	1,299,000	639,821	49.3	1,299,000	-	-	1,299,000	1,881,924	951,512	50.6	951,512 (F)
Debt Service	2,308,000	1,150,208	49.8	2,341,000	1,166,027	49.8	3,305,000	3,305,000	1,693,296	51.2	527,269 (E)
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>87,800,000</b>	<b>37,622,853</b>	<b>42.9%</b>	<b>90,913,000</b>	<b>37,276,169</b>	<b>41.0%</b>	<b>93,785,000</b>	<b>93,785,000</b>	<b>38,599,643</b>	<b>41.2%</b>	<b>1,323,475</b>
<i>ECIT Reserve Allocation</i>	<i>(2,500,000)</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
<b>Net Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 85,300,000</b>	<b>\$ 37,622,853</b>	<b>44.1%</b>	<b>\$ 90,913,000</b>	<b>\$ 37,276,169</b>	<b>41.0%</b>	<b>\$ 93,785,000</b>	<b>\$ 93,785,000</b>	<b>\$ 38,599,643</b>	<b>41.2%</b>	<b>\$ 1,323,475</b>
<b>Excess Revenue Over Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 30,981,965</b>		<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 34,521,389</b>		<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 35,212,202</b>		

### 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 January 5, 2026 and does not include encumbrances.
4. All Other Sources includes space rental and other miscellaneous fees/income (lab, transcript, NSF, late fees, etc.)

## INFORMATION ITEM II. A. FY2026 2<sup>ND</sup> QUARTER BUDGET TO ACTUAL REPORT

### FY26 Q2 vs FY25 Q2 Actuals - Explanation for Change

- {A} Change from PY (totaling \$108K) relates to timing of requesting reimbursements from the State. Full State appropriation amount is expected to be fully vouchered and received by Q3.
- {B} The increase in Net Tuition Revenue and Net Differential Revenue (\$2.2 million) 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.

#### Actual Credit Hours Comparison as of FY2026 Q2 based on Census Data

	Summer II (@44%)	Fall	Spring as of 12/30/25	Total
FY2026	6,025	55,977	40,380	102,382
FY2025	5,906	53,900	39,045	98,851
Increase in Credit Hours	119	2,077	1,335	3,531

- {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 December 2025	As of December 2024	Difference
July	\$ 283,646	374,486	\$ (90,841)
August	274,167	344,166	(70,000)
September	270,343	332,241	(61,898)
October	285,530	336,073	(50,544)
November	291,187	347,750	(56,563)
December	303,164	322,580	(19,416)
	<b>\$ 1,708,036</b>	<b>\$ 2,057,297</b>	<b>\$ (349,261)</b>

The \$349K decrease in investment income can be attributed to a combination of factors, including the Federal Reserve's decision to reduce rates starting September 2025.

- {D} The increase in Personnel Services of \$730K was driven by across-the-board raises for union and non-union employees, promotions, and equity adjustments.
- {E} In FY2026, the University issued new debt to refinance the NEST student housing and parking obligations and to support critical campus improvements. As a result, NEST-related payments previously recorded under the Contractual Services line—typically in December and March—were eliminated, resulting in a net decrease in Contractual Services totaling \$952K. Moreover, starting in FY2026, the University directly pays the principal and interest on the related debt, with a portion recorded under the Debt Service line of the unrestricted operating budget, resulting in higher expenses in that category (+\$527K).
- {F} The increase in Tuition Scholarships of \$953K is primarily driven by the non-receipt of the IBHE Pell 55 grant in FY2026. In FY2025, tuition scholarships including housing scholarships were absorbed by the IBHE Pell 55 grant, allowing unrestricted operating funds to be reallocated and used to support one-time initiatives aimed at enhancing the overall student and faculty experience at the University.

## INFORMATION ITEM II. A. FY2026 2<sup>ND</sup> QUARTER BUDGET TO ACTUAL REPORT

**Table 2**  
NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET TO FORECAST COMPARISONS  
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2025  
UNAUDITED FIGURES

	Adopted Budget	Budget Adjustment	Adjusted Budget	Actual Year to Date as of 12/31/2025	Forecasted Revenue/Expenses Thru 06/30/26	Annual Forecast	Adjusted Budget Vs Annual Forecast
<b>Revenue</b>							
State Appropriations	\$ 41,166,300	\$ -	\$ 41,166,300	\$ 30,116,265	\$ 11,050,035	\$ 41,166,300	\$ -
Net Tuition Revenue	47,001,700	-	47,001,700	40,438,105	6,622,556	47,060,661	58,961
Net Differential Tuition Revenue	1,617,000	-	1,617,000	1,192,907	474,644	1,667,551	50,551
Investment Income	3,400,000	-	3,400,000	1,708,036	1,599,406	3,307,442	(92,558) {AA}
All Other Sources	600,000	-	600,000	356,532	243,468	600,000	-
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>93,785,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>93,785,000</b>	<b>73,811,845</b>	<b>19,990,109</b>	<b>93,801,954</b>	<b>16,954</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>							
Personnel Services	73,613,490	386,131	73,999,621	31,215,589	42,784,032	73,999,621	-
Contractual Services	14,032,107	(1,181,420)	12,850,687	4,074,137	8,706,594	12,780,731	69,956
Equipment	379,486	(16,411)	363,075	169,613	186,080	355,693	7,382
Commodities	758,917	5,612	764,529	238,025	526,504	764,529	-
Telecommunications	176,700	104,753	281,453	158,030	107,378	265,408	16,045
Travel	171,800	102,393	274,193	80,727	187,155	267,882	6,311
Permanent Improvements	25,000	(2,582)	22,418	-	22,418	22,418	-
Operation of Auto Equip	23,500	18,600	42,100	18,714	23,386	42,100	-
Scholarships, Awards and Grants	1,299,000	582,924	1,881,924	951,512	930,412	1,881,924	-
Debt Service	3,305,000	-	3,305,000	1,693,296	1,612,110	3,305,406	(406)
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>93,785,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>93,785,000</b>	<b>38,599,643</b>	<b>55,086,069</b>	<b>93,685,712</b>	<b>99,288</b>
<b>Excess Revenue Over Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 35,212,202</b>	<b>\$ (35,095,960)</b>	<b>\$ 116,242</b>	<b>\$ 116,242</b>

**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 January 5, 2026 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.

### FY2026 Budget to Forecast Comparison - Explanation for Variance

{AA} The projected \$93,000 unfavorable variance in investment income reflects updated assumptions for the remainder of the fiscal year.

As of December 31, 2025, despite a recent 0.25% rate decrease in December, investment income is currently tracking slightly favorable, with an \$8,000 year-to-date positive variance. If the Federal Reserve implements one additional 0.25% rate reduction at the end of January, investment income is expected to end the fiscal year at approximately break-even with the budget.

The \$93,000 unfavorable projection assumes a more conservative scenario in which two additional rate decreases occur prior to June.



**INFORMATION ITEM II. B. PURCHASES OF AT LEAST \$100,000 BUT LESS THAN \$250,000**

Board of Trustees' Regulations require that the President report to the Board purchases of at least \$100,000 but less than \$250,000 other than those exempt from Board approval (e.g. utilities). The following lists those purchases since the last Board meeting.

<b>VENDOR</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>CONTRACT AMOUNT</b>
<b>Steinway, Inc., (Steinway &amp; Sons)</b> (Sole Source approved by State of IL, December 9, 2025)	Steinway Concert Grand Piano, Model D	\$208,330.00 PO# P0072123

## **INFORMATION ITEM II. C. NEWS AND EVENTS**

### **Institutional Advancement and NEIU Foundation**

**Director of Alumni Relations Retirement** - Mr. Michael Zarobe, Director of Alumni Relations, has announced his retirement from NEIU, effective early April 2026. Since joining the University in October 2024, Michael has made significant contributions to alumni engagement and institutional advancement. He worked closely with colleagues to formulate and successfully present a comprehensive three-year strategic plan for the Office of Alumni Relations to University leadership. Under his direction, the office coordinated notable events including the alumni gathering in Washington, D.C. in April 2025 and the Amplify | Elevate event in November 2025. Michael brought extensive career experience in Alumni Relations to NEIU, and the University is grateful for his service and leadership. A national search for his successor will be initiated with the goal of having new leadership in place by Summer 2026.

**Associate Director of Development for Corporate Relations Search** The Development Office is conducting a national search for an Associate Director of Development for Corporate Relations. The position will focus on building and stewarding corporate partnerships to support University initiatives. The goal is to have the new Associate Director in place by April 2026.

**Federal Funding Secured for MSNEP** Congresswoman Delia Ramirez's office notified Institutional Advancement staff that \$1.23 million in Community Project Funding for the Master of Science in Nursing - Entry to Practice program has been funded and is now in the contracting phase.

**Major Gifts Support Arts Programs** The Carol Oppenheim and Jeffrey Lamet Charitable Trust Fund contributed \$21,900 to purchase a new large, front-open kiln and accessories for the Department of Art + Design. Additionally, the Kurt Weill Foundation provided \$5,000 to the Department of Music and Dance in support of the production of *Three Penny Opera* April 9 and 11, 2026 in the Sasha Gerritson Theater.

#### **Hockey Alumni Reunion - March 18, 2026**

Former members of the NEIU (then-titled UNI) Hockey Team will gather in Chicago to reconnect and reminisce about their time at Northeastern. Past hockey reunions have drawn over 30 alumni and friends of the University, demonstrating sustained engagement with this historic program.

#### **Scholar-Donor Soirée - April 7, 2026**

Scholarship donors and key contacts will meet their scholarship recipients during this annual event hosted in Alumni Hall on NEIU's main campus. The evening will feature student musicians and a donor and scholarship recipient to share their experiences with the audience. University leadership and program staff who help build relationships with the donors and students will also be in attendance.

#### **Alumni and Friends Event in Washington, D.C. - April 21, 2026**

Local alumni, friends, and legislators will convene for an evening of networking and connection, coinciding with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) Annual Capitol Forum. Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from President Katrina Bell-Jordan and special guests during the program titled "HSIs in Action: Advancing Hispanic-Serving Institutions in the Midwest."

### **Enrollment Management**

We are happy to announce that the purchase orders for the general contractor and the furniture vendor have been issued for the One Stop Student Center, and demolition and construction will start at the beginning of March 2026. We are very excited to start seeing physical changes in the current space as it will bring expedited process to the University experience for new and existing students.

## INFORMATION ITEM II. C. NEWS AND EVENTS

Between January and March 2026, NEIU has hosted — and will continue to host — dozens of targeted recruitment and outreach events designed to strengthen our enrollment pipeline across undergraduate, graduate, and international populations. Below is a summary of our larger-scale engagement efforts:

**Undergraduate Admissions** has hosted two New Student Orientation sessions, welcoming a total of 146 attendees. In addition, three Preview Days/Open House events are scheduled through the end of March, with 1,023 prospective students currently registered to attend. These high-impact campus experiences are critical in converting applicants to enrolled students.

**The Office of International Programs** has hosted three virtual recruitment webinars with a combined attendance of 30 prospective students and families. Two additional webinars are scheduled for March as part of continued efforts to sustain international engagement amid a challenging global recruitment environment.

**Graduate Admissions** is prioritizing personalized outreach by increasing one-on-one student appointments and coordinating smaller, program-specific information sessions (e.g., Ed.D. and other graduate programs). This tailored strategy is designed to strengthen application growth and improve yield within targeted graduate populations.

These coordinated efforts reflect NEIU's proactive, multi-channel recruitment strategy and commitment to meeting students where they are through both in-person and virtual engagement opportunities.

## Student Affairs

### Angelina Pedrosa Center for Diversity and Intercultural Affairs



The image is a poster titled "BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENTS SCHEDULE FEBRUARY 2026" from the Angelina Pedrosa Center. It lists several events with dates, times, and locations. At the bottom, there are logos for "PROVEO PA SANTI" and "BSSC".

Date	Event	Location
Feb. 03	4th Annual Black History Month Kick-Off Soul Food Dinner	Alumni Hall 3:00pm - 7pm
Feb. 04, 5, and 20	Barbershop Talk	Pedrosa Center 4:30pm - 6:30pm
Feb. 06	Black History Month Trivia Night	Pedrosa Center 4:30pm - 6pm
Feb. 17	La Negra: Blackness, Belonging, and Visibility in Mexico	Student Union Room 204 4pm - 6pm
Feb. 18	Barbershop Talk: Black Mental Health Matters	Pedrosa Center 4:30pm - 6:30pm
Feb. 19	Raíces Negras: Afro-Latinx Identity, Resistance, and Puerto Rico	Pedrosa Center 4pm - 6pm
Feb. 24	Black Game Night	Pedrosa Center 4pm - 8pm
Feb. 25	3rd Annual Black Professionals Panel	Pedrosa Center 4pm - 7pm
Feb. 26	Chicago Bronzeville Tour w/ Sherman "Gigga Dilla" Thomas	Departing from the Pedrosa Center at 9am

This February, the Angelina Pedrosa Center for Diversity and Intercultural Affairs led a robust Black History Month series focused on community, education, and celebration. We began the month with our 4th Annual Black History Month Kick-Off Soul Food Dinner on February 3, bringing together students, faculty, and staff for fellowship.

Signature programs included *La Negra: Blackness, Belonging, and Visibility in Mexico* and *Raíces Negras: Afro-Latinx Identity, Resistance, and Puerto Rico*, highlighting intersectional perspectives on Black identity. Additional events included Barbershop Talks, Trivia Night, Black Game Night, the Black Professionals Panel, and a Chicago Bronzeville Tour.

These programs advanced student engagement, cultural affirmation, and cross-cultural dialogue, aligning with NEIU's commitment to inclusive excellence.

### Career Development

The Office of Career Development continues to expand employer partnerships and student engagement opportunities this spring.

We will host a Part-Time Job Fair in March with 13 employers and a Career and Internship Fair in April with an anticipated 65 employers across multiple industries. Attendance at both events continues to grow, with more than 700 students participating across the two fairs last semester.



## **INFORMATION ITEM II. C. NEWS AND EVENTS**

In addition, the office is offering targeted employer panels and industry programs in partnership with organizations such as Chase, INROADS, and Project Greenwood, as well as discipline-specific career panels and identity-affirming programming.

Our Job Shadowing Program will place 8–10 students each Friday in March with regional employers, including Illinois Tollway and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, providing hands-on professional exposure.

Finally, we are expanding our digital career library to increase access to online tools and resources, ensuring broader support for students' career readiness.

These initiatives directly support workforce development, experiential learning, and employer engagement aligned with NEIU's student success priorities.

### **Housing and Residence Life**



It is my pleasure to formally introduce Dr. Brandon K. Johnson, who joined Northeastern Illinois University this week as our new Director of Housing and Residence Life.

Dr. Johnson brings more than a decade of progressive leadership experience in student affairs and residential education. He has served in housing leadership roles at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the University of Michigan, Loyola University Chicago, and Washington University in St. Louis. Across these institutions, he has led residential operations, crisis response, occupancy and assignment management, staff development, and strategic initiatives that strengthened both operational systems and the overall student experience.

At NEIU, Dr. Johnson serves as the senior administrator for all aspects of our 440-bed NEST Residence Hall. He will oversee residence life programming, housing assignments, staff supervision, safety planning in partnership with University Police, and facilities coordination. He will also support our Living Learning Communities and work closely with Enrollment Management, Student Success and Retention, faculty, and campus partners to strengthen residential engagement and persistence outcomes.

A central priority of his leadership will be guiding the continued transition of the NEST to full university management on May 29, 2026, in close collaboration with Finance and Administration, Enrollment Management, Marketing and Communications, Human Resources, and University Technology Services, including the continued implementation of eRezLife and systems integration.

Dr. Johnson is also nationally recognized for his leadership within ACPA–College Student Educators International and for his scholarship on student engagement and residential learning. We are excited to welcome Dr. Johnson to NEIU and look forward to the leadership and stability he brings to Housing and Residence Life.

### **Campus Recreation Updates**

- The golf simulator conversion is almost complete. Campus Recreation has transformed one of the underutilized racquetball courts into an indoor golf simulator and putting area. This update will allow for new golf programs, campus tournaments, open play and potentially coursework in HSPE.

## INFORMATION ITEM II. C. NEWS AND EVENTS

- Campus Rec leadership are currently finishing the new Club Sports Policy that will give our growing club sports programs a solid foundation for growth. Club Sports will continue to grow and expand throughout the next several semesters.

### Student Counseling Services



It is my pleasure to introduce Dr. Amanda Ngola, who joined Northeastern Illinois University on January 12, 2026, as our new Director of Student Counseling Services.

Dr. Ngola brings more than 20 years of experience in higher education and college mental health. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Illinois and Wisconsin, and most recently served as Associate Director of Mental Health Services at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. In that role, she led outreach and prevention initiatives, supervised a multidisciplinary clinical team, and strengthened campus-wide crisis response and training efforts. Her work has consistently centered on expanding access, advancing equity, and supporting the mental health needs of diverse student populations.

In addition to her clinical leadership, Dr. Ngola served as a Clinical Associate Professor and Associate Field Director in social work, with a focus on leadership development, supervision, and social justice-oriented clinical practice. She brings both practitioner expertise and academic insight to her work.

At NEIU, Dr. Ngola leads Student Counseling Services with a focus on responsive care, trauma-informed practice, and cross-campus collaboration. She will also serve as a Confidential Advisor, providing confidential support and advocacy to individuals impacted by sexual violence and sex discrimination, further strengthening our coordinated support network.

Her leadership is central to advancing a culture of care, resilience, and student success at NEIU. We are grateful for the thoughtful work of the search committee and are excited about the direction of Student Counseling Services under her leadership.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Amanda Ngola to Northeastern Illinois University.

### Student Health Services



The immunization compliance campaign is ongoing and has surpassed the Fall 2025 goals of 30% to 35%. Soft holds begin late Spring 2026, and hard holds begin mid-Fall 2026. Free vaccinations and lab services are available to limit barriers.

Renovation of SHS completed, made available by the Pell 55 grant, a newer lab collection space allowing to expand services to students and employees in a warm and inviting environment.

Hired an additional Health Education Coordinator. SHS now has 3 certified instructors for CPR and Mental Health First Aid, offering free certification courses for students and employees.

## **INFORMATION ITEM II. C. NEWS AND EVENTS**

Sponsoring assistance with the Facilities Department in the purchase of ADA wheelchair accessible workspace signs. Assisting Student Success and Retention with their initiative to support visually impaired students.

### **Student Leadership Development (SLD)**

SLD ended the Fall semester celebrating the December graduates, co-hosting the President's Toast to the Graduates in conjunction with the Honors Ceremony and Graduate Hooding Ceremony.

Over winter break 11 students traveled to New Orleans to participate in an Alternative Winter Break Service Trip. The group learned about Cajun culture and helped with continued hurricane relief efforts which included planting 500 Cypress trees.

The Spring semester kicked off with Winter Weeks of Welcome which included an indoor skating rink, Student Organization Fair and Winter Social that drew almost 200 students.

On March, 19 students will be traveling to Springfield to participate in Model Illinois Government/Moot Court.

Over Spring Break, three groups of students will be participating in the Alternative Spring Break program with trips going to Arizona to learn about immigration and border issues, Memphis, TN to learn about the Civil Rights movement and Justice Reform, and Oklahoma to learn about the Cherokee Nation and visit Black Wall Street. All the service trip participants will host a presentation on their experiences on April 3rd.

Diversity Food Fest, the semiannual student organizations fundraiser where a variety of cultural foods are offered, will take place on March 24.

### **Student Union, Events, and Conference Services**

- Our dining services management contractor, Fooda, has recently switched restaurateurs for the Golden Eagle's Nest Cafeteria. The new restaurant partner, Savory & Spice, will continue to offer daily breakfast and lunch service with the addition of new menu items, daily specials and other new fare.
- We are about 95% complete with the audio/visual renovations of Alumni Hall. Renovations include new video processing, new wall plates, updated audio and speakers, new wiring and new control systems. These updates will allow for easier use of the technology in the space, improved audio and video capabilities, and live event streaming/video conferencing.
- Goldie Bucks are back! We have recently relaunched the Goldie Bucks campus card payment system. Goldie Bucks are preloaded funds on a student account that can be used to purchase items on campus from the cafeteria, Cafe Descartes, Welcome Desk and Spirit Shop. We hope to grow this program to allow students to utilize 3rd party funds, establish meal plan options, and more.