

Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University

**Academic/Student Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee Meeting Minutes**  
August 14, 2019

A meeting of the Academic/Student Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee of the Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University was convened on Thursday, August 14, 2019 in the Student Union Alumni Hall North located at 5500 N. St. Louis Avenue, Chicago, IL. Ann Kalayil, Chair of the Committee, called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m.

**The following Trustee Committee Members were in attendance:** Marvin Garcia, Ann Kalayil, and Fatima Siddiqua

**Other Trustees in attendance:** Jim Palos

**Also present:** Dr. Gloria Gibson, President; Melissa Reardon Henry, Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel; Karl Voigt, Assistant Secretary to the Board; Vice Presidents, staff; and University community members.

**Opportunity for Public Comment in Accordance with Public Act 91-0715**

Trustee Kalayil announced the Opportunity for Public Comment. There were no requests to speak.

President Gibson asked Interim Associate Vice President for Enrollment Services, Dr. John Fraire to present an enrollment update. Incoming freshmen enrollment for Fall 2019 is expected to be relatively flat compared to Fall 2018. While current headcount is running about 12-15% behind last year, a goal for Fall 2019 was to increase the yield rate of the freshman class, which is up to 16% this year compared to 13% last year. This is due in part to expanded use of technology, improved relations with area high schools, and identification and elimination of key bottlenecks in the University's enrollment processes. Looking ahead to Fall 2020, the University is aligning many of its recruitment strategies and programs with Chicago Public Schools, introducing more technology enhancements such as an online, personalized viewbook, all-day campus visits, and working with faculty to develop robust recruitment plans. Graduate enrollment is showing significant growth for the Fall 2019 with a 25% increase in headcount over last year, due in large part to the new Masters of Public Health (which has a full cohort), as well as the graduate programs in Social Work, the College of Education, and College of Business and Management.

Trustees asked about bottlenecks and how they are being addressed. Dr. Fraire talked Trustees through the three key bottlenecks identified through evaluation of the admissions/enrollment process: the fractured communication network among admitted students, enrollment services, and the academic departments needs to be streamlined to move students through the intake processes quicker; the financial aid verification process needs better communication to happen with students/families much sooner in the process; and the process by which new students register for placement testing and orientation, presently being condensed to make it easier overall. A group is also looking at ways to enhance the orientation itself.

Dr. Frank Gaytan, Interim Associate Provost for Success and Retention, provided a retention update. Freshmen retention is rebounding from its low of 46% in 2016. As of yesterday, 58% of freshmen are enrolled for fall classes. Dr. Gaytan expects the retention figure to get to 60% this year; which is where it was prior to the state budget impasse and other leadership transitions. It

is expected that the University will meet its 72% retention goal as set forth in the Title V grant by the end of the grant in two years.

Dr. Shayne Cofer, Acting Associate Provost, provided an overview of the upcoming faculty institute. The second faculty institute will take place on August 21 and 22, 2019. Keynote speakers on day one will present on diversity and inclusion in the classroom, a demonstration and conversation about Starfish, and eight breakout sessions in the afternoon covering topics in retention, student health and mental health, and peer-to-peer leadership, to name a few. On day two, each College will have their own sessions and presentations covering a variety of topics and activities.

Dr. Gibson invited Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Daniel Lopez, to provide a Student Housing Update. The University's only student housing complex, The Nest, is beginning its fourth year of operation. A public-private partnership between Northeastern and American Campus Communities, the 440 bed student residence experienced a drop in residents last year in part due to overall enrollment decline, resulting in a 51% net occupancy for the 2018-19 academic year. Because this is below the 80% contractual occupancy requirement, the University was obligated to make a \$1,929,873 subsidy contribution to American Campus Communities. The 2019-20 academic year enrollment projections are looking similar to last year and the University expects to make another subsidy contribution to offset the anticipated occupancy difference at The Nest. Presently, there are 106 students who are move-in ready for fall 2019. The University continues to aggressively market the resident housing option to incoming freshman, particularly students from out-of-state and from out of the country. Leasing will continue throughout the year. New this year: The Nest will give prospective residents the option of signing either a ten-month or twelve-month lease. To help students who have a resource gap, the NEIU Foundation is awarding housing funds up to \$2,000 whose regular financial aid does not completely cover annual housing costs. Other projects being developed for the coming year are housing for summer conferences, housing for Summer Transition Program participants, and additional student engagement programs geared toward resident students.

Trustees expressed concern about the occupancy figures and the struggle to meet the minimum requirements. President Gibson echoed this concern and stated that the University is focusing its efforts on increasing enrollment, which has a direct correlation to occupancy in The Nest. She added that part of the recruitment and admission process emphasizes student housing to prospective and incoming students more so than in the past. As demonstrated by the NEIU Foundation grants, the University's executive team is working together to help students with the on-campus housing option that suits them best.

Acting Vice Provost, Mark McKernin, presented an overview of the biographies of the 19 new faculty members who will begin their first semester at NEIU. President Gibson pointed to the academic excellence of the new faculty members, the academic institutions they come from and that they will not only be teaching, but performing research and working in the community. Northeastern is fortunate to be able to attract such a talented group of educators each year.

Executive Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, Blase Masini, presented several University data dashboards for Trustees' consideration. The data dashboards recommended capture registration and retention figures, and credit hours for both undergraduate and graduate students. Trustees like the data provided and discussed other data points they might want to review. They will decide the manner in which they receive the data digests and their frequency.

Trustee Kalayil introduced the need for technology to be an area of focus for the committee, and by extension to be part of the Committee Charter. She asked Chief Information Officer, Sam Kann, to provide an overview of the University's technology setup. Since 2017, the University's IT infrastructure has undergone much-needed updating. An IT Infrastructure Modernization proposal was presented to the Board at the October 11, 2017 Finance Committee meeting as an executive summary of the state of the University's technology and proposed solutions. Most of the technology in use at that time was at or nearing the end of its life; unsupported software, aging and obsolete hardware, including the critical battery backup systems. All technology infrastructures underwent a rigorous "health check" resulting in a recommended action for upgrade with proposed costs. At its November 16, 2017 meeting, the Board of Trustees authorized up to \$975,000 that would serve as funding to address the most critical IT infrastructure needs.

Mr. Kann stated that the University's ultimate goal for campus technology is to become a "smart campus" and his team is busily working toward that end. Trustee Kalayil asked for an updated IT infrastructure roadmap and asked that the Provost, Dr. Frank Gaytan, and Sam Kann work together to draft proposed technology language for addition to the current committee charter to be presented at the next committee meeting.

Trustee Kalayil asked if there was any new business. Trustee Garcia asked for an update on the University's HSI status to be presented at the next committee meeting.

Trustee Kalayil announced the next committee meeting will be on October 17, 2019 at 8:30 a.m. in the Community Room at El Centro.

There was no further business.

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### **Adjourn**

At 10:20 a.m., Trustee Kalayil adjourned the meeting

Ann Kalayil, Committee Chair  
Karl Voigt, Assistant Board Secretary  
approved September 19, 2019