The NEIU Board of Trustees Committees met as follows on February 21, 2013 in the Golden Eagles room at Northeastern Illinois University, 5500 N. St. Louis Ave. The President’s Report is incorporated herein by reference. Chair Azcoitia called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes
Chair Azcoitia said that hearing no corrections, the Committee Minutes from November 8, 2012 stand as written.

Announcements
Chair Azcoitia briefly introduced the new Provost, Dr. Richard Helldobler. A formal introduction will be given during the full Board meeting at 2:00 p.m.

Executive Committee – no report

Academic and Student Affairs Committee 1:15 – 1:26 p.m.
Committee Members present: Marvin Garcia, Chair; Barbara Fumo, Jin Lee, and Jesus Nuñez
Committee Members absent: none
Other Trustees Present: Carlos Azcoitia, Ex-Officio; Bob Biggins, Jonathan Stein
University Liaison: Richard Helldobler

Trustee Garcia asked several questions about the innovation summit initiative related to the innovation work, programmatic opportunities, funds invested, and next steps. President Hahs explained that the whole effort is called Imagine the Possibilities and it began last June with an innovation summit. The initiative is about framing and defining innovation and providing encouragement to move forward. The basic theme focuses on opportunities during challenging times. An email address was created to receive ideas; for example, the class schedule has gone electronic. In September, the University announced its innovation grants competition and provided eight awards, total amount of awards is nearly $200,000. A total budget of over $400,000 has been set aside this year for these initiatives. In November, there was a University Colloquium on creativity, innovation and the future. This spring, each college, including student affairs and the library, is involved in a set of round tables to discuss the future of Northeastern in the next five years. The round tables are expected to become the call to action for the University. Trustee Garcia was delighted to hear about the progress.

Garcia also asked about the accreditation for the College of Business and Management (CBM). Hahs explained that the University overall has regional accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission which accredits every Northeastern program. Some professional programs can earn an additional accreditation. The CBM is moving toward AACSB accreditation, the premier accreditation for a business college. It is a very lengthy process that the University has pursued for the past two years. Currently, the college is in the process of gathering the data that shows the CBM is meeting its curricular goals for students. The CBM has been approved at each step so far and expects to complete the process in at least two more years.

Adjourn: 1:26 p.m.
Buildings and Grounds Committee  
1:26 – 1:44 p.m.

Committee Members present: Barbara Fumo
Committee Members absent: Omar Duque
Other Trustees present: Carlos Azcoitia, Ex-Officio; Bob Biggins, Marvin Garcia, Jin Lee, Jonathan Stein, and Jesus Nuñez
University Liaisons: Mark Wilcockson and Nancy Medina

Items Discussed:
  Construction Update

- Trustee Fumo read the construction report.

- Trustee Lee expressed several concerns that were reported in the Independent Newspaper regarding University health and building safety. Lee’s concerns included science lab ventilators, partial closure of computer lab due to falling caulk, and fire safety throughout campus, especially fire panels and extinguishers. Lee would like to see these concerns prioritized and addressed quickly.

  Vice President Wilcockson explained that repairs are underway throughout the University. Due to weather conditions, some repairs that require outdoor access have been postponed. Overall, the University is considered a safe campus and is inspected regularly by the Chicago Fire Department. Some issues reported in the Independent Newspaper were not entirely accurate. A campus tour to confirm safety can be scheduled.

  Trustee Garcia and Chair Azcoitia suggested a follow-up meeting with the Independent Newspaper to answer any questions and correct any misleading statements. The next issue should clarify any inaccurate statements.

Adjourn: 1:44 p.m.

Finance Committee  
1:44 – 2:24 p.m.

Committee Members present: Bob Biggins, Jonathan Stein
Other Trustees present: Carlos Azcoitia, Ex-Officio; Barbara Fumo, Marvin Garcia, Jin Lee, and Jesus Nuñez
Committee Members absent: Omar Duque, chair
University Liaisons: Mark Wilcockson and Robert Filipp

Items Discussed:
  Review of President’s Report Items
  Action Item 1. B. Tuition and Fee Recommendations, page 2

Annually, the Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University sets tuition and fee rates for the next academic year. This report recommends a very modest tuition increase in the rate for incoming students of 4.4 percent and an increase of 6.9 percent for students who have been at the University for more than six academic years. Fees would increase 2.4 percent. Last year, the University did not change rates for new students and graduate students. Northeastern was the only University that did not increase rates last year; unfortunately this did not help the University with the legislature or recruit new students. For next year, another budget cut in state appropriations is expected. Over the last few years, the average state appropriation cut has been 4.5% per year.

Chair Azcoitia referred to Goal 6 of the Strategic Plan which refers to reducing reliance on state funds and student tuition. As Northeastern realizes the impact of not increasing tuition last year, the University continues to fulfill its strategic plan as it becomes less reliant on tuition.
Azcoitia also commented on a section of the board report that said, “the fact that the University kept tuition level for one year did not have any positive impact on the University’s state appropriations and there is no evidence that it had a positive effect on enrollment, which declined by 3.7 percent.” Azcoitia feels that the act of not increasing tuition for one year should have been used as a marketing and recruitment tool to increase enrollment. Azcoitia recommends that the University take another look at its marketing and recruitment practices.

Hahs explained that new students are more concerned with the total cost of tuition; not increasing tuition for one year is not exactly a deciding factor for new students. Trustee Garcia added that students are looking closely at cost, graduating with debt, and comparing academic programs and universities. Trustee Lee added that based on research conducted by UCLA, the biggest concern for new students when choosing a university is cost. Trustee Nuñez added that his biggest concern is student access to programs and scholarships, programs should be better advertised. Hahs added that one of the innovation summit ideas would have all of the foundation grants and scholarships in an electronic searchable format. Azcoitia added that last year was the first year in many years tuition was not raised; the Board will continue to review not raising tuition and maintaining quality and financial stability while fulfilling our strategic plan.

Trustee Stein added that the Board made a mistake by not raising tuition last year, it did not increase enrollment, it did not change anything with the legislature, and it did not create any meaningful publicity. The map in the Board report that compares tuition and fees in the Chicago area shows the great value that Northeastern provides and the room to raise rates. The proposed tuition rate of 4.4% is under what it should be and should be raised to at least 5.9%. Hahs explained that tuition should be increased a modest amount each year to offer students what they deserve. The University is committed to working with and maximizing the resources it has. Hahs agrees that 4.4% is a modest amount, but would rather not raise tuition any higher. Garcia reiterated his point that not raising tuition last year was a good decision especially during these tough economic times. The Board made its decision to not raise tuition partly on the information received from the admissions office that said enrollment applications were increasing compared to the previous year. He felt the University did not capitalize on this great opportunity to advertise the decision of not raising tuition.

President Hahs briefly discussed the remaining action and information items. Most of the action items are expenditure approvals for facility projects. The report on the Minority and Female Business Enterprise Program is a very good report; Northeastern has exceeded its state goals.

Adjourn: 2:24 p.m.