

Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2024

A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University was convened on Thursday, September 19, 2024 in the Student Union – Alumni Hall North room located at 5500 N. St. Louis Avenue, Chicago, IL 60625. Michelle Morales, Vice Chair of the Board, called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

Roll was called and the following Trustees were present: Marvin Garcia; Ann Kalayil; Jorge Leon; Itzel Linares; Anna Meresidis; Michelle Morales; and Paula Wolff

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

Motion to Allow Remote Participation by Trustees

Trustee Leon, seconded by Trustee Kalayil, moved to permit remote participation by Betty Fleurimond and Paula Wolff.

Discussion: pursuant to Section 7(a) of the IL Open Meetings Act and Section 2. A. (2) of the Board's Bylaws, 2 Trustees have notified the Assistant Board Secretary in advance of today's meeting requesting to participate in the meeting remotely. The requests meet one of the requirements outlined in both the statute and Bylaws. Trustee Paula Wolff needs to leave the meeting early for employment reasons but wishes to participate in the remaining business. Trustee Fleurimond is out of town for employment reasons.

There was no discussion. Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Garcia: Yes	Leon: Yes	Meresidis: Yes	Wolff: Yes
Kalayil: Yes	Linares: Yes	Morales: Yes	

The motion carried.

Administration of Past Meeting Minutes

Trustee Kalayil, seconded by Trustee Garcia, moved to approve the following written open and closed past meeting minutes, and to keep the closed minutes closed:

- open and closed minutes from the May 13, 2024 Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting;
- open minutes from the May 16, 2024 Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee meeting;
- open and closed minutes from the May 28, 2024 Regular Board meeting;
- open and closed minutes from the June 13, 2024 Special Board meeting;
- open and closed minutes from the June 25, 2024 Special Board meeting;
- open and closed minutes from the July 30, 2024 Special Board meeting;
- open minutes from the September 5, 2024 Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee meeting;

Discussion: there were no corrections or additions to the minutes. The motion carried by acclamation.

Pursuant to Section 2.06(d) of the Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120), Trustee Garcia, seconded by Trustee Linares, moved that the confidential written minutes from the closed session portions of the following meetings require confidential treatment and will remain confidential:

- May 31, 2023 Executive Committee Special meeting;
- June 13, 2023 Executive Committee Special meeting;
- June 15, 2023 Regular Board meeting; and
- June 23, 2023 Special Board meeting;

There was no discussion. The motion carried by acclamation.

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

Vice Chair Morales announced the opportunity for public comment. There were 12 registrations placed in advance and 10 presentations made.

1. **Isaura Pulido**, representing the Council on the Status of Latinx
Topic: pursuing the Seal of Excelencia to build institutional capacity in intentionally serving Latinx students
2. **Ryan Poll**, representing self
Topic: the paramount importance of in-person education and its value in advertising and fundraising
3. **Amanda Goldblatt**, representing NEIU University Professionals of Illinois
Topic: working conditions as learning conditions: disability and access
4. **Robin Heggum**, representing NEIU University Professionals of Illinois
Topic: physical infrastructure – P.E. Building
5. **Olivia Cronk**, representing NEIU University Professionals of Illinois
Topic: the importance of supporting the new IBHE funding model and upcoming legislation
6. **Brandon Bisbey**, representing NEIU University Professionals of Illinois
Topic: introduction as new president of NEIUPI, the upcoming negotiations, and advocating for support of S.B. 3965
7. **Mary Kroeck**, representing self
Topic: working together to resolve conflict ahead of a grievance process
8. **Criage Althage**, representing AFSCME Local 1989
Topic: university sustainability
9. **Heather Carper**, representing self
Topic: priority of civil service investments as part of pandemic recovery
10. **Jeff Jamrok**, representing self
Topic: state of affairs at NEIU Police Department

Chair's and President's Remarks

President Bell-Jordan welcomed everyone back for the Fall 2024 semester. Things are off and running with the recent Golden Eagles 'Welcome Day,' the Fall Fest activities, and the Goodwin Lecture Series featuring guest speaker, Doris Kearns Goodwin on September 17. Fall enrollment is up 4.2%, representing 98% of the enrollment goal. Retention needs work. Please contact your representatives asking them to support S.B. 3965 styled as "The Adequate and Equitable Funding Formula for Public Universities Bill."

Vice Chair Morales thanked everyone who took time today to make public comment. Vice Chair Morales recognized Trustee Marvin Garcia as today is his final NEIU Board meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee

Trustee Kalayil reported that the Academic/Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Technology Committee met on Thursday, September 5, 2024 in the Student Union –Room 214 on the main campus. The Committee presented no recommendations, but reported on the following informational briefings received which included:

- a report on this year’s Faculty Institute; an update on the Pell 55 grant from IBHE; a report on the American Association of Colleges and Universities’ Student Success Equity Initiative; and an update on Program Realignment work at the University.
- an update report on Student Enrollment and a report on the Nest (occupancy was reported at 93%);
- a report on the strategic recruitment, retention, and completion outlook and planning
- an overview of the various ways the University is addressing artificial intelligence (AI)

Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Shayne Cofer, introduced the following tenure-track faculty new to NEIU this fall:

- Dr. Kyle Goodwin, Counselor Education
- Mr. Todd Irwin, Art + Design
- Dr. Denana Miodragovic, Chemistry
- Dr. Kirsis Pipre, Counselor Education
- Dr. Jennifer Ventimiglia, Educational Leadership
- Dr. Li Wang, Computer Science
- Dr. Lizi Zhu, Computer Science

Audit Committee

Trustee Meresidis reported that the committee met this morning in the Alumni Hall North room and received an update on the FY23 audit findings from the University’s Internal Auditor, Christie Temples. The committee is making the following recommendations for approval today.

Action Item I. A. Board Action on Committee Recommendation Regarding the FY23 Audits

Trustee Meresidis, seconded by Trustee Wolff, moved to adopt the Audit Committee’s recommendation to accept and file the FY23 Compliance, Single, and Financial Audits as presented.

There was no discussion. Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Fleurimond: Yes	Kalayil: Yes	Linares: Yes	Morales: Yes
Garcia: Yes	Leon: Yes	Meresidis: Yes	Wolff: Yes

The motion carried.

Action Item I. B. Board Action on Committee Recommendation Regarding the Statement of Auditor Independence, the Internal Auditing Charter, and the 2025-26 Internal Auditing Plan

Trustee Meresidis, seconded by Trustee Wolff, moved to adopt the Audit Committee’s recommendation to accept and file the Statement of Auditor Independence, the Internal Audit Charter, and the 2025-26 Internal Auditing Plan as presented.

There was no discussion. Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Fleurimond: Yes	Kalayil: Yes	Linares: Yes	Morales: Yes
Garcia: Yes	Leon: Yes	Meresidis: Yes	Wolff: Yes

The motion carried.

Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee

Trustee Paula Wolff reported that the Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee met this morning in the Alumni Hall North room and received informational briefings on the FY24 4th quarter budget to actual report and received a report on purchases of at least \$100,000 but less than \$250,000 that were made since the last committee meeting. The committee is presenting the following items for action.

Action Item I. C. Board Action on Committee Recommendation Regarding the Final FY25 Operating Budget

Trustee Wolff, seconded by Trustee Itzel Linares, moved to adopt the Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee’s recommendation to approve the Final FY25 operating budget.

Discussion: Trustees engaged in a lengthy discussion about various aspects of the budget document, particularly asking for a clearer explanation of the credit hours differential.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Fleurimond: Yes	Kalayil: Yes	Linares: Yes	Morales: Yes
Garcia: Yes	Leon: Yes	Meresidis: Yes	Wolff: Yes

The motion carried.

Action Item. I. D. Board Action on Committee Recommendation Regarding the FY26 Preliminary Operating and Capital Budgets Request

Trustee Wolff, seconded by Trustee Meresidis, moved to adopt the Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee’s recommendation to approve the University’s FY26 Preliminary Operating and Capital Budgets Request as presented.

Discussion: Vice Chair Morales reminded Trustees that this is an IBHE requirement in order to get the University’s operating and capital budgets request incorporated into the legislative budget discussions for the next year’s appropriations.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Fleurimond: Yes	Kalayil: Yes	Linares: Yes	Morales: Yes
Garcia: Yes	Leon: Yes	Meresidis: Yes	Wolff: Yes

The motion carried.

Action Item I. E. Board Action on Committee Recommendation Regarding Shortfall Funding for the Capital Development Board's Project No. 817-010-082

Trustee Wolff, seconded by Trustee Kalayil, moved to adopt the Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee's recommendation to approve shortfall funding not exceed \$371,091 toward the science building HVAC renovation project (CDB Project No. 817-010-082) with a contract expiration date of June 30, 2028.

Discussion: Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration, Beni Ortiz, provided a brief explanation of the project and why the funding gap exists.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Fleurimond: Yes	Kalayil: Yes	Linares: Yes	Morales: Yes
Garcia: Yes	Leon: Yes	Meresidis: Yes	Wolff: Yes

The motion carried.

Action Item I. F. Board Action on Committee Recommendation Regarding the Gensburg-Markham Prairie Proposed Resolution

Trustee Wolff, seconded by Trustee Linares, moved to adopt the Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee's recommendation to approve certain land parcels at the Gensburg-Markham Prairie to be dedicated as Illinois State Nature Preserve additions and Illinois State Nature Preserve buffer zones as provided for under the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act. This recommendation is made with the understanding that approval of such changes to the Gensburg-Markham Prairie does not financially bind the University.

Discussion: Trustees expressed their gratitude for the work being done to preserve this natural prairie.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Fleurimond: Yes	Kalayil: Yes	Linares: Yes	Morales: Yes
Garcia: Yes	Leon: Yes	Meresidis: Yes	Wolff: Yes

The motion carried.

Motion to Convene in Closed Session

At 2:34 p.m. Trustee Leon, seconded by Trustee Wolff, moved to convene in Closed Session pursuant to Section 2(c)11 of the Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120) to discuss the litigation report.

There was no discussion.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Fleurimond: Yes	Kalayil: Yes	Linares: Yes	Morales: Yes
Garcia: Yes	Leon: Yes	Meresidis: Yes	Wolff: Yes

The motion carried. The audience was asked to leave the room.

Motion to Reconvene in Open Session

At 3:54 p.m. Trustee Kalayil, seconded by Trustee Garcia, moved to reconvene in Open Session. The motion carried by acclamation.

Vice Chair Morales asked for a motion to amend the original motion to convene in closed session pursuant to Sections 2(c)1, 2(c)2, and 2(c)11 of the Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120) to discuss personnel, collective bargaining, and litigation matters. Trustee Meresidis, seconded by Trustee Linares, moved to amend the original motion to convene in closed session citing the additional sections.

There was no discussion. Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Fleurimond: Yes	Kalayil: Yes	Linares: Yes	Morales: Yes
Garcia: Yes	Leon: Yes	Meresidis: Yes	Wolff: Yes

The motion carried. Paula Wolff left the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

ADDITIONAL ITEM FOR BOARD ACTION

Action Item: Board Action to Approve Settlement Agreement and Authorization to Release Funds from Reserves

Trustee Leon, seconded by Trustee Garcia, moved to approve the settlement agreement between the University and former president, Gloria Gibson, in the amount of \$750,000, and to authorize release of funds for the settlement from the University's reserves.

There was no discussion. Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Fleurimond: Yes	Kalayil: Yes	Linares: Yes	Morales: Yes
Garcia: Yes	Leon: Yes	Meresidis: Yes	Wolff: Yes

OLD / NEW BUSINESS

Vice Chair Morales asked if there was any old business to discuss. Hearing none, Trustee Garcia, seconded by Vice Chair Morales, moved to adopt the following resolution in honor of Dr. Suleyma Perez:

There was no discussion.

WHEREAS, Dr. Suleyma Perez has served Northeastern Illinois University for more than 24 years with distinction; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Perez earned a bachelors with honors and a masters degree from Northeastern Illinois University; and

WHEREAS, in 2004, Dr. Perez was recruited by the University President to serve as Assistant to the President and the University's first legislative liaison; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, Dr. Perez was successful in creating the Office of Government Relations and was named the Director of the newly created office; and

WHEREAS, during her time as Senior Executive Director of Government Relations, Dr. Perez achieved a long and distinguished record of service at Northeastern; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Perez throughout her excellent service to Northeastern sought to build connections to government and community leaders, groups, and institutions, assuring mutual benefits to them and the University; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Perez built her own credibility as well as that of the University.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Dr. Suleyma Perez be granted the title of Senior Executive Director Emerita of Northeastern Illinois University upon her retirement.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University, September 19, 2024. J. Todd Phillips, Chair of the Board; Michelle Morales, Vice Chair of the Board; and Katrina E. Bell-Jordan, President of the University.

The motion carried by acclamation.

Vice Chair Morales mentioned the following upcoming events:

- Inauguration festivities begin on Thursday, October 3.
- President Bell-Jordan's Inauguration Ceremony Friday, October 4th in the University Commons. RSVP deadline is September 27
- Inauguration Celebration (semi-formal) Saturday, October 5th in Alumni Hall. RSVP deadline is September 27
- Next Board Committee meeting day: Thursday, October 17. Committees to be announced soon
- IBHE Annual Trustee Leadership Conference will be Thursday, October 24, virtually, from 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Several Trustees are required to attend the training this year. Registration information will be coming soon.
- Next Board meeting: Thursday, November 21 at the Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies

There was no further business.

Motion to Adjourn

At 4:08 p.m. Trustee Garcia, seconded by Trustee Fleurimond, moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned by acclamation.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Morales, Vice Chair of the Board
Karl Voigt, Assistant Secretary to the Board
Approved November 21, 2024