BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON ENROLLMENT

October 14, 2015
AGENDA

NIU Board of Trustees
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON ENROLLMENT
1:00 p.m. - Wednesday - October 14, 2015
Board of Trustees Room
Altgeld 315

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Verification of Quorum and Appropriate Notification of Public Meeting
3. Meeting Agenda Approval ................................................................. Action ........ i
4. Review and Approval of Minutes of June 15, 2015 .................................. Action ........ 1
5. Chair's Comments/Announcements
6. Public Comment*
7. University Reports
   a. Report to the Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment ...................................... Information ...... 15
   b. Supplemental Information ................................................................. Information ...... 29
8. Other Matters
9. Next Meeting Date
10. Adjournment

*Individuals wishing to make an appearance before the Board should consult the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees of Northern Illinois University, Article II, Section 4 - Appearances before the Board. Appearance request forms will be available in the Board Room the day of the meeting. For more information contact Kathleen Carey, (kjahns@niu.edu) Recording Secretary to the Board of Trustees, Altgeld Hall 300, DeKalb, IL 60115, 815-756-1273.

Anyone needing special accommodations to participate in the NIU Board of Trustees meetings should contact Ellen Andersen, Director of Special Events, at (815)753-1999, as soon as possible.
Minutes of the
NIU Board of Trustees
Of Northern Illinois University
Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment
June 15, 2015

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The NIU Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment meeting was called to order at 11:02 a.m. by Chair Marc Strauss in the Board of Trustees Room 315 Altgeld Hall. Recording Secretary Linda Odom conducted a roll call of the Committee members. Members present were Trustees Robert Boey, Robert Marshall, John Butler, Paul Julion, and Committee Chair Marc Strauss. Also present were President Douglas Baker, Provost Lisa Freeman, Board Liaison Mike Mann, General Counsel Jerry Blakemore, Alan Phillips, Eric Weldy, Anne Kaplan, Laurie Elish-Piper, Jeff Reynolds, Carolinda Douglass, Harlan Teller, Dani Rollins, UAC Representative Greg Long, with a quorum present, the meeting proceeded.

2. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM AND APPROPRIATE NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Mr. Blakemore indicated that proper notification of the meeting has been provided pursuant to the Illinois Open Meetings Act and a quorum was present.

3. MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL

Trustee Boey motioned to approve the agenda; Trustee Butler seconded. The motion was approved.

4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 27, 2015

Chair Strauss noted there were minutes to approve from March 27, 2015. Trustee Butler made the motion to approve and Trustee Julion seconded. The motion was approved.

5. CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Strauss recognized the representative from the University Advisory Council Greg Long and asked if he had any comments at this time. Dr. Long had no remarks to make on behalf of the UAC but appreciated the concerns regarding enrollment by the committee.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Strauss indicated there was one individual, Mr. Dan Porter, who requested to speak to the Committee. He noted he had five minutes and should be seated at the table for recording purposes. Mr. Porter came to the microphone to address the committee.

Dan Porter: My name is Dan Porter and I’m a recent employee, (inaudible) high school teacher, I’m also graduate from Northern Illinois University and I’m just going to get to the point that the reason why I’m here today is on April 7th I was employed by one of the student organizations here on campus, a charity function, in the Holmes Student Center. For absolutely no reason at all, the guest services staff after escorting me into the building, and I just want to establish that I did this free of charge. After being escorted in to the building, the guest services staff threw me out or tried to throw me out. NIU police intervened at my behest and this was a student worker, a belligerent student worker, that tried to take me out and I have everybody’s music on my computer and I’m not very good at things like this, but what I’m trying to say is that ladies and gentlemen we have a problem here on campus and that is that certain
staff members are treating the NIU student and the public like garbage. This needs to stop. This is not an isolated incident and I know from my Facebook postings and from conversations with student body; I have about 1300 Facebook friends and the vast majority of them are members and alumni of NIU and NIU student organizations. We have been (inaudible) students, students are transferring out of here. As a high school teacher I can tell you that by way of conversation I have had about 150 students just this past semester, and none of them have plans that involve NIU after they leave high school. I did my student teaching at George Westinghouse High School and I had the same conversation with the students there as well and there is an increasing animosity towards the way the students are treated by certain staff members here. There is a problem and this problem needs to be addressed. There are people working here, like for instance in March I believe it was the campus activities board ask me to help out with the battle of the DJ’s and wanted to use some of my equipment. Well this didn’t even involve me, it didn’t even have anything to do with me. Guest Services allows the students into the Carl Sandberg Auditorium and then after allowing students into the Carl Sandburg Auditorium, guest services, while there were about 150 people in there warming up, going over their routines for their skit or whatever for the show, guest services threw everybody out in the foyer area for 20 minutes because of a contractual issue. Apparently they didn’t have the room contracted until 5:30 and they were allowed into the room for some reason I don’t know, a little bit after 4:00 and then thrown out. This is just one example and what I’d like to do, I have some things saved that I think all of you should look at and consider because there really is a problem. Students don’t have the fortitude and I know that I didn’t when I was an undergraduate to get up here and stand in front of all of you and raise this issue because it’s a very perilous thing to do what I’m doing here today. I mean this could really cost me my neck or this is something that (inaudible) need to be made aware of.

Chair Strauss asked if there were any questions for Mr. Porter. Trustee Boey asked if this situation was primarily the Holmes Student Center or campus-wide. Mr. Porter responded his specific issue was with the Holmes Student Center. Chair Strauss asked Vice President Weldy to touch base with Mr. Porter and follow up on these items.

7. UNIVERSITY REPORTS


Chair Strauss indicated Provost Freeman will begin with the first agenda item concerning policies and practices that affect academic program additions and deletions.

Provost Freeman began where she left off from the previous meeting regarding program prioritization. She informed the committee she would review the program prioritization timeline and give an update on items accomplished since the last meeting in March. In addition, she will talk about a new reporting item that IBHE notified us about at the end of April because it involves low enrollment programs and is very well imposed to program prioritization, and to the charge of their ad hoc committee. The final item will be campus process for particular changes including academic program additions and deletions.

Provost Freeman continued, you may remember that you stared exploring program prioritization as the process for our campus in the Fall of 2014. Over the course of the Spring semester of 2015, we established guiding principles, developed criteria with broad campus participation, nominated people to select members of task forces that would ultimately be charged with prioritizing both academic and administrative programs, and selected those members of the task forces. Since I last spoke to you we have also finalized the criteria for evaluating administrative programs and their weights. Although there are only five criteria for administration programs and eight for the academic programs, I think you’ll note that they’re very aggressive, similar to one another it’s just that they tend to be vetted slightly differently. I do want to point out that the academic list of criteria that we have adopted are NIU’s criteria, they are not identical to any use on any other campus to those published by Dickenson or Larry Goldstein. These are the ones that folks from our campus, members of the Academic Planning Council of Resource, Space and Budget Committee and selective others were able to formulate. As I just said, our academic and administrative program prioritization task force has planned the academic task force made up of tenured
faculty and instructors, in fact there are 19 faculty members and three instructors. There is at least one member from each college and the majority, as you might expect, are from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The administrative task force has 21 members; four faculty members, five members of our operating staff and twelve members of our supportive professional staff and those will be public soon. These task force members were nominated by NIU faculty, staff and students. They were nominated with the idea that these were people who could have a steward or a trustee mentality. They could put the institution above their individual programs. Selection was done by a nine person group that mirrored the composition of the committee that advises the trustees. It included me, Vice President Phillips, Bill Pitney who was then the secretary of the University Council, President of the Faculty Senate; faculty selected by the faculty senate, student representatives selected by the student body and members of the operating staff council and SPS council selected by those faculties. Coming up this fall, we will be giving programs relevant data and they will be analyzing and creating a narrative around the data.

Provost Freeman indicated the task force review, which is still listed in 2015, will actually be moved into the Spring 2016 to enable us to have all of the work that the task force is focused on in the spring semester. Vice President Phillips has assured me that if we get the data and the prioritization to you by the end of April we will still be able to perform FY17 budget processes. This summer has been a lot of work behind the scenes. The data support team is very busy building the data system, working with people to map data elements, load data, and reporting. They've been doing individual meetings with the programs. We've defined 250 academic programs and a little bit more than that in terms of administrative programs. We are starting to finalize the task force training plan and we have a website that will be updated regularly. This is our program prioritization website. You can get to it from the NIU home page link and you can type program prioritization into any of the search functions, on the left are the latest news and updates, and the task force membership.

Provost Freeman continued, people will receive sufficient data to accurately reflect, describe and measure the screen program activities. They will be focused on metrics for key performance indicators that are typical to a discipline or to an administrative function. There will be both quantitative and qualitative data and we'll use the data that are easily accessible to us including the institutional data and the program data which will be coming from a variety of sources. When you think of institutional data we think of institutional resource and the curators of data. Certainly that is the unit that's responsible for external reporting, but in fact we have relevant institutional data all over campus. In the office of academic analysis and reporting, registration and records, assessment services, sponsored projects, human resources, finance and administration. We have a lot of people on campus who are engaged in our efforts to populate the templates for program prioritization with relevant and accurate data. I wanted to recognize Dan House, Jeff Reynolds, Celeste Latham, Dara Little, Greg Barker, Chris Parker and Al Phillips; because we don't often recognize a lot of these people and yet they play a key role in helping this process move forward. When we talk about having data that are typical through the discipline, what we really want are data that can be used to show how our programs compare to other programs on campus and how our programs compare nationally in terms of quality. For academic programs there are a number of collaborations that we have and standard organizations that we refer to when we're looking to do the type of comparative data or comparative analysis. We mention the Illinois Board of Higher Ed but the truth is IBHE really takes data that we submit to the IBHE and then it reports it back out to us. Now a days they align that data with other sources like integrated post-secondary education data systems or IPEDS. They no longer do an independent cost analysis because their cost data wasn't really very useful to us. When Vice President Phillips was still at the IBHE, he asked provosts and institutional research directors “is a cost study worth continuing?” and most of us said no. We get our cost data analysis elsewhere, places like the National Study of Instructional Cost and Productivity which is otherwise known as the Delaware Study, and we look at quality indicators for research and doctoral programs through other mechanisms like academic analytics or the HERD survey, the Higher Education’s Research and Development survey. Basically, the Delaware Cost Study is a very large study that has broad participation from across the US of institutions of higher education that are for example, researched, doctoral, comprehensive, baccalaureate, liberal arts, and creates a large database that looks at teaching department size, student credit hour costs, infrastructure costs, research productivity, average faculty productivity, things that you kind of want to know at your institution and how you are
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Chair Strauss asked how current is that data? Provost Freeman responded we provide data to them on an on-going basis, but basically they have their data set self-populated from all of the national publication databases. Jeff Reynolds continued it goes back five years and we’re actually keeping it up to date now based on data tables and working in conjunction with the college to make sure tenure tracking faculty are mapped specifically to the discipline of departments. Departments are easy, but the discipline specific benchmark is important in this case. The next update actually is happening in two to three weeks and so we'll have this updated for program prioritization with data for fiscal year 2014-2015.

Jeff Reynolds continued, the Delaware study is based on the fiscal year. It looks at budgets within the fiscal year, but benchmarks to a fall semester as the typical semester. Productivity of student credit hours, faculty need and instructional staffing, as well as the type of organized class section so we can get a really good look at what a department or even a discipline, because there's multiple disciplines within some of departments or academic units, what that unit or discipline can do in term of productivity; and then you compare that in terms of benchmarking with the other peers. Current Delaware study, from one of our colleagues at Delaware, University of Delaware, indicated this is the largest submission that we actually have ever. Our data were just validated and ready to access and use in July and ready to inform program prioritization.

Chair Strauss asked, the plan is you'll have '14 data for both costs and quality and that's the basis that you're going to make decisions upon? Provost Freeman responded, yes, most of it is a five year average, but '14 will be the most recent year included in the documents. I wanted to show an example, of the Delaware data and where qualitative knowledge and qualitative data really come in. One of the things that program prioritization team if finding is there's a lot of fear that small, high-quality programs will be disadvantaged in an unrecoverable fashion by this study. The small jewels that make NIU what NIU is will never survive program prioritization. And I would say that's not true. I wanted to give an example, not from NIU, to show how a small jewel would fair very well using Delaware Cost study data in a program prioritization process. This is actually the Art Conservation Department at the University of Delaware. In the left hand column where you see 8894 and 8943, you have the University of Delaware's data for full time equivalent students taught for full time equivalent faculty; the direct instructional costs versus student credit hour taught; and the direct and special costs for full time equivalent students taught. The far right column you have national data. So you can see that at the University of Delaware in their art conservation program, there are fewer students taught for full time equivalent faculty and the direct and special costs regardless of how you calculate them are significantly higher than the national average. So if you looked at all of these numbers, you might say that's a very expensive program. It could be a very inefficient program. But it could also be very dissimilar from some of the national benchmarks and in fact, this is a very excellent, very unique program at the University of Delaware. It’s largely graduate students and it’s the only PhD in art conservation in the US and, we know from a large Delaware database, that graduate instruction is more expensive than undergraduate instruction. This is not a
typical art conservation program. They do a lot of other advanced analysis that involves expensive equipment; they collaborate with chemical engineering and chemistry. Chemistry is, by its nature, a more expensive discipline than art, so we have that filtering into the University of Delaware’s data because you can’t really segregate that from this very special program. Also there’s a program with an international reputation, successfully placed alumni, and substantial philanthropic support. When you look at these other data elements, some of them would be quantitative, because if we were at Delaware we would know how much philanthropic support the program attracted. This is the type information we expect in the narrative, no matter the size of the program.

Provost Freeman continued, the IBHE is responsible for approving program additions and deletions and that we send forward to them; and also for program review. This is codified to some extent in Illinois Public Act 97-610 which states that each state university shall report annually to the board on programs of impression and public service that have been terminated, dissolved, reduced or consolidated. So when we take a program deletion to the Board of Trustees, we report it to the IBHE. In 2011 with the implementation data 2012 there was another caveat placed in the act that each state university shall also report to the board a trend in low performance and enrollments, degree completions and high expenses per degree and this shall go into an annual report submitted by the IBHE to the General Assembly. There’s no uniform definition of how to submit cost data to the IBHE. So what we were asked to do was provide three things: an update on programs eliminated over the past decade; a description of the process that NIU will use going forward to identify low performing programs - that would be program prioritization; and then, status reporting on the low performing programs as identified by the IBHE. These would include undergraduate, masters, and doctoral programs. Now, although the initial request was for programs defined by enrollment, graduation rate, and costs; subsequently we’ve kind of settled on enrollment and graduate rate because of the challenges associated with cost data. This is the format the report that we will submitting to the IBHE. This criteria is currently used at Southern Illinois University to identify low performing programs.

Provost Freeman added, for an undergraduate program, average enrollment over a four year period of less than 25 degrees conferred and less than 6 degrees is a flag for a low performing program. For a master’s program, less than 10 average enrollment, less than 5 annual degrees conferred and for doctoral program, less than 5 enrollments and less than 1 degree conferred. NIU has very few programs that fall into this category. For example, the bachelor’s in Russian, we eliminated it a while ago and so it has very little average enrollment and degrees conferred because we’ve eliminated it. We are teaching out the students who are currently in the program.

Provost Freeman added, the second example shows robust enrollment but very few degrees conferred. The reason for that is not that this is a very hard program that knock out all of the students, although that would be a possible explanation for this pattern, it’s actually a program that was instituted relatively recently, so most of the students who are enrolled have not yet had an opportunity to graduate. In terms of our doctorate and masters programs, again we have some that are slated for elimination because we have recognized, just as IBHE has, that these are not robust in enrollment numbers. There will also be programs undergoing review because of the formal program review and program prioritization.

Trustee Butler asked, so this matrix would seem to fall into that potential category that you talked about earlier that just looks at numbers and not the qualitative data that you had mentioned earlier. Is this what the IBHE is asking for only?

Provost Freeman responded, in the explanation column, we can write as much or little as we want. The IBHE has communicated to us that they expect to see program already deleted, programs slated for sunset, program remediation plan, and more justification for what they would consider low performance. I don’t have a feel for NIUs submission yet, but I’m very encouraged by the fact that we have very few programs that fall into low performance based on those categories. The ones that we have, there is good justification. It’s a new program, people haven’t had a chance to graduate. I think we will try to be honest and thorough this when we negotiate with departments about why the numbers look like this. We
will listen to what they say and we will have program prioritization on the horizon to allow programs to make the strongest case. But I do fear that the way this is constructed in the current environment, there's an opportunity to be less nuanced than what should be looking at the data. I very much share that concern.

Carolinda Douglass added, the request for this came at the end of April and is due June 30th and we're still getting information about what they want from the IBHE, so this is definitely IBHE initiated process at this point. It does look like going forward we'll be able to use program prioritization in some aspects of that as how we're actually going to look at low performing programs in the future. For this year there really isn't any alternative except to use the data as they've indicated that we should.

Trustee Butler asked, have they set the red flag level?

Provost Freeman responded, yes, in fact, at one point the red flag level for active programs was suggested to be three. As you can imagine, there as a lot of push back from all the research universities as to whether or not that was appropriate and with that feedback, the IBHE reverted to one which is SIUs standard.

Trustee Boey asked under the annual average degrees conferred, how do you get a number like 0.4, 0.8?

Provost Freeman responded, we're looking at a four year rolling average, so some years there could be zero, some years they'll be whole numbers and so we do the division.

Provost Freeman continued, I’m going to conclude by addressing the specific request of this committee and the board that is very relevant to the other two processes that I talked about. Anything that is recommended by the prioritization task force in terms of program priority, programs sun setting or deletion; and anything that emerges from the IBHE task force as a low performing program that we might terminate or discontinue, would still have to go through a peer review process that's part of our shared governance system, as do most changes in catalog language and all programs, additions, deletions or major revisions.

Provost Freeman continued, our graduate curricular revision process is relatively straightforward. We have the department curriculum committee recommending the change; an addition or deletion goes to the college curriculum committee, to the sub-committee of graduate council; to graduate council and then to university council and is taking ten to fourteen weeks to get to university council.

Provost Freeman added, when you look at our undergraduate curricular process, we're looking at something that's much more convoluted. We have the same process going from department to college curriculum committee, but depending on what the type of change it is, we will go to the undergraduate committee on undergraduate curriculum, it might go to academic standards, it might go to academic environment, it might go to undergraduate improvements, general education, and possibly a couple of these before it goes to an undergraduate coordinating council, that's the equivalent of the graduate council and then to university council. So when you look at straightforward changes, limited admission, general education curricular changes, we're talking about a process that is very variable depending on how many committees it has to go through and whether the committees send it back and forth for clarification or wordsmithing, and we're talking about sometimes more than 20 weeks before a program actually gets to university council by following our process. Then once it gets to university council, it still has to go to the board of trustees. In some cases majors have to go to the academic planning council as well.

Provost Freeman continued, This is a variable because by the times things are merged from our curricular process to go to the board, it could be two weeks before an ASAP meeting, a committee meeting or a board meeting, or it could be two days after we had the last ASAP committee meeting or board meeting and then you'd have basically another quarter; and if you hit it at the wrong time of the year, you could actually add another year and then it can take up to 12 months at the IBHE. There is room to streamline
the overall process for the undergraduate curricular changes at multiple levels and, in fact, our faculty senate and university council have been working towards this end. Last year the vice provost worked very hard with faculty senate president Pitney to create a series of proposals that would consolidate committees, streamline proposals, streamline the process for curricular change to allow things to be more flexible; to allow us to get programs that might be in demand added more quickly, changes that would benefit students done in a more nimble fashion, programs off the books to satisfy the IBHE more quickly, and we had a vote at the last University Council meeting of 38-6-1 but because this was a change to the bylaws, we needed two-thirds of the eligible people who sit on University Council which is 40 to pass the motion so the 38-6-1 motion failed. However, our new faculty senate president, Greg Long, is very committed to trying again. He’s been asking graduate assistants and a secretary of the faculty senate to pull data about the size of the university, the number of faculty at the time the committees were structured in this fashion, and to look at why we need to think about having fewer committees to achieve the same end and how to really create a process that’s more flexible and adaptive while still retaining committee diversity as the representation and the things we really care about in terms of shared governance. President, Greg Long, will speak to the board about that come the fall. There is also an opportunity for this committee to think about what might be done in terms of board governance to try to accommodate changes that might come forward in less than perfect synchrony with the board meeting schedule.

Chair Strauss noted, I think we would have welcomed any proposals that you have in order to get us to a point where required board level activity was being considered and maybe that’s something that you’ll be prepared to do the next time this committee gets ready. Can you give me some sense as to how our process compares to that at other institutions?

Provost Freeman responded, I would say that our undergraduate curricular process has more securities, and is more fragmented than at the other institutions where I’ve been.

Anne Birberick responded, Bill Pitney had one of his graduate assistants look at some of the other processes at other institutions, and we do have many more committees and subcommittees and that influenced what we put forward to the University Council which was to have a process that would be the department, the college, and then one committee at the university level that would consolidate many of the activities done by independent some committees and that was much more in line with processes at other institutions.

Chair Strauss added, well, I certainly want to be respectful of the shared governance structure and the role that the faculty has in making determinations in this area, so I hope you’ll continue to have these discussions and hopefully there’ll be enough common ground that we can have a system that both produces a good result and is as timely as we can make it. I feel confident that the board would be anxious to listen to whatever board level policies are required once those consultations have been completed.

Provost Freeman responded, thank you first for respecting the time honored role of faculty ownership of the curriculum and I do want to say that I believe that our faculty stand ready to re-examine this in the fall. I think you can see by a vote of 38-6-1 that the faculty are aware that our process is time consuming and not always beneficial to the university. I think the faculty will be very excited as all of us are to hear that the board will also consider it.

Chair Strauss continued, by my quick math you had 15 people that didn’t show up to that meeting to vote and that’s not a challenge that’s unique to that body. All bodies wind up with the situation and one easy solution may be to change the requirement to a super majority of those present instead of those who have a vote. I think that there are a number of different ways that you can tackle some of these challenges but as long as there are discussion that are going on about this, at least my personal view is that it would be good to let those conversations continue and hopefully they will arrive at a good resolution.
Provost Freeman responded, I think your point was driven home to everyone in the room when the motion following the failure of curricular consolidation initially failed with a guest load of 39 because the incoming faculty senate president was in the restroom and it was only the quick thinking of student leader, Dillon Domke, who allowed the motion to be reconsidered using his exquisite knowledge of Rutgers Rules to jump in to allow what was most uncontroversial passage of the day to go forward. So I think people are very much in that frame of mind.

Chair Strauss asked for other questions from committee members. He continued, I regret that it took us two meetings to be able to conclude your presentation, but I think we’ve had a healthy discussion particularly of the program prioritization process at our last meeting and also I’ve found the information that we received today to be very beneficial as well. I think it will help us to understand some of the issues that are going to come to this committee and then to the full board.

President Baker added, just one brief comment, it’s to thank Lisa and the team she’s working with. This is not something the university has done before; it’s something we really need to do. But because we haven’t done it before and because we’re in an uncertain fiscal environment, it makes people nervous. I really appreciate your work and your communication on it and also the board’s support of this work, and without that it would be a much harder road to hoe, so thanks to both.

Provost Freeman responded, thanks to the board committee for the opportunity to present.

7.b. Update on Admissions

Chair Strauss continued, now we’re going to move on to some admissions matters and Vice President Weldy.

Vice President Weldy responded, I’ll give an intro here. I’ve asked Dani Rollins, Director of Admissions, to come in to share information, give an update on undergraduate admissions and where we are. She’s been on board for about five months and so she’s been doing a lot from the standpoint of doing some restructuring and strengthening in certain areas. Her presentation today will look at four areas that make up the Office of Admissions - recruitment, systems and processing, communications, and events, tours and customer service.

Chair Strauss added, Dani I’ve had the chance to talk with you before, but it may be that other members of the committee have not, so if you’d also like to take a minute and tell us something about yourself, I think that would be appropriate too.

Dani Rollins responded, I have been in higher education for about 15 years. The bulk of my experience has been the University of Arizona and then, after finishing my doctorate in higher education administration and leadership, I moved on to Reed College for about two years and then to Northern Illinois University five months ago.

Dani Rollins continued, what I’m going to focus on today is organizational development so that we can move forward with a good foundation. As Dr. Weldy mentioned, there are four key areas with the office of undergraduate admissions; recruitment; tours, events and customer service; communications; and systems and processing. These are really new areas of focus for the office.

Dani Rollins continued, we restructured the office of admissions and collapsed some roles and created some other roles. In recruitment, in the past, we had two associate director or recruiter or recruitment position. One was specifically for those admissions counselors that focused on transfer recruitment and one was specifically focused on freshmen recruitment. We collapsed those two roles into one senior associate director position to allow us the opportunity to do a lot more cross training and to make sure that anyone that walks through our office can be served well by any of the counselors on duty instead of being routed specifically to a transfer counselor or specifically to a freshmen counselor. Of course for travel purposes, we do have the stratifications still, we have those focus areas as well; but in terms of
our day-to-day operations, this made things a lot more streamlined. We have regular staff meetings which is a change. The office had not met as a group, ever. They had individual meetings as part of recruiters, as part of processing, but recruitment and processing for example had never met, the call center had never met with recruiters, and so the cross training is something that we’re really working hard on. We also hired several new admission counselors. A couple of those are fluent in Spanish. We’re looking to grow that population, but we also want to do a lot in terms of cross training and in terms of cultural sensitivity training as well.

Dani Rollins added, we’ve also improved the on-boarding for our new staff. Again, in the past when an admissions counselor was hired they would receive a copy of the undergraduate catalog and a copy of the two page document describing the outline of admissions in general. That was the only training that they received. Now they get over two weeks of on-board training. Travel to different high schools and community colleges was solely focused on how many applications we received from that institution in the past. That’s a good place to start, but of course we have some areas that we want to grow as well so that requires more visits to those areas. We are reimagining how we travel for both high school and community college and community based organization activities as well.

Dani Rollins continued, in our CRM, constituent relationship management system, we push out all of our e-mails, text messaging, letters and all kinds of things. Historically those territories while they existed on paper and operationally in terms of travel, they did not exist within the CRM and that limited reliability to reach out to students in a stratified way or in a way that makes sense for each counselor. Now those are created and maintained in connect. We’re also revamping our on-line counselor profiles and that helps. If you’ve ever seen Colorado State’s, they have some really fun profiles. If you look at NIUs right now we have a head shot and some general information about each of the counselors, which again is a good place to start but it’s kind of static and it’s much institutionalized. We want to be more friendly and accessible to our potential students and parents that are looking at our website. Colorado State is the model that we’re using. For professional development, all of our full time counselors participated in the Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling Conference. That’s really important for enrollment management, it is important to engage with our colleagues, to learn best practices, but also so that people know that NIU is still here and still engaging with our peers and still a player in the recruitment background. This year all of our full-time counselors attended that conference. All of our new hires will also attend a summer institute which is essentially like a recruiter boot camp. They go to the host institution, stay in a dorm, meet their peers, and every single day they’re trained on the profession of higher education admissions. These are the four main systems in use by our system and processing department: CRM, on-line application for admission, on-base which is our imaging and document processing system which we process all of our transcripts and any written documentation or paper applications, and PeopleSoft which at NIU is known as My NIU.

Dani Rollins continued, all of the work that we’ve been doing in house CRM’s connected really could be its own presentation. There are over 12,000 filters currently in the system. I implemented this system at the University of Arizona and we had about half that number of filters. NIU has been a user for a much longer time, and part of this is because we were not using the system to its fullest capability and we were doing a lot of duplicative efforts. So now some of these optimizations that we’ve incorporated, will cut down on that and just make the system a little cleaner and much more user friendly. We’ve also cataloged the most useful filters in one place so out of the that 12,000 filters, we probably really use a third of them over and over again, and some of them just existed for quick numbers and need to be deleted. Again, this CRM was really meant to be a territory management system and so our counselors need to be in the system using it. Historically we did not have good phone reports from on-campus systems or from the CRM system, solely through the Office of Admissions. Now all contacts that are coming through the system will flow throw a mock enrollment management file. Now we actually have the capability, depending on an action that a student has taken, i.e. filled out an inquiry card or come for a high school visit, and now will be assigned at the appropriate stage with a name on that file. One of the things that we’re working on right now is that last bullet point, currently we confirmed in our CRM, but of course we want to know the full life cycle of the student and so we want to know when they actually enrolled. The student can confirm for one term and then not actually enroll. We want to know when they
actually enroll so we can see how long they sat in each stage and make some projections off of that. Historically that capability, while it existed in the system, was not employed. We’re going to be passing information via interface with PeopleSoft and that’s upcoming in the next few months.

Dani Rollins continued, so when a student comes into the system, if they are from Sycamore High School, the system automatically looks at their high school and home zip code and assigns them to the correct territory and the correct recruiter. It will be much easier for recruiters to send e-mails, for example, they might to e-mail everyone in specific territory about an upcoming event. That would be a one-line filter whereas historically it could have been about six or seven different filters. We’ve also built more innovation with organizational codes into the system. In addition to high schools and community colleges we have codes for GED and home schooled students. It makes it much easier for us to reach out to certain students. We also rebuilt several of our on-line interest pages.

Dani Rollins added, the admissions website required you hit click for more info to a parent page, an undergraduate page, a freshmen and transfer page. They were almost the equal length of our on-line application, so students were really getting to that page and having to request for more information. We shortened that and we also updated the branding so that everything was uniform. We had been requested as a speaker to the Hoffman’s University Conference. I and my associate director, Crystal Garvey, have been asked to come and speak about all this work that we’ve done, and will be going to San Antonio to represent NIU and to discuss the changes we made.

Dani Rollins continued, now onto the on-line application. We’ve made several changes to the on-line application for fall ’16, spring ’17 this year. We have added a question about the primary language spoken at home so that we can get a better feel for our students who are coming in. We also added a direct link to the page for undocumented students. Again, it did not exist previously. We thought that was important for our population. We also updated the residency question with regard to the new tuition differential structure, and added the dynamic interfaces for those students as well. We also have acknowledgement set up, by submitting this application I acknowledge I’ll be receiving e-mail from NIU. In addition, a complete visual refresh trying to make things look a little bit nicer and a little more accessible and friendly. Many applications fields, instead of being really hard edge fields, will be rounded so that you can see on Twitter and other social media. It’s just a bit more user friendly and more familiar to the user as well.

Dani Rollins continued, our next focus is on-base in PeopleSoft. On-base is our system of a direct report in our document process and PeopleSoft is our record for all students, even current students. We’re really trying to increase efficiency within our office and have people trained really well. Inquiry cards is something that we do every day and that we all kind of take for granted, but it’s a huge part of what we do and this was a manual process. So if you ever see your admissions staff at their tables at their college fairs and see these little cards, we bring inquiry cards with us everywhere so that we can obtain student information. That entire process, thousands and thousands of cards, were a manual process. So I would bring my stack of cards back to the office to be scanned, after that we waited a week, pulled a report, implemented a report, assigned filters, which was hugely complicated for something that we use every single day and is an important of our admissions work. Now that scanning and importing will be automated soon. We also have an Outlook interface to on-base which means if I’m an admissions counselor and I can go and download a transcript from a high school or if a high school sends me a letter of recommendation, I will be able to index that to a student’s file directly from Outlook, directly from my e-mail inbox. Again, instead of printing it, scanning it, and sending it, we have the college reviewer part in place this fall. There are some admissions decisions that are made outside the office of admissions with the various colleges, we can track it and to send e-mails to the college as reminders to give us updates. We could actually have a good look and keep track of how many each college has and where students are in the process. Again, historically the infrastructure existed, but it wasn’t put in place so that’s something we can do now.

Dani Rollins added, the last thing we have is the query viewer app and it has something for all of our admissions staff. We’re going to train each of our counselors to be true territory managers and to be able
to pull their own reports and gauge where they are in terms of recruitment. We really felt like customer service was a focus that we wanted to be able to put at the prime of everyone’s minds when thinking of recruitment and retention. So we created this position to incorporate that phrase, customer service, and Ted Campbell has done a wonderful job of updating our tours, and we have a tour presentation that will be launching in July. We have an on-line sign in for appointments and offer beverages to our guests as a small pleasantry to make people feel welcome. The sign-in online is done by iPads at our front desk, and using our CRM system, give the admissions counselor and the student an opportunity to update any contact information that might be out of date and will also send a trigger to our CRM to make sure that that student has a welcome message and a thank you for coming to the office. We have hired more students as Northern Ambassadors as tour guides and they also help us with administrative support in the office as well.

Dani Rollins continued, we have been cross training our counselors in event management for both on-campus events and regional events. We really felt that was important because we would like to do more for high school and community college representatives, maybe that means even hosting a small event at the community college or at the high school or inviting everyone to Starbuck and coordinating all of the details. We have call centers to include outbound callers, who also include students, and on average they can get out about 400 calls per evening. So they’re a pretty productive group. We follow up daily checking the voicemails from overnight and then send them down to the admissions counselor on duty, and that counselor follows up with the callers that same day. Communications and marketing, this is the area that we’re currently down most in. We are down a CRM analyst and an associate director of marketing and communication so we’re partnering a lot with the Division of Marking and Communications group to centralize and also assist us with our social media, our web presence and our print publications as well. We’re also updating the website in general, not just our admission counselor profiles. Again, just to be more friendly and more accessible for the students and the families who are visiting our page and we’re set to go live on July 1st. Again, I just want to share a slide that sort of show our guiding principles. We really thought some of these things were fundamental things that were missing. The supportive training, general communication, access information, and service. Every student should be greeted like they are important, because they are. We follow up quickly and have accurate information. These are our guiding principles.

Dani Rollins continued, our next steps, include hiring five processors in our systems and processing department as we are down by 12 processors from historic level. The next step is to hire a CRM analyst so that we can optimize all of those changes that we made in the CRM system and to have someone oversee all of those different communication things that we’d like to build. We also want to develop some reports in dashboards in the CRM because the CRM and PeopleSoft actually speak to each other via an overnight interface and so to optimize all of that work that’s been done behind the scenes, we would like to build dashboards for our counselors so they can actually see up to the minute where they are in their territories.

Dani Rollins continued, we’re also going to have an all staff training July 22nd and 23rd. We’re going to be doing this twice a year; once in the summer and once around Christmas to sort of bookend the recruitment cycle. We’re striving to model those practices in terms of recruitment as well. We have a pilot going with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences that’s is based on the National Association for College Admission Counseling statement of principles of good practice. It talks about what a recruitment event is and what we mean when we say freshman transfer. For example, a recruitment event might be for the Office of Admissions with 200 juniors and seniors in high school coming on campus. However, if there are 200 sixth graders, that’s not really a recruitment event for us but we might send a person over to discuss college culture. We want to be sure that we have an institutional wide definition that makes sense to everyone. We’ve also put forward approval to get our CRM tuned up and training on an annual basis. Hoffman’s offers a service whereby you can purchase buckets of hours and we have, if we do this on an annual basis then we can either use them for consulting to get through times where perhaps we’re a bit leaner on personnel, but if we don’t use all those hours for consulting then we can convert them to training. We could actually have a room of 100 people and they would do a webinar and they would train us on that. Another thing that we’re talking in the office is trying to incorporate earlier student
engagement just to through our regular operations with possibly a student led call center in addition to
the full time staff in our call center now. As people retire or move into other areas, we are refilling those
positions with graduate assistants or with student assistants, so when students or parent calls in, they're
talking to a current student instead of to an admissions representative. Historically we have had what we
would call elephant communications where we just sent out these huge blasts, maybe 100,000-200,000
people and just blast everything. Now we want to shift our focus to communicate with smaller
populations more often in a way that's more relevant and timely.

Dani Rollins finished her presentation with the next steps in terms of relations, moving towards those
community colleges and high schools as partners. I am on a national board and in regular contact with
ACT and familiar with things that they’re doing relative to the redesigned SAT, relative to the ACT, and
rebuilding their websites, as well and all of our MAC schools.

Trustee Boey commented on the great start being made in a new direction to get new students.

Trustee Marshall asked will the new hires will be based here every day as a starting point or are they
going to be located regionally around the state?

Dani Rollins responded, we currently have three regional counselors in Chicago, but the new hires that I
mentioned here are behind the scenes people. The processors are people that are here based in DeKalb
in our systems and processing division who are processing the applications and matching up student
credentials with the applications. In addition, the CRM analyst position and the associate director of
strategic communications are also DeKalb based positions.

Trustee Marshall continued, my second thought is on the collaboration. I know of the collaboration with
marketing, but are the recruiting activities of various colleges and programs going to be collaborated so
we’re not bumping heads on recruiting efforts?

Dani Rollins responded, we have some decentralization issues so what I’m trying to do is lay a good
foundation in office of admissions and then rebuild that trust across campus to work towards that.

Trustee Marshall asked for information regarding recruitment and if there is a target GED set?

Dani Rollins responded, anytime we have any community based organization that reaches out to us, we
will go and present to them. We may have high, medium and tertiary priorities and so maybe the high
priority institutions we go to once or twice a month and really try to flush that out. But to add to your
suggestion that we add those as well, that’s something that we can do.

Trustee Butler asked, can you help the committee understand the role of colleges in the admissions
process? In general, I mean assume we know nothing. Why are colleges involved? What do they do
specifically and is that always the case?

Dani Rollins responded, it is generally the case that colleges and departments are involved in recruitment
in tandem with the Office of Admissions. Again, I think historically at NIU that structure just didn’t exist,
there has been some decentralization that we’re seeing as a byproduct of that. People were doing their
own things with good intentions, but I think it is confusing.

Trustee Butler continued, you’re talking about what colleges do to recruit students, I’m talking about
what is the actual role of the college in determining whether someone’s admitted?

Dani Rollins replied, so in the college review process if the student isn’t automatically admitted based on
their ACT, then there is follow up and the student records, that go out to the individual colleges for
review. We in admissions are generalists but we really want to bring in the specialists in the program
from application forward to help us deal with those students. Some colleges are recruiting and having
great success. I’m really trying to focus on rebuilding that trust between others and the office of
Vice President Weldy added, we have strengthening our relationship with the colleges is in regards to the enrollment operations committee. At no time were there any representatives from the colleges on that committee and so I am asking the deans if they could send a representative to serve along with members from admissions, scholarship, financial aid, housing and dining and other areas across campus to gives everyone an opportunity to find out what are we doing now from a standpoint of recruitment but also retention as well. It gives us an opportunity to understand what's going across campus and so how we can more together and more collaborative.

Dani Rollins added, we are starting some of that with a pilot with LA&S to decide when we should be involved, and working with everyone to show that we can work together and, also, getting it down in a tangible way that we can help to train our people and their people.

Vice President Weldy added, we’re learning from the colleges as well because there’s certain things that they do and do well from the standpoint of recruitment. We don’t want to think that we know it all and we can’t learn from each other.

Trustee Butler asked a second question as it relates to territory. Can you help me understand the methodological or disciplinary rationale for thinking in terms of territory and dividing up prospects in relation to territory?

Dani Rollins responded, it is so we can accurately assign a recruiter to presence because, of course, we can’t be everywhere so we have to be able to assign a manageable territory to assist a specific person. We can then have them at college fairs and community college nights in that area. So it’s a way for us to stratify how we do business and send people out into the field. Now that doesn’t mean that if someone comes in and is not in my territory I wouldn’t speak to them, it just a way for us to divide up our travel and then to breakdown what we’re trying to do into smaller segments so that we can report on it as well.

Trustee Marshall asked for clarification with the depleted ranks of staff members, how close we’re getting to filling that Fin.

Dani Rollins responded we’re approved for five positions in admissions processing and that position is posted, it’s out there now and we’re just waiting for that position to close so that we can start interviewing people. For the CRM analyst, which is the next highest priority after the processors, we have a justification written and we have the job description written and so we just need to submit it for approval.

Chair Strauss commented, thank you for your presentation. We’ve heard a lot about challenges with regard to the nuts and bolts of the recruiting effort and so it’s helpful for us to have this background. I’m afraid that in the day to day operation of this area there is not much that the board is going to be able to offer but I’m glad that you’re sorting through these issues. I think the next challenge for us, like the one that I communicated to Provost Freeman, was are there board level policies that may relate either to financial aid, tuition, or other issues that we ought to put on our agenda for consideration, and so I’d like to see whether for our next meeting we can start to refine the issues that will be actionable by the committee. I believe that we’ve really gone a long way toward being able to increase the understanding of all the board members in relation to the various issues that impact admissions. Now I’d like to get down to our real work product if that’s possible.

**OTHER MATTERS**

Chair Strauss commented he would like to request that we continue with our work as quickly as we can so if on the administrative side everybody could consult and see when it might be convenient given enough time to be able to come up with some proposed action items for us to get together again.
President Baker asked, that’s on program prioritization or the development of approval processes for curriculum?

Chair Strauss responded, it would be the full gamut of the items that this committee has been considering. I don’t know how many will come out of each area depending on how fully formed the proposals are when they come to us. We may or may not be able to finish all of the proposals in one meeting, because I’m not certain yet how many will manifest themselves. But I would like to advance the process at this point. I believe, unless my colleagues disagree, that we’ve had enough background information at this point and we ought to see whether we can get to some proposed action.

Trustee Boey asked for a follow up on the enrollment process, how we are improving on that.

Chair Strauss responded, he would be happy to have another report on it. In fact the full board may even want that report and they may want it periodically. Since this is ad hoc committee we want to get to items that require board level alterations in order to be able to support the goal.

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting will be determined at a later date.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Strauss asked for a motion to close the meeting. Trustee Butler made a motion and Trustee Julion seconded. The motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at: 12:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Odom
Recording Secretary

*In compliance with Illinois Open Meetings Act 5 ILCS 120/1, et seq, a verbatim record of all Northern Illinois University Board of Trustees meetings is maintained by the Board Recording Secretary and is available for review upon request. The minutes contained herein represent a true and accurate summary of the Board proceedings.*
REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE ON AD HOC ENROLLMENT

Background Information: During the past year, the Board’s Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment has met on four occasions to review, discuss and analyze University recruitment and retention efforts, financial aid packaging, scholarship information and other activities and factors that impact University enrollment. This report reviews some of the key factors that were presented to the Committee, provides updates on University efforts in key areas, and offers key discussion areas for future consideration.

Summary: The Board’s Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment, chaired by Board Chair Marc Strauss, held meetings on the following dates and reviewed the topics shown below.

- **November 14, 2014**: Enrollment Background/Trends; Recruitment and Retention Efforts; and, Scholarship Information.
- **January 16, 2015**: Financial Aid Packaging and Scholarship Information; Tuition and Fees Trends and Comparisons.
- **March 27, 2015**: Program Prioritization; Policies and Practices that Affect Academic Programs Additions/Deletions; and Policies and Practices that Affect Faculty Work, Productivity and Accountability.

Key Findings

1. Undergraduate headcount enrollment has declined by 3,482 or -18.4 % from the fall 2007 high-water mark of 18,917 to 15,435 in the fall of 2014. **During that same time period, total headcount enrollment dropped from 25,254 to 20,611, also an 18.4% decline.** (Fall 2015 enrollment is 20,130.)

2. NIU is facing increasing competition for students from private institutions, for-profit institutions, community colleges, on-line institutions and programs, and out-of-state schools. More than 1,000 higher education institutions recruit in the Chicago area, and 65 institutions have a physical recruiting presence in the city.

3. Demographics are not helping the enrollment situation. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that nationwide the percentage of high school graduates enrolling in college has declined annually for the past 5 years from 70.1 percent to 65.9 percent. The actual number of high school graduates also plays a factor. In Illinois, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the number of public Illinois high school graduates is projected to decline from high points of 136,650 in 2012 and 135,750 in 2013 to 129,000 for the next few years then slowly rise to 132,000 by the year 2020.

4. Illinois is a net exporter of college students. According to the NCES 2013 Digest of Education Statistics, Illinois ranks 49th in the nation in terms of the number of college-bound students retained in the state. The most recent available data for this measure shows that Illinois exports 33,134 college students and imports 16,571
college students, resulting in 16,563 net loss. (This net loss is second only to the state of New Jersey, which suffered a 29,237 loss of students to out-migration.)

5. At Northern Illinois University, efforts to improve the student engagement and the student experience have resulted in an improvement in NIU’s retention rate for new freshmen which increased last year from 66 percent to 71 percent. (And in fall 2015 increased again to 72 percent.)

6. In terms of the NIU student profile, 91.4 percent of NIU students come from Illinois and 88.6 percent come from the NIU northern Illinois service region.

7. The NIU student population offers tremendous diversity; nearly 40 percent of our undergraduate students are minority students, and many are first generation college students.

8. Over 80 percent of our students receive financial aid. Need-based aid is critical for our students; 5,700 get $20 million in state Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants. NIU also committed over $18 million for institutional financial aid last year ($13.2 million for merit aid and $4.7 million for need-based.)

9. In terms of college costs, from FY 2006 to FY 2015, tuition and fees at NIU increased at an average annual rate of 10 percent from $5,061 to $9,253.

NIU supports the access and affordability goals of the Illinois Public Agenda. We have held the line on student costs for the past two years. Student tuition, fee and room and board rates packages have been held nearly flat by reducing room rates, eliminating high cost meal plans, and holding tuition increases to a minimum. Truth-in-tuition protects continuing students from tuition increases. For FY 2016, a simplified tuition structure for undergraduate students has been introduced which allows students to take course-loads above 12 credit hours per semester at no additional charge. This is aimed at simplification and encouraging fuller course-loads thereby improving affordability, retention, and time to degree.

10. Program additions/deletions: Board of Trustees approval is required prior to the addition or deletion of either instructional, research and public service administrative units (departments, institutes, centers, divisions, schools, colleges, branch campuses, campuses) or instructional programs (minors, emphases, specializations, concentrations, majors, degrees, cooperative (joint) degree programs). Board of Trustees consideration of changes to instructional programs occurs after a shared governance process that can take up to 20 weeks. The additional time required for approval of a program changes by the Board of Trustees is variable and highly dependent on alignment of the Board of Trustees meeting schedule and university catalog deadlines. In addition to Board of Trustees approval, instructional, research and public administrative units and all new majors and degree programs require IBHE approval; the IBHE approval can take up to 12 months. These processes make it challenging for the university to be responsive to changes in market demand or innovative with academic programming. Whereas the IBHE timeline for approval is beyond our direct control, we have the ability to streamline other components of our program approval processes. The University Council will be considering such changes during the 2015-16 Academic year. Later in this report, a scheduling option is discussed which would help streamline this process.

11. Program Prioritization Update: Last fall, NIU began a program prioritization process by which the university will align our resources with our mission and strategic priorities to guide future growth and development. As part of Program Prioritization, all of NIU’s academic and administrative programs will be reviewed, with a focus on their quality, efficiency, effectiveness,
and centrality to the NIU mission. Program prioritization will strengthen NIU by providing us with a strong foundation for maintaining and improving the quality of academic and administrative programs – allowing us to deliver the best possible programs to our students and our region. At the March 27, 2015 Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment meeting, NIU Executive Vice President and Provost Freeman presented information to the Committee about the Program Prioritization initiative currently underway at NIU. The Committee made a recommendation to endorse the program prioritization initiative, and the resolution was passed at the June 18, 2015 meeting of the full Board.

12. **State Funding Support.** From FY 2002 to the FY 2015 revised appropriation, state funding support for NIU operations has declined $27 million from $118 million to $91 million. In inflation adjusted dollars, state support is about half of what it was in FY 2002.

**Conclusions that can be drawn from a review of these topics:**

1. **State Support.** It is clear that additional support from the State is not likely. The state’s disinvestment in public higher education is actually intensifying. The Governor’s FY 2016 budget proposed a 31.5 percent reduction in state funds for NIU and all Illinois public universities.

2. **Affordability.** NIU students are price sensitive, and we must continue to hold the line on student charges. Tuition and fee increases that mirror the rate increases seen prior to the past two years are clearly not sustainable.

3. **Operating Model.** In today’s environment, it is clear that the status quo business model is not an option. We must become more efficient, forge new partnerships, and build new relationships in order to survive and thrive. **We must increase enrollment and retention.**

**WHAT ARE WE DOING?**

1. **Admissions Overhaul/ Recruitment Efforts**

To improve operations and ultimately improve recruitment efforts and increase enrollment, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions has been completely restructured into five focus areas.

1. **Recruitment**
2. **Systems and Processing**
3. **Events, Tours and Customer Service**
4. **Strategic Communications**
5. **Administrative Support**

Within each of these areas, the University is already implementing many new initiatives.

1. **Recruitment**
   - All admissions counselors/recruiters now report to one Senior Associate Director. This allows for more teamwork, cross training, and improved communication. Regular team meetings and a shared calendar system have also been implemented as well as a campus wide recruitment calendar. Admissions is also in the process of acquiring approval and hiring several new recruiters, including a regional recruiter for Southern Illinois. We now also have two fluent Spanish speaking recruiters in the Chicago area.
• We have improved on-board training and have established semi-annual all staff training. Travel territories and visit priorities and frequencies are being reimagined and both freshmen and transfer admissions counselors/recruiters now have more clearly defined territories that have been created and are being maintained in our CRM (Constituent Relationship Management) system, Hobsons Connect.

• Admissions counselors/recruiters have daily follow up protocols for new inquiries, incoming emails and phone calls. They also have weekly outbound calling responsibilities in addition to their travel, recruitment and outreach tasks.

• We have updated our website and admissions counselor/recruiter online profiles, making the site friendly, more accessible abs easier to navigate.

• Professional development has been vastly improved and all SPS admissions counselors attended the IACAC (Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling) conference and our new hires attended IACAC’s Summer Institute. These are both well-established and important events for admissions professionals in the state and it had been well over 3 years since NIU Admissions fully participated any such conferences which damaged our reputation with colleagues.

2. Systems and Processing

Our Hobson’s Connect CRM system was in incredible disarray and had been severely underutilized. Additionally, Admissions did not have the appropriate staffing levels or quality of staff dedicated to this system in order to produce the necessary results. We have taken the following actions to rectify this situation:

• Massive system clean-up
  o Cleaned and organized over 12,000 contact (student) filters.
  o Catalogued the most useful filters in one place for ease of access.

• All contacts (student records) are now flowing through a “Stage Funnel” and are being actively assigned to their appropriate positions within the recruitment funnel on a nightly basis.
  o Territories, recruiters and associated organizations are also being added, defined and assigned nightly via bulk edits.

• Useful application status reports have been created, giving admissions counselors/recruiters new information and the ability to work their territories in a way they did not have before. These reports can also be shared with high school and community college counselors so that they may facilitate the completion of applications from their side as well.

• Multiple interest pages have been rebuilt with updated branding (from University Marketing) and required fields simplified.

• NIU Admissions was a requested speaker at the Hobsons University national conference in San Antonio for our CRM “renaissance” and it was one of the most highly rated and popular sessions.

• The admission application has also undergone several changes, including:
  o Addition of a question regarding the primary language spoken in the student’s home.
  o Addition of a direct link to the affidavit for undocumented students.
  o Revision of the residency questions in light of the new Midwest tuition differential for Iowa, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan, Missouri and Ohio.
  o A complete visual refresh (new look and feel).
Application of the new NIU web template structure.
We also opened the application a full month sooner than ever before, going live on July 1, 2015 for fall of 2016 consideration.

- Changes have also been implemented within PeopleSoft/MyNIU (the university’s student information system) and OnBase (imaging and document processing system):
  - We are working on the automation of inquiry cards from high school and community college visits and college fairs. In prior years, this was largely manual data entry process.
  - Admissions is taking advantage of a new functionality between our Outlook email system and OnBase which will allow admissions staff to index documents to a student’s record directly from an email correspondence.
  - We have also implemented OnBase status reports for the colleges that review applications to ensure that our colleagues in the academic colleges are making admissions decisions in a consistent and timely fashion.

- We have improved access to information and reports for staff and destroyed the long-established culture of information hoarding within Admissions. All staff will have access to PeopleSoft query viewer and are being trained on reports. Additionally, all admissions counselors/recruiters receive automated application status reports on a weekly basis.

3. **Events, Tours and Customer Service**

- A new admission presentation for our daily visits and tours has been implemented.
- iPads are now utilized for student sign-in when they visit our offices to meet with an admissions representative. This is an upgrade from paper and clipboard and also allows us the ability to more actively ensure data integrity for student records in the CRM.
- Coffee, tea and water are now offered at both Williston Hall and BAVC for our visitors.
  - We have doubled the number of Northern Ambassadors (student tour guides).
- All admissions counselors/recruiters have participated in organizing regional and on campus events.
- The inbound call center has new leadership, better customer service training and increased standards of professionalism and follow up.
  - Outbound callers are given standardized scripts and have a nightly expectation of approximately 400 calls per evening.

4. **Strategic Communications**

- Admissions is partnering with University Marketing to centralize and standardize marketing and university promotional efforts, including:
  - Social media/web
  - Printed publications
- Hiring new Associate Director for Admissions Strategic Communications so that we have the talent and staffing necessary to operate the CRM system as intended and to build on our rebuilding efforts therein.
5. **Administrative Support**

- And, finally, in terms of administrative support and operations, a new business manager has been hired, and new expectations and protocols have been implemented which are aimed at maximizing the use of printed materials and improving inventory tracking.

11. **Marketing & Communications**

The environment in which we are operating is one with smaller high school graduating classes, a hyper-competitive market (e.g., as many as one thousand competitors in the Chicago area alone) and additional cost pressures from community colleges and other types of institutions including some low cost out-of-state schools. Additionally, internal obstacles include a fragmented marketing budget (where only roughly 2/3s of the university marketing budget is overseen by the Division of Marketing and Communications) varied voices, graphic looks and tonality in publications and communications and allocated resources that are not aligned with our priorities.

In response to these issues and other opportunities, the Division of Marketing and Communications, in just over a year, has completely reorganized to more effectively and efficiently serve the university. From the previous structure, three main units were identified:

1. **Institutional Communications**, which includes our Media and Public relations unit and deals largely with managing the institutional reputation of NIU;

2. **Campus Communications**, which focuses on internal communications aimed at staff, faculty and students on campus; and,

3. **University Marketing**, charged with the management and development of the NIU brand and socializing our value proposition with current and prospective students, parents and influencers. A fourth unit, **Creative Services**, works across all three of these communication areas, providing support in the areas of design, video, photography, social media and meetings/events.

At the same time, the division filled resource gaps and aligned existing resources more appropriately within this new structure, to the extent possible.

The newly reorganized division began addressing the aforementioned opportunities by building a new narrative and adopting a new tag line – **“Your future, our focus”** – which we feel more accurately addresses our value proposition and underpins our cornerstone objective of student career success. This tagline and narrative may be found in our revised and re-launched Communications and Graphic Standards Manual, which provides direction for all university communicators as to the tone, feel and graphic look of our collateral and other communications materials. Our subsequent work has involved socializing this tagline and narrative across multiple communications platforms and most recently the initiation of work with an outside marketing consultant to harmonize our institutional voice and graphic look across all student “touch points”. Critical in implementing this harmonization is a close working relationship with Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, who work with us daily on communication and marketing efforts and ensure that we are fully integrated as we work through the “enrollment funnel.” In the past, our marketing efforts have plugged into the various parts of the enrollment funnel on an ad hoc basis; with a stronger partnership with SAEM today, our creative elements and tactical implementation of marketing strategies and materials development are much more closely aligned with the recruitment process.
In order to work more cohesively with communication and marketing professionals throughout the university, we have developed subcommittees of the University Marketing & Communications Council (UMCC) to work on a hands-on basis on:

**Marketing & Social Media;**
**Web Governance; and,**
**Public and Media Relations and Internal Communications.**

These groups meet monthly to discuss issues, share information and work collaboratively on large-scale projects. It is the hope of the division that these groups, by virtue of their shared work and spirit of collaboration, can be a conduit for aligning university messaging and standardizing the presentation of our brand and value proposition.

One important step in this refinement process is to gain better intelligence on how we are currently perceived by our key stakeholders, both inside and outside the institution. Toward that end, we have just launched a **comprehensive brand perception survey.** We are currently in the field with this survey. This will help us gauge what perceptions exist among prospective students, current students, parents, alumni and donors, as well as staff and faculty. This will create a benchmark from which our future brand and reputation management efforts can be measured on an audience-by-audience basis.

Additionally, and working towards a more cohesive messaging strategy for prospective students, a student recruitment journey map project is currently underway. This important project will allow us to gain a better perspective of what prospective students experience through communications from the university. As first blush, we have discovered that there are no less than 17 departments at the university level (Admissions, Orientation, Testing, Housing & Dining, Health Services, etc.) that communicate with prospective students. This does not include academic colleges or departments. There is great opportunity here to improve messaging, cost save on redundant messaging and develop a clearer communication flow for prospective students.

A strong focus on making our digital assets work harder for the university is also key in the division’s recent work, and given the role that digital plays in attracting students, it is crucial that we maximize the value of these assets. Creative Services has been auditing and consolidating our 60,000 webpages, bringing each department into the new web template, beginning with the most critical and well-trafficked sites for recruitment. The Creative Services Web Team works closely with distributed web staff through the Web Collaboration working group to ensure brand consistency and standards compliance and provide training on key efforts like search engine optimization (SEO). Their work is making a better end-user experience for our website, and brings pages in line with the analogy that a website should be a window into your organization, not a file cabinet. In addition, we are piloting a digital marketing initiative involving two academic programs, to see the role that digital can play in driving interest on a program-by-program basis. We intend to capitalize on the learnings from this pilot to expand digital marketing efforts to other programs, assuming we can find ways to leverage our dollars effectively across multiple programs.

Additionally, a more concentrated and strategic approach to **social media** has earned the university better visibility in the digital space with a minimal outlay of expenditures. A heavier focus on short videos, content relevant and interesting to targeted audiences and responsive management of the pages are responsible for the visibility. A new student-voice blog, Huskie Tales (husietales.niu.edu), a student-run Instagram account (Huskies of NIU) and the What2do@niu page (what2do.niu.edu) also provide a peer-to-peer communication opportunity for prospective and current students. Peer-to-peer communications, or students talking to other students, is a key strategy for retention and has collateral potential benefit for the enrollment effort as well.

Finally, the division is beginning to develop segmented communications strategies for key audiences like the Latino high school population, University Honors students, adult students and transfer students.
Ultimately, the goal would be to have a communications flow for all of our different audiences as bandwidth and budget allow, but we selected these audiences as NIU stands to gain the most in strengthening our communications with them. The key here is to be able to target each population with relevant messaging in a way they are most comfortable receiving that information. This is something the university has not previously done in any kind of strategic way.

Our current recruitment efforts not only focus on reaching the right students, but perhaps more importantly, are making sure our communications are in order. A complete understanding of our brand perception, guidelines for communicating within brand and sub-brand standards and the harmonization of tone, voice and graphic look will make our efforts in bringing in more prospective students more fruitful, and more cost effective.

The bottom line is that in a highly competitive environment, the recruitment effort becomes a market share play, much more so than ever before. We can't depend on riding demographic waves to be successful, and given increasingly tightening budget parameters, we need to be highly strategic and judicious about how and where we spend our dollars. Our integrated approach to working with enrollment, the segmentation of our marketing strategy aimed at specific groups of students and the harmonization of our brand voice, tone and graphics hold the promise of using our increasingly scarce marketing dollars in a way that fully leverages these dollars as effectively as possible.

III. Retention Efforts

Student retention is a highly complex and challenging issue for many colleges and universities, including NIU. According to one model developed by NIU’s Testing Services in the Division of Academic Affairs, the following items are predictors of retention:

- Good academic standing
- High school GPA
- High school average GPA
- Percentile in high school
- Application days (number of days after September 1)
- Credit load
- Problematic course units
- Math placement exam score
- ACT score

For the purpose of this update, a number of recent projects will be highlighted below.

Chicago Collaborative for Undergraduate Success

NIU continues to participate in the Chicago Collaborative for Undergraduate Success. Initiated by the University of Illinois at Chicago, the mission states, “The Chicago Collaborative for Undergraduate Success builds connections among Chicago-area non-profit institutions of higher education, who work together with high schools and community organizations on evidence-driven initiatives to ensure increased post-secondary student success and degree completion.”

Chicago Public Schools Compact

Beginning in spring 2015, NIU joined the Chicago Public School Compact which seeks to promote enrollment of Chicago Public School students in college as well as foster degree completion at institutions of higher education. Participants set institution-specific goals for their CPS students and working in collaboration with CPS. To date, NIU has:

- Had two 1:1 meetings with CPS to discuss data sharing and specific NIU goals
Participated in the CPS Summer Melt initiative  
Drafted preliminary NIU goals for Compact

Additionally, NIU presented on the use of MAP-Works data and NIU CPS students at the spring Chicago Public Schools Compact meeting held in spring 2015.

MAP-Works

MAP-Works is a survey-based tool that helps students start off on the right track. Incoming freshmen and new transfer students who participate in MAP-Works have shown the ability to:
- Earn a higher GPA
- Successfully complete additional credit hours
- Reduce the risk of academic probation, and
- Benefit from additional NIU support and resources.

Students will receive an email in their NIU student email account inviting them to participate in the MAP-Works survey. Once the survey is completed, students will receive a personalized report summarizing their strengths and possible challenges, as well as campus resources. Pertinent faculty and staff (success specialists, advisors, etc.) will also have access to this information so they can provide additional assistance.

MAP-Works participation by students in 2014-2015 increased so that over 90% of incoming freshmen students took at least one survey while 43.57% of new transfer students participated in one survey. Additionally, faculty and staff participation also grew from 300 users in 2012-2013 to 550 users in 2014-2015. Instructors in UNIV, ENGL 102, 103, 104 and 105, COMS 100 as well as other faculty members have been trained in and are using the MAP-Works tool.

The top five issues that students experienced last fall according to MAP-Works include the following:
- Homesickness
- Plan to study five hours or less
- Test anxiety
- Not confident about finances
- Struggling in at least two courses

(See Appendix 1 – MAP-Works)

Attendance Matters (formerly Absence Tracking pilot)

College research indicates that there is a direct relationship between class attendance and course grades; as one goes up or down, so does the other. With this in mind, the NIU Divisions of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, and Information Technologies launched a pilot program in fall 2014 to identify student absences from 100 and 200 level courses and intervene in a supportive manner with the purpose of educating students about pertinent campus resources. Additionally, the Attendance Matters initiative is relying upon other means of communicating and mass marketing as well:
- Messages regarding attendance were delivered multiple times during new student orientation
- President Baker emphasized attendance during Welcome Days
- The Huskies Helping Huskies tables on campus share Attendance Matters and campus resources with students
- A joint email from Eric Weldy and Anne L. Birberick highlighting attendance was sent to students.

(See Appendix 2 – Attendance Matters)
**First-Year Composition**

Growing out of the Bold Futures Workshops and the Retention Summits, the First-Year Composition program in the Department of English developed the Peer Advocate program. Peer Advocates (PA) attend first-year writing classes once per week on average, help students become engaged at NIU, and research and present on NIU resources. Almost half of the PA’s chose internship credit.

In addition to the Peer Advocate Program, other retention strategies employed by the First-Year Composition program include:

- Individual conferences with students to increase instructor and peer advocate connections with students
- Increased instructor participation in MAP-Works to help instructors to understand more about individual students' experiences at NIU
- Classroom condition upgrades to enhance student experiences during their first year
- Electronic portfolio integration in order to connect the pieces of students' learning and writing in a coherent electronic narrative and promote students' academic and professional identity.

**High Impact Practices (HIPs)**

Students who participate in high-impact practices experience positive student retention and engagement outcomes. High-impact practices include the following types of activities: First-Year Seminars, Learning Communities, Writing Intensive Courses, Collaborative Learning, Common Intellectual Experiences, Undergraduate Research, Global Learning, Service/Community Based Learning, Internships, and Capstones.

A recent study on the impact of HIPs on retention conducted by NIU’s Office of Assessment Services, the Office of Student Engagement & Experiential Learning, and Testing Services achieved the following results:

- Those who participated in HIPs are less likely to drop out
- The relationship between HIPs and retention remains even after controlling for other retention predictors
- The relationship between HIPs and retention is not simply additive
- We cannot rule out self-selection effects
- Effects of HIPs are not conditional on minority status

**Student Success Collaborative (SSC)**

At the core of the Student Success Collaborative is an innovative predictive modeling platform that mines university data to provide NIU administrators, advisors, and academic support service professionals with actionable insights, identifying systemic and individual risk, and illuminating what steps can be taken to improve graduation likelihood across all groups.

Recent SSC developments at NIU:

- Addition of a Student Success Advisor (partnership between Office of Student Academic Success and the College Advising Office in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences). The SSA is currently overseeing two targeted outreach campaigns
  - First targets 83 students currently enrolled second year students who have completed 24-60 credit hours. Goal is to assist students with the exploration and declaration of a major in order to make sure the students have a clear academic plan
Second targets nearly 100 students enrolled CLAS sophomore students who have a 67%-80% completion rate for credits attempted versus credits earned. Goal is to identify barriers and challenges for each student and develop an individualized success plan.

(See Appendix 3 – Student Success Collaborative)

Early Alert Referral System

The Early Alert Referral System is a collaborative effort between faculty and the Office of Student Academic Success (OSAS) that picks up where the Attendance Matters initiative leaves off. The purpose of E.A.R.S is to partner with select faculty at critical points during each academic semester to help identify students who may need additional support.

The Office of Student Academic Success targeted 84 different courses during the fall 2014 semester and 312 unique course sections. Faculty put forth an unprecedented 3,113 referrals for 2,451 students. During the spring 2015 semester, OSAS target 53 different courses and 140 unique course sections. Faculty put forth 1,220 referrals for 1,092 students. Referring faculty are apprised of the results of the E.A.R.S. contact. Additionally, Student Support Specialists meet with regularly with referred students during the months of October and November in the fall and March and April in the spring.

Lois Hobart Retention Scholarship Program

New for the 2014-2015 academic year, the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs and the Office of Student Academic Success created the Lois Hobart Retention Scholarship Program in an effort to retain students nearing graduation who have exhausted all possible financial resources and are in danger of leaving NIU.

Once awarded a Lois Hobart Retention Scholarship, recipients work with a Student Success Specialist to address any additional challenges or issues that could impact the students’ progress to graduation. During the 2014-2015 academic year, 73 students were awarded a total of $77,548.21. The average award was $1,062.00. Fourteen of the 2014-2015 Hobart recipients graduated fall 2014 or spring 2015. The remaining 59 recipients are on track to graduate in December 2015 or May 2016.

Retention Summits

These campus-wide meetings first started during fall 2013. Four separate meetings, culminating in a meeting in October 2014, highlighted select retention initiatives, student experiences at NIU, and participant suggestions for how to set and achieve specific university retention targets. A retention summit will be held annual moving forward.

Residential Academic Coaching Program

Beginning in fall 2014, Housing & Dining Services began a collaborative with the Academic Advising Center to pilot a new program in the residence halls. The Residential Academic Coaching Program was established to encourage new freshmen students to take advantage of all the academic support resources made available to them through the Academic Advising Center. Students living in Neptune Hall and the Health Professions Living Learning Community located in Stevenson Tower A are able to take advantage of the program.

Weekend Behavior Assessment Project

The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs & Enrollment Management, through the Planning & Assessment unit undertook a GPA & Retention Follow-Up Study to a spring 2014 Weekend Behavior
Survey. Data were collected during spring 2014 about students’ weekend behaviors, level of campus involvement, and their sense of belongingness on campus. During fall 2014, a follow up survey was conducted in order to determine if a relationship existed between the behaviors and beliefs measured by the survey and the students’ GPA and/or retention.

Select recommendations from the executive summary revealed the following: 1. Future programming efforts should emphasize the importance in investing in college life as a success strategy and 2. NIU should provide resources and training to staff with high student contact about the importance of students finding their community.

IV. P-20 Engagement: Community College Integration and Collaborations

Through its P-20 initiatives, Northern Illinois University is committed to supporting university-wide collaboration on activities that improve education training at all levels from pre-school (P) through graduate studies (20) throughout the northern Illinois region. P-20 Engagement involves the building of mutually beneficial relationships between the university and its partners in schools, community colleges, workplaces, and community settings. Engaged partners learn from each other, discover new knowledge, and enjoy benefits that include meeting community needs, increasing economic vitality, and improving quality of life across the region.

In support of the P-20 initiative, the University has focused on forging new relationships and creating new agreements and partnerships with multiple community colleges. Over the past two years, the university has entered into reverse articulation agreements with multiple institutions, partnered to offer NIU degree programs on community college campuses, and still continues to meet with community college leadership to discuss new ideas which benefit students and the institutions involved. These relationships are aimed at increasing educational attainment and University enrollment. The following is a list of some of the key activities that have taken place and relationships that have been established over the past two years.

**Rock Valley College:**
Last August, NIU entered into an enhanced partnership with Rock Valley College to offer aspiring engineers with the opportunity to earn bachelor’s and master’s degrees in engineering from Northern Illinois University at Rock Valley College’s main campus. Beginning in fall 2016, students with an associate’s degree in engineering science can pursue one of three bachelor’s degrees — electrical or mechanical engineering, or technology in applied manufacturing — from the NIU College of Engineering & Engineering Technology on the RVC campus. In addition, next fall, NIU’s engineering school will have a satellite spot at the Woodward Technology Center at Rock Valley and students who have a bachelor’s degree in engineering will be able to earn a master’s degree from NIU at RVC. This enhanced relationship builds on a similar “2+2” arrangement that has been in place for years, although that arrangement requires Rock Valley students to transfer to NIU to complete their bachelor's degree.

**Illinois Valley Community College:**
NIU has recently entered into a new relationship with Illinois Valley Community College (IVCC) that allows IVCC students to earn a bachelor’ degree in industrial technology from NIU without ever having to leave the IVCC campus. The arrangement allows students to earn the first 60 credit hours of the 120 required for the bachelor's degree, and earn the associates degree with an emphasis in applied manufacturing technology, at the IVCC campus. The student can choose to earn the next 30 credit hours at either IVCC or NIU. The student will pay IVCC’s tuition rate no matter which school they choose. The last 30 credit hours will be completed through NIU at NIU’s tuition rate. Students will have the option to complete those final 30 credit hours all online. When all 120 credit hours are completed, the student will have a bachelor’s of science degree in technology.
NIU offers several undergraduate programs - online - at our state-of-the-art NIU Outreach Centers in Hoffman Estates, Naperville and Rockford, and other locations across the northern Illinois region. Bachelor's degree-completion programs, designed in partnership with regional community colleges, make it easy for students, who began their education at a local community college, to complete their degree at NIU. Students can choose from a variety of bachelor’s degree offerings and utilize a 2+2 or 3+1 pathway to complete their programs. It should be noted that NIU also offers several graduate level degrees and certifications at its Outreach centers as well. NIU partners with the following community colleges to offer these programs:

- College of Lake County
- College of DuPage
- Elgin Community College
- Harper College
- Oakton Community College
- Rock Valley College
- Waubonsee Community College

Elgin Community College

There are more than 100 NIU alumni working in a variety of positions at Elgin Community College. A few weeks ago, the senior leadership team at NIU met with over 40 of those alumni to discuss ways in which the University and ECC could partner to improve the delivery of programs to their students. Last March, NIU signed a reverse transfer agreement with ECC which allows NIU students who transferred from ECC without associate degrees to earn the two-year degree using course credit from NIU courses. Credits completed at NIU are transferred back to ECC and used to satisfy degree requirements for an associate's degree.

College of DuPage

Senior administrative staff from the University recently visited COD to talk to their acting President and Chief Academic Officer about expanding the work and collaboration between NIU and COD.

Kishwaukee College

NIU works very closely with KC on topics such as reverse articulation and remedial course work and seamless transitions for students. Last year, NIU signed a reverse transfer agreement with Kish which allows NIU students who transferred from Kish without associate degrees to earn the two-year degree using course credit from NIU courses.

College of Lake County

NIU has a reverse transfer agreement in place with the College of Lake County and discussions are ongoing to expand this partnership.

Harper College

Senior academic and administrative staff from the University and Harper are discussing ways to develop a beneficial relationship.

City Colleges of Chicago

NIU has a reverse transfer agreement in place with the City Colleges of Chicago and discussions are ongoing to explore new ways to collaborate.

Task force on Community College Relations

Last summer NIU established a task force to look at community college relations and partnerships.
AREAS FOR CONTINUED DISCUSSION

1. **Affordability:** The University supports the access and affordability goals of the *Illinois Public Agenda*. The Board has held the line on student costs for the past two years. Moving forward, the University is committed to reviewing and analyzing tuition and fee charges to ensure that the dual goals of affordability and fiscal responsibility are considered. A concerted effort will be made to control/limit student cost increases and hold costs steady. The FY 2017 fee development process is underway and committees are meeting to discuss rate recommendations for next year. At this time, tuition options are being analyzed and evaluated to determine the benefits and impact of various pricing strategies – such as increasing rates, holding rates flat or decreasing rates. Ultimately, every effort will be made to hold tuition and fee rates flat, or even decrease them if at all possible.

2. **Access:** Institutional Financial Aid resources should be utilized in the most efficient manner possible; a manner that benefits at-risk students and that has a positive impact on recruitment and retention.

3. **Efficiency:** The University shall continue to explore all avenues to become more efficient, through various activities such as Program Prioritization and Process Reengineering.

4. **Program additions/deletions:** In an attempt to streamline the processes required for program additions and deletions. The proposed Board calendar for 2016 will include a special Board meeting in conjunction with the February committee meetings for the sole purpose of considering program approvals. This will allow the process for programs that need Board approval prior to the March 1 deadline to receive such and, thus, not have to wait an entire year before being put in the catalog.

5. **Collaboration/Partnerships:** The University shall continue building relationships with community colleges to meet student needs, expand student opportunities and expand the University enrollment base.

6. **Capital Needs:** The University will continue to evaluate the institution’s capital needs; particularly as they relate to and impact the University’s ability to improve students’ academic experience and quality of student life, and overall, assist the University in its efforts to recruit and retain students.
What is MAP-Works?

MAP-Works® is a holistic approach to student success and retention, providing a platform of information that faculty and staff use to identify at-risk students early in the term. It also allows faculty and staff the ability to coordinate interventions with at-risk students by providing the power of real-time analytics, strategic communications, and differentiated user interfacing, with integrated statistical testing and outcomes reporting.

The MAP-Works process includes combining data from the institution with information from the students. Using that information, MAP-Works uses real-time analytics to provide information directly to the students as well as to the faculty and staff working with the students.

2014-2015

How well did the risk indicator work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAP-Works Risk Indicator</th>
<th>Retention Rate</th>
<th>Mean GPA</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>2630 (89.2%)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>63.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>199 (70.3%)</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>375 (49.9%)</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red2</td>
<td>126 (28.9%)</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>5,051</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MAP-Works measures academics, social-emotional integration and general well-being to a student’s transition to college. In evaluating these factors, the MAP-Works risk indicator accurately identifies students who were at risk of leaving the institution allowing faculty and staff uses to intervene with students early in the semester to get them to the resources that they might need.

Data show that students who participate in the program are more successful in their first year with regards to GPA, academic good standing, and overall retention.

Outcomes

GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2014 GPA</th>
<th>Spring 2015 GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took</td>
<td>Did not take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Retention**

**Factor Relationships**
According to 2014-2015 data, there are five factors that have the strongest relationship to persistence and five factors that have the strongest relationships to fall term GPA in new students at NIU. These factors are:

**Persistence:**
1. Commitment to the institution
2. Homesickness
3. Financial means
4. Satisfaction with the institution
5. Social integration

**Fall Term GPA:**
1. Basic academic behaviors
2. Academic Integration
3. Time management
4. Academic self-efficacy
5. Financial means

**2014-2015**
Faculty and staff participation has increased significantly. All UNIV instructors are enrolled in MAP-Works as well as English 102, 103, 104, and 105 and COMS 100 instructors. Additionally, faculty and instructors in the several other academic departments have requested access and attended training as well.

Student participation has increased significantly with over 90% of incoming freshman taking at least one survey. Transfer students could use some improvement, with only 43.57% taking at least one survey.

**Increased Participation**
**Faculty/Staff Users**

**Student Participation**
This year, the Map-Works risk indicator was expanded to include specific factors at NIU that contribute to student success. In working with Testing Services, NIU identified two factors that have a significant impact in identifying student success, Math placement scores and Average High School ACT scores. Currently, 30.3% of NIU students are classified as being at-risk.

The MAP-Works risk indicator is dynamic and changes throughout the year as we gain more information on our students. Early Alert data was entered by using data from the E.A.R.S (Early Alert and Referral System) program where faculty and staff identify students who are struggling in their courses. After students complete a survey, their risk indicator can be impacted by the information that they report. At the end of the semester, end-term data is also added to strengthen the indicators. MAP-Works allows NIU faculty, staff, and administrators to see, in real time, students who need assistance.

Faculty and staff have been using the MAP-Works system to identifying students who need to be connected to resources or need additional assistance. Over 98% of NIU students have had some type of contact, note, or a referral made through the MAP-Works program.

### Risk Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAP-Works Risk Indicator</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red2</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,051</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FACULTY/STAFF USER ACTIVITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students with Contacts/Notes/Referrals</th>
<th>4,931 (97.6%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Contacts Logged</td>
<td>27,803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Notes Created</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Referrals Issued</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACCORDING TO THE FALL TRANSITION SURVEY:

Who Are Our Students?

- 17.7% with Dependents
- 91.1% plan on returning to NIU in the spring
- 80.7% plan on returning to NIU next year
- 78.9% committed to getting a degree at NIU
- 65.8% Interested in Research with a Faculty Member
- 69.5% Interested in Studying Abroad
- 61.9% Interested in Mentoring Students

Top Five Issues our Students are Facing:

1. Homesick
2. Plan to student 5 hours or less a week
3. Test anxiety
4. Not confident about finances
5. Struggling in at least two courses.
Background
College research indicates that there is a direct relationship between class attendance and course grades—as one goes up or down, so does the other. For instance, one study conducted revealed that every 10% increase in the number of student absences in college resulted in a .2 drop in students’ overall grade-point average (Kowalewski, Holstein, & Schneider, 1989; Cuseo, 2010).

Furthermore, additional research shows that students who become actively involved with academic support services outside of the classroom are more likely earn higher grades and complete their college degree, particularly if they were introduced to campus experts and support systems within their first year of college (Cuseo, 2003). Students who receive assistance from academic support services such as tutoring, academic coaching, soft skills building show significant improvement in academic self-efficacy and develop greater expectations for future academic success (Smith, Water & Hoey, 1992).

To that end, the NIU Divisions of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs & Enrollment Management, and Information Technology Services launched a pilot program in the fall of 2014 to identify student absences from 100 and 200 level courses and intervene in a supportive manner with the purpose of educating students about pertinent campus resources.

Pilot objectives
- introduce students to campus support services, resources, and personnel
- centralize fragmented student outreach efforts, developing a process to identify absent students
- create a software system to record and report student absences
- designate the closest logical point of contact to reach out to particular groups of students
- develop consistent messaging and information

Outcomes:
Faculty and instructors from 329 sections of 100 and 200 level undergraduate courses monitored attendance and provided the name of students who were absent from each class session during the first two weeks of the semester of the fall 2014 semester.
Alterations were made to the program during the spring 2015 semester. Faculty and instructors from 307 sections of 100 and 200 level undergraduate classes monitored and reported attendance for the entire semester. Reason codes were simplified for the spring semester.

Next Steps
The time and effort put forth to monitor, track, and contact over twenty thousand absences was deemed unsustainable due to costs and limited human resources. The Attendance Matters initiative continues for the 2015-2016 academic year. Several components will remain the same, while others will be altered. Faculty and Instructors of 100 & 200 level classes who have elected to take part will record attendance for the entire semester as was done during the spring 2015 semester.

Individual student outreach will occur during weeks 4 & 7 of the semester by staff within Residence Life, Veterans Affairs, Honors, Chance, Athletics, the DRC, and the Office of Student Academic Success (outreach will be coordinated with the Early Alert and Referral System) and again during weeks 9 & 11. Students who have missed more than 3 classes between weeks 1 & 4 and weeks 5 & 8 will be the focus.

The Attendance Matters initiative is relying upon other means of mass communication and marketing as well:
- Messages regarding the importance of attendance were spoken several times per day by multiple NIU faculty, staff and administrators during new student orientation.
- President Baker also emphasized attendance during Welcome Days at the Huskie Family Welcome.
- The Huskies Helping Huskies tables on campus early this week share Attendance Matters and campus resource information with students.
- A joint email from Eric Weldy and Anne Birberick highlighting attendance will be sent to all students next week.

Additionally, CAs will be talking about class attendance during floor meetings, multiple offices on campus will be featuring articles on class attendance in newsletters, certain first year courses will focus on the importance of attendance, and articles on attendance will run in NIUToday and the Northern Star.
The Student Success Collaborative (SSC) is a rapidly growing membership of nearly 100 colleges and universities working together to better understand the drivers of student attrition and measurably impact success.

At the core of the Student Success Collaborative is an innovative predictive modeling platform that mines university data to provide NIU administrators, advisors, and academic support services professionals with actionable insights, identifying systemic and individual risk, and illuminating what steps can be taken to improve graduation likelihood across all groups. The SSC strives to enhance:

- **Executive Visibility**: Identifying and drilling into areas of risk within individual colleges, majors, and specific populations
- **Advisor Effectiveness**: Supporting data-driven advising efforts and enabling proactive, informed interventions with students
- **Student Decisions**: Delivering insight into majors, courses, and careers best suited to each student’s interests and abilities. More than just a technological platform, SSC advances member efforts by providing dedicated consulting services, data analyses, and access to our best practice research library. Recognizing that we often face common challenges, SSC brings members together to exchange ideas through national summits, best practice webinar presentations, and facilitated peer networking.

**SSC Developments at NIU**

**Addition of Student Success Advisor**
During the spring of 2015 the Office of Student Academic Success (OSAS) and the College Advising Office in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS Advising) partnered to create a hybrid position to identify, advise, and academically coach CLAS sophomore students with a 2.0 – 2.9 cumulative GPA. Titled “Student Success Advisor,” the position was filled in August 2015.

**Targeted Outreach Campaigns**
The SSA is currently overseeing two outreach campaigns. The first campaign targets 83 currently enrolled second year students who have completed 24-60 credits but have not declared a major. The SSA initiated contact with the students via email and follow up calls are being made to schedule an advising appointment for each student. The goal of this initiative is to assist students with the exploration and declaration of majors and to make certain that the students have an academic plan and appropriate academic and coaching support to guide them towards a timely graduation.

The second campaign targets nearly 100 currently enrolled CLAS sophomore students who have 67%-80% completion rate for credits attempted verses credits earned. Students were initially contacted via email and are now receiving follow up calls to set up appointments with the SSA. The purpose of this campaign is to identify challenges and barriers for each student, develop a corresponding student success plan, and connect students to pertinent campus experts and resources. Follow up will be coordinated by the SSA along with the assistance of the Student Success Specialist for the CLAS.

A minimum of one campaign will be launched for each academic college and the Academic Advising Center during the fall 2015 semester. Campaigns will be managed by Student Success Specialists within the OSAS.

**Continuous Professional Development and Training Opportunities**
Consultants and trainers from the Education Advisory Board remain in close contact with the NIU community.

Three workshops are being offered on October 8th for academic advisors and academic support professionals to further develop their skills with the SSC Platform and learn how to leverage the student data and predictive analytics to help improve retention and student success.
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:
REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE ON AD HOC ENROLLMENT

The following information is provided as a supplement to the Report to the Committee on Ad Hoc Enrollment. This supplemental item provides additional information to the Committee regarding capital funding and potential University's projects that could impact enrollment. The Committee's charge includes the examination of capital project expenditures necessary to improve the quality of student life and support recruitment and retention initiatives. This update also summarizes the Holmes Student Center and Neptune Complex project and the current financial considerations and constraints.

Background:

Capital Funding: In recent years, state funding support for University capital needs has been non-existent. Without adequate capital renewal funding from the state, the University has few options to address needed repairs and renovations to its instructional facilities and common areas. In many instances, the failure to address maintenance issues as they develop, results in a situation where small problems become bigger, costlier problems. Deferred maintenance is a significant problem on our campus that is estimated to exceed $400 million. The state's inability to support its investment in state assets is a major concern for NIU and all public universities. Without dedicated dollars for this purpose, University operating funds are sometimes redirected to address emergency facility needs and to correct issues which pose a threat to student, faculty and staff health, life, and safety concerns. Funding for regular capital projects has also been affected by Illinois' fiscal crisis. This year, in June, the state suspended state-funded capital projects managed by the Capital Development Board which resulted in the shuttering of NIU’s Stevens Hall project which is approximately 40% completed. This delay in action will undoubtedly increase the cost of the project and create additional costs related to the securing of the site, and the steps needed to protect the exposed project from the winter elements.

To support the repair and maintenance needs of non-state funded buildings, or buildings that make up the University's auxiliary facility system, the University relies on funds in the auxiliary facility system and R&R bond reserves, as required and maintained by covenant. Debt financing is typically used to provide funding for construction and major renovations projects; bonds or certificates of participation, for example. In 2010, the University issued over $110 million in Build America Bond Funds to support the Living and Learning Initiative which was aimed at renovating Gilbert Hall, renovating Grant C and D towers, installing fire sprinklers in Stevenson Towers, constructing the outdoor recreational facility, demolishing Douglas Hall and extending Lucinda, and making a variety of infrastructure improvements such as parking lot improvements, campus electrical infrastructure, parking garage repairs, rotational painting, lighting improvements, wireless coverage etc. Funds have also been earmarked for the Holmes Student Center/Neptune Design Project.

Holmes Student Center/Neptune Design Project. Last summer, University staff provided the Board with background information regarding the redevelopment of the campus core with a specific focus on the Holmes Student Center and the Neptune Complex. The Campus Core Vision strives to direct investment and new development toward the geographic center of campus and Holmes and Neptune were identified as the first projects that should be addressed. It was noted that over the next 25 years, strategic construction of new facilities presents significant potential to transform the campus core into a comfortable, walkable, and memorable center of campus life.
Regarding the renovation of Holmes Student Center renovation, several strategies have been identified and they include:

1) The project should address the Center’s “economic engine” in terms of improving the food, retail, as well as the hotel functions of HSC. Those areas can be revitalized in a manner that really draws students and the campus community into the building. If retail and/or corporate partnerships can be developed for these retail functions, the University's financial contribution to the project can possibly be utilized toward achieving components of the project identified in later phases.

2) Equally important, is the concept of returning student life organizations, which currently reside in the Campus Life building, to Holmes Student Center. This would allow all the students that are engaged in those activities, also those that want to come and have engagement with those activities and organizations, to be able to utilize Holmes Student Center.

3) General improvements such as increasing the daylight, improving way finding, upgrading the conference spaces, adding or reconfiguring new programming spaces, and increasing lounge spaces are strategies that are aimed at making the Holmes Student Center a reason to stay on campus for the weekend. Holmes is really an opportunity to enhance the student experience throughout, if you can create additional spaces that students can utilize and attract. Of course, not everything needs to be changed and the Center’s current assets such as the College Grind, Huskie Den and the MLK plaza will continue to be key features.

Due to the comprehensive nature of the proposed improvements and the financial limitations that exist, not all of the proposed improvements can be immediately achieved. The Holmes Student Center improvement project can be broken down into several phases to be completed. Phase I includes improvements to the Ground floor including the “economic engine”, social space, and the Sports Grill/Huskies Den. The initial budget for those improvements is estimated at $16 million; if Student Life space for a student organization suite is included, the Phase I budget would be $19.7 million. Phases II – IV include a number of additional improvements including hotel improvements, construction of a winter garden and keystone building, improvements to meeting spaces, the bookstore, conference venues, window replacements, and Huskies Den support spaces. The total estimated project cost is $113.1 million.

The Neptune Residence Hall design project is also aimed at reinforcing the development of the campus core. The design team identified the following areas where improvements are needed;

1) The need to improve the east/west circulation both within the building, and on the exterior south end of the building.

2) In addition, the housing quality and amenities need to be improved in order to bring Neptune up to the level of our other housing options. In order to accomplish this, individual temperature control in student rooms is needed.

3) In addition, student rooms and bathrooms need to offer additional privacy and community and dining spaces need to be upgraded.

4) Finally, there is a need to reinforce and improve efforts to support our living/learning communities, and this can be accomplished with improved meeting space and adding community specific amenities.
Similar to the plan for the Holmes Student Center, the designers have proposed a multi-phase vision for the Neptune project. Phase I, calls for a newly defined thoroughfare that would begin the process of upgrading the building mechanicals while also improving student access to both Neptune central and the east and west residential communities. Once the horizontal utility improvements are in place, the first phase would then allow us to begin vertical renovation beginning with student lounges and restrooms on the lower floors and moving upward throughout the facility. Phase I cost estimates total $41 million, however, this phase can be broken into two components: A ($22 million) and B ($19 million) to accommodate resource limitations. Phase II, focuses on the renovation of Neptune central where both the main dining center and the Trident grab and go outlet are located. Window replacement and improving the courtyard between Neptune central and Neptune north are also a part of phase II. The renovation of Neptune north as a standalone project is Phase III, and Phase IV proposes a possible new housing facility on the west end of the current complex. These improvements would allow us to transition Neptune Hall to a more contemporary housing complex that would provide improved study and social space with enhanced natural light and a more straight-forward navigation path throughout the building. The total project is estimated at $121.4 million. It’s clear we don’t have the funding to complete all of the phases of this project.

Build America Bonds: As noted earlier, the University issued over $110 million in Build America Bonds in 2010 to support a variety of capital projects outlined in the Living and Learning Initiative. At the August 6, 2015 special meeting of the Finance, Facilities and Operations Committee, Vice President Phillips provided the Committee with an update on the BAB fund balances. As of June 30, 2015, after completed and active projects were considered, and encumbered funds are accounted for the current remaining BAB balance is $18.6 million. If $5.1 million in funds for approved projects - that are not actively started - are unencumbered, the total potential remaining balance is $23.7 million. An additional constraint to consider is that there is a time limit in which we can use the Build America Bonds funds. An extension has been granted once, and while there is no specific “expiration” date, these funds need to be utilized before the federal interest subsidy is lost and or other penalties are assessed.

Auxiliary Enterprise Reserves: There are three permissible auxiliary enterprise reserves that are required as the result of university legislative audit committee guidelines; equipment reserves, repair and replacement or R&R reserves, and utility reserves.

**Repair and Replacement Reserve:** the Repair and Replacement Reserve is in place to support the repair and maintenance needs of the facilities currently in the system. The minimum requirement for the R&R Reserve is 10% of the maximum net debt service, or $1.3 million. After minimum requirements and current commitments are considered, there is $14 million remaining in the fund.

**Equipment Reserve:** the Equipment Reserve is in place to support the repair and maintenance needs of equipment in the auxiliary facilities. The maximum for these reserve is no more than 20% of the book value of the moveable equipment of the system. After current commitments are considered, there is $10 million remaining in the fund.

**Utility Stabilization Fund:** the Utility Stabilization Fund is in place to address difficult to predict fluctuations in energy costs, the repair and replacement of physical plant systems or equipment, or in the event of a natural or mechanical emergency could be used to continue basic services. There is no minimum or maximum for this fund. After current commitments are considered, there is $12 million remaining in the fund.

Staff is not recommending the use of these reserve funds for renovation projects at this time.

**Summary:** Research indicates that state-of-the-art campus amenities are a leading factor in college choice for today’s college students. Holmes Student Center (HSC)—as the location for all of our large-
scale recruitment and Orientation events—is the first impression of the institution for prospective students. Bringing the synergy of student organizations back to HSC is not only significant to increasing student traffic and enhancing retail opportunities, it also showcases student engagement, a critical component in student retention. Neptune Hall—located in the heart of our campus—is also a showcase for prospective students. Additionally, renovations to Neptune provide increased opportunities for faculty-student interaction, another key retention activity. A renovated residential facility, located close to academic buildings, would encourage faculty and students to share a meal in the dining facility, interact as a group in the meeting and innovation space, and enhance the faculty-in-residence program. Projects, like this, can improve the campus core, improve services to students, and enhance the quality of student life; all contributing factors to increasing enrollment, via recruiting and retaining more students.

Given current financial constraints, Phase I of the Holmes Student Center project is the preferred course of action, but it should also include a component consisting of corporate partnerships in order to leverage private sector funding support for the project. The University will continue to evaluate the institution's capital needs; particularly as they relate to and impact the University's ability to improve students' academic experience and quality of student life, and overall assist the University in its efforts to recruit and retain students.