President’s Program
Prioritization Progress Report

November 28, 2016
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Letter from the President

November 28, 2016

Dear University Community,

In Program Prioritization, we’ve engaged in an examination of our large and complex organization in a way that’s unprecedented for us. While we’ve still got much to do, we’ve come a long way, and are already making important changes as a result. In this progress report, I’d like to update you on what’s been accomplished since the task force reports were released in May, and indicate what lies ahead in the months to come.

**Academic and Administrative Task Forces**

An important feature of NIU’s approach to Program Prioritization is that we’ve taken on both the academic and administrative at the same time. We’ve looked at them in parallel, recognizing that we need to prioritize our efforts for both, while also recognizing that they are different and need to be treated differently. We established two separate sets of criteria, and worked through two separate task forces.

Academic issues are, quite rightly, the domain of the faculty, and we have a fully developed, shared-governance process for addressing academic programs. The action steps that stem from the Academic Task Force report are flowing through those channels. As those channels are overseen within Academic Affairs, I have asked Executive Vice President and Provost Lisa Freeman to provide the progress report on the academic programs. Her progress report can be found at go.niu.edu/pp. I thank Executive Vice President and Provost Freeman, as well as members of the academic leadership, faculty and student bodies for all of the hard work that has gone into their response.

With Provost Freeman’s action plan speaking to the academic programs, my progress report will focus on advances made on the administrative side. However, to fully align resources to strategic priorities, we will have to bring the work on the academic side and administrative sides together, and create an appropriate balance in resource allocation across programs and divisions. As described below on page 11 (the section on Aligning Resources with Mission), we have created an Executive Budget Committee (EBC) to provide the needed financial analysis and prioritization, in collaboration with me. Any decisions requiring approval from members of the Board of Trustees will be forwarded to them.

**Budget and Enrollment**

Throughout this process, NIU has continued to confront the challenges of a declining enrollment, as well as the significant reduction – $107.5 million in the past two years – of financial support from the state. We have an urgent need to reverse that decline, an urgency made all the stronger by the loss of state support. As I shared in the September Town Hall meeting, I formed four task forces to address our enrollment targets – freshman, transfer students, adult learners and international students. As you’ll read in the report, I’m making some substantive changes to how we’re organized around our enrollment effort.
that will allow us to be more effective and efficient in not only stemming the decline as soon as possible, but recalibrating attract and best serve students, as well as generate revenue.

The budget shortfall and our projected revenue estimates continue to be our largest obstacles and have direct bearing on how we can proceed in the short and long term. The good news is that Program Prioritization has shed light on where there is room for better efficiency and where investment is needed. As you will see, some programs are moving forward for budgetary evaluation and prioritization. Unfortunately, without a full-year budget from the state, we can’t afford at this time to provide funding in all of the areas in which we’d like to invest. Even where all evidence points to a program warranting enhanced resources or budget, it could take months or even more than a year before this might happen.

I’ve also communicated recently that I’ve asked each vice president to develop budget reduction scenarios as a step to address a significant budget gap. Ultimately, these cuts will not be done across the board, but strategically and tailored to each unit and coordinate through the Executive Budget Committee. In some cases, we might need to cut budgets for programs slated for enhance or sustain, while in other cases we have made priority decisions to invest now. We continue to work through these scenarios, and will communicate in early 2017 what action items will result for each division.

**Process and Progress**

With all of this in mind, what we are doing is combining the strategic assessments, recommendations, action planning, and revenue projections together to initiate actions that will strengthen and enhance our core, and move toward greater sustainability. The following report serves to update you on the process and actions that have already begun or will commence in the days ahead.

Here are important considerations as you review:

This is a progress report. Every decision made about a program has implications for other programs, and therefore cannot be done in a vacuum or without thoughtful and strategic consideration. We have made real, substantive progress but, in some program areas, additional and ongoing review is required and noted as such.

“Complex conversations” – discussions about programs that cut across unit or division lines – are ongoing, each moving at its own pace. The report outlines each conversation, units involved and when a final report is due. From there, decisions will be made and, if appropriate, actions taken.

Some programs still require more work before a decision for enhancing, sustaining or reducing can be determined. These programs are identified throughout the report, and include a timeline for keeping the process on track.

With the exception of Academic Affairs, other divisional action plans have additional steps to undertake, and will be released by my next update in May 2017.

There is no single moment when all of the work catalyzed by Program Prioritization will be done, and no single document that will capture all of the results. Instead, this will inform decision-making for the years to come.
A tremendous amount of work has happened in 2016, and as we near the end of the calendar year, we are better positioned to face our challenges strategically and deliver on Student Career Success through teaching and learning, research and scholarship, creativity and artistry, and outreach and service.

Thank you for all that you have done to support Program Prioritization and NIU, and for the enormous effort the attached report represents.

Forward Together,

Doug
Integration, Collaboration and Realignment

The Administrative Task Force identified a number of functional areas where interrelationships between multiple programs existed and called for increased collaboration, developing synergies, mergers, and changing funding models. The task force wrote, “It is these suggestions that the task force feels will most improve the quality and consistency of services that the university provides to its students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community.”

It is in that very spirit that I have identified several areas where a reorganization will provide for increased effectiveness, efficiencies, and ultimately benefit our ability to attract and retain students.

Enrollment and Marketing

The Administrative Task Force noted the need for our admissions, marketing and communications functions to be better aligned, and it also proposed that we look at consolidating recruitment functions, currently split among Admissions under Student Affairs and Enrollment Management (SAEM) and Outreach, Engagement and Regional Development (OERD). The task force also noted the existence of multiple constituent relationship management (CRM) systems, and speculated that reducing the number of systems we use could result in efficiencies, reduced costs and a potential increase in enrollment.

Our enrollment efforts need to be driven with clear and measurable goals and a laser-like focus on sparking prospective students’ interest all the way through the enrollment funnel—from generating initial interest in NIU, to encouraging them to apply, to accepting them, and then having them confirm their intention to become Huskies. Ultimately, we need to track students through their educational experience and on to their life after graduation. Our current structure has enrollment functions split among three different divisions, which does not allow for the type of integration that’s necessary for NIU to efficiently manage this critical management function. Effective January 1, 2017, I am folding all enrollment, recruiting and marketing efforts of prospective undergraduate students from SAEM and OERD, into the newly created Division of Enrollment Management, Marketing and Communications under the leadership of Interim Vice President Harlan Teller.

This new structure will ensure greater alignment of our recruiting efforts with the marketing activities that support this essential work. It will also allow for consolidation from multiple CRM systems into one master database so that we have a central repository that can be more effectively managed while resulting in significant cost savings.

While uniting the work of these three divisions was not specifically outlined in a draft action plan, it was prompted by the Administrative Task Force’s observations about multiple divisions working on similar efforts and further informed more recently by the work of the four enrollment task forces. Developing stronger ties between these functions makes us more efficient and better integrated, and ensures our marketing and communications dollars will be spent more strategically. This is a significant reorganization, and it takes place midway through the enrollment season. We are confident that this major step will help in the short term to improve our yield, and longer term will result in a more strategic and integrated approach to recruitment.

Vice Presidents Teller, Weldy and Kaplan have already begun working on the transition, which will take place over the next six weeks. While Vice President Teller is still on an interim assignment that ends June 30, I’ve asked him to take the first steps necessary to align the resources of this large team. Meanwhile,
we are initiating an executive search in December for a permanent Vice President of Enrollment Management, Marketing, and Communications who can build on the work Harlan has done in first successfully realigning the Marketing and Communications team and now undertaking this larger integration effort. This chief enrollment strategist will report directly to the president.

**Cultural Centers**

As was recently shared with the staff involved and communicated via NIU Today, the cultural resource centers have begun to transition from Student Affairs to the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion under the leadership of Senior Associate Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Dr. Vernese Edghill-Walden, in Academic Affairs. This new structure is designed to bring even greater strategy, cohesion, awareness and participation in these equally important centers that serve our university community. The restructuring will position these diversity units, with similar missions, to be more integrated into a single vision for diversity, equity and inclusion at NIU. The new alignment also will help reduce silos and encourage intentional strategies that can advance equity, and inclusion across all levels and experiences.

Our resource centers, now more than ever, will play a critical role in supporting NIU at the core – its people – students, faculty and staff, and it is under this plan, that collaboration with all divisions is a top priority. The transition is scheduled to be complete by Jan. 1, 2017.

**The Undergraduate College**

The Program Prioritization process has led the university to reevaluate how it organizes and delivers academic support. Several conversations are ongoing in this area (see page 14), but in response to the recommendations of increasing efficiencies among units and improving communication, Academic Affairs proposed the creation of a new “Undergraduate College.”

This model is frequently adopted on university campuses as an administrative unit that organizes university functions, services, learning opportunities, and curricular and co-curricular programming to meet the needs of undergraduate students. Such an administrative unit can be designated as an undergraduate college, a university college, or a school of undergraduate studies. In the same manner as a graduate school provides support and services to graduate students across all programs, an undergraduate college serves students across all majors. Special attention is paid to providing support to entering students; however, undergraduate colleges also house programs that serve students throughout their baccalaureate studies, such as honors, undergraduate research, and career counseling. Organizing these resources together in an integrated fashion in an Undergraduate College signals to the university community that academic support services exist to serve all students, and that all students have the capacity for success.

I’ve accepted the Provost’s recommendation for this new unit, which will oversee academic support services, learning opportunities, and curricular and co-curricular programming for our students. I believe that the new organizational structure will benefit NIU in a number of ways. The Undergraduate College will broaden and deepen the student academic experience; better define program and unit roles; reduce gaps and duplication of efforts; help students, parents and employers to fully understand the value of NIU PLUS; and better position marketing and admission campaigns aimed at promoting student career success.
To be clear, the Undergraduate College will not grant degrees or be led by a dean. Academic programs that serve all undergraduate students, such as the minor in military science associated with the ROTC program, will remain in the colleges, although there will be enhanced opportunities for this and similar programs to reach students through collaboration with the Undergraduate College.

The Undergraduate College will be staffed with existing employees and built upon the foundation of NIU PLUS. Programs and units currently in the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs will transition into the Undergraduate College and coalesce around one of the three PLUS components: academics and support services; co-curricular learning and engagement; and career exploration and preparation. Career Services also will move into the Undergraduate College.

Positioning Career Services within the framework of the Undergraduate College will speak directly to NIU’s focus on student career success. Best practices in undergraduate education suggest that career exploration and professional development opportunities should be made accessible throughout the life cycle of the student. The creation of the Undergraduate College provides an opportunity to make these services and traditional career counseling more accessible and more integrated into the student experience. There will be greater opportunities for integration among NIU PLUS components, advisers, departmental career courses, and coordinated messaging to students, parents, alumni and the philanthropic community.

The development of the Undergraduate College will begin in earnest early in the spring 2017 semester. Career Services will report to the vice provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs effective January 1, 2017. Reports from the advising, retention, and tutoring/academic support working groups are due in mid-December 2016 and mid-January 2017. The suggestions from these groups will influence the development and organization of the Undergraduate College. The implementation of the working groups’ suggestions will take place during the spring 2017 semester. Additionally, communication with different internal and external stakeholders about the new college will occur throughout the spring and summer of 2017. The Undergraduate College will formally launch at the beginning of the fall 2017 semester.

**Institutional Effectiveness**

The mission of Institutional Effectiveness is to create a data-informed culture that supports our strategic planning and decision-making efforts in realizing our mission and enhancing the success of our students, faculty and staff. In its report, the Administrative Task Force recommended that we create a single campus entity charged with centralizing the functions of collecting, analyzing and sharing campus data. Both the executive vice president and provost and I agree with the recommendation and support the newly created Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE).

The new office combines functions that were previously housed in Academic Analysis and Reporting; Accreditation; Assessment Services; and Institutional Research. These units came together and constructed an action plan that, when fully implemented, will align these functions into two units: Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation; and Institutional Research and Planning. Phase I of implementation, the creation of Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation, has already been completed. With this new structure, two units were consolidated, two positions were eliminated, one was refilled at a lower level, duties were reallocated, and the budget has been reduced. Phase II will involve the restructuring of the Institutional Research and Decision Support and Analysis group, and will be completed by January 2017.
OIE is reorganizing in order to better serve the needs of the institution. OIE will work with units across campus providing decision planning and support; benchmarking and efficiency analyses; predictive analytics and forecasting; and quality and effectiveness measures. For example, OIE will collaborate formally with the director of Testing Services to analyze academic data in support of specialized student success initiatives, particularly those related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and student engagement. OIE also will work to increase data literacy and knowledge so that the campus is more aware of (and better understands) what data are available and how to harness them.

The office is already at work on a series of projects including:

- Reviewing the annual Data Book to make it more user-friendly;
- Developing a dashboard of key performance indicators for academic programs;
- Creating a site to facilitate easier sharing of reports, such as academic analytics and credit hour reports;
- Analyzing the effectiveness of high-impact practices on student engagement; and
- Evaluating the Program Prioritization process and looking for ways to improve it.

**Financial Aid & Scholarships**

As a result of input from the Program Prioritization Administrative Task Force, we have been working to restructure how the university provides institutional aid (grants, scholarships, waivers, and other financial awards) to students.

Central to this process has been 1) the merger the offices of Student Financial Aid and the Scholarship Office to create the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office; 2) creation of the Institutional Aid Task Force.

Since the spring of 2016, the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office has been leading the Institutional Aid Task Force to better align the aid we offer students with institutional priorities. As part of those efforts, the new office is analyzing how well we are serving specific student populations; how aid impacts strategic enrollment initiatives; and how academic and financial access relate to admission and retention criteria. Ultimately, the goal is to restructure our financial aid and scholarship operations to better meet the service needs of students; the cost and compliance demands of state, federal, and accreditation rules and directives; and to enhance the enrollment and revenue goals of the university.

Work to date has already resulted in the creation of:

- Our first-ever comprehensive catalog of awards;
- An aggregate report that allows us to better understand what student populations are most benefitting from specific types of aid; and
- A cooperative effort with the NIU Foundation that now allows the university to include campus awards in the initial financial aid package offered to potential students.

- The office has purchased and is implementing new AcademicWorks software to create a more student-centered scholarship experience; provide central oversight of the scholarship process; improve fund utilization and compliance; and revolutionize donor engagement.

The Financial Aid and Scholarship Office has been tasked with prioritizing budget processes, funding sources, and strategic planning to leverage further operational improvement for FY18.
Aligning Resources with Mission

The goal of Program Prioritization is to ensure that we direct our resources toward efforts that will advance our mission and support our strategic priorities. The task force reports marked an important milestone in that effort. The hard work that went in to all of the program narratives last fall, the two task force reports this spring, the feedback, and the division action plans, is now being translated into action.

As we’re doing so, we’re not just making one-time resource decisions. I’m committed to integrating the Program Prioritization process and the data-informed allocation of resources as permanent parts of how we run the university. The resource-allocation decisions include not only how we invest university funds, but also how we devote the time and talent of our staff and faculty, how we use space and facilities, and how we choose to present ourselves to the public. This will help us keep pace with our dynamic environment. To ensure that we can go forward using this decision support framework, we are creating the processes necessary for linking Program Prioritization to planning and budgeting to include long-term space and facility planning, multi-year budget planning, and systematic hiring plans. In this section, I describe the new budgeting process, and the ways we’re connecting it to Program Prioritization. As one of the most immediate applications of this, we’ve put the process to work to drive faculty hiring.

The Program Prioritization task force reports are driving change in ways beyond the resource allocations based on the program-specific recommendations. For example, the Administrative Task Force identified a number of structural issues that impact multiple programs across the university. Some of these have to do with the ways in which responsibilities are distributed across units. Those are addressed on page 14 in the section on “Complex Conversations.” There are other cross-cutting issues that have been identified that speak more to the ways we deliver and fund services. Two that I discuss later in this section are the need to reform our chargeback funding models and the opportunities for outsourcing.

Connecting Program Prioritization to Budget

We are linking Program Prioritization outcomes to the university budget by integrating the action steps that flowed out of Program Prioritization into both our existing annual, and new multi-year budgeting processes. Management of NIU’s budget processes is the responsibility of the vice president of administration and finance, who is accountable to the president and ultimately to the Board of Trustees for the effective management of all university fiscal resources. To discharge this responsibility, the president and the vice president for administration and finance are supported by the Executive Budget Committee (EBC).

The EBC is a working group comprised of cabinet members chosen to ensure broad knowledge and expertise. The committee is co-chaired by the vice president for administration and finance and the executive vice president and provost, and includes the interim vice president for research and innovation partnerships (RIPS), the vice president for information technology (DoIT), and the associate vice president for state and government relations and board liaison. Collectively, the EBC members have a deep understanding of all aspects of NIU’s mission, and can draw on their extensive knowledge and experience in the development and management of budget processes in a variety of relevant contexts, including academic departments, interdisciplinary centers and institutes, enterprise level service units, and government agencies.
The EBC is committed to working with shared governance to enhance participation and accountability in decision making. To these ends, the vice chair of the Academic Planning Council and the chair of the Resource, Space and Budget Committee of the University Council have been invited to meet with the EBC to provide feedback on the design of a multi-year budget process and implementation of Program Prioritization.

The EBC shares responsibility for maintaining a multi-year budget process that is transparent, fiscally responsible, accountable, and academically responsive. Accordingly, the committee plays an important role in ensuring that this process links the university budget directly to the achievement of NIU’s mission and strategic goals, and to the actions proposed as a result of the Program Prioritization process.

As you’ll see in the program-level progress reports below, recommendations for program enhancement or transformation that require the assignment of significant resources are being referred to the EBC for review, and are considered in the context of the overall university budget and competing priorities. Those priorities are captured in a budgeting template that is modeled on the Program Prioritization criteria, and analogous to the template developed to request authorization of a faculty search (see supporting Materials in the Academic Affairs Action plan at go.niu.edu/pp). Specifically, these criteria include: Program Prioritization outcome; revenue enhancement opportunity (e.g., enrollment growth, student recruitment/retention/completion, expanded sponsored project funding, auxiliary services); expense reduction/operational efficiency (e.g., process improvement, critical operational need); academic factors (e.g., academic excellence, contribution to university mission, faculty recruitment); audit compliance factors (e.g., risk mitigation, public/life safety, impact on accreditation); and diversity and equity (e.g., building educational equity, enhancing university diversity, building an inclusive culture).

Based on the recommendation of the representatives from the Academic Planning Council and the Resource Space and Budget Committee, a similar template is under development for use in staff hiring requests. Evaluating all of the proposed action steps against a common template will facilitate the work of the EBC, and allow the president to make final decisions that integrate our priorities and fiscal realities into the university budget presented to the Board of Trustees.

**Academic Hiring Plan**

A university is only as strong as its faculty.

A strong foundation of tenure-track faculty is essential to creating and sustaining excellent academic programs that attract and retain motivated students from diverse backgrounds. We have been mindful of this as we have navigated difficult financial times, and it will remain paramount as we move forward.

Toward that end, I have endorsed a set of faculty hiring guidelines set forth by Executive Vice President and Provost Lisa Freeman in August. Those guidelines balance our commitment to ensuring a strong faculty with the economic realities with which we are faced. They do so by aligning hiring with our strategic priorities.

As part of that process, each college was asked to categorize its hiring requests based upon recommendations put forth by the Program Prioritization Academic Task Force:

- **High Priority**: Positions related to programs targeted for enhancement or transformation through the addition of resources;
- **Medium Priority**: Positions related to programs recommended to be sustained or transformed with no addition of resources; or
- **Low Priority**: Positions related to programs identified as candidates for review, reduced resources or transformation through reduction in resources.

Classifications can change based on fluctuations in enrollment, outside funding, accreditation requirements and other factors.

Only “high priority” requests were considered for searches this academic year. Colleges were asked to rank order all requests within that category. To prioritize faculty hiring requests across the Division of Academic Affairs, the provost’s staff used criteria and a weighting framework similar to those developed by the Executive Budget Committee for prioritization of unfunded needs.

At the conclusion of that prioritization process, out of more than 120 high-priority requests, we authorized 60 searches for tenure-track faculty in FY18, many of which are already underway. Obviously, this does not address all of our needs, but in these difficult and uncertain financial times I believe this effort demonstrates our commitment to maintaining a robust faculty.

See the Academic Affairs Action Plan at [go.niu.edu/pp](http://go.niu.edu/pp) for a listing of positions by college.

**Chargebacks**

The Administrative Task Force noted that there are many areas of the university whose basic funding model is a chargeback system, where one unit of the university charges another for providing services. Chargeback systems have been widespread across the university, including Architectural & Engineering Services, Creative Services, Housing & Dining, multiple functions in DoIT (document services, phones, servers, storage, wired and wireless connections) and room rentals. While chargeback systems have their merits, they create haves and have-nots, encourage duplication of services (as units would rather create their own shops than pay another unit on campus), increase transaction costs (as all of the chargeback transactions have to be accounted for) and increase the overall operational costs of the university.

As part of our long-term budgeting process, now underway, Vice President of Administration and Finance Al Phillips is working with the other vice presidents to replace many of these chargeback structures with base funding. This will allow us to eliminate redundancy of services, provide a more equitable access to services across the university, and promote more consistent solutions that make us look, feel and act more like one institution. Some of the chargebacks that have already been eliminated include those for Blackboard, Creative Services, OnBase, WiFi and many phone services. We are not eliminating all chargeback structures, but they are moving toward becoming a more refined tool for managing exceptional cases, rather than the normal way of doing business. It is important to note that there is no such thing as a free lunch, or a free service. As chargeback structures are eliminated, the service providers will need to replace those funds. While the new funding structures are still being developed, it is likely that that funds formerly held and spent by client units will need to be transferred to the service providers’ base budgets. We are now working through these essential restructuring processes, and I have called for a new funding model from the CFO and CIO by 2/1/17.
Outsourcing

The Administrative Task Force identified a variety of programs where the university might benefit from a different model for delivering services, including the possibility of outsourcing services. These options were noted for units across the university, from Administration & Finance, Athletics, Information Technology, Office of General Counsel, and Student Affairs. I agree with the task force that NIU needs to evaluate and understand all of our options for delivering support services as effectively and efficiently as possible. I have charged the vice presidents with investigating these options. This doesn’t mean that we will choose outsourcing, but knowing the facts will allow us to make a choice on delivery models based on the clear knowledge of the pros and cons.
Complex Conversations

The Administrative Task Force report noted numerous functional areas where multiple programs across divisions operate. These functional areas range from advising to IT customer support to community relations. The programs that operate in these areas have not always been coordinated in their efforts, which has led to inefficiencies, uneven results, and uncertainty about where to go for assistance. This also represents one of our greatest opportunities to achieve the fundamental goal of Program prioritization, that of aligning resources with mission. To that end, I have called for detailed examinations of each of the functional areas identified by the task force report. Recognizing that it isn’t easy to re-examine years of established practice, especially when the examinations involve multiple units and divisions, we have come to refer to these as complex conversations.

For each of these conversations, a facilitator has been identified, a working group assembled, and a charge issued that sets out the expectations for the group’s work. These charge statements can be found on the Program Prioritization website (go.niu.edu/pp). Each of the conversations have gone at a different pace, with some already having moved from planning to implementation; some now moving through the planning stage; and some delayed in order to better manage the process.

For each complex conversation, a report outlining assessments and recommendations will be submitted to the president. At that time, each report will be reviewed, and decisions will be communicated to vice presidents and appropriate program owners. All directions and outcomes will be outlined in the president’s follow-up Program Prioritization report in May 2017.

Academic Advising

The Administrative Task force raised concerns about the disparate advising models and student-to-adviser ratios among the colleges. Additionally, the task force noted the need to strengthen institutional training and professional development of academic advisers, improve coordination of the varying types of advising software used, and prioritize funding to advising programs that are most understaffed. Several enhancements to academic advising have already taken place as a result of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) report evaluating the university’s advising efforts, including implementing the Student Success Collaboration Campus, a predictive analytic platform that will improve communication between advisers and make it easier to identify academically at-risk students. However, the NACADA report was silent on the structure of advising.

A working group comprised of two advising deans, an associate dean for undergraduate affairs, a professional adviser, a chair, a student, and several faculty has been charged with reviewing the advising structure in the various colleges and the Academic Advising Center. Specifically, the group has been charged with articulating “one or more optimal undergraduate academic advising structures for all student populations at NIU, taking into account the needs and perspectives of students and other constituents and existing processes and structures.” The working group must address challenges, including variable quality in the training and delivery of advising services, unintentional redundancies, and inconsistent communication. The group’s report is due by 1/15/17.
**Community Relations**

NIU is committed to community engagement. The communities we interact with range from DeKalb to Chicago to Mandalay, but NIU’s relationship with our neighbors in DeKalb-Sycamore are especially important to us, and we engage with our home community in many ways. The Administrative Task Force was correct in noting that we do not have strategic alignment of those efforts, nor do we have a structure for coordinating them. This complex conversation is still emerging, with leadership from Marketing and Communications and Outreach, Engagement, and Regional Development (OERD). The group’s report is due by 5/15/17.

**External Programming**

One of the recommendations of the Administrative Task Force was to examine the way the university delivers non-credit activities that are primarily directed at off-campus audiences. This includes everything from music lessons to OSHA training to hosting conferences. I agree that there appears to be an opportunity to be more efficient, and to focus on those activities that most enhance the university. The task force recommended a single conversation to consider the full range of non-credit programming, but we have determined that it makes better sense to separate Conference and Event Services (which involves a focused set of issues, but is also distributed across almost all of NIU’s divisions) from the rest of External Programming. The External Programming conversation is now proceeding independently, involving OERD, the Office of International Affairs, and those colleges that maintain External Programming offices (Education, Engineering & Engineering Technology, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Visual & Performing Arts). The group’s report is due by 2/1/17.

**Conference & Event Services**

The university hosts events of many shapes and sizes, to audiences both internal and external. Providing effective support for these events presents the university with an opportunity to enhance our reputation, increase visibility, more fully utilize space and facilities, and supplement revenues. A working group with contributors from nearly every division of NIU had been formed even before the task force report was released. Once it became clear that Conference and Event Services could be pursued separately from External Programming, the working group resumed their efforts, mapping out how to best coordinate a university-wide conference and event hosting structure, built around a central coordinating office. The group’s report is due by 5/15/17.

**Information Technology (IT) Customer Support**

For quite a few years, the university has improvised its IT customer support, without a clear organization or strategic plan. In response to the Administrative Task Force’s call for a comprehensive review of IT support, a group of IT managers, drawn from across the university, has explored options, including desktop/laptop/mobile device support, and support for classroom technology. The group has provided a preliminary report to the Chief Information Officer, which has been shared with the IT community. IT units on campus have largely agreed to do the following in pursuit of better customer support:

- Shed infrastructure-related duties, such as maintaining servers, networks and storage, to focus more on customer service;
• Adopt a common work-tracking system so we can talk (and manage performance) across different IT departments more effectively.

• Participate in trainings on IT service best practices. Two-hundred seats of introductory training have already been provided. Intermediate training is next.

• Use automated tools to assist with desktop support. This is primarily a productivity aid through automation but also has the potential to provide faster or even real-time assistance for end-users by calling the service desk and allowing staff to take remote control of computers to aid in fixing the problems rather than waiting to dispatch techs to make office calls.

• Consolidate to a single help desk.

While not all aspects of IT customer support have been resolved (e.g., classroom support needs to be addressed), the IT community is beginning to transition from planning to implementation, and looks to have the bulk of the work done by FY 18. The group’s report is due by 2/1/17.

Online & Off-Campus Course Delivery

A working group from Academic Affairs and OERD is exploring options for how to structure the delivery of online and off-campus courses and programs, and is also exploring options for the financial models that go with those courses and programs. The group’s report is due by 2/1/17.

Retention

Regarding retention efforts, the Administrative Task Force wrote: “What is lacking is a central strategy for how the university spends its retention money and energy. The university needs to ensure coordination and strategic distribution of resources to the different retention initiatives across campus. A centralized retention strategy to could better develop programs for respective student populations (e.g., ethnically diverse students, first-generation college students, at-risk student populations.)”

A working group comprised of faculty, chairs, and supportive professional staff representing various units within the divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs has been charged with developing one or more optimal university-wide strategies for how the university spends its retention money and efforts. In developing the strategies, the working group should not only consider improving retention rates, but time to graduation as well. The group’s report is due 1/15/17.

School Connections

The university engages with K-12 schools and school districts in multiple ways, through multiple units. Educator licensure programs are part of this, as are outreach programs, professional development, hosting centers (e.g., Illinois Report Card, Econ Illinois), and conducting research on K-12 teaching and learning. The conversation is charged with reviewing the ways in which we organize and deliver these functions, and identifying options for how to structure our efforts. In light of the university’s upcoming accreditation by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), this conversation will move at a more deliberate pace, and will present its report by 12/15/17.
**Student Recruitment**

The Administrative Task Force was concerned that the university’s recruiting activities were not being appropriately optimized, and recommended assessing current recruiting efforts and realigning or consolidating resources. Several strategic actions have taken place since to address this, including the formation of four working groups dedicated to the recruitment of native first year-students, transfers, adult learners, and international students. Also, the reorganization of marketing, recruiting, and admissions will directly lead to greater cohesion and effectiveness (see page 6).

**Tutoring and Academic Support**

The task force noted the need for better coordination of tutoring and academic support services. A working group comprised of faculty and staff with direct oversight of tutoring and academic support programs is reviewing how the university delivers its tutoring and academic support services as well as ways that both can be enhanced to promote academic success. The group’s report is due 12/15/16.
Division Reports

Academic Affairs

Academic Affairs exemplifies all aspects of the university mission, and is the division most directly responsible for the delivery of our core functions of teaching, research, artistry and service. The Division of Academic Affairs is the heart of the university.

All of NIU’s academic programs were evaluated by the Academic Task Force and a significant number of decisions have already been made based on their recommendations. Proposed curricular changes are moving through the shared governance process. Academic departments have been authorized to search for new tenured/tenure track faculty members (see page 11). For more information on the response to and status of the Academic Task Force’s recommendations, see the Academic Affairs Action Plan at go.niu.edu/pp.

The Administrative Task Force also reviewed more than 70 administrative programs within Academic Affairs, and the resulting recommendations spanned all five prioritization categories. Among the notable things resulting from that review:

Recommendations from the task force resulted in the creation of an Undergraduate College that will unite in one administrative unit a variety of programs that promote student learning and development among undergraduate students at NIU (see page 7). In particular, this new college will allow the university to better integrate the new NIU PLUS program into the undergraduate experience.

The task force commented on a number of opportunities for greater synergy between complementary programs in Academic Affairs and Student Affairs and Enrollment Management (e.g., Campus Child Care Services and the Child Development Laboratory). Enhanced collaboration will enable these units to serve the NIU community more effectively. The task force also recommended that both of these high-quality child care programs be enhanced by investigating the ability to expand the facility's capacity, providing more competitive salaries, and hiring more staff to meet the significant demand for childcare services.

The task force recognized the collections and technical services in the University Library as “the lifeblood of a university,” because these units make it possible for the NIU community to discover and access materials for research, study, and learning. Enhancement of the resources available to purchase and provide access to materials, as recommended by the task force, will enable the library to better support the teaching and research mission of the university and contribute to student success.

While the task force’s recommendations have resulted in some actions already being implemented or in progress, it became obvious that some administrative programs within the division required more study. Those programs are part of the series of complex conversations that are ongoing. Among them are:

Advising Centers

CBUS College Advising
CEET College Advising
CHHS College Advising
CLAS College Advising
Student Services (CEDU)
The Academic Advising Center

All of these programs, along with the advising that is performed by the faculty and staff professionals in CVPA, are part of the Advising complex conversation (see page 14).

The Academic Advising Center will be part of the newly created Undergraduate College.

College Offices
CBUS College Office
CEDU College Office
CEET College Office
CHHS College Office
CLAS College Office
CVPA College Office
College of Law Office

The college offices are not engaged directly in cross-divisional, complex conversations; however, each is examining its organizational structure to determine if there are opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness. I support a model under which college offices are staffed in a manner that not only allows for effective management of critical administrative functions related to teaching, learning, research, scholarship and artistry, but also supports strong collaborative efforts related to marketing and communications, alumni and donor relations.

I recognize that the human capital and other resources required to achieve these objectives differ among the seven colleges due to: differences in their size; the scope and breadth of the disciplines represented; the number and nature of the academic departments and degree programs; and the complexity of the demands imposed by external accreditors. However, I believe that a more thorough analysis of these functions across campus could yield substantial improvements for all.

Executive Vice President and Provost Lisa Freeman encouraged the four new deans who joined us in 2016 to engage in strategic planning at the college level, and I want to respect their processes. Toward that end, Provost Freeman has requested that each academic dean revise the program narrative for his or her college office by 4/3/17, with the updates focused on the office resource requirements and an associated organizational chart. I will consider these updates in the context of the Program Prioritization task force recommendations and action plans, and I will indicate on or before 4/17/17 what actions I would like taken, along with the timeline over which I expect the actions to be completed.

IT Customer Support
Administration (CBUS)
CLAS Distributed IT
CEET Computer Operations
Distributed IT (CEDU)
Technology Initiative and Support Services
All of these programs are part of the IT Customer Support complex conversation (see page 15).

**External Programs**

External and Global Programs (CEDU)
External Programming (CEET)
External Programming (CLAS)
External Programs (CVPA)
Graduate Academic Affairs (CBUS)
International Training

All of these programs are part of the External Programs complex conversation (see page 15).

**Institutional Effectiveness**

Assessment
Academic Analysis and Reporting
Accreditation
Institutional Research
Testing Services

All of these programs are part of the Institutional Effectiveness complex conversation. (see page 8).

**School Connections**

Teacher Certification
University Licensure Educator Preparation

These programs are part of the School Connections complex conversation (see page 16).

Other programs examined by the Administrative Task Force, and my response to their recommendations, are as follows:

**Admissions and Financial Aid (College of Law)**

I disagree with the recommendation to combine this program with Graduate School Admissions. It serves a unique student population and, as such, must remain a stand-alone program.

**Anthropology Museum**

I agree with the placement of this program in the Sustain category. I concur with the task force’s view that this program is an important center of cultural engagement for both our campus and our community and is a source of pride. With opportunities for students to engage in research and participate in curation of its more than 20,000 objects, the Anthropology Museum epitomizes how our campus museums are an integral part of the NIU educational experience.

**Business Advancement Office (CBUS)**

I agree with the task force that this program should be sustained and concur that any decisions regarding the office should be part of the NIU Foundation’s broader discussions regarding allocation of resources.
More information related to this program will be included in the CBUS College Office report, which is due 4/3/17.

**Career Opportunities and Professional Development (CLAW)**

I disagree with the recommendation that this program be combined with Career Services. It serves a unique student population and, as such, must remain a stand-alone program. Additionally, Career Services is now moving under Academic Affairs and will be part of the new Undergraduate College (see page 7).

**Center for the Study of Family Violence and Sexual Assault**

I agree with the placement of this program in the Sustain category. The program has long been recognized for its contribution to research that informs prevention, intervention and treatment related to family violence and sexual assault. It provides an excellent experiential learning opportunity for students and a valuable service for the community.

**Child Development Lab**

I agree that this high-quality program should be considered for enhancement. The lab provides a valuable service to the university and surrounding community by making available high-quality child care (it receives a four-star rating from the Illinois Department of Human Services) while also serving as an important teaching and research facility for those studying child development. The task force recommended exploring possible synergies with Campus Child Care in order to expand childcare services. I have asked these two units to deliver a proposal discussing ways to increase synergies or to merge the programs. That report is due by 3/1/17.

**CLAS Distributed Tech**

I agree that this program should be sustained. The task force raised the question of whether this program would better serve the campus as a centralized resource. However, in consultation with the vice president for Research and Innovation Partnerships, I have concluded that the unit should remain as is.

**Collections and Technical Services**

I agree with the task force that the services provided by this program are the lifeblood of the university, and that the program should be enhanced. A budget proposal to increase the ability to purchase books, journals, and other materials should be sent immediately to the Executive Budget Committee (EBC) and receive high priority.

**College Relations (CEDU)**

I agree with the task force recommendation to reduce this program as it appears to have redundancy with other offices on campus. I commend the College Relations Office for its ongoing transformation of services and the way it has absorbed staff reductions as part of that process. I also laud and their new collaborative efforts with other offices on campus, including the sharing of personnel with Marketing and Communications. More information related to this program will be included in the CEDU College Office report, which is due 4/3/17.
Couple and Family Therapy Clinic
I agree with the placement of this program in the Sustain category. The program provides high-quality, affordable mental health services for people across the lifespan experiencing a wide range of difficulties. It also provides an excellent experiential learning opportunities for students specializing in Marriage and Family Therapy.

Division of Academic Affairs, Executive Staff, and Office Operations
I support the placement of this program in the reduce category. The elimination of two associate vice provost titles is appropriate. Also, while I applaud the vice provosts for teaching without compensation, I am concerned about spreading them too thin given their already busy schedules. This decision might need to be revisited in the future.

ESP/ACCESS
This program is part of the Tutoring and Academic Support complex conversation (see page 17). The program will be part of the new Undergraduate College (see page 8).

ESP/CHANCE
I agree with the Administrative Task Force’s placement of this program in the Transform category. Perhaps more than any other program on campus, CHANCE demonstrates NIU’s commitment to helping students maximize their potential. Over its nearly 50-year history, it has helped thousands of students who otherwise might not have had access to a college education build a better future – for themselves and our society.

I concur with the suggestion of the task force that CHANCE should explore ways to better serve students with particular focus on enhanced academic success and degree completion. I am encouraged by Academic Affairs’ commitment to adopting a more equity-minded approach to student success, which I believe will better support all students. I envision opportunities for CHANCE to move in this direction through closer collaboration with other units that report to the vice provost for Undergraduate Affairs.

I also endorse the ongoing process improvement project that involves CHANCE and Enrollment Management. As noted in that project proposal, I anticipate that operational enhancements to financial aid, orientation, and recruitment and processing will be in place for the fall 2018 admissions cycle.

ESP/SSS
I agree with the elimination of this program. It is no longer supported by federal funding and, based upon reasons provided by the Administrative Task Force, Academic Affairs has already decided to stop funding it. Students affected by this change are receiving services from other programs (e.g., ESP/CHANCE).

Faculty Development
This program is part of the Online Course Development and Delivery complex conversation (see page 16).
Graduate Academic Affairs (CBUS)
More information related to this program will be included in the CBUS College Office report, which is due 4/3/17.

Graduate School Administration and Office of the Dean
I agree that this program should be sustained. The program is effective and efficient.

Graduate School Admissions
I do not support the recommendation that this program should be transformed by combining it with the College of Law admissions program. Recruitment of law students is distinctly different from recruitment in other graduate programs, and as such should remain separate. Moreover, I understand that graduate student recruitment at a doctoral university with high research activity requires collaboration. This teamwork must include graduate programs with professional networking reputations that attract students as well as graduate school initiatives that mine and capture prospective graduate students who reveal their interest in NIU.

I am aware that the Graduate School and the International Student and Faculty Office (ISFO) have traditionally cooperated in the recruitment of international students, and that any change in the current roles and responsibilities would require reallocation of resources associated with application fees. As the American Council on Education (ACE) Internationalization Task Force is considering a variety of questions related to graduate student recruitment, I want to revisit this question in spring 2017 after their report is available.

Graduate School, Enrollment
I agree with the task force that this program should be sustained and remain separate from Registration and Records.

International Affairs
I agree with placing this program in the Transform category. The task force appropriately recognized that International Affairs is already undergoing a transformation, driven by the departure of two key leaders, and the opportunity to participate in a strategic planning exercise via the ACE-Internationalization Laboratory.

The NIU task force associated with ACE-Internationalization Laboratory is working through the process of re-envisioning International Affairs. A final report on this program will be issued in spring 2017, after their report is available.

International Student and Faculty Office (ISFO)
I agree with placement of this program in the Enhance category. The current three-person staff of ISFO is insufficient to carry out its work in the areas of compliance, acculturation, recruitment, and admission. The ACE-Internationalization Task Force report is expected to make specific recommendations regarding the organizational structures and resources needed to adequately support admissions processing, recruitment and marketing, as well as international scholar and student services. A final report on this program will be issued in spring 2017, after the ACE report is available.
Note that, based on my endorsement of the task force recommendation, the EBC has already considered and approved the allocation of additional resources for recruiting in China and forging partnership initiatives in that country.

**Jerry L. Johns Literacy Clinic**

I agree with the placement of this program in the Sustain category. The program provides an excellent experiential learning opportunity for students and the community with a valuable service.

**Law Library**

I disagree with the task force that this program should be transformed and that the program could be consolidated with the main library. This is not feasible due to American Bar Association accreditation standards, which stipulate that law libraries must have a separate and consistent budget allocation made with the input of the College of Law dean and the director of the Law Library. Although the recommendation for consolidation is unrealistic, I support the Law Library’s ongoing efforts to collaborate with the main library to maximize efficiencies and work toward economizing shared purchases in print (Oxford/Cambridge University Press titles and shared special collections plus interdisciplinary titles) and when considering current and future purchases for online databases of shared interest.

**Learning Center/Blackwell History of Education Museum**

I agree with the placement of this program in the Transform category. The Blackwell History of Education Museum and One Room School House perform a unique and valuable service, helping to link modern American education with its roots. I endorse the College of Education’s plan to provide additional support for that facility’s curator through establishment of an executive committee with appropriate subject matter expertise. In addition, I encourage the Blackwell Museum to increase its collaboration with campus and community libraries, museums, archives and historical organizations. I also support the college’s plan for ongoing program improvement in Learning Center operations and staffing.

**NIU Art Museum**

I agree with the placement of this program in the Sustain category. I concur with the task force that the Art Museum provides great value for the university community by contributing to our educational curriculum. It also serves an important role in our community by providing opportunities for art education and cultural enrichment.

**Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost**

I agree with the placement of this program in the Sustain category and commend Provost Freeman for making significant changes in operations from past practices, particularly for increasing the level of collaboration with the vice president for administration and finance, and decreasing the number of administrators with the title of “associate vice provost.”

**Physical Therapy Clinic**

I agree that this program should be sustained. The clinic provides excellent experiential learning opportunities for students, research opportunities for faculty and a valuable service to hundreds of members of the community each year.
Pre-collegiate Programs

I support moving the Upward Bound program to P-20 and eliminating other aspects of this program that have not been renewed because of lost grant money. A report on the cost savings of this move will be provided to me by the executive vice president and provost by 12/15/16.

Public Services

I agree that this program should be sustained. This program is an important part of the research mission of the institution and should be maintained.

Regional History Center/University Archives

I endorse the recommendation of the task force to reduce this program. I do not support the automatic refill of vacant positions and the addition of new staff as outlined in the action plan. The program should explore closer collaboration and coordination with the University Library as a way of addressing the demand for services. If this is not helpful, then a reduced level of service should be considered. In addition, the unit might need to prioritize its acquisition, preservation and presentation of materials in the University Archives, Local Government Records, and Regional Collections. That said, every effort should be made to ensure that mandated service to the state is fulfilled at an acceptable level and the most valuable collections are maintained.

I am also concerned about the amount of space that this program occupies and would suggest exploring possibilities for collaborating with other units seeking specialized space (e.g., Museum Studies; CVPA; Elwood House) to determine if a shared solution would be possible through philanthropy or collaboration.

I appreciate the challenges associated with creating and maintaining accessible digital archives, and encourage creative thinking about how the unit could address these needs through collaborative relationships with new or existing graduate programs in public history or archival studies. A report on the possibility of such collaborations is due to me by 5/15/17.

Registration and Records

I support the placement of this program in the Reduce category. A reduction plan is due by 1/15/17. I also support the program’s decision to institute a fee for requests that require quick turnarounds.

Research and Development CEET

I support the placement of this program in the Reduce category. I have instructed Executive Vice President and Provost Freeman to work with Interim Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships Jerry Blazey to clarify a plan regarding this program. The plan is due by 12/15/16.

Research Evaluation and Policy Studies

The task force recommended eliminating this program, and the division’s action plan concurred with this suggestion. As a result, the program has already been eliminated. An update on the redeployment of the two remaining employees in this program is due by 12/15/16.
Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic
I agree with the placement of this program in the Sustain category. It serves hundreds of community members each year and provides an excellent experiential learning opportunity for students.

Student Academic Success
This program is part of the Retention complex conversation (see page 16).

Student-Athlete Academic Support Services
I disagree with the placement of this program in the reduce category. NIU’s graduation rate for student-athletes consistently ranks at the top of the Mid-American Conference, and is a point of pride for the university. A reduction in this program would threaten that ranking.

Student Engagement and Experiential Learning
This program will be a part of the new Undergraduate College (see page 8). I support the recommendation to eliminate the redundancy in leadership development and community service between this program and Student Life Services. I have instructed the heads of both programs to develop a realignment and reduction plan. A draft of the proposal is due to me by 1/15/17 with the execution to be in place before the end of the fiscal year (6/30/17).

Study Abroad
I agree with the recommendation to enhance this program. Consistent with that recommendation, travel scholarships for study abroad should be a fundraising priority. Overall costs of the programs must be lessened as well with the administrative costs passed on to students reduced as much as possible. Additionally, we must take full advantage of international partnerships to increase NIU students’ access to authentic and affordable study abroad programs.

Testing Services
I concur with the placement of this program in the Reduce category. A reduction plan is due by 1/15/17.

Undergraduate Academic Affairs (CBUS)
More information related to this program will be included in the CBUS College Office report, which is due 4/3/17.

University Honors Program
I agree that this program should be considered for enhancement. The honors program is an integral part of attracting outstanding young scholars to the university, and we should take steps to increase support for such efforts. The new director of University Honors is developing a strategic plan that will include recommendations to increase the capacity of this program, which is due by 2/15/17. The program will be part of the new Undergraduate College (see page 8).
University Libraries Administration and Office of the Dean

I agree with the recommendation that this program should be sustained. The task force also recommended that the physical spaces within the library be updated to make it a more inviting place to do research and study. Such efforts are already being made, especially on the first floor.

University Writing Center

This program is part of the Tutoring and Academic Support complex conversation (see page 17). I support the program’s proposal to generate revenue by charging a small fee for its dissertation boot camp. The program will be part of the new Undergraduate College, although it will continue serving other populations.

Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Diversity, equity and inclusion for all students, faculty, and staff are a critical part of NIU’s vision and mission. As a community of diverse individuals who live, learn, work and play together, we must celebrate and respect different cultures, viewpoints and ideas. This type of collaboration will lead to increased access to high quality educational programs, even stronger retention and graduation rates of our students and an overall productive environment.

In the year since the Office of Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion opened, a strategic plan has been implemented and NIU has benefited from initiatives such as the Diversity Dialogues – especially during these times in which our nation is challenged as it relates to social justice and our students work to find their place in a global society. I am pleased with the office’s partnership with college deans and the academic diversity centers to develop strategic plans that will address reducing academic achievement gaps for underrepresented students and to develop and implement the Human Diversity requirement.

Additionally, a clear theme of transformation emerged from the Administrative Task Force’s report regarding programs related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our diversity resource centers and programs provide incredible value and serve extremely important educational, social, recruitment, and retention functions, but need clear missions and foci. As such, I have moved these resource centers to report to the Chief Diversity Officer who will work with the various units on their transformation (see page 7). Several of these programs have scarce resources, and I have asked the chief diversity officer to send funding requests for several of the programs to the Executive Budget Committee (EBC) for consideration.

Asian American Center

I support the Administrative Task Force’s recommendation to transform our cultural centers and, as such, have moved these programs under the supervision of the chief diversity officer (see page 7). In addition to being transformed, I believe this program should be enhanced. The space for the center was supposed to be temporary and is unacceptable as a permanent location. A plan to move the center to a more suitable location must be in place by 5/15/17. Additionally, the program is understaffed. The program’s request to hire an assistant director and an administrative assistant should be sent to the EBC for review.
Black Male Initiative (BMI)

I disagree with the task force’s placement of BMI in review and support the proposed plan to make BMI a program under the Center for Black Studies, similar to S-Plan. This move should be finalized by 12/15/16.

Center for Black Studies

I support the Administrative Task Force’s recommendation to transform our cultural centers and, as such, have moved these programs under the supervision of the chief diversity officer (see page 7). Although the task force recommended that this program be separated into academic and administrative units, I do not support such a move. I support the fact that the minor in Black Studies will be transformed and the center director is now attending Senate meetings within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Gender and Sexuality Resource Center

I support the Administrative Task Force’s recommendation to transform our cultural centers and, as such, have moved these programs under the supervision of the chief diversity officer (see page 7). Based on the program’s narrative, I shared the task force’s concern about the need to increase the visibility of gender equity-based programming for persons who identify as women. I understand that the center has already done an internal review and efforts are underway to address this issue. A plan reflecting this work is due to me by 1/15/17.

Latino Resource Center

I support the Administrative Task Force’s recommendation to transform our cultural centers and, as such, have moved these programs under the supervision of the chief diversity officer (see page 7). Given the growing Latino student population, the program’s request to hire an associate director and a program coordinator should be sent to the EBC for review.

Presidential Commissions

I disagree with the task force’s placement of the presidential commissions in review. I support the transformation of the commissions under the direction of the chief diversity officer, including asking the commissions to assess what they do, identify gaps, and eliminate redundancies.

Administration and Finance

Administration and Finance provides the support for the physical facilities and financial systems that enable everyone at NIU to carry out their work. The task forces strongly recognized the role of Administration and Finance in providing essential support to the campus: “The university needs to be proactive about taking care of its buildings—a pattern of deferred maintenance has led to infrastructure that is out of date and difficult to repair at best. This critical infrastructure not only directly affects the learning and working environments for current students, faculty, and staff, but it is also an important feature for recruiting new students.”

Many of the units within Administration and Finance have been modernizing and involved in process re-engineering. I concur with the task force that these efforts need to continue. On the Finance side, there is less need for change, with most of the programs placed in the sustain category and more fine-tuning, such as changing business practices to increase efficiency and take advantage of options for automation. On the
Facilities side, while recognizing that units such as Heating Plant are doing heroic work to keep an aging infrastructure functioning, there is a greater need to look hard at how we deliver services such as building services, grounds, materials management and transportation to support the campus. Across the division, I have outlined expectations for next steps and timelines for advancing those steps.

**Accounts Payable**

It appears that the unit has already taken steps to align itself with the task force recommendations. At the same time, the operations of the program remain a source of concern. I call on the program to develop performance metrics; a tracking system; and to examine opportunities for process re-engineering. I would like to receive a detailed staffing and space utilization plan by 2/1/17.

**Architectural and Engineering Services**

I disagree with the task force’s call for this program to be considered for elimination. The services provided by Architectural and Engineering Services are not easily distributed to other units. At the same time, I recognize the dissatisfaction that the university community feels toward the services provided by Architectural and Engineering Services. There are two areas where particular attention is needed:

- A comprehensive space survey is required to make informed plans and decisions. As part of this, efforts should be made to identify ways to reduce costs for off-campus space, by relocating functions back onto campus where possible.

- Advance efforts to improve client services and support for units in fulfilling their missions. My sense is that the leadership has been successfully moving the division in this direction, and I encourage continued progress.

I look for a written report by 12/15/16 on how these two initiatives will be undertaken.

**Budgeting**

I agree that long-term reductions in Budgeting can only occur after a new, long-term budgeting process is in place. I understand the sense of urgency surrounding the Hyperion budget-planning software, but we need a clear cost-benefit analysis to justify this expenditure at this time, relative to the other short-term demands on our budget. Such an analysis is needed for the project to be assessed in the portfolio of funding options that will be reviewed by the EBC and me by 2/1/17.

**Building Maintenance, Heating Plant**

I agree with the task force recommendation to consider the program for enhancement. Safe and effective spaces are essential for all of the missions of the university. John Heckmann and his team are to be commended for their work in creating a comprehensive draft plan that outlines staffing, budgeting, projects, preventive maintenance, safety, and emergency response. Those elements of the action plan that can be implemented with existing resources should move forward; the rest should now go to the EBC for evaluation.
Building Services, Grounds, Transportation

I agree with the task force’s call for all of these programs to consider all options for reducing expenses, including the possibility of outsourcing some or all of their operations. I expect a preliminary description of options and their cost/benefit analysis by 2/1/17, to see which options should be seriously considered.

Bursar

I agree with the task force recommendation to sustain. The action plan calls for various ways to make effective use of technology, including implementation of an online payment system, PeopleSoft Collection module and PeopleSoft e-bill module. These should now go to the EBC for evaluation.

Controller

I agree with the task force recommendation to sustain. The action plan calls for a variety of routine actions, including a policy review, comprehensive review of activities subject to the Unrelated Business Income Tax (UBIT), and a fit-gap analysis. Those elements of the plan that can be implemented with existing resources should move forward; the rest of the action plan should now go to the EBC for evaluation.

Environmental Health and Safety

I concur with the task force’s placement of Environmental Health and Safety in Reduce. I expect a preliminary plan for reduction by 2/1/17.

Materials Management

It appears that the unit already has begun implementing the steps recommended by the task force, with fewer resources devoted to mail delivery and stocking supplies. At the same time, the action plan doesn’t make it clear that the unit has fully aligned its staffing with the changing work environment. I would like to receive a detailed staffing and space utilization plan by 12/15/16. The space plan should address whether some of the space now dedicated to the unit could be used to reduce NIU’s off-campus footprint and costs.

Office of the Vice President for Administration and Finance, Risk Management

The vice president’s office already has made some of the reductions recommended by the Administrative Task Force, and I do not believe further reductions are required. I am in partial agreement with the division’s plan to locate risk management and compliance in an Operations Office within the division. Risk management and compliance span virtually every division of the university, and no one division can own these broad issues. However, I agree that a Risk Management and Compliance Council is needed to pull expertise from across the university, that the council needs a convener who can organize efforts and lead accountability, and that the convener could come from this office. I would like to receive a draft of the proposal by 1/15/17, with the execution to be in place by 6/30/17.

Parking Services

I agree with the task force’s recommendation to transform. Campus parking needs require assessment and solutions that coordinate with bussing systems, and include bicycle and pedestrian mobility. The action plan also calls for process re-engineering, reviewing communication policies and enforcement hours, and
the use of technology to improve the customer experience. I expect a plan to address these issues by 5/15/17.

**Procurement Services, Contracting Office**

While Procurement Services was categorized as Transform and the Contracting Office as Sustain, the task force recommended that both are directed toward the common goal of improving contracting and procurement services. I agree with that direction. Plans have evolved since the narratives were composed last year. The action plan still calls for the contracting function to reside within a realigned Procurement office, but now no longer calls for a separate Contracting Office. This new configuration should be fully implemented, then assessed for operational effectiveness and efficiency. I expect a plan to accomplish this by 2/1/17, to be implemented by 7/1/17.

**Treasury Operations**

I agree with the task force recommendation to sustain. The action plan calls for strengthening the University Investment Committee, and for a fit-gap analysis of relevant PeopleSoft systems as a prelude to further automation. The former should move forward; the latter should now go to the EBC for evaluation.

**General Counsel**

The Office of the General Counsel provides guidance and representation to members of the Northern Illinois University Board of Trustees, administrative officers, faculty, staff and employees regarding official university business and operations.

The task force noted the importance of this office to the university’s functions, but believed the office should be transformed. This transformation includes having the office spend more time focusing on legal matters and less time on non-legal matters that can be handled by other offices (e.g., FOIA, Clery Act reporting, procurement contracts). I concur with the task force’s overall recommendation, although I note some minor disagreements in the discussion of the individual programs below.

In light of the recently announced resignation of Vice President and General Counsel Jerry Blakemore, the acting vice president and general counsel will lead the program changes, where applicable, until the appointment of a permanent leader for this area.

**Board of Trustees (Governance, Legal Counsel)**

I agree with the task force’s placement in the Sustain category. This position is essential for the operations of the Board of Trustees and should continue functioning as is.

**Clery Counsel**

Consistent with the task force’s recommendation, this program has been absorbed by the Department of Police and Public Safety.

**Collections**

I need more information on this program to make a decision regarding whether it should be eliminated as the task force suggested. An analysis of the full costs associated with the program and whether the program nets revenue is due by 12/15/16. If the program is in the black, then I am supportive of
maintaining it. However, if the university loses money from the program, then the program should be eliminated.

Contracts
I agree with the task force’s recommendation to reduce this program. All non-legal review work should be delegated to the appropriate offices (e.g., procurement, Division of Research and Innovation Partnerships).

Dispute Resolution and Mediations, Litigation, Arbitration
I agree with the task force’s suggestion to reduce this program. However, I also acknowledge that the university’s litigation workload can be driven by external factors and is not always within the university’s control. Where appropriate, processes should be streamlined through OnBase and any related cost savings should be identified by 12/15/16.

Ethics
Since the Administrative Task Force report was written, new mandates from the state have led to an increased workload in this program. In addition, each public university is required under state law to have an ethics officer, who is designated by the president of the institution. As a result, I disagree with the task force’s recommendation to reduce. A new ethics officer will be hired and the reporting relationship will be finalized upon the hire of a permanent General Counsel.

FOIA Review
I agree with the task force’s placement in the Sustain category. The two units performing FOIA review (Office of the General Counsel, as counsel, and the Division of Marketing and Communications) appear to work together well and should continue doing so.

Legal Requirements
I disagree with the task force’s recommendation to reduce. These are typical and, in many cases, mandated functions of an Office of the General Counsel and should continue.

Legislation, Drafting, and Proposal
I disagree with the task force’s placement of this program in the Review category. These are typical functions of an Office of the General Counsel and should continue.

Office of the Vice President and General Counsel
Although this program was placed in the Transform (neutral) category, I believe that the budget can be reduced. A reduction plan for this program is due by 12/15/16.

Professional Leadership and Public Relations
While I disagree with the task force’s suggestion that these functions be eliminated, I do believe that the time spent on these functions should be substantially reduced to allow the general counsel and staff to spend more time on legal matters.
University Service
I agree with the task force’s statement that this program is redundant with the responsibilities of the Office of the General Counsel.

Human Resource Services
Human Resource Services (HRS) provides the support needed for the people of NIU to carry out their work. The Administrative Task Force had varying appreciation of the different aspects of HRS, ranging from a call to modernize employment services, to a refocusing of the role of Affirmative Action, to enhancement of employee assistance and training. A unifying theme across these responses is a respect for the compliance role that is essential to an HR function, together with a desire to see HRS direct its resources as much as possible toward its support functions for employees. Doing so will depend in part on our ability to implement software solutions and change business practices to make routine functions more efficient, thus allowing HRS to focus more on value-added efforts such as recruiting and training. However, one arena in which we need to tightly link compliance and support is that of responding to Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Our response to these mandates needs to be more tightly coordinated, and aligned efforts now distributed across multiple units and divisions. My specific guidelines and timelines for action are as follows.

Affirmative Action and Equity Compliance (AAEC)
I agree with the task force recommendation for transformation, and endorse the suggestion to refocus this program on guiding and enforcing the policies, procedures and laws that govern fairness, equality and related compliance for NIU. I am aware that this office is collaborating with the chief diversity officer to ensure adequate coordination of diversity resources during this transition, and I applaud these efforts. These transformations will allow AAEC to address the obligations associated with Title IX compliance as well as the collective bargaining negotiations and contract administration for NIU’s employee unions. I have asked the vice president for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and the executive vice president/provost to work together to facilitate an external review of their reporting units that contribute to compliance with the various statutes and policies that govern the NIU response to sexual misconduct, including but not limited to Title IX, VAWA and IL law. The external review should be scheduled no later than 5/15/17.

Distributed IT
This is still pending, as part of the IT Customer Service complex conversation. The status of the Service Center needs to be determined separately.

Employee Assistance
I agree with the task force recommendation to consider the program for enhancement. It is important to NIU that all employees are supported in their work, and the Employee Assistance Program is a key element of that support structure. The action plan includes the merger of Training with the Employee Assistance Program, and seeks an additional staff member for the employee assistance functions. Both of these action steps have been approved and are now being implemented.

Employment
Evaluation of this program is still pending.
Insurance and Benefits
I agree with the task force recommendation to sustain. The program is working well in a challenging environment to provide employees with needed services. The action plan calls for coordination with the state’s Department of Central Management Services to move access to services online. I support this effort, and encourage it to move forward.

Payroll
I agree with the task force recommendation to sustain. The program is working well in a challenging environment to provide employees with needed services. The program should continue its good work.

Training
I agree with the task force recommendation to consider the program for enhancement. It is important to NIU that all employees are supported in the skills they need to perform their work well, and the Training office is a key element in helping employees fulfill their potential. The action plan includes the merger of Training with the Employee Assistance Program, and seeks an additional staff member for the training functions. This funding request should now go to the EBC for evaluation.

Information Technology
The modern university depends fundamentally on its IT structure. Our students, faculty, and staff rely on it for everything they do. Like the air we breathe, we need and expect it to be there and notice it most when it is not. The important work of ensuring our IT environment rests both with DoIT and with the IT staff distributed across the university. The Administrative Task Force recognized the importance of this work, and also recognized that NIU’s history has allowed a structure to grow up that lacks coherence and effectiveness:

- “IT customer support at NIU has grown organically over the years and displays wide variability. … The number of [separate IT] programs has produced inequities in service and support, as well as created challenges for efficient use of resources.”
- “The unifying theme of [IT hardware] programs is the need to transform both the business model and the campus coverage.”
- “… one of the glaring issues noticed across these [IT software] reports is the university has paid for, but not yet implemented, numerous PeopleSoft modules. Those modules have the possibility of transforming how the university works, providing better data-driven decision-making and cross-campus efficiencies.”

I applaud the transformative work that has been underway since 2015 to re-invent our IT structure and see the task force report as accelerating changes that have been underway. The action plan provided by DoIT in response to the task force recommendations lays out a thoughtful path forward. Some of the key elements of that plan are:

- Replacing the chargeback system that has been the driver of much of our existing structure and replacing it with central funding that provides for equitable and efficient support campus-wide. These changes in the chargeback system have already begun and will be largely complete by FY
18. As noted on page 12, these changes will require new financial models, which are now under development. I would like to receive a plan from the CFO and CIO for the new financial model by 2/15/17.

- Rationalize our hardware, software, and customer support systems. This balances central and distributed services, with much-needed economies of scale for elements such as connectivity, desktop/laptop purchasing and disposal, servers, storage and security, while maintaining distributed customer support and treating research computing separately. This also includes better control over our software and app purchasing, licensing and deployment.

- As funding allows, implementing software that will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our efforts.

Planning and implementation of new software will need to be linked to planning and implementing changes in business practices to take advantage of the opportunities created. Based on these considerations, I have the following recommendations.

**Academic Technologies Support**

I agree with the Administrative Task Force recommendation to enhance academic technology support. Systems such as Blackboard and Qualtrics are essential to our academic mission. The action plan calls for solidifying funding for Blackboard, Qualtrics and other academic software, and eliminating redundancies in video-conferencing software. Those elements of the action plan that can be implemented with existing resources should move forward; the rest of the action plan should now go to the EBC for evaluation.

**Application Development and Hosting, Software and Licensing Distribution, Voice Services**

For all three of these programs, I understand that the administrative task force is calling for long-term savings to the campus by restructuring our business practices and/or deployment of technology. I support those goals, and recognize that many of the opportunities for long-term savings require near-term investments. Therefore, all of these need to go to the EBC for prioritization against all of the university’s other budget needs. That will require cost/benefit analyses for each project. I would also urge that the IT Steering Committee (ITSC) and related governance structures be used to conduct a comprehensive portfolio review of all of the proposed DoIT activities, to ensure that there is realistic alignment between the projects recommended to the EBC and DoIT staff capacity to execute those projects.

Finally, all of these activities imply refining the set of products available to the campus, whether it is apps, software, or communications. As choices are made, DoIT needs to ensure meaningful input from the university community. The IT governance structure is an important part of that, but it will also be important to hear from the faculty and staff directly impacted by the choices made.

**Desktop and Media Technologies Support**

I support the task force recommendation for a comprehensive review of IT customer support, and appreciate the leadership in organizing the complex conversation. The IT managers have delivered a strong initial report. Their good work needs to be continued, with specific implementation steps identified for their recommendations. In particular, the unresolved issues of classroom technology management need to be addressed. I would like to receive a draft plan on these remaining issues by 2/1/17.
Document and Print Management

I agree with the Administrative Task Force’s placement of this program in the Reduce category, and understand that this includes two different kinds of reduction. First, I appreciate and support the efforts underway to reduce printing across campus, including the steps indicated for OnBase and AnywherePrints. Second, we still need to look at the role of Document Services, which might include the possibility of outsourcing our print functions or the enhancement of this area to provide services to external clients and increase its net revenues. I would like to receive a preliminary report on the feasibility of these or other viable options by 2/1/17. This could include a comparison of comparable schools’ printing costs when using internal and external print shops.

Financial Systems Support, Human Resource Systems Support, Student Administrative Systems Support

I agree with the Administrative Task Force recommendations to positively transform all three support areas by better exploiting the capacities of PeopleSoft. The action plan calls for implementation of multiple PeopleSoft modules, improving integration of the three components of PeopleSoft, improving access to PeopleSoft systems and reports, and creating a data warehouse. It is in the long-term benefit of the university to implement the many PeopleSoft modules that have been purchased but not implemented. At the same time, there are considerable up-front costs, in both time and money, across multiple divisions, to implement these modules. All of that complexity makes cost-benefit analysis essential. Those elements of the action plan that can be implemented with existing resources should move forward; the rest of the action plan should now go to the EBC for evaluation.

Identity and Access Control

I support the task force’s recommendation to sustain. The action plan calls for ongoing action to improve access and security for NIU’s systems, including a consolidated multi-factor authentication system. Those elements of the action plan that can be implemented with existing resources should move forward; the rest of the action plan should now go to the EBC for evaluation.

Messaging and Communication

I agree with the task force’s placement in Sustain. The action step calls for routine action involving improvement of the O365 environment, better management of dormant student email accounts, expansion of Everbridge, and consolidation of duplicative signage systems. Those elements of the action plan that can be implemented with existing resources should move forward; the rest of the action plan should now go to the EBC for evaluation.

Multimedia Production and Support

I support the Administrative Task Force recommendation to either eliminate or reduce general revenues funding for this program. I would like to see a firm plan by 12/15/16 for reduction or elimination of this program.

Network Architecture and Support

I agree with the Administrative Task Force recommendations to positively transform NIU’s network infrastructure, and to create a new funding model to replace the chargeback structures. The action plan calls for a steady migration from a wired to wireless environment, and also calls for the elimination of the
charge-back system for both. The new funding model should be delivered to me by the CIO and CFO by 2/15/17, and the new funding requests should now go to the EBC for evaluation.

**NIU Broadband Development Services**

I support the Administrative Task Force recommendation that general revenues funding for Broadband Development Services should be reduced. I appreciate the DoIT action plan’s call for greater external support and that you have been pursuing those efforts in recent months. I would like to see a new action plan for reducing general revenues funding that identifies strategic pathways and a cost/benefit analysis by 2/1/17.

**Research Computing Support**

I do not fully agree with the task force recommendation to sustain the program, as it appears that transformation of the program is in order. In particular, the research computing support program in DoIT and the Center for Research Computing and Data in RIPS should be better integrated. I would like to see a joint proposal by the Vice Presidents by 2/1/17.

**Office of the CIO and Vice President for Information Technology**

I agree with the task force recommendation to sustain. The Division is undergoing significant re-organization and transformation, and the Office of the CIO needs the opportunity to stabilize and evaluate performance. It should be evaluated by the summer of 2019 for its impact and effectiveness.

**Server Hosting and Administration, Storage Administration**

While Server Hosting was categorized as Transform and Storage Administration as Sustain, the task force recommended that both server hosting and storage administration should be centralized and standardized. I support those recommendations, and the move toward cloud-based solutions to realize these goals; however, I understand that the thinking on cloud-based solutions has changed since the original program prioritization report, and recommendations were published. Action plans should continue to be refined to detail the procedures by which that centralization and virtualization will be achieved, including the elimination of the charge-back structures. Those elements of the action plan that can be implemented with existing resources should move forward; the rest of the action plan should now go to the EBC for evaluation.

**Intercollegiate Athletics**

Intercollegiate athletics plays an important role on college campuses. The Administrative Task Force concurred, noting that having a Division I FBS intercollegiate athletics program “provides the university with substantial earned media, engages alumni, and improves the campus experience for students, faculty, and staff.” I commend the student-athletes, coaches, and staff on their commitment to academic excellence, as our graduation rates are consistently at or near the top of the Mid-American Conference.

While great benefits come with having a competitive, robust athletics department, the increasing costs of such a program are difficult to sustain, especially in the current budget climate. I agree with the task force that the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics needs to become more self-sustaining. I have asked the associate vice president/director of Intercollegiate Athletics to provide me with a plan to make the department more self-sustaining, including increasing revenue and possible budget cuts. Based on that report, a decision on whether to eliminate a male, non-revenue sport will be made by 5/15/17.
While Intercollegiate Athletics continues to flesh out its financial plan, I will hold off on any additional decisions pertaining to individual programs. The comments below are separate from the overarching message of self-sustainment.

**Camp Clinics**

This program is part of the Conferences complex conversation (see page 15).

**Campus and Community Outreach, Planning, Gifts, Annual Fund, Revenue Generation**

I support the task force’s recommendation to sustain this program. I concur with the task force’s position that Intercollegiate Athletics must be more self-sustaining, and this program will play a key, ongoing role in this effort.

**Convocation Center**

I support the task force’s placement of the Convocation Center in the Reduce category. I have asked the associate vice president/director of Athletics to clarify operational areas for reduction and provide this information to me no later than 1/15/17.

**Facilities**

I support the task force’s placement of this program in the Reduce category. I have asked the associate vice president/director of Athletics to clarify operational areas for reduction and provide this information to me no later than 1/15/17.

**Marketing**

I support the task force’s recommendation to sustain this program. Strategic marketing efforts will need to directly support ticket sales and other revenue-generating activities.

**S-A Insurance and Athletic Training/Testing**

I disagree with the task force’s recommendation to transform this program. Specifically, I do not agree that student-athlete health and well-being might be compromised because this program reports to Intercollegiate Athletics. The reporting structure of this program should remain as is.

**Ticket Office**

I disagree with the task force’s placement of the Ticket Office in the Review category because increasing ticket revenue is one of the pathways for the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics to increase its ability to be self-sustaining, but believe that the operations should be reviewed to increase operational efficiencies. I have asked the associate vice president/director of Athletics to clarify areas for review and possible reduction and provide this information to me no later than 1/15/17.

**Marketing and Communications**

Marketing and Communications maintains, protects and enhances NIU’s institutional reputation, builds and communicates its brand value proposition, and provides quality communications services and counsel to a broad range of internal constituents, including our colleges, departments, and divisions. The division plays an important support role in recruiting prospective students.
The Administrative Task Force recognized the importance of the programs in this division, especially those with recruitment functions, and placed almost all of the division’s programs in the enhance or sustain categories. In particular, the task force strongly recommended centralizing and increasing advertising dollars dedicated to student recruitment. It also recommended enhancing programs (e.g., Creative Support Services, Web Management and Support) that help promote student recruitment. The division’s action plans called for enhancements in these areas as well. In some cases, enhancements have already been made (e.g., Web Management and Support), while in other cases (e.g., Advertising), I have asked Vice President Teller to send funding requests to the Executive Budget Committee (EBC) for consideration.

Because of the importance of these programs in student recruitment, and the fact that they have been underutilized and not well-integrated with other recruitment and admissions programs, I have decided to merge enrollment management and recruiting programs with this division to establish the Division of Enrollment Management, Marketing, and Communications. More information about this endeavor can be found on page six.

**Advertising**

I agree with the task force’s recommendation to transform this program. The university needs to rethink the way it spends its advertising dollars so that they are maximized. Specifically, funding for advertising must be more centralized and expanded. The action plan calls for increasing the advertising budget and approval of an associate director of advertising. I support sending these funding requests to the EBC for evaluation.

**Branding**

Given the current budget constraints, I agree with the placement of this program in the sustain category. This program is doing excellent work promoting a uniform, coherent brand to various stakeholders and has made substantial progress in a short period of time. In the future, we will need to reassess this area for enhancement to continue to build our brand identity. Meanwhile, I look forward to seeing the fruits of the branding process reengineering effort that is currently underway, with the objective of further streamlining our process for approving materials through the clearinghouse, ensuring more pervasive adoption of brand standards and better leveraging our brand at university events.

**Campus Communications**

I agree with the recommendation to sustain. I applaud the division’s rebranding of this program as “internal communications” in its effort to take a more strategic approach to informing and engaging faculty and staff. The new program will be more strategic and holistic in reaching out to various internal constituents, as well as integrate more effectively with Human Resources to improve employee communications and onboarding.

**Community Outreach and Strategic Partnerships**

I agree with the placement of this program in review and support the division’s elimination of the program and transfer of responsibilities to OERD. Any cost savings associated with the elimination should be provided to me by 12/15/16.
Compliance (Marketing)

I agree with the recommendation to sustain. The two units performing FOIA review (General Counsel and Marketing and Communications) appear to work together well and should continue doing so.

Creative Support Services

I agree that this program should be enhanced and believe that the recent work to do so is appropriate. The elimination of the chargeback system for services from this program is positive (see page 12). Such a move will improve the quality of materials produced by units, as well as ensure greater adherence to the university’s brand standards. Additionally, consistent with the task force’s recommendation, moving a graphic designer from Outreach Creative Services to this program is an important enhancement. Additional staff will also come to the program with the reorganization of admissions and adult and online recruiting activities from Student Affairs and Enrollment Management (SAEM) and OERD as referenced on page 6.

Crisis Communications

I agree that this program should be sustained. While the employees of this program do admirable work, I agree that a FTE dedicated solely to this program is not needed at this time.

Emergency Communications

I agree with the recommendation to reduce the level of the division’s staff involvement in this program. Giving oversight for this program to the Department of Police and Public Safety and reducing the number of people on call from the division from four to two are appropriate changes. I am pleased that this transition is already taking place.

Executive and Advancement Communication

I agree that this program should be transformed, and applaud the efforts to better integrate this program into internal communications. I also support discontinuing the NIU Dialogues on Global Competitiveness series so that resources can be redeployed into branding and paid media.

Media Relations

I disagree with the Administrative Task Force that this program is appropriately staffed. As such, the program should be enhanced instead of sustained. The program is important to continue improving the reputation of the university by promoting our impressive faculty, students and staff. Short-term, the focus will be on ensuring that new communications hires at the college level have dotted lines to this division. Such a reporting structure will ensure that there is strong alignment between the university and the colleges, and that the college communicators are capable of generating content that can be used for multiple purposes and distributed through multiple channels. Given the talent on campus, new hires might not be necessary to increase the staff of this program. I have instructed Vice President Teller to work with other divisions to look for opportunities to reallocate staffing and provide me with a plan to do so by 1/15/17.

Office of the Vice President for Marketing and Communications

In order to have better collaboration among units, this office will be renamed Enrollment Management, Marketing, and Communications per page six.
Social Media
I agree with the Administrative Task Force that while this program serves an increasingly important function, it is appropriately staffed.

Website Management and Support
I agree this program should be enhanced and believe it has been appropriately. Consistent with the recommendation of the Administrative Task Force, relocating three web-related positions from OERD to this program is an important enhancement.

Outreach, Engagement and Regional Development (OERD)
NIU is a regionally-engaged institution, and OERD has played a leading role in positioning us for that mission. The division has also contributed to our enrollment goals through its work in supporting online and off-campus courses and degree programs. These are vital to our mission, and I am concerned that our current structure doesn’t allow us to reach our full potential which is also echoed in the Administrative Task Force response. This is also reflected in the multiple complex conversations that various elements of OERD have been referred to: recruiting; online & off-campus course delivery; external programming; marketing; school connections; community relations; conference and event services.

I share the task force’s sense that there are ways to more closely tie the engagement functions of OERD with our other critical mission areas (e.g., teaching and research), to better organize the ways we serve adult learners and online/off-campus programs, and to benefit from our off-campus facilities. Some of these changes in structures and processes have already been identified while others are still under discussion. The outcome of these complex conversations over the course of the next semester will shape plans for the division going forward.

Center for Governmental Studies (CGS)
I agree with the task force recommendation to transform this program. I understand that both CEDU’s and CGS’ action plans recommended against the task force speculation that CGS and the College of Education’s Office of Research, Evaluation and Policy Studies might be merged, and that instead of merging, REPS is being dissolved. I accept those recommendations. However, I believe that we should go deeper in considering the future of CGS, and explore whether it can better serve the university through increased collaboration and integration with faculty researchers across the University.

Outreach managed online and regional academic (ORA) and continuing professional education
The marketing personnel associated with adult learners will be integrated into the newly formed Division of Enrollment Management, Marketing and Communications (see page six). The status of the other elements of the program are still pending, as part of the Online and Off-Campus Course Delivery complex conversation (see page 16).

Office of the Vice President for Outreach, Engagement and Regional Development
This is still in progress and I have asked Vice President Kaplan for a draft proposal by 2/1/17.
Office of the Vice President for Outreach, Engagement and Regional Development: Office of Community Affairs

An interim stakeholder management model has been developed by Vice Presidents Kaplan and Teller, and will be piloted in the Spring semester. Final plans are still pending, as part of the Community Relations complex conversation (see page 15).

Office of the Vice President for Outreach, Engagement and Regional Development: External Programming

This is still pending, as part of the External Relations complex conversation (see page 15). This has been separated from the discussion about conference and event services, and I would like to see the focused conversation about external programming reach a conclusion by 2/1/17.


The status of the Center for P-20 Engagement and the Northern Illinois Regional P-20 Network are pending, as part of the School Connections and Educator Licensure complex conversation (see page 16). For the other elements, I would like to receive a report on the options for better integration and evaluation of risk management, to be received by 2/1/17.

Regional Centers, UCLC, Taft, EIGERLab

This is still in progress and an ongoing complex conversation. EIGERLab is under the RIPS office and its future is being examined there. The regional centers could be part of new partnerships and structural arrangements with a range of other divisions including Finance and Administration, an integrated institution-wide conferencing unit, and Academic Affairs.

Registration and Conference Services

This is still pending, as part of the Conference and Event Services complex conversation (see page 15)

WNIU/WNIJ/NIRIS

The division and station need to develop a plan to modify the station’s relationship to the university. Outcomes may include reduced reliance on appropriated funds through a combination of decreased expenditures, increased sponsorships and fund-raising and the possible development of a media collaborative and deeper synergy with relevant academic units on campus. I understand that developing options will require feasibility evaluations and planning to execute. I look for a feasibility study and recommendation on the preferred option by March 1, 2017, with implementation to begin by July 1, 2017.
**Research and Innovation Partnerships**

RIPS promotes and supports research, scholarship, artistry, innovation and entrepreneurship across the campus. Our research efforts have the ability to not only inform us and others, but actually change lives within our region and throughout the globe. I’m particularly impressed by the expertise of faculty, and the opportunities for our students to participate in meaningful work as early as freshman year.

The task forces strongly recognized the role of RIPS in providing infrastructure and compliance, as well as support to catalyze and grow research intensity. Four key components of RIPS — Faculty Research Development and Support, Innovation, Research Compliance and Sponsored Projects Administration — were described by the Administrative Task Force in terms such as “essential in assisting faculty in conducting high-quality, high-impact research” or “As a research institution, it is imperative to have an active program in innovation.”

The task forces strongly recommended additional resources for scholarship and innovation. Consistent with the recommendations, the RIPS action plan proposes enhancements to existing programs to further support and grow scholarship and innovation across the university. At the same time, the plan calls for sustaining or reducing programs that are of narrower focus or less likely to contribute to the research profile of the university. Below, I have outlined specific next steps and deadlines for additional information to be provided to me in those cases.

**Center for Burma Studies**

I agree with the task force’s recommendation to sustain. The center should continue its good work.

**Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Language and Literacy (CISLL)**

CISLL has done excellent work in language and literacy and is becoming self-sustaining. Vice President Blazey and I both agree that CISLL should be reduced with the goal to reduce general revenue funding and increase grant support instead. I would like to receive a draft of the proposal by 12/15/16 that identifies a reduction in 02 funding, and a timeline for that reduction (whether or not grant support has been secured). I invite you to set a realistic date for that reduction that allows a reasonable opportunity to write proposals and secure funding. At the same time, I would expect 02 reductions to take place no later than 06/30/18.

**Faculty Research Development and Support**

I agree that the program should be considered for enhancement. As a research university, it is central to our mission to grow our research intensity. The action plan calls for restoring or increasing funding for research clusters, high-performance computing, teaching buyouts, staff and equipment support. These funding requests should now go to the EBC for evaluation.

**Federal Relations**

I agree with the task force’s recommendation to sustain. The office is new, and its impact is still emerging. The office should continue its good work, and should be evaluated by summer 2018 for its impact and effectiveness.
**Innovation**

I agree that the program should be considered for enhancement. Innovation is an important part of our mission, and also contributes to our strong teaching, outreach and engagement functions. The action plan calls for strengthening IP protection and launching an innovation center, with funding requests for staffing and start-up for the innovation hub, as well as for patent work. These funding requests should now go to the EBC for evaluation. Also, strong efforts should be made with external partners (e.g., Ideal Industries) to support this program.

**Institute for NanoScience Engineering & Technology**

Vice President Blazey and I agree with the task force’s recommendation to reduce InSET. I support efforts to end the dedicated funding for InSET and redirect those funds towards other research initiatives. This redirection should take place as soon as current commitments to InSET can be wound down, and the process complete by 06/30/17.

**NIU Press**

The NIU Press makes a valuable contribution to the scholarly community and enhances our reputation. However, I agree in part with the task force recommendation that NIU’s contribution to the cost of the NIU Press needs to be reduced. I look for a plan to do so to be delivered by 7/1/17 and implemented as soon as feasible.

**Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships**

I agree with the task force’s recommendation to sustain. I have commenced a search in November to fill Acting Vice President Blazey’s position. The office structure should be maintained until a final decision has been made in accordance with Trustee regulations and the person is in place and has had the opportunity to assess and refine the structure.

**Research Compliance**

Vice President Blazey and I agree that Research Compliance should be considered for enhancement rather than sustained at its current level. Research compliance is critical for the safety of our research community, and for continued federal support. The action plan offers staffing scenarios for addressing overall compliance needs as well as the particular needs of the animal care facilities. These funding requests should now go to the EBC for evaluation, where I believe they should be given particularly urgent attention.

**Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA)**

I agree that the program should be considered for enhancement to maintain the effective functioning of our external funding. The action plan calls for implementation of the PeopleSoft Grants module, and staffing support for SPA, including new staff and professional development. RIPS should investigate if some of the data analysis needs can be met by the new Institutional Effectiveness (see page 8) office. In parallel, the funding requests should also go to the EBC for evaluation.
**Student Affairs and Enrollment Management**

The Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management works to ensure student well-being. It provides opportunities for engagement and leadership as well as services that promote persistence through the collegiate experience.

The task force placed division programs within all five categories. Some programs that deal directly with student services (e.g., Counseling and Consultation Services; Disability Resource Center) were recommended to be enhanced, while other programs that were thought to serve some redundant functions (e.g., Student Life Services) were recommended to be reduced. For other programs, the task force believed that current functions needed to be rethought (e.g., cultural centers; Advocacy Services; Direct Health Services) or reviewed (e.g., Wellness Promotion Mandates).

The task force’s assessments brought to light opportunities and issues that led me to rethink this large division’s role, priorities and organization. Coupled with the need to ensure alignment of enrollment and marketing efforts, now is the right time to restructure the division to focus on providing services and support to current students.

As noted elsewhere in this report, cultural centers will now report to the Office of Academic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Career Services will move to the Division of Academic Affairs as part of the new Undergraduate College; and enrollment management programs, including Undergraduate Admissions, Financial Aid and Scholarships, and Orientation and Family Connections, will be part of the new Division of Enrollment Management, Marketing, and Communications. Consistent with the task force’s recommendation, Financial Aid Services and Scholarship Services have been combined and will also be part of the newly created division.

**Advocacy Services**

I agree with the task force’s placement of this program in Transform. I have asked Vice President Weldy and Executive Vice President and Provost Freeman to work together to facilitate an external review of their reporting units that contribute to compliance with the various statutes and policies that govern the NIU response to sexual misconduct, including but not limited to Title IX, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Illinois law. The external review should be scheduled no later than 5/15/17.

**Campus Child Care Services**

I agree with the task force’s recommendation that this program should be considered for enhancement as it provides a valuable service to the university community, particularly students with children. The task force recommended exploring possible synergies with the Child Development Lab in order to expand childcare services. I have asked these two units to deliver a proposal by 3/1/17 to increase synergies or merge the two programs.

**Campus Recreation Office Operations**

I disagree with the task force’s placement in the category for enhancement. Specifically, the task force recommended improving existing facilities, but given our scarce resources, emphasis should be placed in other programs that more directly impact the teaching and research missions of the university.
**Campus Recreation Services**
I agree with the task force’s recommendation to sustain. As the task force noted, the program appears to be functioning well and is staffed appropriately.

**Career Services**
I agree with the task force that this program is in need of transformation to better integrate it into the academic mission of the university. As such, the program is moving to the Division of Academic Affairs as part of the new Undergraduate College (see page 7). I disagree with the task force’s suggestion to combine this program with the College of Law’s Career Opportunities and Professional Development program because of the unique nature of professional development for law students.

**Conduct Services**
I agree with the task force’s recommendation to sustain this program. As the task force noted, the program is staffed appropriately.

**Counseling and Consultation Services**
I agree with the task force that this program should be considered for enhancement. This program is essential for the mental health of our students and the demand for the program’s services are growing. The program’s request to hire additional staff should be sent to the Executive Budget Committee (EBC) for review. Additionally, the program should continue exploring partnering with an outside company to provide on-call coverage. The program should provide a recommendation regarding the feasibility of such a partnership by 1/15/17.

**Direct Health Services; Health Services Support and Office Operations; Pharmacy**
Vice President Weldy has communicated to these programs that we are exploring outsourcing (see page 13). I have asked to have an RFP out for review by 1/15/17. No decision on outsourcing will be made until we get a better sense of the financial feasibility and service quality in such a move. In the interim, I have asked the vice president to make other cost reductions to these programs as appropriate.

**Disability Services**
I agree with the task force’s recommendation to enhance as the program is under-resourced. The program’s requests to hire a braille specialist and for increasing captioning services should be sent to the EBC for review. Additionally, the office is located in an unacceptable location. A plan to move the office to a more suitable location must be in place by 5/15/17.

**Financial Aid Services**
I agree with the task force’s recommendation to enhance. Consistent with the recommendation, this program was combined with Scholarship Services (see page 9). The combined programs will move under the new Division of Enrollment Management, Marketing, and Communications. The program has already been enhanced with the purchase of Academic Works.

**Holmes Student Center (HSC)**
I agree with the task force’s recommendation to transform. The HSC is the hub of the campus and, as such, we need to make it a comfortable place for people to study, relax, eat, and converse. I support the
proposed remodel of the first floor and want the option of outsourcing of food services, the hotel, and the bookstore to be examined. No decision on outsourcing will be made until we get a better sense of the financial feasibility and service quality in such a move. A report on the issue is due to me by 1/15/17.

**Housing and Dining**

I agree with the task force’s recommendation to transform the program. These two programs have split since the narratives were written. I am pleased that the new director of campus dining has been hired and would like an assessment of the university’s current dining services. Additionally, I look forward to receiving the comprehensive housing plan that is being developed. Both reports are due by 3/15/17.

**Northern Star**

I agree with the task force’s recommendation to sustain and that the Star should be moved to a new location. A plan to move the office to a more suitable location must be in place by 5/15/17. I encourage the possible development of a media collaborative and deeper synergy with relevant units on campus.

**Off-Campus Non-Traditional Student Services and Military Services**

I agree with the task force’s recommendation to transform the program and would like a report assessing the effectiveness of the recent transformation by 1/15/17.

**Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management**

As outlined above, I agree with the task force’s recommendation to transform.

**Orientation and Family Services**

I agree with the task force’s recommendation to sustain and that the program should be revenue-neutral. A plan to achieve budget neutrality is due by 1/15/17.

**Prospective Admissions Services**

I agree with the task force that this program should be considered for enhancement. This program will move under the new Division of Enrollment Management, Marketing, and Communications. Consistent with the task force’s recommendation, the program will now be responsible for all recruiting and admissions tasks for online programs and adult learners.

**Scholarship Services**

I agree with the task force’s recommendation to combine this program with Financial Aid Services and am pleased that this has already occurred (see page 9). The combined programs will be moved under the new Division of Enrollment Management, Marketing, and Communications.

**Student Government**

I agree with the task force’s recommendation to reduce this program, specifically as it relates to student fees. I have asked Vice President Weldy to convene a group to make a recommendation on reducing fees; the proposal is due by 2/1/17.
**Students’ Legal Services**

I disagree with the task force’s recommendation to transform. I believe student fees associated with this program should either be eliminated or substantially reduced. I have asked Vice President Weldy to convene a group to make a recommendation on reducing fees; the proposal is due by 2/1/17.

**Student Life Services**

I agree with the task force’s recommendation to reduce and support eliminating the redundancy in leadership development and community service between this program and the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning. I have instructed the heads of both programs to develop a realignment and reduction plan. A draft of the proposal is due by 1/15/17 with the execution to be in place before the end of the fiscal year (6/30/17).

**Wellness Promotion Mandates**

I disagree with the task force’s recommendation to place this program in review. This program should be reduced with the understanding that some functions within this program are essential. I have asked Vice President Weldy to develop a plan to reduce this program (and Wellness Promotion Services) that demonstrates agreement among collaborating parties, including risk management. The plan is due by 2/1/17.

**Wellness Promotion Services**

I disagree with the task force’s recommendation to transform. This program should be reduced with the understanding that some functions within this program are essential. I have asked Vice President Weldy to develop a plan to reduce this program (and Wellness Promotion Services) that demonstrates agreement among collaborating parties, including risk management. The plan is due by 2/1/17.

**University Administrative Services**

The programs listed below are all part of my immediate office or directly report to me (e.g., Faculty Athletics Representative, Internal Audit). The Administrative Task Force generally believed that most programs in my office should be sustained, while my immediate office should be reduced. I agree with the task force’s recommendations and provide below several examples of reductions my office has already made or will do so in the future.

**Board of Trustees (Liaison)**

I agree with the task force that this program should be sustained. Appropriate resources are allocated to the program.

**Faculty Athletics Representative**

I agree that this program should be sustained, although I have eliminated the fax machine associated with the program because it is no longer necessary.

**HR, Budget**

I agree with the task force that this program should be sustained and its view that the program runs efficiently and functions well.
Internal Audit
I agree that this program should be sustained and support the task force’s suggestion of possibly hiring an IT auditor. This request should be sent to the EMC for consideration.

Office of the Ombudsperson
I agree that this program should be sustained. The program does a fine job serving the university community in a neutral capacity.

Office of the President
I agree with the task force’s placement of my office in the reduce category. We have already taken several measures to do so, including reducing office staff, travel, entertainment, and memberships and association fees. I will continue to look for additional cost-savings measures.

Office Operations
I disagree with the task force’s placement of this program in the sustain category and think it should have been placed in reduce. The office has reduced staff costs, including replacing a full-time administrative aide with a part-time employee.

Police
I agree that the program should be sustained within the bounds of collective bargaining agreements.

Public Safety
I agree that this program should be sustained. The task force suggested that some cost savings could be created by increasing the number of automatic locking doors in buildings on campus. I agree and have instructed Chief Phillips to submit a plan to the EBC for review by 1/15/17.

Special Events
This program is part of the Conference & Event Services complex conversation (see page 15).

State and Government Relations
I believe that this program needs to be transformed and am currently considering several options to do so. I will release a reorganization plan by 2/1/17.

University Council, Faculty Senate, Operating Staff Council, Supportive Professional Staff Council
I agree with the task force’s recommendation that shared governance should be enhanced and steps were taken this fall to add support. Shared governance is essential to a vibrant campus community. I also agree that the Operating Staff and Professional Staff Councils need administrative assistance as suggested by the task force and an administrative position was approved 8/16/16. Additionally, a new operating staff personnel advisor position was filled 7/1/16.
**University Advancement**

University Advancement is responsible for building strong relationships with NIU alumni and generating philanthropy to benefit the university. The support of alumni and donors is invaluable to NIU on an annual basis, but also, importantly, as we strive to build our endowment. Students benefit from scholarships, mentorship, networking and enhanced academic enrichment programs. Faculty benefit from the engagement of alumni in programs that benefit the colleges, and from the philanthropic support of programs and research. The impact donors make at NIU is transformative, and University Advancement provides the professional framework for that philanthropic engagement through annual support, alumni engagement, major giving and capital campaigns. Impressive facilities such as Barsema Hall are a testament to both the impact of engaged alumni and the ability of the division to harness donor interest.

The Administrative Task Force noted the importance of increasing fundraising and alumni engagement to allow the university to build, promote and protect programs related to our educational mission. Support for these programs has become particularly important in an environment in which the state is disinvesting in higher education.

The efforts of University Advancement continue to have great potential yielding return on investment, and I support the task force’s recommendations. As such, I have asked the vice president for university advancement to send funding requests for several of the programs to the Executive Budget Committee (EBC) for consideration.

**Alumni Relations**

Like the Administrative Task Force, I was unclear why this program was listed as a separate program from the NIU Alumni Association and the Office of the Executive Director. The two programs’ narratives are identical. See my comments on the NIU Alumni Association and Office of the Executive Director.

**Donor Relations**

I agree with the task force’s statement that the current practice of hiring students to replace lost full-time staff is not sustainable. As such, the funding requests for full-time staff in Donor Relations should go to the EBC for evaluation.

**Financial Services**

I agree with the task force’s recommendation to sustain. While this program might have to hire more staff in the future as the Foundation’s endowment grows, I do not believe that this program needs additional resources or staffing at this time.

**Fundraising (Major Gifts/Planned Gifts/Annual Gifts)**

I agree with the task force’s placement of this program in the enhance category. Given the return on investment in hiring gift officers, this program should submit to the EBC the requests to hire new gift officers that were put forth in the division’s action plan.

**NIU Alumni Association and Office of the Executive Director**

I agree with the task force’s placement of this program in the sustain category. I look forward to working with the new executive director and expect this program to increase alumni engagement in the future. Further, in discussions with the VP for university advancement, it is clear that efficiencies are possible.
through a more deliberate alignment of college-based alumni relations efforts to the Alumni Association. I have asked for the analysis to be done once the new executive director is on board, and a plan is developed to address this opportunity.

**NIU Foundation and Office of the Vice President for University Advancement**

I agree with the task force’s recommendation to sustain and that the current staffing of this office is adequate.
# Appendix

## Programs in Alphabetical Order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School/Division</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Task Force Recommendation</th>
<th>President’s Progress Report</th>
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<td>Academic Advising Center</td>
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<td>Desktop and Media Technologies Support</td>
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<td>NIU Press</td>
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Note: Alumni Relations and Collaboration and Conferencing Support are not represented in the table because the president agreed with the task force’s assessment that they should not have been included as separate programs.