

## **Board of Trustees Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy**

### **I. Preamble**

The Northern Illinois University Law provides:

“Members of the Board shall serve without compensation but shall be entitled to reasonable amounts for expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of their duties. Such expenses incurred by the student member may, at the discretion of the Chairman of the Board, be provided for by advance payment to the student member, who shall account therefor to the Board immediately after each meeting.” (110 ILCS 685/30-20).

Pursuant to the Northern Illinois University Law (NIU Law), and in order to provide clear, consistent and transparent policy related to reimbursement of reasonable authorized expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as members of the Board of Trustees, the following shall be the policy of the Board of Trustees of Northern Illinois University related to travel and expense reimbursement. This policy statement supersedes any previous Board policies on travel and expense reimbursement. The Board expressly delegates authority to the President to issue revised, updated, new or amended University policies or procedures in furtherance of this policy statement as deemed necessary and appropriate.

This Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy (Travel Policy) is intended to comply with regulations promulgated by the Illinois Travel Regulation Council and the Illinois Higher Education Travel Control Board (Travel Regulations) related to travel and expense reimbursement. In the event of any conflict between this Policy and the Travel Regulations, the Travel Regulations shall control. For these purposes, the official headquarters for members of the Board of Trustees of Northern Illinois University, with respect to University travel and expense reimbursement, shall be their respective personal residence.

Any Member wishing to seek reimbursement for travel and other expenses will need to complete a form TA-2 and file that form with the Legislative Audit Commission on a semi-annual basis, as an individual whose headquarters have been designated as a location other than that at which official duties require the largest part of working time.

For compliance with the Travel Regulations, the Board of Trustees acknowledges that the President of the University serves as the “Agency Head.” The President may delegate the responsibilities of the “Agency Head” under the Travel Regulations to a designated representative by filing appropriate notice of this designation with the Office of the Comptroller for the State of Illinois. The Board of Trustees delegates responsibility to the Board Liaison unless another person is designated by the Board to carry out this function to appropriately assist with Trustee travel and expense accounting and administration, including the completion and submission of TA-2 forms to the Legislative Audit Commission.

### **II. Requests for Reimbursement**

Members may be reimbursed or have appropriate expenses paid in advance for travel expenses related to official University business up to the extent of the reimbursement limits proscribed in the applicable Travel Regulations, whether those expenses relate to the use of personal or professional resources or University or commercial resources. Proof of the use and purpose of those resources shall be provided before reimbursement is made. When making any request for reimbursement for travel and expenses, Members of the Board must submit a travel voucher to the University through the Board Liaison. All travel vouchers or the equivalent thereof must be accompanied by receipts or other documentation

documenting the expenses incurred by the Member. Members are personally responsible for the accuracy and propriety of any travel vouchers that they are submitting. Any expenses incurred over those allowed for reimbursement under the Travel Regulations are the personal responsibility of the respective Board Member.

Members of the Board shall be eligible for reimbursement for all mandatory regular, special and emergency meetings of the Board and its committees. Members are also eligible for reimbursement for all mandatory meetings of federal, state or local entities when the respective Member is attending as the official representative of the Board (e.g., the Board's representative to the Civil Service Merit Board).

Each Member of the Board shall also be reimbursed for (1) two professional development opportunities and (2) four University events in each fiscal year as determined by the respective Board Member. The Board Liaison will provide to all Members of the Board a list of all scheduled meetings and special events for the University. For planning and budgetary purposes, Board Members are encouraged but not required to designate their one professional development and for University events at the beginning of the fiscal year and no later than the first scheduled full Board meeting of each fiscal year. Exceptions to this may be made by the Chair in consultation with the Executive Committee.

Additional reimbursement requests by the Chair must be approved by the Vice Chair in consultation with the Executive Committee, and may not be unilaterally approved by the Chair. Pursuant to the Travel Regulations, when travel is not required as a condition of carrying out the duties and responsibilities of being a member of the Board of Trustees, but the travel is a benefit to the University and the Member, partial reimbursement may be available subject to the approval of the Chair or the Executive Committee. In any case, such partial reimbursement cannot exceed the rates otherwise authorized in the Travel Regulations or the budget established for travel purposes.

Members of the Board are expected to make prompt submission of any requests for reimbursement, but no later than 30 calendar days after the conclusion of the travel or event from which the respective Member makes the reimbursement request. The University may deny reimbursement requests for failure to comply with applicable state and federal law or regulation. Any amounts disbursed for travel or expense reimbursement claims that are in conflict with the Travel Regulations or other applicable law shall be refunded by the Member and deposited in the fund from which the payment was made.

The Board shall establish a budget to cover costs of Board travel and professional development annually. Said budget shall be managed and maintained by the Board Liaison.

### **III. Reimbursable Expenses**

The Travel Regulations set forth appropriate reimbursement limitations for expenses that include, but are not limited to, travel (by air, auto, boat, etc.), lodging allowances, meal allowances, per diem, and miscellaneous related expenses. When traveling, Members of the Board will be expected to use the most direct route and the most economical mode of transportation available considering travel time, costs and work requirements. Members will also be expected to request the lowest available lodging rate at the time of making reservations. Expenses due to deviations for convenience will be borne by the Board Member.

Unless prohibited under the Travel Regulations or other applicable law, examples of reimbursable expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Lodging allowances.

- Meal allowances.
- Per diem.
- Hire of room, exhibit space, set up, and such for official business.
- Laundry and dry cleaning if on travel status for at least seven (7) consecutive days.
- Storage and handling of baggage.
- Taxis including reasonable tips.
- Automobile mileage.
- Automobile parking fees and tolls.
- Telephone calls on official business including calls of ten (10) minutes or less to announce safe arrival or delay-change in plans.
- Telephone calls to secure lodging.

Unless allowed under the Travel Regulations or other applicable law, examples of non-reimbursable expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Traffic and parking tickets.
- Personal Entertainment charges, such as movies, spa/health clubs, sightseeing, tours, etc.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Coat check.
- Late check-out and room guarantee charges.
- Meals for other state employees or officers.
- Tips incurred that go beyond those provided for in the rules and regulations of the Travel Council.
- Transportation to procure meals.
- Commuting expenses.
- Non-University-related expenses.

The University is not responsible for reimbursing for lost time from private work and other responsibilities or duties of a Member that are outside of those duties and responsibilities to the University as a Trustee. Per this policy, reimbursement is not available to Members of the Board for political fundraising events, political events, or events where the Member is not an official participant or guest. Members of the Board shall comply with the Illinois Gift Ban Act. In the performance of their duties and responsibilities as members of the Board of Trustees, no Member shall intentionally solicit or accept any gift from any prohibited source that violates the Illinois Gift Ban Act or is in violation of any other federal or State statute, rule or regulation that is applicable to the Member's service on the Board of Trustees. This ban applies to and includes the spouse or an immediate family living with the Member. This policy only applies to Members in the course of their duties and responsibilities to the Board.

#### **IV. Advance Payment of Travel and Expenses for the Student Trustee**

Pursuant to this Policy the President, in addition to the Board Chair, is delegated the ability to approve in advance the travel expenses of the Student Trustee. As provided in the NIU Law, travel and related expenses incurred by the Student Trustee may, at the discretion of the President or Chair, be provided for by advance payment to the Student Member. The Student Member is responsible for providing an accounting to the Board immediately after each meeting until all such advanced funds are used or returned to the University. If at any time, it is determined that the Student Member has used advanced funds in violation of this Policy, the Travel Regulations, or any other applicable law or University policy, the Student Member immediately forfeits any interest in the advanced funds and must refund the full amount of advanced funds to the University.

**V. Exceptions to the Travel Regulations**

Exceptions to the Travel Regulations may be requested by submitting a written justification to the Board Liaison as designee of the “Agency Head.” The “Agency Head” shall review the exception request and work with the Board Liaison, the Chair and the requesting Member to determine whether to seek an exception from the Illinois Travel Regulation Council. The Illinois Travel Regulation Council will review special exceptions and may approve them when necessary to meet special circumstances or when they are deemed in the best interest of the University. If a request for an exception is made, reimbursement for the expenses will not be made until approval is given by the Illinois Travel Regulation Council.