



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Ethics and Compliance Office

To: Mr. Tim Anderson, Secretary of the Illinois Senate
Mr. John Hollman, Clerk of the Illinois House of Representatives
Reports@ilga.gov
Attorney General Kwame Raoul, Office of the Illinois Attorney General
databreach@ilag.gov

Date: February 4, 2026

RE: Breach notification

Mr. Anderson, Mr. Hollman, and Attorney General Raoul:

Northern Illinois University (NIU) is notifying the General Assembly and the Illinois Attorney General that NIU recently experienced a breach of personal information. As required by Illinois' [Personal Information Protection Act](#) (PIPA), below are details about the breach.

On Thursday, January 29, 2026, NIU received notice from a currently enrolled student that their direct deposit information in [MyNIU](#) was changed without their authorization to an unknown bank account. NIU reviewed the student's account and all recent direct deposit changes in MyNIU. MyNIU is a web-based portal where students can access information about a variety of enrollment-related items such as class registration, grades, and financial aid. The analysis revealed 36 student accounts with unauthorized direct deposit changes from January 11-28, 2026.

These breaches occurred because the students provided their MyNIU login information when they received phishing emails. The phishers accessed each student's MyNIU account by using the student's username and password that were shared by the student during the phishing attempt.

We are unaware of other personal information being compromised. MyNIU contains some education records, but there are no unmasked direct deposit account numbers, Social Security Numbers, driver's license numbers or state identification card numbers, medical information, health insurance information, or unique biometric data viewable via a student's access to their MyNIU account.

Three students' refunds, totaling \$4,182.15, were issued to a fraudulent account. NIU was unsuccessful in recovering the refunds so NIU will identify a funding source to reissue the refunds to affected students. NIU is evaluating additional direct deposit verification strategies and security controls to mitigate risk of recurrence.

NIU will provide updates when relevant information becomes available. Please let me know if you have questions. Thank you.

Karen Hsu
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