Present: Stacey Bivens, Elizabeth Buck, Donald Butler, Heike Hofstetter, Patricia Liberty-Baczek, David Long, Yvette Lubbers, Jay Monteiro, Amy Polzin, Carlos Raices, Pam Roesner, Gina Shannon, Andy Small, Karen Smith

Absent: Victoria Nay, Rachel Pierce

Guests: Robin Andersen, Deborah Haliczer, Sarah Klaper, Dr. Alan Rosenbaum, Rhonda Wybourn

I. Call to Order
President Andy Small called the regular meeting of the OSC to order at 9:10 AM.

II. Roll Call
Attendance was recorded by Stacey Bivens.

III. Approval of Agenda
A motion was made by Carlos Raices to accept the Agenda. The motion was seconded by Amy Polzin and passed by unanimous vote.

IV. Approval of March 6, 2014, Minutes
A motion was made by Amy Polzin to accept the Minutes. The motion was seconded by Carlos Raices and passed by unanimous vote.

V. Treasurer’s Report
The treasurer’s report was given by Elizabeth Buck. A motion to accept the Treasurer’s report was made by David Long. The motion was seconded by Karen Smith.

VI. Announcements/Correspondence
Amy Polzin shared the news that were 19 nominations for the Operating Staff Outstanding Service Awards. The awards committee will meet March 18 to make selections; final selections will have been by March 25. Andy Small complimented Amy on her work on the Operating Staff award. Amy thanked the rest of the staff for making nominations.

Andy Small announced that Karen Smith’s birthday is in March. The OSC members wished her a happy birthday.

A thank you card from Marcia Dick for the flowers the OSC sent in memory of Marcia’s husband, Tom, was passed around so each council member could read it.
In regard to the visit by members of the Higher Learning Commission, it was felt that the HLC’s forum with the operating staff went well. Although Professor Rosenbaum didn’t attend the forum between the HLC and the Board of Trustees, he’d heard that shared governance was discussed and that the Board was optimistic about the current NIU administration. Deborah Halicz said the HLC representatives in the meeting with the SPS questioned whether the core missions of the university were being served, and also asked about shared governance. At the meeting with Human Resource Services, Deborah said that diversity recruitment and retention were discussed, along with morale. Celeste Latham fielded questions about labor relations and the pension issue. It’s felt that, overall, the HLC’s visit to NIU went well.

Members of the HLC pointed out that NIU offers 5% of its classes online, as opposed to many other colleges and universities that offer up to 20% of their classes online. Dr. Rosenbaum remarked to the OSC that NIU does not intend to become an online university.

Andy Small shared a flyer about the next Council of Councils conference which will take place on Friday, October 17, 2014, at Southern Illinois University – Carbondale.

It was announced that Steve Cunningham will spend the next few months continuing to work on the pension issues and then he will be leaving NIU to pursue other career opportunities. Brad Hoey will be replacing Kathy Buettner when Brad assumes responsibility for Marketing and Communications for the university. The OSC members discussed doing something for Steve or perhaps giving him a gift to thank him for all he’s done for the operating staff.

VII. President’s Reports
A. Board of Trustees
   Approval of sabbaticals was discussed. There was a faculty member who sang an a Capella song about the importance of sabbaticals for faculty. The trustees talked about a tuition increase. Trustee Coleman is very opposed to any tuition increase, feeling that the budget should not be balanced on the backs of the students. His view is that NIU should cut costs and not increase tuition. The increase currently under discussion is $235.00 over four years, but a reduction in room and board. Health insurance costs for students have increased, and the university might be changing providers.

B. Faculty Senate
   There was a presentation by acting CFO Nancy Suttenfield. The Chief Information Officer has been hired. The Senate approved the budget priorities. Faculty Senate needs a new secretary. Dr. Rosenbaum is not eligible since he’s
already served for five years. Four others have been nominated, but it seems certain that none of them will accept. Professor Toni Tollerud is retiring and her position must also be filled. Nominations are due by March 19.

C. University Council
Doris McDonald gave a pre-Higher Learning Commission visit update at the meeting. The Student Grievance Procedure is close to approval, and will need a 2/3 majority vote for approval. Once approved, the procedure can be implemented by the end of this academic year (2013 – 2014).

VIII. Committee Reports
A. Workplace Issues
The Operating Staff online survey is up and running. It will be launched on March 12 and then shut down on March 26. The survey is anonymous, which is very important for participation. Reminders to take the survey will go out to everyone, even those who’ve already taken the survey, so that people will know that they’re not being tracked.

B. Elections and Appointments
The “Call for Candidates” flyer is complete and ready to be distributed. These candidate interest sheets must be returned by April 11, 2014. OSC has five positions open. There are also vacancies on several OSC committees: Affirmative Action and Diversity Resources Advisory Committee, Campus Parking, Parking Appeals, Student Conduct Board, Benefits, and Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee.

C. Public Relations
There were three applications for the Operating Staff Dependent Scholarship Award. One application was incomplete. One student didn’t turn in an application because of misinformation on the OSC website. The deadline to turn in applications was February 28, 2014, while the website listed it as February 1. Amy Polzin made a motion that OSC vote whether or not the student could submit the application. The motion was seconded by Dave Long.

D. SPS Council
Deborah Haliczer shared that a paper copy showing the results of the SPS online survey was given to the HLC. A copy will also be shared with the OSC. There are four SPS employees who will receive the SPS Presidential Award for Excellence. They will be recognized at an open house on April 15, 2014. A number of SPS employees will also be awarded with Caught Doing Good awards.

E. Visiting Committees/Guests
There were no visiting committees or guests.
F. EAC
The next EAC meeting will be held May 11, 2014, at the University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign.

G. UAC
No report

H. APAC
Robin Andersen shared that there are three nominations for the Pat Siebrasse award. An ethics officer attended APAC’s February meeting to explain his role, and discuss different situations that would be ethics violations. Nancy Suttenfield attended APAC’s January meeting to introduce herself and discuss her role as temporary Chief Financial Officer.

IX. Old Business
A. President’s Meeting Workload
There are meetings that add a great deal of stress to OSC President Small’s workload. These are: Faculty Senate and SPS Council. David Long agreed to take Andy Small’s place at the Faculty Senate meetings, which take place the fourth Wednesday of each month at 3:00 until 5:00 PM. Karen Smith will take Andy’s place at the SPS Council meetings which take place the second Thursday of each month from 10:00 AM until noon. These changes will be effective immediately.

B. 403B Vendors
The number of 403B vendors has been cut from four to two. All employees have a year to switch if they want or need to, and can contribute to the plan as they’ve always done, i.e., their plan has been grandfathered in. However, if an employee stops contributing, he/she will have to switch to one of the new plans.

X. New Business
A. Advocate
There is a need for a Civil Service advocate. An advocate is someone who advises and assists an employee who is having difficulty with the personnel process. An advocate can also serve as a grievance officer when an employee is pursuing a grievance procedure. Currently there is a faculty member who serves in this capacity for faculty members and supportive professional staff. Andy Small, Deborah Haliczer and Dr. Rosenbaum will need to meet with President Baker to discuss this need. Deborah feels that the term Advocate might be too adversarial, and that Advisor might be a better option. Currently, Professor Toni Tollerud is the advocate for faculty and SPS employees. Gina Shannon pointed out that Dr. Tollerud is reimbursed monetarily for her role as advisor. Karen Smith agreed that we need a position like this, but probably need more than one
person. Patricia Liberty-Baczek asked if OSC has been approached by a number of people who need this service. Sarah Klaper, the Ombudsperson, said that she sees a lot of operating staff in her office, but has been referring them to Andy Small. Andy feels that the situation needs more discussion.

XI. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 AM.