I. Call to Order

SPS Council President Cesarek called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Haliczer made a motion, seconded by Clark, to approve the agenda. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Cesarek read an e-mail from Chemers where she asks that "...reported that $6.2 million has been cut from NIU's budget for next fiscal year." from section III..F. should be changed to "...reported that the Governor's FY11 budget recommendation to the General Assembly reduces NIU's FY11 appropriation by $6.7 million (6.2%)." Bernoudy made a motion, seconded by Latham, to approve the SPSC minutes of the March 11, 2010, meeting as amended. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Attendance was taken and a quorum was confirmed.

II. Guest Speaker—President Peters

Cesarek welcomed President Peters and Steve Cunningham. Peters addressed a number of issues with the SPSC.

A. Budget. Peters reported that the appropriation hearings are done and the real action now is between legislators and the governor. He reported that there is a $55 million deficit from the state to NIU for FY 2010, and that the university has used almost all the funds it has access to meet its obligations. There is no indication that NIU will receive any more money before July 1, 2010. Then there will be the $55 million carryover from 2010 plus the any cuts made to the FY 2011 budget. He also noted that the governor has proposed a 1% income tax increase to put back into education, but Peters said that will not fix the crisis in the long run. The administration is watching what they can control, e.g., enrollment and tuition. But large increases in tuition and fees puts the burden on the students. Peters also plans to meet with the DeKalb and Sycamore mayors to discuss the economic impact to those communities. On the positive side, there are indicators that show general revenue is on the rise, but Illinois is slow in its recovery. He added that NIU has been very conservative with its expenditures for
several years, but not without sacrifices, for example deferred maintenance. He said that furloughs aren’t the answer, neither are vertical cuts, such as eliminating a whole department. However, the university is making payroll for now. Peters noted that communication is key and mentioned the budget button on NIU’s web page, which takes the user to a site that has up-to-date information as well as a place where users can post any rumors they have heard. Peters stated that if NIU can do what is needed to get through the next year, the trick then is to be prepared when the funds it is owed are received. He added that salaries remain a top priority. Perkins asked what the feeling was of Peters regarding legislative support for higher education and he responded that there doesn’t seem to be a united voice for higher education, but Governor Quinn has said that it’s a priority. Dickey noted that deferred maintenance is taking its toll on the infrastructure, for example, Davis Hall has a leaking roof and there is not enough power to support new technologies. Peters responded that that was part of the points he was trying to make during appropriations hearings; he is well aware of these problems on campus. He added that after the last Board of Trustees meeting, the trustees toured some of the residence halls and were not pleased with what they saw in the older buildings that have not been renovated such as Grant, Douglas, and Neptune. In May, they will announce a way of funding that’s not related to general revenue to update residence halls. With regards to other buildings on campus, everything that has been built has been done with private (e.g., Barsema Hall) or federal funds (e.g., Family Violence Center).

B. Stevens Building/Cole Hall. Peters reported that there was a request for proposals for both buildings that has attracted some good engineers to bid on the project. Cole Hall will be worked on first since it’s an easier fix and it’s needed for teaching the large lectures. The Office of Support and Advocacy is working with the families and victims of the shooting for planning what will happen to the auditorium where the shooting took place. The target date to reopen Cole Hall is fall of 2011. The university has received the full funding for the project. The planning for the renovation of the Stevens Building will involve faculty and staff input like was done with Barsema Hall. Regarding the lecture hall, he hopes to break ground on that by the end of the summer. The last building project, which is much further out in the planning schedule, is a technology building that will be anchored by the Department of Computer Science. It was confirmed that all of this is taking place with monies specifically targeted for these projects that cannot be used elsewhere; it’s part of the capital budget and sits in a fund with the Capital Development Board.

C. Strategic Plan. Peters noted that the Strategic Plan in on target and he remains committed to the funds for the projects that are coming out of the Strategic Plan.

D. Employee Workload/Morale. Perkins asked how Council members can address the issue of employees being asked to do more with less training. Peters agreed that there should be ways of compensating employees who are doing more and that training is very helpful. Hayenga added that many departments do not make good use of compensatory time for their employees, but that compensatory time is a good way to acknowledge the extra work put in by employees. Apperson stated that more employees are feeling stress and that studies have shown that exercise not only relieves stress, but makes employees more productive. She asked if Peters would support 30-minutes release time for employees to participate in an organized exercise program. Cunningham agreed that these are important issues for the Council to be discussing since everyone has assumed more duties, even Peters. He did explain that compensatory laws are defined by the fair labor standards and is not feasible for exempt employees. Cesarek asked if it’s time for employees to start looking at all their
responsibilities and eliminating the ones that may no longer be a priority. Peters said that he has always been an advocate for SPS job evaluations and potentially recalibrating positions and salary structure. It was also suggested that redistributing the workload could be looked at; taking duties from someone doing too much and giving them to someone who may have time to take them on.

E. Other questions. Trottier asked about how the university is working with community colleges and Peters responded that NIU has teamed up with a number of community colleges on a number of programs. Perkins asked what Council members should be doing and Peters responded that having these conversations is a start, talking about what matters to employees like wellness and workload and what’s good for our families, for example. Hayenga asked what NIU employees can do as Illinois citizens; how do employees make legislators understand the seriousness of the situation and how important higher education is. Peters responded that the argument has to be about the future and educating young people.

III. Announcements
Cesarek asked Council members to read the following announcements on their own.

A. The Baccalaureate Review Task Force has posted its Spring Update: http://www.niu.edu/bacreview/index.shtml. The report provides a summary of the task force’s work during the fall semester as well as current efforts during the spring 2010 semester. The NIU community is encouraged to read the report and share feedback; to provide such input, contact Greg Long at glong@niu.edu.

B. Women’s Track & Field is seeking volunteers to work two home meets: April 17 and April 29. Please contact Sue Hansfield (753-9544) if you can assist for part of the day.

C. SPS Evaluations – March 1 – June 30. Ensure your job description is updated; ensure you receive an evaluation from your supervisor.

D. SPS Survey – Available March 30 – April 30. Be sure to complete it; encourage colleagues to complete it.

E. April Lobby Days (per Ken Zehnder). Two days of activities have been scheduled in Springfield in support of higher education. A variety of groups have met throughout this year to share information on efforts to encourage a resolution to the state budgetary crisis. The threat to the quality and availability of public higher education in Illinois continues. Wednesday, April 21st, has a broadened focus on behalf of the "Responsible Budget Coalition” efforts. People representing all of education, social services, and labor groups will be present. Information is available at http://www.abetterillinois.com. A rally is scheduled for 11:30 on the grounds of the State Capitol. April 21st is also University of Illinois Day at the Capitol. April 22nd developed from being the Illinois Community College lobby day and now includes participation from the Federation of Independent Colleges and Universities, Illinois Student Assistance Commission, and representation from the public universities. Student groups will be holding a press conference at 1:30 in the press room at the capitol, and a request has been made to meet with the governor. This day was selected due to the anticipated difficulties of trying to meet with individual legislators during the Responsible Budget Coalition rally, when large crowds are expected. The efforts on April 22 will be concentrated on individual legislative contacts and, therefore, a central rally has not been scheduled.

As President Peters indicated in his budget statement, it is important "to exercise your right as a citizen and contact your state legislators. Pay close attention to their positions on higher education funding, and do not hesitate to voice your opinion.” Note: If you
decide to contact your state legislators, please remember it is inappropriate to use university resources (stationery, postage, e-mail, facsimiles, telephones, etc.) to communicate personal opinions to legislators and policy makers.

IV. Committees of the Council

A. Awards
Haliczer provided the Council with a list of nominees for the SPS Certificate of Recognition. The criteria for recipients are, for example, publication of books or articles, presentations or papers delivered at professional conferences, leadership in professional associations, honors and recognitions received, advanced academic degrees or professional certifications earned, and for extraordinary service to the NIU community and its students. These will be given out at the SPS Awards Ceremony on May 4, 2:00 - 4:00, along with the Presidential Award for Excellence and the SPSC Service Award. Nelson made a motion, seconded by Bernoudy, to accept the list of nominees. Motion passed, with several abstentions.

B. Communications
No report.

C. Constitution and Elections
Mueller reported that he has been working with Ostenburg on preparing for the elections. It was clarified that the elections are for Council members as well as president, then there will be an additional solicitation to fill committee vacancies. Cesarek reminded Council members who are up for reelection that if they want to continue on Council to be sure to self-nominate.

D. Events
Cesarek reported that the April 13 luncheon with Ken Zehnder is almost full. She also thanked those who helped with the Wellness Fair and noted that it seemed like it was mostly operating staff and students who stopped by.

E. Finance
No report.

F. Legislative
No report.

G. Technology Resources
Ostenburg is working with the Elections Committee on elections.

H. Workplace Issues
No report.

I. Vice President
Please refer to the written report. Young pointed out that the Campus Parking Committee has recommended that parking fees not be raised for the coming year.

V. Old Business

A. Sabbaticals.
Haliczer reported that Lux is working on tabulating the results of the sabbatical survey.

B. Grievance Procedures
Discussion postponed due to time constraints.

C. SPS Survey Update
Cesarek reminded everyone to complete the survey if they haven’t done so and to encourage their colleagues to complete it as well.

VI. New Business

A. 2010-11 SPSC Meeting Calendar.
Cesarek distributed the meeting calendar for SPSC Executive Committee and full Council meetings and asked for approval. She has made reservations for all of the rooms listed and pointed out the two meetings that have been moved to accommodate Board of Trustees meetings. Fransen made a motion, seconded by Benson, to approve the 2010-11 SPSC calendar. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. University Committee Reports

Cesarek encouraged Council members to review the reports sent electronically. She specifically noted that the main issue from the Faculty Senate meeting was about the salary survey and added that Dan House is doing a good job representing the SPS on that task force.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 noon.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Donna Smith, SPSC Secretary