I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA – amended to move Unfinished Business directly after the Consent Agenda, and to add a walk-in memo from Dan Griffiths on Responsible Conduct of Scholarship to the Consent Agenda as item C, to be referred to Rules and Governance. The agenda was adopted as amended.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 22, 2003 MEETING – approved

IV. PRESIDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The state budget situation continues to be murky. The Governor has asked and received permission to present his budget on April 9, so appropriation hearings will be after that. In the meantime, little is known about the FY04 budget, nor about whether there will be a rescission in the FY03 budget. NIU has planned for a moderate rescission, although the later in the fiscal year it comes the more difficult it will be to accommodate. State revenues in January were lower than last year; the February and March numbers will be the final ones to give guidance for the FY04 budget. The Governor is interested in avoiding large increases in tuition, and in reducing “administrative bloat” at state universities. The legislature has scheduled hearings to learn about the effect of budget cuts on the universities.

The federal government is still running on continuing resolutions for FY03, while meantime working on the FY04 budget. We are hoping that an FY03 budget will be in place soon, and that it will contain some of the funding we have requested.

President Peters spoke on NIU’s views and plans for growth at the DeKalb Mayor’s Growth Summit; he will also be talking to the DeKalb County Economic Development Council. He will have results of a new study based on the 2000 census, on NIU’s impact on the local economy.

V. CONSENT AGENDA – amended to move item B (Office Privacy Policy) to New Business; approved as amended.

A. Inclusion of changes in the IRB committees in the Committees Book – see memo from Dan Griffiths – refer to Rules and Governance.

C. Responsible Conduct for Scholarship Committee – see walk-in from Dan Griffiths – refer to Rules and Governance
VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Thanksgiving Break – see responses to Sue Willis.

The proposal is to begin Thanksgiving break on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, rather than holding half a day of classes that day. Feedback was received both supporting and opposing the proposal.

D. Wagner stated that he did not think “vacation creep” (students taking the whole week off) was inevitable.

K. Miller voiced the support of the Student Senate for the proposal, as well as his own personal support.

D. Wagner moved that Thanksgiving break begin on Wednesday morning before Thanksgiving, rather than at noon. There was a second.

J. Wolfskill said that his department, as well as others around campus, was already squeezed for time and did not want any more time off. D. Smith-Shank said that she thought students needed to be with their families, and supported the proposal. P. Henry said that having half a day resulted in an imbalance and that this should be corrected. A. Kaplan said that the decision should be made on academic grounds, as staff, civil service, and SPS would still be working. J Kowalski said that class attendance was poor that morning anyway. C. Sorenson agreed that the half-day made no sense, and supported the motion. S. Ackerman spoke in favor of the motion, and said that whether or not there was “creep” was up to the faculty. President Peters said that the Wednesday afternoon break had a long history in higher education, as it gives students time to travel; however, as 90% of our students live within a 90-minutes drive of DeKalb, this is not a consideration. X. Song asked what evidence we had that additional class time resulted in higher academic achievement. W. Tolhurst suggested that the half-day problem could also be solved by having classes on that Wednesday afternoon as well. D. Wagner asked if there was evidence of “creep” on the Friday before spring break. D. Rusin said that most workplaces are open for a full day on the day before Thanksgiving. S. Clayton said that Civil Service people would be unhappy about working when the faculty and students were not there.

President Peters asked what the process was; R. Wheeler said that there was time to implement the change for fall 2003, and A. Kaplan said that no further action would be required to change the academic calendar, although the holiday calendar was a different issue.

P. Henry asked if civil service and SPS employees got that Wednesday afternoon off; they do not.

W. Tolhurst asked if classes could start one day earlier; it is probably possible.

E. Johnson said that students are not focused on learning that day anyway, so classes might as well not be held.
S. Willis said that there were fewer people who had sections of the same course in both the morning and the afternoon than who taught just in the morning, and that it was a lot easier to cancel a scheduled class than it was to hold a class at an unscheduled time.

K. Miller wondered why some of these points had not been brought up sooner, and said that in three years he’d only had one class that had actually done constructive work on the day before Thanksgiving, and that he lives 6 hours from DeKalb so leaving at the end of a full day would not be an option.

President Peters said that he was at an institution that started Thanksgiving break at noon Wednesday and returned at noon Monday.

D. Griffiths asked about the School of Nursing’s strong opposition; Dean Richmond said that it was not a real problem for them as students on practicums keep the hours of the facility where they are located. M. Lundeen added that the situation for student teachers is similar.

The question was called, and the motion passed; after a count the result was 27 yes, 12 no, 5 abstain.

E. Johnson asked when it would be effective; it would be fall 2003 if possible and fall 2004 otherwise. Fall 2003 is logistically possible but there may be restrictions from the bylaws of the Board of Trustees [which there are – 12 months notice is required. The change will therefore take place in 2004]

VI. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

A. FAC to IBHE – Patricia Henry – report

The committee met January 31. Anyone with input for the IBHE’s Committee on Affordability should get it to them ASAP. There is a new project, sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trust, to develop a model for analyzing college-level learning; several Illinois public universities will be involved. The Public Policy Committee will be talking to legislators, to ascertain their attitude towards higher education, in order to approach them more effectively. A resolution was forwarded to the IBHE pointing out that assessment is basically an unfunded mandate; another requested faculty input to mission-specific indicators for the Illinois Commitment.

V. Cassidy said that the goal of the Pew project is to develop an overall index of learning to be incorporated into the higher education report card. Also, the IBHE is trying to streamline approval and reporting processes for programs; and now wants annual assessment reports (which affects only our reporting, as we already do the assessment itself). Lastly, NIU’s mission-specific indicators were discussed with the Academic Planning Council and the University Assessment Panel last year, and will be discussed again this year.

President Peters asked how much additional work was involved; V. Cassidy said that most of it will come from the annual reporting but we will have to go through one cycle to see.
D. Musial said she was concerned about the index which would result from the Pew study, and wondered how much faculty input there would be and how one could get involved. V. Cassidy said that the IBHE had asked for a representative from each university; she is NIU’s rep but has not been contacted yet. President Peters said that the motivation for the study came from the higher education report card, where every state got an incomplete on learning outcomes as there was no way to measure them. It will involve a fairly small number of students – about 1000 statewide, over a 4-year period.

B. BOT Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee – Paul Loubere and William Tolhurst – no report

C. BOT Finance, Facilities and Operations Committee – Sue Willis and Jim Lockard – no report

D. BOT Legislation, Audit and External Affairs Committee – Sara Clayton and Bev Espe – no report

E. BOT – Sue Willis – no report

F. Academic Policy Committee – John Wolfskill, Chair – no report

G. Resources, Space and Budgets Committee – Bill Goldenberg, Chair – no report

H. Rules and Governance Committee – Susan Mini, Chair

1. Constitution Article 2.82 – change in starting date, for all University Council members ACTION ITEM (Page 13)

The following language was passed by the Council, and sent on to the faculty as a referendum:

Terms of office for all members shall begin on July 1. Persons elected or appointed to fill mid-term vacancies on the University Council shall be eligible to begin service on the University Council three days after the executive secretary of the University Council has been officially notified in writing of their election or appointment.

I. University Affairs Committee – Richard Orem, Chair – no report

J. Elections and Legislative Oversight Committee – Deborah Smith-Shank, Chair

University Council nomination ballots have been counted; final ballots are being sent out shortly.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Office Privacy Policy – refer to Rules and Governance
B. Espe moved that, inasmuch as the privacy policy affects staff as well as faculty, it be referred to the SPS Council and Operating Staff Council for their comments before going to Rules and Governance. J. Wolfskill asked when they would respond; they will have a response in time for the March 19th Council meeting.

The motion passed.

IX. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

P. Henry suggested that the Wednesday before Thanksgiving be named “Wagner Wednesday.”

X. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Minutes, Academic Planning Council
B. Minutes, Athletic Board
C. Minutes, Campus Security & Environmental Quality Committee
D. Minutes, Committee on Initial Teacher Certification
E. Minutes, Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum
F. Minutes, Graduate Council
G. Minutes, University Assessment Panel
H. Minutes, University Benefits Committee
I. Minutes, Undergraduate Coordinating Council

XI. ADOURNMENT