UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2003, 3:00 P.M.
HOLMES STUDENT CENTER SKY ROOM
JOHN G. PETERS, PRESIDING


J. Newman-Ryan attended for D. Cearlock; B. Robinson attended for F. Rodgers.

Parliamentarian Ferald Bryan was present.

THOSE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Barr, Cabasa-Hess, Crumble, DeMoranville, Dorynek, Fox, Hurych, Johnson, Kafer, Kolb, Loubere, Lundeen, Minor, S. Song, X. Song, Stapleton, Williams, Young

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA – A memo from the SA about online syllabi was added to New Business; the agenda was adopted as amended.

III. APROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 12, 2003 MEETING – approved

IV. PRESIDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The President expressed his enormous appreciation for the many efforts by our trustees during this difficult budget time, and encourages all to send them notes of appreciation. He then reviewed the cuts, rescissions, and extra costs that we have taken on in the past year and a half, which have taken us back to the FY99 funding level. We took 1100 more students last fall, with 11% less funding; for every percent of state funding we lose, we have to increase tuition 3% to make up for it – tuition increases cannot solve this problem. Our service region (I-80 to the IN, IA, and WI borders) includes 80% of the high school graduates in Illinois, but we will have to put limits on admissions if we do not get enough funding to provide needed services for students. The request to put aside $8.6 million of the FY03 budget for “review” was totally unexpected, and it is difficult to craft a rational response to it this late in the fiscal year. If this money is really gone, some expenses will have to be delayed until FY04, making the next year’s budget problem even worse. We must insist that NIU be evaluated on its own merits, rather than lumping all the public universities together. We are already very lean administratively. The President is no longer confident that we can handle our budget cuts without layoffs. The case needs to be made in Springfield for higher education; students are essential here and ours have been excellent.
Dr. Williams and Kathy Buettner are in Springfield at a meeting with the state budget director about the FY03 reserve and the FY04 budget; planning cannot begin until we know what the FY04 budget will be. NO matter what, the semester will be finished and students who are qualified will graduate. Summer school is one of the last things on the priority list to cut.

The BOT passed a resolution this morning directing Peters to review the university’s annual operating budget to eliminate any superfluous or unnecessary expenses; this is in response to the concern at the state level about “administrative bloat” in universities.

Other proposed legislation that would negatively impact the university includes tuition limitation bills, the most palatable of which would freeze an incoming freshman’s tuition for four years but allow for tuition to be raised for incoming students in subsequent years; line item budgeting, which could be acceptable or very onerous, depending on the level of detail; and returning the income fund to the state, which would be a disaster as it would remove all flexibility from the university.

At the federal level, NIU has done very well; specific announcements will be forthcoming.

On the war – freedom of speech will be protected but destruction of property is not acceptable; in addition, NIU can protect its faculty, staff, and students when they are on campus but not if they are not. NIU should continue examining the relevant political, social and religious issues.

On a positive note – the basketball team is doing well, and NIU is getting a lot of academic awards.

C. Sorenson spoke about the P-20 initiative. She, Dean Richmond, Dean Kafer, Dean Kitterle, Anne Kaplan, and Bob Wheeler have been meeting over the past several months. Most other institutions talk about P-16; we like P-20 because it includes postgraduate education and training. NIU is hosting a two-day retreat for deans from all Illinois public universities who are involved in teacher education, in order to foster statewide collaboration and meet state needs.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Proposed changes to CITC Bylaws – see memo from Robert Wheeler. Refer to Rules and Governance – approved

VI. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

A. FAC to IBHE – Patricia Henry – report

The FAC is concerned about what types of expenditures are being considered as administration, and the FAC president has written a letter to the IBHE and to the governor. The FAC is also concerned with getting faculty representation on the IBHE and the ICCB (the community college board).
Pat has discussed how legislators perceive higher education with our senator and representative; faculty workloads are always an issue. The legislature is also concerned about the cutting of the 5th year IMAP funds. Finally, the FAC has passed a resolution asking for a seventh goal to be added to the Illinois Commitment: that the collective efforts of Illinois colleges and universities will enhance and enrich the quality of life for all Illinois citizens.

President Peters added that all tuition waivers are under review.

F. Kitterle pointed out that we have continually provided the legislature with information about how faculty spend their time, and wondered why the message still hasn’t gotten through. President Peters agreed that NIU has provided good information, and added that we might want to institute an annual report of workloads from the departments and colleges, showing that we are paying attention to this issue. However, when he was asked, the only question was about how much time faculty actually spend in the classroom.

A. Kaplan pointed out that there are many new legislators and staff, and that continuing efforts do pay off.

F. Kitterle said that his college is already monitoring workloads.

D. Wagner asked what “faculty erosion leads to erosion of faculty governance” meant; P. Henry replied that it referred to the increased committee load for regular faculty when the proportion of non-tenure-track faculty increases.

B. BOT Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee – Paul Loubere and William Tolhurst – written report

C. BOT Finance, Facilities and Operations Committee – Sue Willis and Jim Lockard – report

There was an increase in student fees, which was small except for the increase in health insurance premiums; even that was small compared to national averages.

D. BOT Legislation, Audit and External Affairs Committee – Sara Clayton and Bev Espe – report

Most of the discussion was about legislation and the budget, which President Peters already covered. It looks as though NIU may not get anything in the FY04 capital budget; our first entry is #15, and the funding does not usually go that far even in good years. NIU is in full compliance with the SEVIS regulations for international students and employees, although the national system is not working well.

P. Henry asked if we should contact our legislators about some of the proposed state legislation; President Peters said that the income fund bill would be a good one to address.

E. BOT – Sue Willis – report
S. Willis told the BOT that she was attending a meeting of Illinois public university faculty senate presidents on Friday, and asked if they had any action suggestions. They said write letters. Letters from students, parents, and alumni are best. Points to make include that higher education should not bear a disproportionate burden of budget cuts; the income fund should stay local; and detailed line-item budgeting is a mistake.

NIU, at the direction of the BOT, is considering a technology surcharge to cover improved student information system software, smart classrooms, improved Web capabilities and the like; there is no concrete proposal yet. The BOT passed both constitutional amendments (to bring titles up to date, and to change the start date for University Council members to July 1 from August 16).

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

G. Resources, Space and Budgets Committee – Bill Goldenberg, Chair – report

The problem of students getting to class on time, given the expanding campus, is being handled by CUAE; RSB will leave it to them.

We are close to the goal of having 50% of the major classrooms on campus be smart classrooms; ITS is doing reasonably well despite budget cuts. The Faculty Development Center is working hard on Blackboard, which is becoming quite popular around campus. Planning for the far west campus (west of the Convocation Center) is in the early stages.

The priorities for Academic Planning include salaries and increased faculty hiring, although the probability is that budget cuts will interfere. At the time, they were looking at 3% and 5% scenarios, and thought that was doable although 5% would give us some problems.

H. Rules and Governance Committee – Susan Mini, Chair

   1. Placement of Ethics Statements – see memo from Sue Mini.

Information item – the committee recommends that the Operating Staff Council, the SPS Council, and the Faculty Senate each incorporate their ethics statements into their own bylaws or similar documents.

   2. Committee on Advanced Professional Certification (CAPCE) – to be included in the Committees Book

R. Wheeler said that this committee parallels CITC, except for advanced certification programs in education, of which we have eight. The accrediting agency has requested that there be such a committee, and this is our response to that request.

D. Griffiths asked where in the Committees Book it would appear; like CITC, it would be in Committees Reporting Directly to the University Council.
D. Wagner objected to voting on something that had just been presented as a walk-in; it was pointed out that it had already been in the packets on the consent agenda.

D. Musial asked how the committee structure had been determined; C. Sorenson said that it had been done by the faculty in the respective programs. D. Musial expressed dismay that no support faculty were included, and wanted more time to think about it.

D. Wagner moved to postpone discussion and voting until the next meeting; the motion failed.

The vote was then taken on the original motion, which passed.

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

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

1. Results of University Council elections.

   Business: Sally Ann Webber
   Education: Richard Orem, Amy Rose
   Health and Human Sciences: Ken Burns
   Liberal Arts & Sciences: Colin Booth, Patricia Henry, Fahui Wang, Paul Stoddard, Angela Powers, David Gorman
   Visual and Performing Arts: Larry Gregory

2. Results of Faculty Referendum, to change start dates of University Council members: passed

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Class syllabi posted online – walk-in

K. Miller presented a resolution from the Student Senate requesting that syllabi be sent to the SA before the beginning of a semester; the SA would then post them to give students more information when registering for classes.

It was moved and seconded to refer this issue to the Academic Policy committee; the motion passed.

IX. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

J. Wolfskill asked about when the change in Thanksgiving break would take place; it will be fall 2004, as 12 months notice to the Board of Trustees is required.
K. Miller also encouraged the writing of letters to legislators and the governor, and said that the students will be writing an honor code to go along with the ethics statements.

I. Legg pointed out that university resources should not be used when lobbying.

L. Pernell expressed his appreciation for all the hard work the president is doing on the budget, and asked if the news reports which seemed to indicate quite a bit of hostility during the meeting between the state budget director and the state university presidents were correct. President Peters said that it was somewhat exaggerated, and that we must understand the magnitude of the problem the budget director has to deal with.

S. Willis expressed appreciation for the efforts of the trustees.

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. ADJOURNMENT