UNIVERSITY COUNCIL TRANSCRIPT  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2003, 3:00 P.M.  
HOLMES STUDENT CENTER SKY ROOM  
PRESIDENT JOHN PETERS, PRESIDING


Parliamentarian Ferald Bryan was also present.

THOSE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Cabasa-Hess, Crumble, Cummings, Dorynek, Fox, Graham, Kolb, Legg, Loubere, Lundeen, Mini, Schneider, Salgado, Smith-Shank, Stapleton, Young

I. CALL TO ORDER

President Peters: Let me call the – where are we, oh yes, University Council, April 9, already.

The meeting was called to order at 3:08

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

President Peters: The first item of business is the Adoption of the Agenda. I’ve been informed we have no walk-in items, so is there a motion to approve the Agenda as printed? Second? All those in favor say aye. Opposed? We have an Agenda.

The Agenda was approved as printed.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 19, 2003 MEETING
   (Pages 3-7)

President Peters: On pages 3-7 is the Minutes of the March 19 meeting. I call for additions or corrections? Grab a microphone so you’re on record.

S. Ackerman: This is Sean Ackerman and I was present.
President Peters: All right, let the minutes be corrected to show Sean. I saw Sean one time over the break. He was climbing mountains in – what that’s the name of that place Sean in –

S. Ackerman: Galleons.

President Peters: Yeah that’s right, the place where you can spend your money. All right, any other additions or corrections? Move to approve the minutes. Second? All in favor. All right, they’re approved.

The minutes were approved as corrected.

IV. PRESIDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Peters: Let me – this is going to be a little disjointed. I’m going to get my handkerchief out because I have allergies. I have listened to the Governor’s address at noon and we had very little in the way of preliminary information, which is pretty unusual. Usually, you have had a briefing before that’s a bit embargoed. We had very little to go on so for the past hour or so I’ve been writing and analyzing and so I’m going to be a little bit cautious. I am releasing as we speak this e-mail and I’ll read it to you and I’m amplify on the e-mail.

Dear Colleagues:

I write to you today with very mixed feelings about the news we have just received from Springfield. Today’s budget message from Governor Blagojevich revealed his intent to limit public universities from drastic cuts to our current year’s budget but require an even greater sacrifice from all of us in our ’04 budget. So, kind of good news/bad news.

Let me begin by characterizing three main themes the Governor repeated in the portion of his message that dealt with higher education and I think the themes were as follows. First, he reiterated his pledge to cut non-instructional costs at state universities. Second, he pledged to protect student financial aid. Third, he promised to support legislation that seeks to stabilize tuition. Okay? So there were three, as I heard it, three components. Now, I’d like to explain to the extent possible at this early stage, what I believe these actions will mean for us at NIU. So let’s take off the table and deal with right now our budget for this year, the final FY03 cuts and the implications. All right? You’ll recall and you can read this in history here, that last week I told you our FY03 cut would likely be smaller than previously feared. Today we learned that the total amount we must return to the state is 2.9% or about 3.2 million dollars. While that amount is certainly preferable to the nearly 8.6 million that an 8% cut would have meant, it will still require us to undertake serious cost-cutting measures in the final three months of our fiscal year and I have to say that the academic community and our university community and the public higher education community and our students and our trustees and our friends have made this minimal cut possible because we were very effective in moving it from 8 to 2.9. That was really a good bit of work. At the beginning of this fiscal year, we initiated measures that anticipated further reductions in state support. That was the prudent thing to do in July and we did that – internal management measures. Those measures included, as you know because they hurt, freezes on new hires, equipment purchases, non-essential travel and the elimination and
reduction in force of about 46 positions. That helped us create a reserve if you will. Other actions included development of internal reserves and negotiation of extended payments on outstanding utility bills. So where we could lengthen some things and delay some payments for a while, we did. With an exact reduction number now in hand, we know we must take several additional actions to fully meet the Governor’s FY03 reserve requirement. In other words, we were prepared to go a long way towards that 2.9% but we weren’t quite there so now we have to do a few other things. Among those things under consideration as we speak, and we’ll try to get that done within a week or so, is the initiation of a four-day summer work week as well as temporary summer building closings. We’re going to, you know, the least painful approach here to having a balanced budget for this year ’03. I’m pleased to inform you now that these and other actions will allow us to protect student programs, preserve jobs and continue to offer a full schedule of summer session courses. All right? So let’s get those students registered up. All right? Full schedule for summer. And that doesn’t mean we won’t have some problems here with some, you know, where we’re going to teach and everything, but we’re a go. Now, let me – so, FY03 hopefully, is to bed. Because we have to worry about ’04. FY04 cuts and implications.

We also learned today that our FY04 appropriation cut will be 8.2% on our GRF base. That means we will start the fiscal year that begins this July 1 with 9.1 million less in state funding than we had at the beginning of FY03. Now, let me put that into – I see one of the deans already at the telephone. Were you delivering good news or bad news, Dean Kitterle? Isn’t it nice to be able to laugh? Since the beginning of this budget crisis nearly two years ago – let me put this in perspective – we have endured budget cuts and unavoidable cost increases totally 13 million. This includes 3.5 million in employee health insurance contributions we absorbed last year which the state imposed on universities and which has been continued into the next year. With today’s announcement of an additional 9.1 million dollar cut, NIU’s base budget – our base GRF – has been driven back approximately six years to a level we’ve not seen since the 1997-98 school year, academic year. That would the ’98 fiscal year. Six years. We’ve been driven back six years. While we have been waiting for the release of the Governor’s budget before making specific statements, I assure you that I and the staff and everyone has been working diligently to manage these cuts while remaining true to the principles I laid out nearly two years ago and you know what those are. At every level of this university, we have looked for ways to reduce spending without damaging the integrity of our academic programs, without threatening the livelihood of large numbers of employees which is very important to me, and without endangering the health and safety of any member of our campus community. I know that people get tired sometimes of hearing those but I think they’re very good principles to keep in front of us throughout this. To those ends, I can now share several specific actions that I feel will be required. One, I have directed the vice presidents to consider implementation of a four-day work week beginning in June and continuing through the summer months, through August, because about three-quarters of the summer budget begins after July 1, so it’s on the ’04 budget. This change in schedule would not affect salaries but would allow the university to recognize significant savings in utility, contractual services and other expenditures. We need to try to save every dime we can while protecting what we do in the classroom in our core mission. Another action that we’re going to look at right away is possible consolidation of classes and operations to allow for the temporary closure of some buildings over the summer and DuSable Hall is one such facility that we’ve been looking at. There may be others. None of this is without – is not
going to be particularly easy, but consider the alternatives and it becomes doable. Another thing we’re going to do right away is all campus buildings will close at 11:00 p.m. during the summer months. In addition to those things that I’m saying, I want some reports on those things and I want that to put into place although there’s going to be some discussions with the various groups because there’s some things we may not have thought about, you know, externalities that we need to take care of and unintended consequences. The burden is if we don’t do one of these, what are we going to do? I mean, what else are we going to do? What alternative does one have? In addition, we need to explore the possibility of an extended winter shutdown, reduction in maintenance and repairs; things that are non-health or safety related and limited admissions to the university. Those are things that we’re putting on the scenario list of things we need to consider. Through the remainder of the fiscal year and into the next, we’ll continue to seek out addition cost cutting measures and I’ve implemented for the past several months and weeks a look at almost every one of our operations. The Board of Trustees has specifically asked me to oversee a process by which new efficiencies and streamlined operations are identified at every level of the campus. I’ll continue to work closely with the deans and the vice presidents and the leadership of the Council, the Supportive Staff Professional Council, the Operating Staff Council to identify and reduce, wherever possible, costs that are not directly linked to instruction. I mean, that will always be the decision rule, how closely is it related and linked to delivery of instruction.

Now, some future concerns. Our state’s financial problems are far from over. With everything we do, we have to view this against a backdrop of the worst fiscal crisis in Illinois history. Some of the issues of particular concern to me include – and there are many – but I’m just going to hit those that keep me up at night, include pending legislature that would impose tuition caps on us and those that would increase the minimum wage. There are proposals that are cleared – I believe they’ve cleared both the House and the Senate – that would raise the minimum wage from $5.15 over a two-year period, to $6.50. That would be a two-year implementation. If that goes through in that form, and we applied that to all the categories of employees that are at that level, that would be about 3 million dollars. Unfortunately, it comes in categories where you, I’ve been through this many times, where you might be forced to reduce those categories and most of those categories are student workers. So one way of controlling these costs is to reduce student workers. I don’t want to do that. NIU has a history of giving every student who needs some employment to help get through a job, and it’s at minimum wage but it helps them get through. You know, that’s a concern to me. How are we going to handle that. It’s a non-funded mandate. I’m certainly for increasing the minimum wage but it does have an implication for us that we have to realize. So, the other thing about tuition is that the loss of state funding cannot and should not be made up with new tuition dollars. To recovery the 9.1 million cut, we are sustaining in FY04 for example, would take a tuition hike of more than 25%, an action we would never recommend to our Board and our Board would never approve. Nonetheless, tuition caps rarely take into account the unavoidable cost increases that accompany budget cuts. An increase in the minimum wage for example will cost us 3 million and there’s energy and other things as well. Now, I’ll talk in a minute in just a little bit of specificity about the legislative bills that are out there on tuition limitation and let you know where we are on that. Well, the Governor’s budget now goes before the legislature for final approval and it’s late. The sine die adjournment is set at May – in the 20’s, late May – that means you have the rest of April and May for the House and the Senate to hold appropriation hearings. We have not heard when but I expect there
will be hearings but they have to work this total budget and its complex. If they go past June in special session, a super majority is required to pass anything in his budget bill so, I would imagine, there’ll be a compelling reason to get the work done by the end of May on the part of most. So, because of that while this budget goes to the legislation for final approval, history would suggest that the cuts announced today will very likely be sustained. That’s the history of budget bills in Illinois. Our work, from now until the end of the legislative session this summer, will focus on minimizing the effects of legislation that could threaten our flexibility in responding to the budget crisis, increases in enrollment and other financial issue. That’s were our focus – obviously, we’re trying to minimize the cuts if we can, but our focus is going to be on those legislative issues. We will in the weeks and months ahead, continue to rely on your patience, good will and dedication. All of us will be challenged to work more creatively with fewer resources at a time when our talents are needed as never before. As always, I pledge to keep you informed as new information becomes available.

I just had a few other thoughts. I want to thank everyone also for the good work they did because the Governor’s presentation of the higher education budget was, he had lauded and thanked the universities for working with him and his staff as we tried to identify these cuts and I happen to think that that was a direct result of all the messages, good messages, that the Governor had received that helped turn around the perception, at least for some universities, that somehow we were wasteful or we were abusive of the public trust which is certainly not true. We’re not cheap, but we’re not abusive and I don’t think we’re bloated and I think he got that message and so he was laudatory in that regard and I think you ought to take some credit for that. So, some other things, just a few other things that I’ve gleaned out of the highlights of the Governor’s budget, the MAP funding is continued at the present level and that’s good news for our students. I think it’s at the 336 million, I don’t believe that included reinstatement of the fifth year MAP. I don’t believe that that was on the table. There’s virtually no money in new capital projects. We did receive some money for- what’s the category Dr. Williams for improvement or –

E. Williams: Repair and maintenance.

President Peters: Repair and maintenance where there’s a small amount, it looks like there’s a small amount of money in there for repair and maintenance. Again, we don’t have the budget book yet. We just have little snippets.

All right, so with that – I have informed the Trustees. I will give them a good briefing, written analysis. We have people already down in Springfield. I have been in Springfield many times since I’ve seen you and in Washington. Things are different in Washington. It always feels good to go to Washington even though I always peer out of the plane to see if anybody has a stinger missile aimed at me. I just want to say that I will be engaged trying to carry the message forward and working with all the various groups as we try to deal with this ’04 budget. We have some scenarios and some approaches and we’ve received a lot of good information in working with people and the deans have some ideas and through all of this I am certain that we’re going to preserver.
Now I think, if you don’t mind, I usually wait to take questions but I think that this is important and if people have questions for me now. Ivan Legg is not here. Kathy Buettner is in Springfield and Ken Zehnder but Dr. Williams is here and he and I sort of watched the speech together and so I will take any questions that you have. I’ll try to be as specific as I can but right now I don’t know a lot. John?

**J. Wolfskill:** I’d like to ask about building closures for the summer. I understand that DuSable will be closed the coming summer. Are there other buildings that are targeted for closure?

**President Peters:** Let me be as specific as I can. We’re looking at a range of buildings but DuSable seems to be the one currently, for which we can save the most money and have the least disruption to our academic programs. It may only be DuSable but we’re looking at some others and, you know, we still have to go through a process where we evaluate who’s in there and what the impact will be. We’re not insensitive to that but a hard decision is going to have to be made. DuSable is a major classroom building and has a lot of our smart classrooms but we’re working with the academic side of the house to determine right now. Right now, I don’t even know the name of another building we’re looking at but I know our people are looking at it.

**J. Wolfskill:** Also, do I understand correctly that for future years, one of the items under consideration is to close DuSable then every summer? Is that what you said or did I misunderstand it.

**President Peters:** Well, let’s take this thing year by year, but let’s see how – maybe this thing is going to work out okay and we can save money. Dean Kitterle?

**F. Kitterle:** I just want to follow up on John Wolfskill’s question regarding DuSable. Bill Minor, who’s the Associate Dean in the college, who deals with space is already in contact with chairs checking to make sure that we do the minimal amount of damage to programs so this is all, you know, we’re putting into play a process in the college.

**President Peters:** I always hate to inconvenience faculty and students but if I can save some jobs and we can save some part of summer school, I’m willing to make that decision. Yeah?

**B. Espe:** Can you elaborate at this time about the four-day workweek for the summer? Are those details worked out?

**President Peters:** Well, Steve Cunningham is here and what I’ve requested of the vice presidents and Steve is that we work with the various employee groups to find out and seek input as to what works and what doesn’t work for them. But, you know, remember I have the brain of the average president, you see, and I think what this means is spreading five days of work out in four. Again, to the simple minded brain of a president, I realize that’s not easy. But we’re willing to listen and I’ve dispatched my experts on that to listen hard.

**B. Espe:** Steve is coming to our Council meeting tomorrow to explain it. Is it definite that we are going to go to a four-day?
**President Peters:** I would like it to work out because it saves money and saves jobs. I understand there’s a history of that here. I view this as a hardship; I don’t view this as anything other than that. Okay?

**D. Rusin:** I can just pick up on that question about the four-day workweek. so it would save money because if I only come in for four days, you can shut off the cooling and so on for one day. Would it be possible, for example, to keep the library open more days than the regular buildings? That way, you know, I could still use the library.

**President Peters:** We’ll take that into consideration. Maybe we could reduce hours or something like that. Please get all these suggestions to – we’re making this up as we go along – make sure the Dean of the Library knows that because we’ll be talking to the Dean of the Library and so forth. The things I would request that people do is to do an actual analysis of how many people use the library on Friday in the summer.

**D. Rusin:** Well, if my office is 98 degrees, I’ll be in the library.

**President Peters:** Yeah, that’s a very good point. You must be in DuSable. Dr. Williams?

**E. Williams:** Just one comment. Our experience has been whenever we try to do something like a closure of a building or whatever, the list of exceptions begins to grow and please understand that if the list gets to that critical point, the there’s no need. So, everyone is going to have to really assess and work with us in terms of trying to make this closure tight enough so that we’re realizing the potential savings that are there.

**President Peters:** One other point about the Governor’s budget, I think the Governor’s budget, if I’m reading this correctly and if I’m wrong let me know Dr. Williams, does take care of centrally the increase in health insurance costs. So they’re not passed down to the university, if I’m reading this budget correctly. Bill?

**W. Tolhurst:** Yeah, just getting clear on the four-day workweek, I take it that means that all faculty members who have offices on campus are going to be in buildings that are not air conditioned on Friday. So it’s not just the folk in DuSable. If you’re saving money by going to the four-day workweek and shutting off air conditioning in buildings other than DuSable, you’re hope is that faculty members will be able to work at home on their own air conditioning? I just wanted to get that clear.

**President Peters:** I’ve got a big fan that I’m going to bring into my office because my air conditioning in Lowden – I think this is a left over from, who’s that president – that they shut the poor guy’s air conditioning off. All right, let’s go – Jim?

**J. Lockard:** John, when you were listing the things that you were concerned about in the future and legislation still in the works, you didn’t mention the infamous income fund business. Is that still hot?
President Peters: Yes, well it’s still a concern. We’ve been led to believe there has been some legislative compromising and gubernatorial compromising where this is off the table for this year but we will be vigilant because it’s a complex issue that not a lot of people understand and we will continue to watch and try to maintain that because without it, our flexibility is completely gone and I don’t think it’s the right thing to do anyway. Again, as I say when students and parents write that check, they expect that check to come to us so we can spend it and not go to the state treasury where it sits there for a year and then we may get it back and we may not but you’re very astute. I didn’t put it in there because I think that we made some progress on that and that is an issue that was helped considerably by all of you. Yeah?

J. Kowalski: Jeff Kowalski from the School of Art. First of all I just want to say that we’re all your biggest fans. A more serious question and this will be a very short question and you may not be willing or ready to answer this so you might just want to paint with a broad brush, but how do you see this shaping up effecting hiring and firing?

President Peters: Well, I think obviously and let me speak generically about this, I don’t know how you make a 9 million dollar, 8% reduction without a reduction in force. I didn’t say layoffs. I make a distinction between layoffs, which are, you know, people with blood in their veins working and vacancies, but there will be a reduction in force. We’re going to be very careful about where those reductions occur and I wouldn’t consider that firing but – so, my principles are still the same. Maybe other universities take a different approach. Maybe I’ve had more experience than they have on what happens when you begin to focus on units and – not that we shouldn’t if we have ineffective and redundant units, we ought to combine them and do something creative – but, okay, what was the other part?

J. Kowalski: Hiring meant, you know, will there be a hiring freeze or presumably – I don’t know, I’m asking.

President Peters: We’re going to be in a permanent – it’s going to be the tundra of hiring for a while. Sort of a permafrost, but I want a process whereby every administrator and every shared governance group takes a critical look at every position and prioritizes so that we don’t have, we need a level and a fair playing field and we need to follow our principles of the core mission, of academic quality, safety and really we should hopefully find ways of not destroying some of our great programs even though they may happen to have vacancies. I can’t do that by myself; I can only rely on the good will of everyone. I will monitor it though. So, there is going to be obviously, a reduction in force. There’s an interaction here. That’s why you notice one of my concerns was limited admissions, student admissions. There’s a point at which we can’t take anymore students or our quality just flies out the window. I do have to ask you all for sacrifices especially in terms of picking up duties and students. My pledge, although I still have hope because I’m an optimist – haven’t ruled out, but I don’t know how we get there – my hope is still based upon my top priority which is to try to find a way, even in this dismal situation, to get some sort of salary increments for people but that hope, I mean, is getting dimmer and dimmer all the time but it’s there and so sometimes the way to get there is to ask all of us to do a little bit more so I don’t have to cut in other areas. It’s a very good question and, I mean, at the end of the day that’s really what it’s all about. I can assure you that I am personally looking at administrative operations and any streamlining is going to begin with me. And I need some
streamlining by the way. Let’s take my friend from Tennessee here. You’re also a Marine, right?

S. Ackerman: Yes, I am and I also work in the Office of Admissions and that’s what this question is about. I field a lot of questions because people are choosing between Northern and Southern and ISU and I want you to reflect on how our cuts compare to other state universities.

President Peters: It’s all the same; it’s all the same.

S. Ackerman: Is that percentage wise or dollar wise?

President Peters: 8.2% is their base GRF budgets. There is a little adjustment that always has to be made in critical things like direct hospital payments and so forth but all universities have been cut 8.25% of their adjusted FY03 bases.

S. Ackerman: And the other one is about limiting admissions. Does that mean at some point you pick a magic number and once that last applicant is in and accepted, no more are taken until there are graduates or how does that work?

President Peters: That’s a complex question. We will, and it’s layered, we already have in place applying strictly our deadlines. So if you miss the deadlines, where in years past we may have been lenient, we can’t be lenient this year. We will admit people but put them on waiting lists so that “yes, you’re admitted but you can’t come until there’s space available” you know, maybe January of ’04 or September of ’04. Then we have several committees that are looking at getting in place some better mechanisms to control – because you just can’t go out there and turn the spigot off without informing people and we don’t have enough management techniques in place to do that. We need to get things in the bulletin. We need to consider a shorter deadline and then maybe some criteria of who gets in and who doesn’t. But I don’t want to do anything that changes the character of NIU and our service to the people and students of Illinois but almost every university in the state is going to have to consider some kind of limitations if they’re in a growth pattern because you only have so many instructional resources. The worst thing to do is to take a class of students and then they track through and they can’t graduate in time because the courses aren’t there. That is worse than saying you’re admitted, but your admission is delayed. And the whole thing is, if you think of the whole system of higher education, that means maybe more students will go to community colleges and then transfer in two years. Well, for us with 42% of our undergraduates being transferred, that just changes the mix for us. But it is on the table. Yeah, and then you.

M. Spires: I have a question and a suggestion to make. The question is do we still lobby. Do we still write letters, make phone calls and, if so, what do we say when we do that.

President Peters: The answer is yes, yes and yes and we will be giving you information that will be useful to you and our friends to intervene on our behalf at the right time in the process, because timing is everything.
M. Spires: I asked specifically because I’m about to send out our monthly electronic news letter to alumni and friends in my department and I wondered whether I should say anything about writing to their legislators and, if you, what.

President Peters: I’ll tell you what, if there’s every any question about that, just for the purposes of good order, why don’t you ask Kathy Buettner, in charge of our federal and state relations, who is prepared and ready to go on this and also our alumni association. You know, we have to be pretty careful about this.

M. Spires: Yes.

President Peters: I mean, there are groups who could do this on our behalf but I’d have to say right now that things are looking better than they were and now we move to the legislative – now it’s legislature. Before it was governor; now it’s legislature.

M. Spires: Now the suggestion has to do with the fact that I am also taking advantage of one of our wonderful benefits and furthering my own education and I was a little bit surprised to get an envelop from the Bursar’s Office earlier this month telling me that I don’t owe them any money which, while that is a nice thing to find in my mailbox as opposed to something that says I owe them thousands and thousands of dollars, when my credit card companies – you know, when I pay off a credit card, they don’t send me a bill so I was just wondering, could we cut out sending out statements that say that we don’t owe anything and save the processing?

President Peters: Well, that’s PeopleSoft for you. I mean, could somebody handle that? I’m a simply minded president. If you have suggestions – when I was putting myself through university, I worked at a railroad yard and they had this suggestion box – this is true – if you made a suggestion and it was kind of a manufacturing place that had processes and so forth. So, on my lunch hour, I would fill out these cards with suggestions and then if your suggestion was picked, you got $25. Do you know one week, I doubled my salary. Of course, I was paid $1.35 an hour.

D. Wagner: I said this before, but it was before we became a lobbying organization, if we’re going to be a lobbying organization, why don’t we look at the revenue side too and start lobbying for changes in the way revenue is collected in this state?

President Peters: Can you help me out there, more specifically what you mean.

D. Wagner: I think most intelligent people think the income tax should be raised in this state. Paul Simon said that on Sunday.

President Peters: From a long time of experience, let me just say that my view is that it’s the responsibility of the public officials of this state to determine how they fund and at what level they fund public programs. It’s out job to make the case for the need for funding; it’s their job to determine how that is done and I have long experience and observation of individuals who got themselves and institutions in a world of hurt by aligning themselves with one kind of revenue enhancement versus another. That is the most dangerous thing you could possible do. And not
appropriate; it is not appropriate. Now, our friends can do that for us and citizens can do that, but a state institution cannot.

**D. Wagner:** You asked for specifics but it seems to me as an educational institution, we could at least investigate the different ways of attacking the problem of revenue. It’s my personal opinion that income tax is the most likely, but that’s only one alternative but I think it’s perfectly legitimate for an educational institution to examine that problem broadly.

**President Peters:** I agree with that. You need, I had a bitter experience in Tennessee which had no income tax. It had a hall tax on dividends but it was all sales on everything, 9.25% and that’s a regressive tax and it’s a structural defect because it assumes that you have to continue growth and the state went through – and I left there in part because of that – but the state went through a bitter four years including of legislatures having to run a gauntlet of anti-income tax protesters, rocks being thrown through the windows of the capitol. There is no more volatile issue in American politics today than raising income tax. That is a volatile issue and about 80% - as a matter of fact, I don’t have the specifics David – but our Governmental Studies Center just recently redid their – is anyone there from - Anne, did you see this data where they did the random sample of Illinois residents and they asked them about that, about funding and how do you solve – raise the income tax? It was like 80% were opposed to it. But, we certainly have the wherewithal and the brainpower to help analyze different revenue structures that are both fair and equitable and are broader based. You see, what the Governor has presented is kind of a broadening of the – there’s a gambling tax issue, some fees, passing on fees that are – getting rid of and consolidating boards, so he is looking at the revenue side but he stayed away from corporate or income tax or general sales tax. My nearly elected boss, congratulations to you and thanks for your work in Springfield with your cohorts there.

**K. Miller:** It’s our pleasure to help out. I’m sure it’s too early at this point to tell, but is there any indication of what the proposed tuition increase for this year is going to be?

**President Peters:** No.

**K. Miller:** That’s what I thought.

**President Peters:** The Trustees have been thinking about that all year. There are several things in play right now. There is a bill, a couple of bills – tuition stabilization bills – one called “truth in tuition” something like that – I never would have named it that – that says something like this that an entering freshman, entering new student, has a tuition rate that’s set and that rate then applies to the duration of their degree completion. You know, in the simple case, someone who is to graduate on the four-year plan, all right, the Governor said today – the Governor threw his support to that concept with the following proviso – that he would like increased from year to year to be limited to 5%. All right, so in other words in that scenario, new freshmen comes to NIU and this would begin in 2005 under the current bill that is in the legislature. That rate is set for four years. Then in '06 when the new crop comes in, the new tuition rate could be set at that x plus no more than 5% of x. All right? So that is the Governor’s proposal to the legislation that is working its way through. My view on that is that I’m not opposed to the concept; it’s not a bad concept, because it’s predictable, but I would like a rider that says they won’t cut our base
budget. Which, you know, it puts us in a terrible position then. It also assumes that 5% is enough to take care of the increased costs of higher education that are separate from consumer price index increases or inflation. Like the escalating costs of providing the technology or energy costs or those things that are – or health care costs that get passed down to us. They want us to act like a business, but then they want to tie our hands so we can’t act like a business so, you know, those are the kinds of things I’m going to be really, really fighting for. Now, our Trustees are looking at tuition. We definitely will have a tuition increase this year and we’re debating and discussing what is the fair amount. That will happen between now and June 1.

W. Tolhurst: It strikes me that this plan to cap the increase and guarantee a tuition rate for students at least for their first four years, is likely to be very harmful to students because, you know, you’ll have to raise the tuition a little bit higher to cover what you’re not getting from the folks who are going through at the lower tuition so you’re going to probably have to max out at whatever they let you max out every year and then if a student has to work his or her way through school and happens to take a fifth year which he pays at the going rate for tuition at that point, that student is going to get hit with a really whopping tuition increase from his fourth year to his fifth.

President Peters: Well, you have an assumption there.

W. Tolhurst: Oh?

President Peters: That assumption that the fifth year would be x – entry x plus compounded 5% over four years and it may not be that. It may be only 5%.

W. Tolhurst: Oh, my mistake.

President Peters: I know, like you I had slipped in the rationality on that one. See? The devil is in the details and the details have to be worked out. Okay. Are we exhausted now over this? So, we know where we are in ’03. We’ve got that pretty much fixed. We’re operating. We know the challenge, we’ve got some plans and we’re going to get through this. Okay? Good.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

President Peters: Now, Consent Agenda. Motion to adopt the Consent Agenda? Is there a Consent Agenda? No. Then we’re not going to have a motion.

VI. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

A. FAC to IBHE – Sue Willis – report

President Peters: All right, let’s have our reports. Sue Willis, Faculty Advisory to IBHE.

S. Willis: Yes, Pat Henry was not available to go to the most recent meeting and so I went instead. Let me tell you briefly what went on at that meeting. Let’s see, first some general information. The first one was that Keith Saunders who many of you may recall was the former
Chair of the IBHE is ill. He has primary pulmonary hypertension and so he is resigning from ISU. We sent him a card so I just thought people would want to know that. There is a bill, House Bill 2805, which would put a faculty member on the IBHE. That passed the House; I do not know its status in the Senate.

**President Peters:** That will go through.

**S. Willis:** That’s step one. Let’s see, there was considerable concern expressed about the possibility of a new SURS board in the sense that the Governor has expressed the desire to get rid of the entire present board, appoint all new people plus appoint the chair and the executive director. We were not thrilled about this prospect. Let’s see, all right, let’s see now well, we had a general discussion on the budget which, of course, most of which is irrelevant now. Well, you know, we were trying to figure out what was going on.

**President Peters:** How accurate were you?

**S. Willis:** Well, that’s not the right question. We weren’t trying to guess at what the numbers were, we were just trying to guess at when they were going to give us the numbers and I guess on that we were not so accurate. We were thinking we would hear about FY03 before we heard about FY04, but who knew.

Okay, all right – there was some thinking, and it looks like perhaps this is not the case or maybe it’s too early to tell, that next year’s cuts might be targeting in the sense that they would tell us what to cut. I saw some hints of that in the speech but it was certainly not clear. By the way, I did mean to mention, if you go to the Governor’s web page, the text of his speech is on there. So you can read it yourself and see if you can figure it out. It was pointed out that there was a lot of public misunderstanding of higher education, what we do and how we do it which tends to lead to a lack of sympathy and that this is something that we might consider addressing somehow.

Let’s see, there was also a discussing of the Illinois Articulation Initiative, which has some shortcomings. One is that it is apparently voluntary and so it’s sometimes ignored. Another is that in order to keep it happy, people defining what is required for a particular major tend to keep adding requirements but never taking any away. So if you look at how long it would take you to complete all the courses that are required for a major, it’s very hard to do it in four years because they just keep kind of piling up. So, it may be the FAC will spend a lot of time next year looking into the Articulation Initiative in much more detail.

Let’s see, we drafted a bunch of – we didn’t call them proposals exactly – but statements of concern about SURS and about the budgets and somebody made what I thought was a very good point which is that higher education is not the cause of the budget shortfall in Illinois. In fact, we are in large measure, part of the solution in the sense that a strong higher education system of a healthy economy in the long term for the state.

Okay, so that ends my report.
President Peters: Good. I can just add that there is a new Chair of the IBHE commissioners and that is a person named Jim Kaplan who’s a good fellow. He’s been on our campus. I think his spouse is an alum. He cares a lot about access issues, diversity issues. I know him well. There are I believe five vacancies on the IBHE as we speak. The previous Chair was Steve Lesnik who did a good job for us. He took the time to understand how universities are funded and was very helpful in this latest interaction with the Bureau of the Budget. So, there are big changes there coming. All right.

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

President Peters: We have no reports from B-E but John Wolfskill has an Academic Policy Committee report?

J. Wolfskill: Yes I do. You may recall at the last meeting of the University Council there was a resolution brought to us from the Student Association Senate and that matter was referred to the Academic Policy Committee. Our Committee met just Monday to discuss this issue and I’d like to report briefly on the outcome of our discussion and where the matter lies at this point. The resolution from the Senate I will read to you. After some preambles, it says the following “Be it resolved that the NIU SA Senate asks the NIU Faculty Senate and the Provost to require all departments to provide a current on-line syllabus of every undergraduate course which would include a brief course description, objectives, test schedule and the class requirements of individual professors”. In our discussions, the following issues were brought out. First of all, there’s a question of just how much of a problem is this. What is the scale of the problem? We know in some departments and whole colleges these things are done very well. There’s antidotal evidence that the information is not there in other cases but what the facts are, we don’t know. Generally, I think faculty is receptive to the idea. I don’t think anyone is trying to keep information or withhold it from students; nevertheless, the idea of adding a requirement to faculty may not be well received. There’s some concern if on-line information is provided that the Student Association from their site probably should not post the information but simply link to individual departments or faculty members and that that would be a more appropriate way of getting that information out. Another concern is that specific information, for example, on the organization of the course may not be assigned until the last minute or, if they are, they may not decide themselves on the organization of the course until late in the game. Another concern that was brought out by
one Committee member is that in some cases, the information provided to the class and a course outline is extremely detailed, a tremendous amount of work went into it and there is concern that if this information were made available to the general public, that someone such as a hired gun from the University of Phoenix could simply download it and run with it and have essential free course development research. Then finally, there was speculation that the issue may be more significant at the lower division level than the upper division particularly in regard to general education courses. This is where the big enrollment courses are. Maybe this is where more of a problem is. At the upper division, we would hope the students know the faculty more, are talking with their advisors and they have more information on which to base their schedules and course preferences anyway. So, the end of our discussion is that we recommended to the student representative that they take the issue to the General Education Committee which will meet next week and that is our understanding of what will happen as the next step.

President Peters: All right, any comments or questions? It sounds like there was a thorough discussion of that issue. Bill?

W. Tolhurst: I guess I misunderstood the nature of the resolution. I routinely post my syllabus on line on my blackboard and only the students in my class have access to it. I take it that would not satisfy what the Student Association is requesting? It would avoid a lot of these problems. I have concerns about requiring all faculty to do this because, in fact, I have a colleague who’s a PRP and Luddite and he doesn’t do e-mail. You know, there are issues of academic freedom here as well. So ---

President Peters: So, it sounds as if the General Education Committee is going to look at this as perhaps more suitable to lower division courses? Is the thrust of what I’m hearing?

J. Wolfskill: Yes, that was the outcome of our discussion. To the extent this matter is appropriate, it’s probably more appropriate at that level and that that would be a good body to initiate an initial in-depth exploration of the problem.

President Peters: Okay, yeah?

L. Kamenitsa: If this goes to the General Education Committee, will it eventually come back to us? Will we have another chance to have some faculty governance input on that?

B. Wheeler: General Education – oops, sorry folks. If the General Education Committee were to make a recommendation, that would be forwarded to the Undergraduate Coordinating Council and, as with any significant decision by the Undergraduate Coordinating Council, that would in turn be referred back to the University Council for its consideration.

President Peters: Can I ask, step out of the Chair for a minute, a point of information from the students? What was the bottom line intent? To get some information to the students to help them select courses for registration. Is that basically what we’re after here?

K. Miller: If I may, that was part of the intent.
President Peters: Okay.

K. Miller: It was not, by any means, the whole intent. You know, we’re now functioning in the 21st century here and, you know, technology is a huge part of education. There are computer labs everywhere. I have to do much of my class work on computers and it would just be an added benefit for students. It would provide them with an additional resource if they could access their class’s syllabi on line. The sole intent was not to, you know, just provide extra information on registering, but to help students throughout the year.

President Peters: Right.

K. Miller: And to save paper too.

S. Willis: I guess that does bring up the question of whether syllabi were on line but accessible only to students actually in the class, it sounds like that would at least go some way to satisfy part of your motivation.

K. Miller: That would definitely be a variable outcome of this whole process, you know, if the original intended outcome was not realized but a big problem is, you know, a lot of departments place some syllabi on line. I’ve seen one from one of the departments of which I’m a major, I won’t say which, where half of them are on line, half of them aren’t. Some of them are years old. They’re not updated. The same professor is not even teaching the class anymore. I realize there, you know, it’s difficult to maintain the website but, you know, I just thought we’d offer to help out a little bit.

President Peters: Okay, that was good. That clarification was helpful for the --- okay, John are you done?

G. Resources, Space and Budgets Committee – William Goldenberg, Chair

President Peters: All right, William Goldenberg, Resources, Space and Budget Committee.

W. Goldenberg: No report.

President Peters: No report.

W. Goldenberg: Except that they are all diminishing.

President Peters: They told me you had a sense of humor.

H. Rules and Governance Committee – Susan Mini, Chair

President Peters: Where’s Susan, Rules and Governance?

S. Willis: She is not here and has no report.
I. University Affairs Committee – Richard Orem, Chair

President Peters: Richard?

R. Orem: No report.

President Peters: No report.

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

President Peters: Deborah? Couldn’t be here, no report. Does anyone want to ask any questions about any of that? Okay.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Office Privacy Policy (Page 8)

President Peters: Unfinished Business we have the Office Privacy Policy on page 8.

S. Willis: Okay, let me speak to this a bit. This came to use originally on the 12th of February. We decided that we should ask the Operating Staff Council and the Supportive Professional Staff Council for input since this is a policy for staff as well as for faculty. I did that. Mostly, they had no particular problem with it. There were two exceptions. One was a concern about the computer privacy policy which is separate really and which we could certainly revisit to make sure it’s consistent, although I wrote the original draft of this using that, so they can’t be too inconsistent. It got rewritten by Ken Davidson though so it got changed. The other concern was by somebody in the, I’m going to get the wrong name of the division here, but it’s the Physical Plant – yeah, who was concerned this was going to cost them a lot of money and time because they’re going to have to inform everybody ahead of time when they come to do things and that’s not how they do things now. They usually just – when stuff needs to get done, they go and do it. I talked with him quite a bit on the phone and, I hope, alleviated his concern because we do say “except for routine cleaning, other limited accesses or for emergencies”. In those cases you don’t have to notify and it says “whenever practical, notification will proceed access”. Well, if it’s going to cost a lot of money or a lot of time delays, I would say that’s not practical and I pointed out that if it’s not a limited access, you know, if they’re going to be doing extensive work in your office, they do notify you anyway and they would certainly want to. So I think we sorted it out and agreed that as written, this would not mean they would have to change anything that they’re doing.

My brain has gone slightly dead as to what we had originally propose to do this. I think we were going to refer it to some committee but I forget which one.

President Peters: All right, so it’s unfinished business. We’ve drafted an office policy. I assume it’s been vetted through our legal?

S. Willis: Yeah, Ken wrote a lot of it.
President Peters: It reads like a lawyer wrote it.

S. Willis: It does. It went to the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate approved it and passed it up to us and my recollection is, and I apologize for not looking at it before I came over here. I’ve been a little distracted by all this budget nonsense. In any case, my recollection is we had it on the Consent Agenda to refer to a committee and that it was decided to pass it through the SPS and Operating Staff Councils first.

President Peters: So ---

B. Espe: It was on the Consent Agenda to refer to Rules and Governance and then we took it off the Consent Agenda.

S. Willis: Okay, so now that’s it’s been through SPS and all that I would entertain a motion to once again refer it to Rules and Governance. Sue’s not here to object, so---

President Peters: The motion is - the action is we are going to refer it – that’s the possible action. All right? It’s so moved. Second? Any discussion? All those in favor say aye. Opposed? All right, so the Office Privacy Policy – make sure you get your files in order and mark confidential on them.

The motion passed.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

President Peters: Let’s see where we are. New Business?

A. Committees of the University – discontinue printing of book

President Peters: Committees of the University – discontinue printing of book.

S. Willis: All right, let me address this also. This has to do with the budget of my office which, of course, is non-instructional and, therefore, is a target for reduction and properly so I think given the current climate. In any case, we have been asked to find more money than we already found this year and the only real big expense we have now that we could cut out other than Donna’s salary and my salary is the Committee’s Book. There is not really anything left and so our proposal – we’ve already gone to making the on-line version the official one. We’ve cut down considerably the number that we print. Our proposal is to discontinue printing them entirely pretty much. We would not have a formal printed version. We would keep our archival versions in our office. It would be on the web. You can obviously print anything off the web that you want to so people would certainly be able to print their own copies if they needed them. My recollection from back when we gave a copy to every single faculty member, I think probably 95% of them ended up in the trash or else in one of those piles, you know, that ought to be in the trash but isn’t. In any case, that is our proposal, to discontinue the printing of the book entirely. As I say, we will keep our archival copies in our office. I talked to President Peters
about this and he was very supportive and suggested that if people needed to have a printed copy and were, for some reason, not able to print it out themselves then we would arrange to have a copy printed off the web for them. That is certainly possible.

President Peters: Probably through the Provost’s Office budget.

S. Willis: Of course.

President Peters: Or Human Resources.

S. Willis: I think that was a suggestion. In any case, we felt that even though we don’t have much other choice, as I say except to get rid of either me or Donna which – Donna’s probably more important than I am, but my two months is in the Bylaws so you can’t just take that away. In any case, we thought that it would be wise to have this body endorse that decision.

President Peters: Yes, Pat?

P. Henry: I was just wondering out of idle curiosity, how much would that actually save?

S. Willis: It’s about $5,600, much of which, by the way, is Donna’s overtime. So, she kind of loses in any case but she has to, the way it is now, she has to prepare the thing twice because the printed version is different from the on-line version and so it’s a lot of work for her just to make it look nice. So this way, she gets her evenings and weekends back in the fall. As I said, if you’re wondering about the cookies, or what’s left of the cookies, our annual budget for refreshments now is only about $1,500. So even if we cut them completely out, that’s just barely a quarter of what we’d save by just not doing one version of the Committee’s Book and have that be on line. Yes, Carol?

C. Minor: I move that we discontinue the printing of the Committee’s Book.

President Peters: There’s a motion and second to discontinue the hard copy and distribution but it will be maintained electronically and printable. All those in favor say aye. Opposed? We just saved – actually, we didn’t save ----

The motion passed.

IX. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

President Peters: Comments from the floor for the good of the order. Yes?

J. Engstrom: John Engstrom from Accountancy. After the IBHE, nobody asked for questions and I got really concerned about the SURS thing. I wonder if we know any more about that than they knew at that time and it seems like this is really something we ought to lobby about.

President Peters: I did not detect in my brief scan and before I came over and I don’t have the whole budget book, and I monitored the Board commissioned section of the Governor’s budget
message and I didn’t see it there. However, I do know that behind those actions that were taken today by the Governor, there’s a series of other consolidations that he didn’t have time to get to. It may be in that category, but we are vigilant and watching that and, you know, I think the SURS system is run pretty and efficiently and I can’t speak to the other state systems but, I mean, from the point of view of the way the Governor and the Governor’s budget people are approaching the re-doing of state government, certainly that is a logical move for them but it does have implications for us and we’re watching that issue. Actually, on this one – the tracking of legislation – Ken Zehnder is in charge of tracking. We have kind of a spreadsheet of all the bills that are out there and whether we have a position on them and where they are and so it’s sort of a, I can’t say this is a sophisticated bill tracking system, but if you ever need or have a question, you can call Ken Zehnder and we can track it down for you in a hurry. The other thing is the new legislative service, website, for the General Assembly, is quite good at bill tracking but you have to get up to speed on it. But we’ll monitor that. Yeah, Pat?

P. Henry: Just on that same subject, excuse me, I got an e-mail from the FAC President who is at U of I and they – the U of I AAUP sent out an alert on this issue as well and is urging faculty to – it is, I think, House Bill 3511 that has – concerning as they say the fiduciary integrity of SURS and also is involved in this – the way in which the Board is composed and they’re quite concerned. They think there’s a lot of potential problems here if the way the Board is set up is changed and that there’s – it is hoped that an amendment would be introduced to take the pension systems out of this bill and maintain the status quo as the basic way they are looking at it.

President Peters: I think it’s really a very important issue because there’s a point where consolidation results in a group losing input and influence over a set of policies that are very unique to them. A good example I think, is the fact that when it comes to negotiation of our dental plan, because we’re all kind of lumped in together, our own unique needs sort of get pushed aside and I would fear that this would be the same if there was a consolidated retirement board. Yeah?

J. Engstrom: The concern I had was as much not having staggered terms and the Governor appointing them all at once being totally submissive to what the Governor wants them to do. There’s a lack of independence that would come from that.

President Peters: Part of reorganization is also control.

J. Engstrom: Yeah.

President Peters: Yeah?

R. Miller: Do you hear anything else about a super-board being created to oversee the IBHE and the College Community Board or Community College Board?

President Peters: I’ve heard less and it’s speculation. Now we’re 19th hole talk. I’ve had less about super-board. I’ve heard some talk about perhaps consolidation of things like the student system, ISAC, Community College, IBHE and IBHE has so many complex issues. I’m not
saying it’s not on the table, but I think it’s been pushed back for another time and another place. But we’re monitoring it; we’re monitoring it. Right now, I think you have an IBHE that has a lot of vacancies and we’ll see what their role is going to be in the future but we’ve heard – I think there’s a compelling need to have more of a seamless P-12, P-16, P-20 educational system. Now, how do you accomplish that? Is that through a super-board or through better coordinating links but, you now, you can walk the halls of Springfield and hear about any kind of construction rumor that you can image. I’ve heard less about the super-board. Everything was this budget message. Now the arguments in Springfield will be more macro. They’ll be about well, does this revenue thing take precedent over something else and is the Governor’s revenue estimates too positive. So, it’s going to be at that level and a lot of these other things will probably not be dealt with at this point in time. Right now there’s no – the IBHE budget was cut 10% and it’s pretty much the way all code agencies were handled. We’re not a code agency; they are. They’re under more direct control of the Governor.

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

President Peters: All right, we done? Adjourn.