I. CALL TO ORDER

President Peters: If everyone will take their seats. Am I on? I’m on. It’s like karaoke. I’d like to call the January 26, 2005 meeting of the University Council to order.

The meeting was called to order at 3.07 P.M.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

President Peters: The first item of business is the adoption of the agenda for today. You should have at your chair, two walk-in items. One is a report from Patricia Henry on the Faculty Advisory Committee to IBHE – am I off again – I’m waving in and out. The other item is a report from University Affairs under Richard Orem’s report on the Ombudsman Office. Are we all right? You got a problem. Houston, we have a problem. All right, I’ll talk for a minute. Is there a motion to accept the agenda? Second? All those in favor say aye. Opposed? We have an agenda.

The agenda was approved as amended. D. Smith-Shank made the motion; C. Minor seconded.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 8, 2004 MEETING

(Pages 3-8)

The minutes were approved as written.

IV. PRESIDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS
President Peters:  Welcome back.  First let me indicate that we got through the winter break without any physical plant anomalies.  We did come back to some snowy weather.  Hopefully, I do believe we did save money on energy.  We’ll have to wait and see how much that is but it was the right thing to do.  I want to thank the physical plant.  Parking lots and walkways seem reasonably clear given the amount of snow and, you know, when you have the big city like we do, you always worry about making sure that the walks are salted and everything and I think we did a really, really good job and so Eddie, you can thank your people for that.

I want to talk a little bit about any number of general things at the university.  Particularly, I want to talk about the context of budgeting and legislation this year and try to look into the crystal ball and see where we may end up and try to highlight a few non-budgetary issues that are out there that we will continue to monitor and then take questions at the end of the meeting if you have questions.

First of all, this is the time of year when we’re waiting on the State of the State Address by the Governor and to get a feel for priorities and also to get a feel for what we might expect in terms of budget.  The revenues that were projected from the state sources for FY05 are on target.  In other words, last year’s projected of what would be coming in in sales and income and fees and excise taxes and so forth are on target but they fall short and they fall short even of matching liabilities for the annual contribution to the various state employee pension plans.  So I guess the good news is revenues are on target, they’re not robust but they’re not meeting obligations.  All right.  Recently, you’ve probably been reading within the past few weeks or months, there’s been a court ruling against the fee increases that were put in place, particularly business taxes filed by the State Chamber of Commerce and the court ruled that they were unconstitutional and that could dramatically effect the current shortfall and that’s being appealed as we speak to the State Supreme Court but legal analysts that I know indicate that this is pretty airtight; it’s unconstitutional.  Fees are specific to a particular event or need and they’re not to go into the general fund for general purposes.  So we’ll have to wait and see on that.

On the legislative side, there’s still a coalition between Speaker Madigan and Leader Tom Cross and Leader Watson versus the Governor and Senator Jones so what that means is, if that holds constant, that means another long extended, overtime legislative session.  As a matter of fact, there really is no legislative session on budgeting anymore.  This has just been one continual rhythm of not being able to get the problem fixed so, you know, one year’s problem laps over to another and that’s what we’re seeing right now.  I’ll talk specifically about the university IBHE budget in a minute.  There are some changes in the legislative committees.  The Senate has formed a new higher education committee which is interesting.  Membership on that has yet to be announced.  It may have been announced but as of this – I just checked as I left the office – and I’m not aware who’s going to be on that.  That could be very important.  The House Higher Education Appropriations Committee also will have a new chairperson.  The former chair, Ricca Slone, a democrat out of Peoria was defeated in November and so there’s some jockeying now as to who’s going to take that over.  That’s an important position to us.  You remember for years Dave Wirsing was the ranking minority member on that committee but we think there are two possibilities.  Both of them are friends to higher education and particular to NIU.  It will be a democrat because democrats have majority in both the House and the Senate.  All right, so the
legislature is organizing itself. As far as legislation is concerned, the FY05 capital budget, buildings and our big ticket item is Stephens was never acted on and has yet to be acted on. Now, the problem there is that we’ll see no action on that because there’s a whole series of existing obligations and priorities that the Governor never took care of and, I don’t know, there are 800 projects and there’ll be no action on the new capital until those are politically taken care of and we have a couple of dribs and drabs in that list of 800 but that’s holding everything up plus the fact that there’s no money so, but that never stopped government. So you see, we don’t have a ’05 budget and we’re trying to build the ’06 budget. Am I making everybody happy? Another issue that we’re tracking is House Bill 750. That’s left over from last year and will be reintroduced and that bill amends the state funding formula for school districts with an income tax/property tax swap. That’s a high profile issue and it will get some attention. I don’t know if it will get solved but I’m all for property tax relief and better schools but that will have an impact on our budget because that means local school districts will get state general revenue money and guess where that general revenue money will come from? Tax increase? No, it’ll come from reallocation. So, we’re tracking that one very carefully. We don’t oppose aiding schools but we’re concerned about the impact that would have on us.

There are a couple of other things that are of interest as well. We’re going into a gubernatorial election cycle and that usually slows some things down. In all of that, we put a budget together – the IBHE put a budget together, that will be approved at their upcoming meeting and the good news is that for the first time in a couple of years, the IBHE is proposing an increase in our base budget. Remember last year, we were lucky and fought a hard battle to keep our ’05 budget flat and equal to ’04 when a cut of 5% was being proposed. We won that battle, hard fought, and now we do see that the IBHE has gone in for an increased budget for us to the Governor and it is an increase, when it’s all said and done, it’s an increase of about 1.5% and I’ll talk about in just a little specificity in a moment. Now, remember where we are in the process. We’ve helped the IBHE build a budget; we’ve put requests in beginning in July, documenting our needs. IBHE has hearings with us. We went to Springfield and talked to them, then they create a budget and we react to their budget and that budget is passed by the IBHE. That will be next week and then it goes to the Governor and then the Governor decides what to do with that and then it goes to the legislature for action. So you see, we’re at the recommendation step but if you don’t get a positive recommendation from IBHE, you’re already in trouble. So if it was flat, or a negative or a reduction, we’d already be in trouble. So I look upon that as a positive development. It’s certainly not up to what we need but it is a positive development and there are people who worked very hard to make that a positive development. Given the context of the budgeting that I’ve just given you, I would say the majority of the money, outside of general revenue, to us is going to go into student aid which is appropriate, the MAP, the Monetary Award Program. That program is about 361 million dollars and, you know, if you look at high school graduation rates, they have been increasing and will continue to increase with a couple of dips in the next ten years but that means more students want to attend university and if they’re eligible, based on need, they can quality for the Monetary Award Program. It hasn’t been increasing fast enough to meet all the demand for two reasons; the number of students who want aid and then the amount of aid that can cover a reasonable part of tuition and fees and all of that because obviously, across the whole country, tuition has been increasing. The increase is being requested of about 22.4 million and part of that is state, 18.7, and then there’s a federal match on that of about 3.7 million. So that will be a – I think that’s welcome news for parents and students. I don’t know if
it will go far enough, but I think that’s welcome news. As far as the general fund support to public universities, that total budget is 1.3 billion to all of us. That’s just our general fund, you know, it’s not community colleges, it’s not MAP awards, it’s just our operating and personal services budget. The requested increase there for all of us is about 14.7 million and the way that tracks out and the way it’s directed, the bulk of that increase is in the personal services budget which is about 1.5% and the expectation there is that that will go towards salary and will require some sort of match on our part which we do every year so, going into this, if this holds, it looks like we will have some salary increase dollars in that budget. I won’t go over the community college budgets but a couple of other things that are of interest that have an impact on the way we do our business and money that has helped us do things that are important, maybe not essential, but permit us to do helpful and good things and that is the grant program, the HICA program. Many of you may have had grants or applied for grants. There’s a general funds decrease of 17.8 million dollars in that or 45% in grant programs administered by the BHE. The principle hit is 10.3 million in reduction in health services education grants and about 4.8 million cut in the state matching grant program that provides seed money for attracting federal and corporate research dollars. You know, there was a pool of funds you could use for matching for equipment grants and so forth. You can look at the budget, that 17.8 million; you know if you take a look at the budget, you can tell you right away what happened there. That has been reallocated to MAP funding. If you look at the two numbers they’re the same. That’s what’s happened.

For your interest, for those of us who are closer to retirement and toward the middle of our careers, 328 million in state funding for the State University Retirement System (SURS) has been provided. That’s a mandated increase of 55 million dollars or 20% over ‘05 levels. That represents the amount certified by SURS as necessary to meet the statutory requirements for funding in ’06. So, again remember how I started this out, I said the increase in revenue that’s coming in is not even equal for paying for the mandated increase in pension funds across all the state pension systems. It’s a train wreck folks and there’s a commission out there working. Steve Cunningham monitors that commission. We watch that everyday because it’s a little like the Social Security debate at the federal level, I mean, how can you get your hands actuarially on this but we’re monitoring it.

Then finally, 350 million dollars has been requested for capital improvements consisting of 29 projects and really what they’ve done is taken the ’05 capital budgets that we all put in and moved them forward to ’06. We sort of lost a year.

All right, so that will be approved or action will be taken on that by the IBHE this week. Again, I know that’s probably more detail than you wanted and it’s certainly less detail than is contained in the budgets but I do think it represents a turnaround because it’s not flat and it’s not a reduction. I think the IBHE leadership has worked very hard and they’ve kept us informed so I’m pleased with that.

Just a couple of other things, you know, on the positive side. Our private fundraising for the Alumni and Visitor Center is at 90% of our goal. We’re closing in on that and it’s very, very good. Obviously, we had a good trip to Silicon Valley and we had a – I was amazed at the number of California alumni who were at our tent. It was amazing. I think there must have been
a hundred or a hundred and fifty alumni from California and I know the students are shaking their heads. They were out there with us. We must have had a thousand people in our tailgate tent that held 500. Right? And the weather was lousy and the game was great and everybody’s ready for next year. I’m proud of Joe Novak and the team.

Okay, with that report I think what we’ll do is move into our agenda. I forgot to approve the minutes. So let’s do that now. If you look on pages 3-8, we have the minutes of the December 8 meeting. First of all, are there any additions or corrections? Yeah?

**J. Stephen:** Not for the minutes. I have a question for you. I’ll wait.

**President Peters:** All right, hold on. Let’s do this and then the question. Motion to approve the minutes of December 8. Second? All those in favor say aye. All right, we have minutes. Okay, now your question.

**J. Stephen:** How certain are we of this proposed fee increase for next year and how committed are you to keeping it at 3% or below?

**President Peters:** What fee increase are you talking about?

**J. Stephen:** The one that was in the newspaper today.

**President Peters:** The what?

**J. Stephen:** The one that was in the newspaper today.

**President Peters:** You got me. I don’t know. Are these student fees you’re talking about?

**J. Stephen:** Yes, that’s what I mean.

**President Peters:** With students fees there’s a process we go through and I think that process is just beginning. Recommendations come up to me and we have what, ten or twelve different kinds of fees. We set fees for room and board, athletic fee ---

**J. Stephen:** Buses and everything like that.

**President Peters:** Right and I always say every year that I’d like to keep the overall to 3%. One fee may be 10%; one fee may not increase at all but overall I always say that. Is that what they’re talking about?

**J. Stephen:** Yes.

**President Peters:** Dr. Williams?

**E. Williams:** I just want to comment and I think the President has made it clear both this year and in prior years, of his commitment to keep those numbers down and to keep within that 3%
sort of target but there are fees that are part of this system that we have absolutely no control over.

J. Stephen: Oh I know that, but the departments and such.

E. Williams: I’m sorry?

J. Stephen: Within departments and things like that.

E. Williams: Yes, it is our objective and sometimes we’re able to totally do that within a particular area. Sometimes it’s the overall number that ends up within that range but that’s our goal and if we don’t try to adhere to that then we will have a problem but that is the objective of what we’re doing.

J. Stephen: Okay, but when asked, I can say you’re committed to trying to keep it at 3%.

E. Williams: Oh, absolutely, I think our students are well aware of that and the process that we go through is one that is total involvement of the university community, especially the students, at every level of recommendation from the committee up. Then the President meets with the student leadership to review all of the recommendations that have been brought up to his level as one more opportunity to review the overall aggregate of what’s been proposed. So we try in every possible way to limit the increase, to have full involvement and discussion of all of the issues and the needs and so forth and sometimes the needs do outweigh the objective of trying to keep fees within the 3% and I did mention that there are a number of fees that we do not have control over such as the bus fee which is a contract, the health insurance fee which is a contract and so forth but within that context, we work very, very hard and very closely with the students to try to minimize those increases.

J. Stephen: Thank you President Peters. Thank you Dr. Williams.

President Peters: I’ve never seen a more thorough process. By the time it gets to me, it’s been pretty much chewed over amongst students and administrators and others and I think it’s a good process. Last year I rejected a fee as too high and it was needed, but I just felt it was outside the bounds of what we could do and, you know, some fees go years without an increase and then – they’re like toll fees but – get your I-PASS – maybe we ought to have a Huskie I-PASS. Every time you walk into a classroom. Listen, I will entertain any creative idea to get us some more money. All right.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

President Peters: Consent Agenda, we have one item. Is there a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda? A second? All those in favor say aye. Opposed?

A. 18.32 Deans and the Dean of the University Libraries – see e-mail from Jerry Zar – refer to Rules and Governance (Page 9)
The motion was made by C. Minor and seconded by D. Smith-Shank.

VI. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS, AND STANDING COMMITTEES

President Peters: All right, we do have reports. Our first is Patricia Henry on the Faculty Advisory Committee to IBHE.

A. FAC to IBHAE – Patricia Henry – report – walk-in

P. Henry: Thank you. There’s a walk-in here that has a couple of points concerning last Friday’s meeting at Governor’s State University at University Park. The discussion sounds very familiar actually after several of these and we’re still very concerned about the budget situation and how it is affecting the quality of education. These are the points of discussion that were brought up with President Fagan and Provost Keys. They in particular were discussing the fact that we have to fight to maintain quality. That very morning, I believe, Sylvia Manning, the UIC President had been commenting on NPR about the latest tuition hike and how this was seen as necessary to maintain quality and I would also have to be sort of clear about the fact that damage is being done when the budget cuts happen like this. They also spoke to the issue of needing a state-wide coalition of presidents, faculty, students, and especially business interests to help make the case for higher education to various powers that be. We had some information discussion with Don Sevener and Ed Duffy. They are, along with the Executive Director Tom Lamont, strategizing ways to advocate for higher education. One of the particular issues I think that needs to get stressed is how, indeed, K-12 is important but that higher education is integrally part of the whole education system and that we need to make a noise about how we’re as important and as tied into the overall quality of education as they are. I mean, it’s good that there’s going to be, if there is in fact, improvement there because that will mean less remedial stuff that we have to do and likewise most primary and secondary school teachers in Illinois are products of Illinois higher education, usually the public universities so there’s definitely links that have to be made and we just have to keep educating people them. One mention was made of Eliot Regenstein who’s the Governor’s Director of School Reform who does have an interest in higher ed as well as K-12 and the IBHE is working with him. We may try to meet with him as well.

As you hear from President Peters, the present budget doesn’t show much improvement and it is likely that it will just continue to get bad in terms of the share of health costs and also, of course, the problem with the pension under-funding.

We had a brief discussion also with Representative William Davis who is a democrat from the 30th District and is a member of the Higher Education Appropriations Committee. He represents the area around Governor’s State University which is basically south suburban Chicago and he was very interested in listening to us in the matter how truth in tuition is not altogether fully understood in terms of the impact that this has on universities. He did speak to the issue that legislators see affordability and completion of degrees, and diversity of faculty are issues that they are fairly intent about. We tried, in turn, to point out this is all tied to money and, in particular, the matter of assessment taking resources. There’s a little note that that Ken Andersen who’s a member of the FAC who’s on the PPA Committee says that they are looking at ways to
sort of try to simplify the reporting process. Representative Davis also mentioned House Bill 750 as being something that we should keep an eye on. I have a typo here by the way on the second line I say “to general more income for the state” and it should be “to generate more income for the state”. This may be smoke and mirrors but he also said that since it was targeted mainly at K-12, that that’s not a done deal and that there could be ways in which higher education could be included as well and that we should keep looking at it. I’m not quite sure how that will work but we’ll try to keep an eye on it.

Finally, with regard to the pension fund, the Advocacy and Public Policy Committee drafted a resolution – this is the rough draft whereas:

“Because the financial problems in the SURS system are the result of long-term failures to adequately fund that system (not fun- so not fun, I typed this rather rapidly); and Because the recommendations of the Governor’s Pension Commission are all focused on reducing faculty benefits, especially for potential hires (and this is indeed one of things that we’re afraid is going to create an underclass); and

Because it is never desirable to create an underclass of faculty;

Therefore, the FAC/IBHEA resolves that the Commission’s solution should be rejected in favor of real, long-term, constitutional and full funding to all public educational retirement systems, in order to protect the quality of higher education.”

So, for what it’s worth, that’s what the FAC is supporting and we’ll pass that on to the IBHE. I should mention, I actually forgot to add this, a couple of other things that are going on and this may sound a little funny, but we think it would actually be a good idea to come up with some slogans. We’re in sort of a war of media attention and higher education often just gets lumped into, you know, goofy professors who only work 15 hours a day – or 15 hours a week – and the person who suggested this pointed out that there is a bumper sticker that said “if you can read this, thank a teacher” and perhaps we need something like “if you’re a teacher, thank a professor”. I mean to try to make some sort of connection. I’m not sure that’s totally snappy. My personal favorite is “higher education; cheaper than prison” was seen as a little dark. It's a little dark, a little negative but if you come up with some and students especially. I think part of making the case really needs to come from students and how these things are affecting you and the legislators will listen to you more than they will to use so I think if you can generate some interest among your students as to something short and snappy, a little sound bite, it wouldn’t hurt.

Finally, as President Peters pointed out, the IBHE budget is available on the website and it has a long way to go.

The last item that I didn’t actually include here but some of you may have seen in the Tribune on January 10, there was an article on how Virginia colleges are looking to trade “Funds for Freedom” is the headline, where three schools in Virginia are offering to surrender a portion of public funding for power to set tuition control, major building projects, manage employees salaries and benefits – oops, sorry – I mean, this is actually the case in other universities as well,
I think, Colorado, Florida and Texas, where public higher education is essentially, rather than just fighting over nickels and dimes from the state legislature, is proposing that they be cut loose from that and be given the power to raise tuition. Presumably, this would also involve raising public aid as well but just cut loose from the legislature in general. Myself, I don’t find that a terribly appealing prospect but it is something that’s around.

That’s all I have to say.

**President Peters:** I like your bumper sticker idea.

**P. Henry:** You do huh?

**President Peters:** I think we ought to have a contest.

**P. Henry:** Go for it, yeah, absolutely.

**President Peters:** By the way, on the pension thing, various groups – steering committees and so forth – really someone in the state who is up on this is Steve Cunningham. I mean Steve has invested at our, you know, direction in understanding what is going on with the pension funds and he’s been sought after by other universities to explain what’s going on so he is a tremendous resource for us and keeps up with this on a daily basis. It’s taking a good bit of his time but it’s too important not to. Any questions for Pat on her report? Okay, thank you Pat.

We have no reports from BOT Academic Affairs, Finance, Legislative Audit. Paul has a BOT report in general.

B. **BOT Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Personnel Committee** – Joseph “Buck” Stephen and Ferald Bryan – no report

C. **BOT Finance, Facilities and Operations Committee** – Paul Stoddard and Xueshu Song – no report

D. **BOT Legislation, Audit, and External Affairs Committee** – Donna Smith and Shey Lowman – no report

E. **BOT** – Paul Stoddard – report (Page 10)

**P. Stoddard:** Thank you. The Board of Trustees met last December 9 in the brand new Board of Trustees’ room in the newly reopened Altgeld Hall. They seemed to like it a lot; it is a nice room.

A couple of highlights; the report itself is on page 10. The chair announced that NIU has taken a leading role in reviving and expanding the neutron therapy program at Fermilab. This is a program that had been kind of in the experimental stage for several years then, due to a lack of funding, it went dormant for a little while and we stepped in and got it going again. This is a lab to use neutron therapy in the aid of certain cancer patients and other patients with certain
inoperable conditions so this is a very exciting thing. We’ve hired somebody, A.Z. Diaz, to administer this program so it looks like we’re in good shape with that.

Under Action Items, the Board of Trustees authorized several expenditures. Almost $700,000 for internet conduits in various residence halls on campus. Also another almost $400,000 for renovation of the Grant South Tutoring Center. So that’s nearly a million dollars in renovations and improvements for student housing regions.

Finally under Action Items, former SSRI, downtown DeKalb at Third and Locust, is being renamed the William R. Monat Building in order of Dr. Monat’s contributions to NIU.

Under Information Items we have a report from Kathy Buettner pretty much echoing what the President has said, that the upcoming budget and fiscal year look to have some interesting problems that need to be solved. Also, something of interest I think to the community at large, is a federal proposal to start tracking students by Social Security Number. This has been mentioned her and I think in the Senate once or twice before. Basically, I think this is an outgrowth of Homeland Security who would like to keep track of students and where they’re going. It has some potentially positive consequences for articulation, cases where we have students come in – transfer students who transfer at various stages in their academic career and who gets credit for teaching them essentially – has been an issue and this will help ease that. Of course, the negative aspect of it is the privacy issue for the students. Social Security Numbers were never really meant to be used as ID so this is a bit of a problem perhaps.

Also, part of an ombudsman funding bill included a mandate for all schools that receive federal funding to offer some sort of program on the US Constitution on September 17, the anniversary of the Constitution. Whether or not that’s a Constitutional mandate, I’m not sure but we could probably spend time every September 17 talking about it and that would fulfill the requirement.

There’s a report on the Convocation Center which is doing very well. In its first year it hosted 175 events, grossed over 5 million dollars, netted $900,000. The second year those numbers went up to 199 events, 6.1 million gross and $961,000 net. My understanding is that those profits go on reserve for long-term projects and that’s all I have. Yes, Buck?

J. Stephen: Having worked in a print shop and voted against a union there and voted against a union here, I’m sort of wondering how the collective bargaining for the two – for the Teamsters and the I.U.O.E. did as compared to the rest of us who get merit raise increases.

E. Williams: Unfortunately, I don’t have those exact percentages but I will tell you this, what we try to do in negotiations is limit all of the increases to the same decision rules that are established for governing all of the increases. Now, there are some exceptions to that. Those exceptions are when they include some kind of step plan or whatever but I’ll be very happy, if you’d like, to share that information with you. I do not know the details of these just off hand.

J. Stephen: Can you make an estimate if it above 3.4%?
E. Williams: I really cannot. I can say that again, probably the base was right at 3.0 or 3.2 but then when you consider steps and those kinds of things it probably exceeded that.

J. Stephen: Okay, thank you.

E. Williams: Much like, you know, sometimes we have increases for faculty that are not part of the base either.

J. Stephen: Like retention?

E. Williams: That is correct.

President Peters: Let me comment just a little bit on Bill Monat. I had a recommendation from some faculty who had taught with Bill Monat and suggested we do something for Bill. They told me I’m not supposed to say Rice Hotel. To me, the Rice Hotel is the Rick Hotel but apparently it was a place where homeless people used to – I don’t know - anyway, the SSRI Building. We checked it out and Bill was honored and what we’re going to do when the weather warms up and Bill is not in Florida, we’re going to have a public, you know, when the flowers start blooming which is what, July, we’re going to have a nice little ceremony honoring him and get a plaque for the building and so forth. We were very pleased to do that. I wish I had thought of that. Okay? All right, anymore questions for Paul? Yeah?

P. Henry: I seem to recall when I first came here there was a constitution test that students had to take. Do they still have to – a test on the constitution? They used to have it at the university.

President Peters: I’m not sure about that but I know how to assure very little attendance on constitution day and that’s for me to take my old notes from American Politics on the constitution and have me deliver them. That’s numbing. Okay. As far as the Board of Trustees, you should know that we have a vacancy and have had a vacancy on the Board for over a year and we have three members who’s appointment is up but no indication as to whether they will be reappointed or replaced and we’re not expecting word and we’re really not part of that process nor should we be. They will continue to serve until replaced or reappointed and are happy to do that – to continue to serve. Maybe they’re happy to be replaced. I don’t know. Let’s see, where are we? We have a report from Rules and Governance, Carole.

C. Minor: First I have an announcement. Rules and Governance Committee at its meeting next Monday at 3:00 will consider – will begin consideration of the stop-the-tenure-tract policy so I’d like to ask all the members of the Committee to bring that information from the packet that you received for the December meeting. I would also like to request other members of the University
Council to read this policy and give us your suggestions. I’ve already received one report from Faculty Senate Committee to which this was sent. There are several people who have voiced concerns about this policy but not any suggestions about how we can address their concerns so we would be most interested in hearing both your concerns and how you suggest we could address your concerns as we consider this policy. Thank you.

1. **Deletion** of Student Affairs Professional Staff Advisory Committee from the Committee of the University **ACTION ITEM** (Pages 11-12)

C. Minor: The second thing is that the Committee proposes the deletion of the Student Affairs Professional Staff Advisory Committee as was requested by Vice President Hemphill. The Rules and Governance Committee consulted with the SPS Council, the Operating Staff Council and both concur that this should happen. This is on page 11 and 12 in your packet. The rationale is that the function of this Committee was to hear grievances and that function is covered by the Faculty/Staff Grievance Policy that was passed last spring so I move that we delete the Student Affairs Professional Staff Advisory Committee from the Committees Book.

President Peters: All right, so that’s a motion from the Committee?

C. Minor: Um-huh.

President Peters: Discussion?

L. Kamenitsa: Carole on page 12 as I look over what the duties are supposed to be, one of them is to review and rank sabbatical requests. Is the Grievance Committee going to do that or are such things not filed? What’s going to happen?

C. Minor: I would defer that question to Vice President Hemphill.

B. Hemphill: At this point, whenever we have any type of sabbatical request, that is automatically going to go to the Provost’s office so we’re really taking the approach of using the same mechanism that we currently have in place in the Provost’s office for any of those requests because it will have to be signed off by Provost Legg as the final step within that process.

L. Kamenitsa: Okay, thank you.

President Peters: Bill?

W. Tolhurst: If there’s more than one sabbatical request, is there any prioritizing or anything like that or do you just forward them on up as equal then?

B. Hemphill: No, what we will do is I will have the opportunity to review those and have some kind of conversation with our executive group basically looking at some of the criteria that has been established for sabbaticals at the university and then at that point, they will be passed on to the Provost’s office.
President Peters: Ivan?

I. Legg: UCPC asks for prioritization.

President Peters: So it’s built into the process?

W. Tolhurst: So somebody has to review it and it would be the Executive Committee?


C. Minor: That’s the end of our report.

President Peters: Any questions for Carole? All right, Richard, University Affairs.

The action item passed.

I. University Affairs Committee – Richard Orem, Chair – report – walk-in

R. Orem: You’ve got the report there that was a walk-in. The Committee was charged with this review in October at the October 6 meeting of the University Council. One of the first questions that was asked by one of the members was “why are we doing this” and I said it was in the Bylaws so there’s the Bylaw right there, 19.41 Quadrennial Evaluation of the Office of the Ombudsman and we did – we interviewed the Ombudsman. He provided a report for us and then we charged members of the Committee to go to their various groups and get feedback regarding the perceptions of the office and after hearing back from very few people, and the only responses we did get were very positive, we came up with three recommendations that are there. The first one is to retain the Office of the Ombudsman in its current form and that’s largely because there seems to be a general perception on the campus that this office is performing effectively. The second recommendation is to review the office every eight years or at the time of next vacancy in the office whichever comes first so this would be a change that require a change in the Bylaws rather than reviewing the office. Right now the office is reviewed every four years but the office holder is reviewed I believe it’s every three years and we didn’t see the – I think there’s - probably because there’s general satisfaction with the way the office is being held, we didn’t see the need to be doing this but we decided to put a cap on that. That’s why we said 8 years which tends to conform to how many of the academic units on campus are reviewed anyway. So that’s the more substantive recommendation that we’re making at this time. To review the office every 8 years or at the time of the next vacancy in the office, whichever comes first. Then the third one is to invite the Ombudsman to provide an annual oral report to University Council to inform the Council and increase awareness of the office to the NIU community. The Ombudsman already provides the written report but it’s attached in an electronic file. It’s found on the University Council’s website but there’s always probably a need to provide a little bit more opportunity for the office to make their case to the university community and so therefore, we’re saying that perhaps one thing would be to give the Ombudsman a chance to provided a brief oral report annually and then we also suggest that the report that he shared with us be also attached to the minutes for this meeting as part of our report. So those are our recommendations.
President Peters: Before we ask for questions, I believe what we need to do is to accept the report and then it has built in then referrals to the various committees if there are Bylaw changes. I think that would be the action item. Okay, that said, discussion? Questions? Yeah?

W. Tolhurst: I can understand why we’d want to review the continuing need for this office once it was first established, but if every time it’s reviewed, it’s obvious that we need to retain the office, why do we need to keep doing the review of the office as opposed to the office holder? Are there other offices that we review in this way apart from the office holder?

R. Orem: Well, I can’t speak for the entire community but I think there’s a sense – there’s a history here with the Office of the Ombudsman and it has gone through some changes. I think initially there was probably a lot more concern about whether or not we should have an office and there was one response to our requests from one person who said we don’t see a need for this. So I think there’s still perhaps a question out there in the community shared by a small number of people that many of the things that are done within the office can be done elsewhere, but that’s not generally shared by I think the majority of the community. That’s the sense that we got as the Committee.

President Peters: All right, does that answer your question?

W. Tolhurst: Yup.

President Peters: Now, in normal administrative matters, I’m not talking about academic departments or units now, one continually looks at administrative units to say, okay, are they configured properly, are they still serving the function for which they were established and then, you know, they usually morph or incrementally change sometimes, you know, go out of existence and it’s in the normal course of things, but ombudsman offices are peculiarly embedded in that same governance and need a certain amount of independence and protection and needs do change and, you know, ombudsman offices across the country have either gone away or come back into existence on regular cycles so I think it’s appropriate that the University Council systematically look at this periodically like eight years on a cycle because it is embedded in the shared governance. That would be my view. All right?

J. Stephen: Move to accept the motion.

President Peters: All right, there’s a move and a second to accept the report and all the implications implied with that. All those in favor say aye. Opposed? Thank you for your report. I know doing this report has taken some time. All right, Elections and Legislative Oversight, Sally?

J. Elections and Legislative Oversight Committee – Sally Webber, Chair – report

S. Webber: This is a very short report. The University Council elections are underway. The ballots are due next Wednesday at noon. Please encourage your colleagues to vote. The main thing I need to say is I need the members of the Elections and Legislative Oversight Committee
to stay for a few minutes at the end so we can determine whether we’re going to count these votes next Thursday or Friday. Thank you.

President Peters: Thank you. Any questions?

President Peters: Any Unfinished Business? Carole?

C. Minor: I had a question for the motion we just passed. You said there’s an implied referral to committees? Could we specify what committees these three recommendations are going to?

R. Orem: Basically, since suggestion #2 about the timing of the review of the office requires a change in Bylaws, as you suspected, this is coming your way, yes. Rules and Governance.

C. Minor: I’d just like to have that specified.

R. Orem: Yes, that would be it.

C. Minor: So basically, that would be the only committee referral to come out of this report?

R. Orem: Yes. It just sounds better if we try to spread it around.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

President Peters: Now any Unfinished Business?

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

President Peters: New Business?

P. Stoddard: As I think most of us are aware by now, a predecessor mine in this office, Dan Griffiths, passed away over the break and I think it’s fitting and appropriate that we take a moment in this meeting on record to acknowledge that and thank him again for his service to the community, academic and administrative at Northern and I think – the Senate did this and I’d like to see a parallel motion from this body – that the President and I draft a letter to Dan’s family essentially expressing our gratitude for his service to NIU. We’d like that as a motion from this body again to get it on the record.

President Peters: All those in favor say aye? On behalf of the University and the Council, I sent an appropriate memorial bouquet to the services and it’s a tragedy for us. I had grown very fond of Dan because he was the Executive Secretary my first year and my relationship with him continued. I talked to him three or four times a year in his new position and it’s to Marquette and for the Griffiths family and it’s a loss for NIU so I’ll be pleased to join you in this letter.

Any other New Business or anything for the good of the order? This is my time of the year to be off to Washington. I hope there’s still money left. It’s safe now, the inauguration is over. I can go now and so I’ll be trolling as best I can. Keep warm. Meeting’s adjourned.
R. Orem made the motion; J. Newman-Ryan seconded.

IX. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

X. INFORMATION ITEMS

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

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:04 P.M.