UNIVERSITY COUNCIL TRANSCRIPT
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 2007, 3:00 P.M.
HOLMES STUDENT CENTER SKY ROOM


B. Minor attended for J. Grush; A. Johnson attended for A. Langguth; M. Morris attended for L. Pernell.

Parliamentarian Ferald Bryan was present.

ABSENT: Baker, Bose, Cesarek, Dowen, Hemphill, Johns, Kamenitsa, Kaplan, King, Kolb, Marcus, Oreseanin, Pappanduros, Parisot, B. Peters, J. Peters, Purnell, Richmond, Sido, Stravers, Thu, Walton

I. CALL TO ORDER

Provost Alden: Could I call the meeting to order? I’m representing John Peters today.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Provost Alden: On the adoption of the agenda, there is one change on the agenda. There will be a report on Resources, Space, and Budget Committee so can I have a motion on the agenda as modified? Do we have a second? All in favor? Any opposed? Any abstained? Thank you.

The agenda was adopted as amended.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 24, 2007 MEETING
(Pages 3-5)

Provost Alden: The approval of the minutes for the last meeting; the January meeting. Do we have a motion to approve those minutes? Do we have a second? Any discussion on the minutes from the last meeting? Okay, all in favor? Any opposed? Abstentions? Thank you.

IV. PRESIDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Provost Alden: As part of the President’s report, I do have to say where John is today. He regrets not being with you. As you may or may not know, when Fermi Lab came up for renewal of a federal contract, we became part of a consortium that was put in line for kind of the overall oversight of the lab and he is on that board and they are having a two day retreat so, it’s an important meeting. It’s the first one that we are represented at so I think that’s a good thing. We will obviously continue to be involved in this important operation and if the International Linear
Collider comes here, it could be a huge operation so I think it’s, even though he regrets not being here, I think it’s an important precedent that we are now part of the board that oversees that operation.

He asked me to make a few comments on things going on that I’m aware of. The Strategic Planning process, we are well on the way. Some of you are directly involved in that you’re members of the Strategic Planning Task Force. Others have been part of the roundtable. There will be another roundtable later in the semester. Just to give you kind of a thumbnail sketch of where we were, we had the roundtable in January before classes started. We had over 110 people invited and almost everybody showed up. They narrowed down the concepts that were being worked upon by the Strategic Planning Task Force and now we have four work groups that are meeting on a week-to-week basis to work on various tasks, not excluding final strategic initiatives that will be developed. The four general areas are, in terms of goal areas, to preserve and strengthen the university’s distinctive learning environment providing students with expanded opportunities to engage in experiential or engaged learning, as NIU recruits new faculty and staff to make sure that that environment is preserved and the metaphor that was originally used is it’s like a teaching environment in a medical school where there’s a lot of opportunity for hands on experiences in addition to classroom learning. Harold Kafer is the chair of that group and they’re evolving that whole concept as we go. The second area was to achieve international distinction and leadership in five to seven key clusters of scholarly and research activity and this was to provide kind of the process by which we determine the big picture areas, particularly the multi-disciplinary areas that we’ll be known for in the future, not to discount what any individual faculty or staff are engaging in as part of their scholarship, but it is to look at some of those big picture areas. How do we develop them? How do we identify them? What are the criteria and so forth. The third area is to extend and enhance the university’s commitment to community engagement and public purpose through development of processes and procedures designed to increase NIU’s regional impact. A lot of discussion here about NIU being a magnet in an area that’s basically a global portal even though it’s a regional service area and that’s being worked on. I should have said in the second area, Sue Mini is the chair and in the third area Brigid Lusk is the chair. The fourth area, Debbie Haliczer is the chair and that’s to substantially improve the nature and quality of university life for students, faculty and staff by identifying issues and improve the culture to better improve, support, retain, and enhance all components of the university community. So that’s also a fairly big picture area and they’re working on focusing on what does that mean in terms of some specific initiatives that can be implemented in a reasonable time. Those work groups will be meeting routinely for the next month or so and then in April we’ll have the task force meet for two more times to try and combine and coordinate the efforts and we will have one final roundtable where the roundtable, the larger community of representatives, will look at what’s been done, make comments, make changes and the final written report will be done in June. I will say that the Strategic Planning Work Groups are using the web for work product but it’s a web that’s maintained by the Learning Alliance so that those products can be read by all the work group members but they don’t go onto our website until they’re near final draft so at that point, everybody will be able to look at them and determine what their input might be. So there’ll be an opportunity for all the university community to comment on what’s being produced by these various work groups.
Are there any questions on that issue? I know that’s kind of a thumbnail sketch but there’s a lot of people involved and hopefully all your representatives are keeping you somewhat informed on what’s going on in those work groups as we go along.

The third area I wanted to mention is that we have two dean searches going on. I wanted to update you on where we are with those dean searches. We have a Dean of Libraries search going on. The search committee narrowed down the group of potential candidates down to three. Unfortunately, one dropped out early in the process before they were invited to campus. We’ve gone through all the HR processes and so they will be hopefully on campus the week after break, so two weeks from now and the following week so the last two weeks in March for those candidates. We will have their CV’s and their schedules posted hopefully by the end of next week so when you come back from break, you’ll know who they are, where they’re going to be visiting with various constituency groups so you’ll see where you’ll have the opportunity to interact with them.

The other dean search is the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences and that search had to have a step of airport interview because there were nearly fifty applicants which was, according to our search firm and they’re fairly knowledgeable on all the dean searches going on now, that’s a pretty good response for a dean of liberal arts and sciences. We narrowed it down through a very rigorous evaluation in the search committee, to nine people to come into the airport interviews. One dropped out immediately, but the other eight we met with last week. The consensus was that four candidates were appropriate to come on campus and we did have one alternate in case another one drops out. The HR process was finished today so search firm will be contacting those four candidates and, again, as soon as we get their schedules available, we’ll be posting that again on my website, on the Provost’s website, what their schedules will be and copies of their CV’s. So I think they’re fairly strong candidates and we do want to try to get them here on campus the last two weeks in March as well. We’re trying not to have more than one candidate for that search on campus at the same time. There may be some overlap in the visit of the Dean of Libraries candidates and the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences candidates. That just can’t be avoided if we’re going to do this in a timely matter.

Are there any questions on the dean’s searches?

Okay. The final thing I wanted to comment on that John suggested we at least mention and that’s that we’re in budget hearings now. We had the hearing before the House and I thought it went fairly well. We have been asked so many different combinations of budgets but they all center around about 1.5% across the board with some competitive increments depending on which of the programs they pick from which of the universities to underwrite. Probably, not likely, be more than a couple percent at most. Eddie did you want to say anything about that process since you’ve been more involved than I have?

E. Williams: ???

Provost Alden: So we expect to go down to the Senate Hearing within the next week or two and we’ll see how it goes. I guess the good news is there are no cuts in the wind that we’ve
heard; the bad news is that it’s not a lot of percent increase but at least it’s something. It’s better than the alternative.

Anybody have anything else they wanted to ask about budgets or anything? We do have Stevens Hall as the top of our capital budget issues; we’ll see whether that gets funded or not.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Recommendations concerning Personnel Advisor from the Faculty Senate – refer to Rules and Governance (Pages 6-7)

Provost Alden: On the consent agenda, there is a recommendation concerning the Personnel Advisor. You have the Rules and Governance section there. Would anybody care to make a motion on that recommendation? Okay, a second on that? I know consent agendas you usually don’t discuss but if somebody feels compelled to – okay, all in favor of that consent agenda recommendation say aye. Any opposed? Okay.

The recommendation passed.

VI. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS, AND STANDING COMMITTEES

A. FAC to IBHE – Jody Newman-Ryan – report (Pages 8-9)

Provost Alden: There are a few reports. The FAC to IBHE, Jody, you have a report?

J. Newman-Ryan: I do. We met about two weeks ago. You have a report if you’re interested on pages 8 and 9. I’ll just summarize that briefly. We were in Peoria and had a nice meeting. We had two representatives from IBHE there with us. We also had the President of University Professionals of Illinois and she’s busy trying to compile kind of a consortium to work together to work towards our common budget goals and to express those to the Governor and the Legislature in the best possible way. She recently left higher education but feels she has a good feel for that and so she talked to us about her ideas and her priorities. If you look at 2.a., she said that we need a unified message to convey to these people and her idea was “Put a Face on Higher Ed” which didn’t go over terribly well with those of us who were there. We didn’t think it was quite catchy enough but if you have a better one, feel free to send it to me. She’s trying to work with a marketing firm and sort of step up lobby efforts and communication with the appropriate government officials in a little bit better say so we’ll see how that goes.

She did mention that lobby day is April 25. Some of you have been involved with that in the past in various different ways and she did remind us that if you choose to contact the Governor or legislators about budgets or any other issues you wish to contact them about to remember to use your own stationery and not NIU stationery so I’ll pass that on to you.

You’ve had plenty of opportunity if you’re so interested, to look at editorials in the Chicago Tribune and follow some of these budget discussions about this gross receipts tax which I have
no expertise in but I’ve put a website on page 9 for you if you’re interested in looking at just basic information on that and I’m sure there are people on campus who will be able to talk about that more. I have no idea what its chances of success are or what will happen today in the Governor’s speech but I will keep you posted about what we know from them on that.

There was a response here to information that Paul in my place, presented to you last fall about the FAC to IBHE Teacher Preparation document draft that they worked on last fall and so we had a response from this campus that I was asked to convey and I did but there was no discussion at that time. I was led to believe that they would discuss that possibly at our next meeting. So if I have more information on that at that time, I will convey that to you. That’s about it so far.

**Provost Alden:** Thank you. Any questions on the report? Okay, on the next two items we don’t have our committee meetings until tomorrow so there are no reports. The Legislation, Audit, and External Affairs Committee met earlier so Sara Clayton or Bobbie or do we have a report?

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 – Sara Clayton and Bobbie Cesarek – report

**S. Clayton:** The Legislative, Audit, and External Affairs Committee met yesterday at Hoffman Estates. Mark Strauss called the meeting to order. Ken Zehnder gave a report on the Northern Illinois Technology Triangle Intergovernmental Agreement which is called the N.I.T.T. What this is is a fiber-optic that will be running along I39 and IDOT will be maintaining this. Since there was no quorum, it could not be voted on so this will be placed in the President’s report to the Board. Ken also reported on various House and Senate Bills. He also reported on the Illinois Higher Education FY08 budget. Appropriations for FY08 are an increase of 19.8 million which is about 1.5 over FY07. In the FY08 capital budget, the Stevens Building is listed as number nine on planning and number nineteen for remodeling.

Kathy Buettner gave a Congressional report. She spoke on the No Child Left Behind Act which will expire in 2007 and she expects this to be extended. Because of the No Child Left Behind Bill, the Higher Education Reauthorization Act may be delayed; it has already been delayed for three years.

The College Student Act of 2007 was passed. This will cut interest rates in half for new undergraduate’s subsidized student loans. The PAL Grants were increased for the first in three to four years. Kathy also reported on the Bush administration FY08 budget. In the budget there were provisions for significant in funding for the Department of Education.
Sharon Dowen, our Internal Auditor, gave a report on the auditing standard 112. This standard will give the external auditors more latitude when doing their audits.

Finally, there was a discussion on the Recording Industry Association which is with the students downloading music and other things from the web illegally and ITS has been contacted and there were 28 NIU students that were involved in this and ITS is working with it.

Provost Alden: Any questions on the report? Thank you very much.

E. BOT – Paul Stoddard – no report

Provost Alden: Since the Board of Trustee meeting won’t be for another two weeks, we don’t have a report on that.

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

Provost Alden: No report on the Academic Policy Committee.

G. Resources, Space, and Budgets Committee – Linda Derscheid, Chair – report

Provost Alden: We do have a report on the Resources, Space, and Budgets Committee.

L. Derscheid: Yes, we met February 14 with Mallory Simpson, the President of the NIU Foundation, and she explained to us the ongoing campaign plan that had started in approximately the year 2000 and sort of went on hiatus and was a quiet campaign and was a quiet campaign for several years and now this May she said there will be an official rollout of a more public campaign; fundraising of approximately $150,000 and so May 5 will be sort of a celebration of cutting through that $100,000,000 milestone I should say and with plans for another $40,000,000 to $45,000,000 to go. So, May 5 there’s quite a plan for approximately 500 people to be invited on campus with presentations and lunch and hopefully we can really sell the campus and convince people to give more money to NIU. It seems like NIU really is depending on more from philanthropists since we’re not getting much – 1.5% from the state is not going to go very far to cover our expenses so I think with our push for this extra fundraising to go towards academic excellence, I think it sounds like a good positive kind of campaign that is going to be promoted starting May 5.

Provost Alden: Any questions on the report? Thank you very much.

H. Rules and Governance Committee – William Tolhurst, Chair – report (Pages 10-11)

Provost Alden: The next report is Rules and Governance Committee, Bill Tolhurst.

W. Tolhurst: The Committee met on February 14 to finalize and approve a response to the Provost’s request for an interpretation of the Bylaws concerning university level appeals. You have that in the packet and I’d be happy to answer any questions if any of you have them.
Provost Alden: Any questions? Okay, thank you.

I. University Affairs Committee – Jody Newman-Ryan, Chair – no report

J. Elections and Legislative Oversight Committee – Brigid Lusk, Chair – report

Provost Alden: I guess that’s the last report – I’m sorry, Elections and Legislative Oversight Committee, Brigid?

B. Lusk: Our Committee met and we’re very appreciative of those people who consented to be nominated from their departments, their colleges. The results of that Committee are the College of Business, Rick Ridnour from the Department of Marketing; College of Education, Toni Tollerud, Counseling Adult in Higher Education (she was re-elected); College of Engineering and Engineering Technology, Clifford Mirman from Technology; College of Health and Human Sciences, Jody Newman-Ryan from Communicative Disorders was re-elected; College of Law, Dan Schneider; College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, William Baker from English, re-elected; Jeffrey Chown from the Department of Communication; Heide Fehrenbach, Department of History; Linda Sons, Department of Math; Carol Thompson, Department of Physics; Rich Greene, Department of Geography; and, from the College of Visual and Performing Arts, Douglas Boughton from the School of Art. We’re very appreciative of these new members. Thank you.

Provost Alden: Thank you.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Provost Alden: Is there any unfinished business?

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Provost Alden: Any new business?

IX. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Provost Alden: Any comments or questions from the floor? Buck?

J. Stephen: I’d like to, in front of this body, applaud the Northern Star for their recent efforts in bringing attention both to the students and to the legislation and people outside campus, the plight of the university’s financial situation and they had a wonderful letter earlier this week, very expressive of let’s say an atmosphere of unhappiness with the state’s treatment of state universities and personally, I’d like to support their efforts to try to the College Campus Press Freedom Act gone through in Illinois so that that recent ruling doesn’t effect our independent student newspaper.

Provost Alden: Any other – yes?
While I applaud the legislature’s attempt to increase our funding 1.5%, I think the reality of the fact is that with the increase costs that we see in utilities, with some unfunded mandates that have come through from the legislature, that in effect, it still is a continuing trend of a decreased amount of support from the state towards the public universities. In reality, I think if you were to put those unfunded mandates and the inflationary costs against the amount of revenue that we’re going to see as an increase, it really is in effect another decrease this year that the public universities are seeing and as, you know, as recently as from today you can read the paper, that’s causing some of those costs to again be pushed off onto the backs of the students which is a trend that we’ve seen, at least in my tenure here since 2000, on a yearly basis. You know, housing costs continue to increase. You know, in the past it was for some renovations, this year it’s for spring and a number of other items. But you know, in effect we’ve seen, over the last seven years, some very significant increases in those costs pushed off on the backs of students which, you know, in particular with, you know, some of the changes that were made to financial aid at the federal level, that some changes may be made as we heard. Whether or not the president signs those, I don’t know but it is having a significant impact at this point on the affordability of NIU. In particular since we’re trying to market ourselves as a competitive, affordable institution, I think that our edge in that regard is somewhat eroding and that is obviously of concern to me. I think it’s a concern to my fellow students and I think that it’s something that needs to be on everybody’s radar screen. I know that the university is making its case before the legislature but I think it’s something that is going to take more than a university-wide effort on that basis; something that everyone needs to become personally involved with. I’m sure a lot of people here are but I just wanted to make a comment in that regard and to express my concern that the reality is not that things really are getting better but that they continue to really get worse for higher education in Illinois.

If I may add, I know Chris has had her hand up back there for awhile, but I’d like to echo what Buck and have said. It’s not just an NIU problem of course; it’s a state-wide problem. We’re really looking at the affordability of college across the state of Illinois so this is a real large issue and for all the yelling and screaming that faculty and staff might do about it, that’s always seen to some degree as self-serving in Springfield. But they do listen to students; they do listen to the parents of students and that’s why I think it’s such a great thing that the Northern Star took the lead on this and I would encourage the entire community, especially students and their families, to get involved in the effort to laminate the legislature a bit on exactly what their policies are doing to family budgets in Illinois.

Provost Alden: Any other comments? Yes, Chris?

C. Sorenson: I know Sara mentioned that at the federal level, they’re unlikely to get to Higher Education Reauthorization this year because they will be reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Act, the ESEA, but I did want to point out that we should probably pay a lot of attention to the No Child Left Behind reauthorization as well. There are specifically some proposals out there that would effect higher education most directly. If you haven’t read the NCLB Commission Report that was released in the middle of February, it’s a bipartisan commission with a number of recommendations, but one of those recommendations connects financial aid eligibility for higher education institutions to those institutions’ plans to recruit teachers in high-need areas, particular the stem fields and to have a plan to do that and so that is
one of the proposals on the table. There’s also one that would require institutions and the state within one year of reauthorization to analyze the alignment between high school exit criteria and college entrance criteria and to develop tests to assess how students are doing in terms of that alignment. So there are several things within the proposals right now that clearly would have an impact on us here at the university not to mention that many of the proposals have implications for teacher certification and other school personnel certification and professional development. On the good side, there is also a recommendation to double the funding for the Institute for Education in Sciences to do research so that might be on the positive side but it is something to watch and we do need to pay attention to that even though it’s not the Higher Education Reauthorization.

**Provost Alden:** Any other comments? Brigid?

**B. Lusk:** Kind of related to money and expense, could you also address the results of the Spellings Report in terms of that might be another additional expense that probably will get passed on.

**Provost Alden:** I can tell you what I know about it. The Spellings Report was focused, as you probably know, on accountability at different levels, accountability in terms of affordability to students and full disclosure of what it costs to go to a given college or university. I don’t think that’s a big issue, it’s certainly not the biggest issue. Related to that, however, are things such as graduation rates which means what they call “unit record tracking”. That means that every student, no matter where they are or where they go, institutions will be responsible for keeping track of where they are and where they go which could be a huge unfunded mandate because it is difficult with students coming and going from various colleges and universities before they graduate. We’ve seen it with the ??? issues, with the international students. Tracking them, as you know, became a very serious mandate after 9/11. This is a similar sort of mandate so that’s one level. The second level of the Spellings Commission has to do with student engagement and here we’re talking about standardized metrics of measuring how engaged the students are in the university community through usually some sort of a test such as ??? or I think it’s C.I.R.P. and there’s a few others but it’s just a standardized measurement tool that’s given to students periodically through their academic career to find out anything from how much time they spend on homework to how much time they spend on student organizations and so forth and so on. I think the third and one of the most controversial aspects is the sort of value-added, standardized testing of what students in terms of what’s kind of referred to as higher level thinking skills, critical thinking, quantitative thinking, communication and so forth and it’s starting to focus now on standardized tests of testing students when they come into a university and then when they leave a university and with some metrics to measure value-added compared to comparable institutions around the country, provide what could be considered to be a report card. This is coming largely out of Texas where it’s becoming a report card for universities. This was something that six or eight months ago was being fought by higher education; now some of the largest national organizations representing universities are coming in line saying well, we’ll make it a voluntary system but we sort of expect our members to follow along and participate. So it is a train that’s left the station and moving very quickly and is going to be a challenge for universities not only because of the unfunded mandates but any sort of assessment programs that we have, we may have to accommodate to do some of these even though they may not be
federally mandates but federally and publicly expected sorts of accountability measures. It’s something that for those of you who are on curriculum committees or assessment councils need to pay particular attention to because the focus right now is try to get these sorts of issues incorporated into regional accreditation bodies and so it is a challenge and it is a challenge that I don’t think is going away. I think a lot of people thought that after this election, this was just going to disappear. I think it has bipartisan support and, quite frankly, some of this can be done through the Department of Education just by rule making, it doesn’t have to go through Congress. So, something to keep an eye on and if you don’t have access to the Spellings Report or some of the other things, we have been circulating some of these items through the Deans’ Council. I’m sure your Dean has copies; we can provide you copies if you want to look at them and see what’s involved. But it’s something that we in higher education have to take quite seriously. Yes?

???: I’d like to ask about an item from the Resource, Space, and Budgets report. Let me preface my question by pleading naivety on the costs of things. The most expensing thing that I really understand is a house. There’s a statement that about $20,000,000 has been spent on the Barsema Building. I’d like clarification. Is that in addition to the gift from Barsema himself?

Provost Alden: Eddie?

E. Williams: It would be nice to say we had another $20,000,000 but no, that was the initial investment and actually, because of the nature of the gift and the amount of the gift and the design that we eventually ended up with, we got a quality facility which means it’s going to be there and we’ve not had to put a lot of money in it at all because of the quality of the initial construction. So, no, it was the initial investment.

???: Okay, then if I can follow up. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that in the Strategic Plan we came to the conclusion that we need another academic building of comparable scope, then the amount of money that we would be talking about would be $20-$25,000,000?

E. Williams: Well, it depends on the scope. The College of Business building as an academic building would be quite different if it were a science building or a computer science building or something of that nature and the cost per square foot would be – even though the footage would be the same – it would be tremendously different. Also, escalation of costs of materials and so forth over time so, I don’t know if you want to put a dollar amount out there yet. I think you want to really focus in on what the need is and the configuration of that need and at that point in time, we’ll be able to put a number to it.

???: Fair enough.

Provost Alden: Any other questions or comments? If not, I’ll draw your attention to the information items and entertain a motion to adjourn.
X. INFORMATION ITEMS

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

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at ????.