UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2010, 3:00 P.M.  
HOLMES STUDENT CENTER REGENCY ROOM

Disclaimer: These minutes should not be taken as a verbatim transcript but rather as a shortened summary that is intended to reflect the essence of statements made at the meeting. Many comments have been omitted and, in some cases, factual and grammatical errors corrected. The full verbatim transcript is available online at the University Council website under University Council/ Agenda Meeting Transcript.


Parliamentarian Ferald Bryan was present.

ABSENT: Akinyemi, Baldwin, Banks, Cassidy, Erman, Feurer, Guinta, Hall, Holly, Johnson, Kaplan, Kostic, Lash, Liu, Morris, Nuzzo, Parks, Robertson, Rosato, Schneider, Schoenbachler, Schols, Seaver, Tonks, Valentiner.

I. CALL TO ORDER

President Peters: called the meeting to order at 3:09 PM (CST).

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA’

E. Hansen made the motion; motion was seconded. The agenda was adopted with the addition of two walk-in items.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 2 MEETING (will be sent electronically).

P. Henry made the motion; motion was seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

IV. PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Peters: commented on the state budget situation noting that the state is still 60 million dollars behind in payments to NIU. Public university presidents and chancellors met in Chicago to work on a collective letter that will be sent to constitutional officers, governors and state legislative leaders about the implications of this cash flow problem. This morphs into what
I consider the longer term issue to us: what happens July 1 if the state hasn’t caught up, what does the new budget look like? Some say that depending on revenue income for the next few months and we’re going into the months where the income revenue is usually down, that the state will start the next fiscal year with a 13 billion dollar deficit. To put it in perspective, California with three times the population has a 14 billion dollar debt. We have a 13 billion dollar debt with much less population. It appears that we’re in a situation where it’s difficult to see the end of it in terms of public policy. Whether that means budget cuts; whether it means tax increases or pension reform or some combination. Our particular situation cannot be solved unless the total state problem is solved so I’m going to be spending a lot of time trying to make that case and I think it’s incumbent upon us, you and our students, to do what we do best and that is analyze the problem and come to understand it. I said no furloughs because I don’t think they raise the money that you need to solve a 60 million dollar problem but we’ve done other things. We’ve had a hiring freeze except in some areas, and I know the Provost working with the deans came to an accommodation on how they handle that because we have to hire faculty. You’ll be hearing much more about that in the next weeks to come. Then we’re all waiting on the Governor’s budget message. It should give us a good indication of how we plan for 2010. Remember, because the state took recovery funds; federal stimulus funds and plugged our operating budget with that money, the state agreed to keep levels of funding for education, higher education, at 2006 levels. The state can petition the federal government for a waiver on the commitment to keep education funding at the 2006 level and I understand that about nine states have made such a petition. Illinois has not at this point and I don’t have any idea what they’re planning to do on that but that’s something we’re watching.

I also want to report to you on the Governor’s message today. Governor Quinn came, and he came with gifts which we greatly appreciate. He came with a release of funds to begin the projects that had already been authorized by the legislature, signed by the Governor and the money had been appropriated but there was no money to release because they had to raise the money through bonds. They raised a limited amount of money in bonds and out of that limited amount of funds that is available right now, the Governor released 10.2 or 10.3 million dollars to us to commence the Cole Hall and Stevens renovations.

President Peters: reviewed the changes to the Cole Hall and Stevens building renovations. In terms of Cole Hall, Auditorium A 100 which was the non-shooting room, is going to continue to be used as a large lecture hall. It’s going to be substantially updated from the current facility and we’re going to install modern seating. We’re going to replace the floor, which is just a concrete slab with staggered decking. It’s going to have a new stage and a new projection system. We will upgrade the control booth and install state-of-the-art classroom technologies. As far as 101, Auditorium B, where the shooting took place, that’s going to be repurposed and remodeled for non-classroom or non-formal instructional usage. The Provost is heading that up and we’re going to do the best we can to make the best use of it. The Cole Hall appropriation included money for a free-standing lecture hall which will be added to the part of the Stevens building adjacent to Cole Hall. This will be more economical since it will be able to tap into the utilities and supply lines serving the Stevens building. It also permits us to expand the future black box theatre and the scene facility. That new auditorium then will have 200-400 seat capacity, tiered seating, state-of-the-art technology and that will then replace the capacity we had in the old Cole Hall. We’re getting 10.3 million this year to start those two projects and then, we’ll get the
second amount in the next fiscal year. A lot of Steven’s is infrastructure. Replace the roof, replace the heating/cooling, ventilating systems, modernize plumbing, the electrical system, and then we’re going to reconfigure, remodel and modernize all classroom spaces and laboratories. We’re calling the whole thing the Cole/Stevens Complex. The third piece of that is the Forward Together Memorial Garden which is up and, of course, we will hold our 3:00 memorial ceremony on Sunday, February 14 there. We think we’ll be able to start construction in late summer and have Cole ready for occupancy in the fall of 2011.

**R. Alden:** I just wanted to reiterate that 101 in Cole will be used for academic support services but not for traditional lecture classrooms and I’ll be working with the deans to figure out which is the option that creates the best impact for everybody.

**K. Thu:** I can’t underscore how excited our department is about getting this started. We’ve been probably among the biggest cynics or skeptics around. My only question is whether the blueprints for the Stephen’s renovation are in place yet or is that still being developed?

**E. Williams:** It’s a concept statement and we will immediately be starting on construction drawings.

**V. CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Nature Preserves and Research Committee **Review**– to Rules and Governance (page 3).

B. Academic Calendar **2019-2020** – to University Affairs (page 4).

C. **Student Evaluation of Instruction** – Academic Policy (pages 5-6)

**E. Hansen** made the motion; **K. Thu** was second. The Consent Agenda was approved as written.

**VI. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS, AND STANDING COMMITTEES**


**E. Hansen:** I want to say that President Peters articulated the needs very well on how to address the issue financially in the state. We’ve been kicking this around in the Faculty Advisory Committee for about three months. Discussions centered on the financial problems in higher education in Illinois – we (we being the faculty) and administrators must take the case for the importance of higher education and the consequences of the current budget situation to the legislature. There are different groups working on things. There’s the Responsible Budget Coalition that is trying to do something within the state legislature. We know that we can’t appeal to the politicians’ moral obligation to fund higher education. Each one of us in this room needs to take it upon ourselves to talk to our own representatives and tell them how we feel and anybody that’s been around higher education pretty well knows that higher education provides research, provides funding and industry grows from that.
President Peters: I want to comment a little bit on something I said before and something that the presidents at lunch and chancellors talked about. We were talking about MAP and our students and how engaged our students got, particularly students who have MAP money, and what a wonderful learning experience that was for them to see how democracy works. We need to get our students engaged. Faculty have to help, when appropriate, in their classrooms in doing this and also students have a really important responsibility to get involved in the political process. That means getting them registered to vote and giving them the opportunity to get educated on the issues. I happen to think that we’re going to need them in this upcoming fight and, after all, it’s only their degree and their career and what they pay for an education. Even if we passed Governor Quinn’s 50% tax increase, and even if we had cutbacks and even if we had some sort of acceptable pension reform, we’re not out of this for maybe four or five years. We are near a financial calamity in the state of Illinois. So for our young people, I think it’s a critical moment. I want to get off the soap box but you have to keep your eye on the bigger picture and certainly we’re going to make the case for higher education but the bigger picture is this financial calamity situation the state has gotten itself into and you can’t cut your way out of it and you probably can’t tax your way out of it. So our students should educate themselves and look for those candidates who have a plan that gets it there.


C. BOT Finance, Facilities and Operations Committee – Alan Rosenbaum and Gregory Waas – no report.


E. BOT – Alan Rosenbaum – report (pages 7-8)

F. Academic Policy Committee – Kendall Thu, Chair – no report.

G. Resources, Space and Budgets Committee – Barbara Jaffee, Chair – no report.

H. Rules and Governance Committee – Rebecca Butler, Chair – no report.

I. University Affairs Committee – Carol Thompson, Chair – no report.

J. Elections and Legislative Oversight Committee – Abhijit Gupta, Chair – no report.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Bylaw 16 – Athletic Board changes. Second Reading and Vote – walk-in.

R. Butler: moved that the changes as discussed (and included in the walk-in item) be accepted.
Motion was seconded.

A. Rosenbaum: noted that this is essentially the same motion that we had at the first reading with the exception of the addition of – as needed – to the part that says that the one male and one female athlete nominated and elected by the Student Athlete Advisory Council.

President Peters: we considered it a minor change and therefore, it’s still a second reading.

B. Cesarek: Regarding change #2, the change from Huskie Club to Huskie Athletic Scholarship Fund. It’s my understanding that the name has changed, yet again, to Huskie Athletics Support Fund which was mandated through the Development Office.

President Peters: All right. So what is it now?

B. Cesarek: Huskie Athletics Support Fund. It was deemed to be changed through the Development Office.

President Peters: We’ll consider that an editorial change.

The motion passed without opposition.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

P. Henry: I’m actually not sure if this is new business. It relates back to the consent agenda item C, student evaluation of teaching effectiveness.

President Peters: asked A. Rosenbaum to clarify this item.

A. Rosenbaum: The UC is required to review this policy every five years. The committee will update the wording with the changes that were passed by the University Council since the last wording change. They will also consider whether they want to recommend other changes to this policy. This committee will have an opportunity to solicit input and to decide what they want to do about the online evaluations and whether comments that are solicited from students should be available to chairs and to personnel committees and the like so they’re going to have the freedom to go through this and decide whether or not we need to make additional changes. They’ll make recommendations to the Council. We’ll have discussion and vote on it.

K. Thu: The Academic Policy Committee has been given this charge so you’re welcome to siphon your comments and questions to us.

A. Rosenbaum: I think the important point is that this is going to take some consideration. It’s not just going to be a rubber stamp of approval for the next five years.

B. Lusk: noted that two colleges are already doing online evaluations so it seems like we’re investigating or looking at this midway through. It’s already going on and I worry as a faculty
representative that we’re talking about it after the fact for two of our colleges. It seems like this discussion should have happened prior to it.

**T. Bishop:** My understanding of the discussion that’s already taken place on this issue is that there is nothing in the current policy which prohibits the use and I don’t know if it’s premature for us to recognize evolution of technology and to begin collecting evaluative data on line. By the same token, it is certainly appropriate at this time to begin to consider in this mandated five year review cycle to think about the language of the evaluation procedures or policies.

**A. Rosenbaum:** The last time this was considered by the University Council, there was lively discussion and the Academic Policy Committee has been provided with a transcript of that discussion.

**W. Baker:** reminded Council that we did discuss this at some length for at least a year if not two years in the Academic Policy Committee and we could not reach a consensus.

**K. Thu:** As a reminder, we did pass a resolution last March on this issue and we passed a provision that the electronic evaluation of courses is allowable but it is voluntary; it’s not required.

**K. Freedman:** I’m one of the members of the Academic Policy Committee, and through our e-mail discussions it has arisen that we’re actually going to be looking at the entire assessment group of policies. This is just one of those policies that we’re going to be looking at so it’s not a question of changing the practice of the colleges; it’s a question of reviewing the entire process and figuring out how that strategy fits in with the policies that we have now, to make it consistent. There also may be some recommendations for changes and in terms of doing assessment online, it’s a good time to look at where those changes might fit with the practices that have already begun. For example, there may be some security issues that we need to develop policies around. So there are some peculiar aspects of the online issues but most of our discussion is going to focus on a general review of the practice as a whole.

**President Peters:** As always, these evaluations stimulate debate and we have to do it every five years whether we want to or not.

IX. **COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

X. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

**President Peters:** I have a limited number of press packages that have diagrams of Cole Hall and a press release. For those, you know, in the department may have an interest. I have about twelve of them.

XI. **ADJOURNMENT**

**P. Henry** made the motion; **J. Stephen** was second. The meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.