UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17 3:00 P.M.
HOLMES STUDENT CENTER SKY 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, Bond, Boughton, Calmeyer, Cassidy, Castle, Garcia, Guinta, Johnson, Kostic, Lash, Liu, Mirman, Morris, Nuzzo, Parks, Ridnour, Robertson, Schneider, Schols, Seaver, Smith, Sosina.

I. CALL TO ORDER

J. Peters: called the meeting to order at 3:08 PM.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

E. Hanson: made the motion, seconded by B. Lusk. The agenda was adopted with the addition of one walk-in, a report from the Resource, Space, and Budget committee.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 27TH MEETING (to be sent electronically).

J. Stephen: made the motion, seconded by A. Quick. The minutes were approved as written.

IV. PRESIDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

J. Peters: noted that Nancy Castle had asked for time to talk about the newest faculty and staff initiative of the True North Campaign. Due to the delay in rolling out the initiative she will postpone her visit until the April 7 council meeting. In the meantime, look for a letter from co-chairs which you should be receiving in the next week.
J. Peters: I have three things to talk about. I can give you a status update on the budget. We have a governor’s budget now and the University had a hearing before the House Higher Ed Appropriations Committee. We are scheduled to appear before the Senate Higher Ed Appropriations Committee next week. Up until this morning we were still owed approximately $63,000,000 of our $107,000,000 appropriation. We have not received a payment since January 25. I am really pleased to say that we are expecting, momentarily based upon good authority from the comptroller’s office, 10.9 million dollars, as our second payment on MAP disbursements.

The other good news is we had a portion of our fiscal year 2010 budget gapped by federal stimulus funds. For us that was about 4.2 million. We understand now that that payment is arriving in the controller’s office. So we have had a $15,000,000 day. That is almost one pay period. However, we are still owed in the neighborhood of $50 million on our $107 million base budget, and we continue to make payroll using everything we have that isn’t obligated in restricted funds. There is a bill working through the process that would give universities borrowing authority against their general revenue that I was not in favor of, but I did sign on to, and the U of I also signed on because it might be the only way we can keep going. We would have the authority to borrow up to a certain percent of our general revenue for a certain period of time. The onus is on us to find the financial mechanism to do that. I am not happy about that. I am not in favor of it. We are also in the process of building a budget for 2011. The NIU budget request is basically last year’s budget which is $107 million. The governor’s budget that is on the web site is called a “maintenance of effort budget.” Maintenance of effort is a term that comes out of the agreement that was struck between the state and the federal government when they took the education stimulus funds, and maintenance of effort is operationalized in terms of the fiscal year 2006 budget. In other words if you take stimulus money, Illinois, you have to maintain your funding levels for higher education at fiscal year 2006 levels.

The governor put in a budget for us that amounts to a 6.2% cut or 6.7 million dollars. When it all nets out, the request for next year is just a smidge over $100 million. Every public university got the same cut – 6.2%. Community colleges were in the 2.3 range.

Obviously, at that level, we are going to have to continue economy moves. But that is not the whole story. Outside of the governor’s budget is the governor’s proposal for a 1% surcharge tax on income that would be dedicated to education, including higher ed. One percent of state income tax would raise a lot of money and it would be a surcharge of short-term duration. If that were passed and acted on, our budget would be more like our request.

You will have to look into your crystal ball and determine whether or not you think there is going to be any action. We have got to go through our hearings and see what the legislature does. Hopefully, we will continue to get payments for this year.

Now, let me add a bit more, because when we build a budget you should be aware that we have accumulated, over the past eight years, several unfunded mandates that you have to add back into this and let’s quickly go over them. They add up to about $10 million a year. Since about 2002, we have been asked to pick up the much greater share of the group health contribution for our health insurance, about 3.5 million per year. We pick up the tuition for the Illinois Veterans
Grants, the Illinois National Guard Grants, the MIA POW grants that total to over $4 million a year. There is a federal program, but heretofore the state program includes housing. So, it would be best if our student veterans took the federal program. But right now, they are taking the Illinois program because it provides housing benefits. And of course the legislature has not given us anything. We are also required to put fire sprinklers in the dormitories. It costs us about $1.7 million a year for the sprinklers. Due to increases in minimum wage over the past several years, we basically have to provide about $230,000 extra in payments for minimum wage. There is some legislative action out there that you should be aware of or watch. Among those things we are watching there is a bill that will eliminate dependant tuition remission for employees. I have to think that is a very bad bill for all of the reasons, you know. Sooner or later we are going to see pension reform bill. And right now it is hard to talk about because we don’t know what it is going to look like. I like to say that dealing with the budget crisis like this, everything has to be on the table, and by that I mean efficiencies, budget cuts, reforms in systems; perhaps pension systems have to be considered, have to be on the table, revenue enhancement has to be on the table. There is definite support for higher ed. There is definite support for NIU. But this is a very, very difficult time.

At our House Appropriations Hearings, I put a slide up and I want to read you this slide:

--New York, February 9. 2010. Moody’s Investors Service has downgraded the long-term rating of Northern Illinois University from an AAA to a AA and maintains the university’s rating on a watch list for possible further downgrades. The downgrade and continued watch list status reflect payment delays currently experienced by the State of Illinois Public Universities which have placed material pressure on NIU’s liquidity position.

So the state’s inability to pay us what was appropriated has affected our bond rating. I don’t think U of I was affected. They are in a different situation. So as we go out and we bond, we pay more money. We are very frugal. We don’t waste a lot of money around here, never have. We don’t have money to waste.

There was a good bit of work done by our Center for Government Studies in a recent policy survey and we were thinking how do you make the case for a tax increase? There is some interesting data and some of it is a bit troubling. The Center asked if you would support increases in state spending for: public schools, Medicare, medical aid, job training, low income families, public health, student financial aid and higher ed. And basically of that spectrum, higher ed is on the lower end. Over-all state-wide, 49% of those surveyed said they would support an increase in higher ed. spending.

Let me give you an update on something that is related to the budget. Last year, Provost Alden reorganized the way we did enrollment management because we needed to be more proactive. This is a highly competitive area and we depend on our enrollment now for our budget. We have shifted the way we do things. Obviously, we are doing a lot of new media. We have got to reach the kids by new media. We have packaged our financial aid and sent out several thousand financial aid packages.
I understand that we have a software package where through your department chair you can generate personalized letters for prospective students. So I encourage you to do that. We are moving to a very sophisticated process in enrollment management and admissions process.

Okay, third thing. Tomorrow is another one of those days at NIU. We are going to release the 2/14 report. Tomorrow at 10 a.m. a link to this report is going to be posted on *Northern Today*.

I am going to read this for the record. I thought long and hard about what to say about this. This captures my feelings about what this report is. The report represents countless hours of painstaking efforts by members of the Northern Illinois University Community. Within its pages we offer our analysis combined with that of other agencies dealing with our response to the tragedy of February 14, 2008, when five extraordinary lives were cut short at Cole Hall and 21 students were wounded. The report compelled us to dissect the most tragic hours that this campus has every endured and to relive events that remain all too vivid in our memories. I think sometimes the public and the press do not understand that every time a question comes up, we relive that and it is difficult for us. Despite an immense personal grief that is still raw for many in our NIU community, we worked steadfastly to write this report, endeavoring in the hope that others may learn from our experiences. Just as we learned from the information shared by Virginia Tech following shootings there in 2007. No institution can ever be completely prepared for such a horrible event, but hopefully, by sharing our experience, others may better prepare and respond to the needs of their campus communities during times of tragedy. And we get called on about this all of the time.

We also attempted to answer questions in this report that have haunted us since that fateful day. In particular, why would anyone, especially a young man who had enjoyed such success on our very campus, ever commit such a horrible crime. There may never be as definitive answer to that question, but I sincerely hope that what we learned in pursuit of that answer will add to the growing body of scholarship and research on violent crime and help prevent similar tragedies in the future. As difficult as it is to relive the events of that day, it also serves as a reminder of how grateful we are as a university community.

At our time of greatest need, thousands of people from all over the world would reach out and help us, from our local law enforcement officers and emergency medical technicians who are on the scene within minutes providing invaluable assistance to hundreds of counselors across the Midwest who dropped everything and answered our call for help to members of our DeKalb county community who welcomed our students back with cookies and hugs all provided aid, support and comfort during a very difficult time. Their actions have much to teach about the value of preparedness, cooperation, neighborliness and humanity. We will never forget February 14, 2008, and the terrible cost in human lives and bright futures. The NIU community continues to recover and it is our hope that this report contributes to that healing process.

And actually, I view this as closure. I view this as the ending of the public phase of this, although every day we heal. But I see this as important. When you see it, you will see how substantial it is.

**J. Peters:** concluded his remarks regarding the 2/14 report and then introduced **R. Alden**, Provost.
R. Alden: I just wanted to announce this is about the time of year we start talking about academic convocation which occurs at the beginning of the fall semester. It will take place on August 20th at 11 a.m., beginning with preparation at 10:30 for the March. We have the opportunity to meet with all of our first year students at that time, we encourage faculty to be there and march. Student Affairs provides at least one set of regalia for each department. We generally have 2500 to 3000 students attend, so it is a well attended event. In addition to participating, we are asking faculty who have worked with their students on research projects to submit a proposal. One of the highlights of convocation, is the presentations by faculty and students about those kind of engaged learning opportunities of research. This year’s proposals are due at the end of this month. There is a form on the web. We are urging all the departments to submit proposals so that we can have a diversity of disciplines presenting their activities. And we ask that faculty who plan on attending, reply to us in early spring by e-mail or my office phone number is 753-1585. Thank you very much.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

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

A. FAC to IBHE – Earl Hansen – report

E. Hansen: At the beginning of the meeting, we observed a moment of silence for the tragedy at the University of Alabama at Huntsville and also the shooting at NIU.

On April 6th the faculty advisory committee will meet with the members of the Illinois Board of Higher Education at Harold Washington College with the intent of going one-on-one, as best we can, with them.

P. Henry: Noted that E. Hansen’s report was not included in with the agenda.

A. Rosenbaum: apologized for the omission and suggested that R. Andersen would email the report to the Council.

E. Hanson: One more thing, on those reports, I tend to put in websites that you might want to look at. If you want to stay on top of this stuff, connect to the website and see what is going on.

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

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

D. BOT Legislation, Audit, and External Affairs Committee – Jay Monteiro and Bobbie Cesarek – no report

E. BOT – Ferald Bryan – report
F. Bryan: I attended, in place of A. Rosenbaum, the full Board of Trustees Meeting on Thursday, February 25. I will highlight a few of the items. The College of Law Excellence Fee was approved. Transit contracts and student accident and sickness contracts were approved. The Northern Illinois Proton Treatment Research Center Amendment was approved. They explained that that center is still an open field and the economy is to blame for that. I expected there would be more questions but they left that alone because of the bad economy. Good news: the Cole/Stevens Complex Capital Project was approved including the possible razing of Cole Annex if needed. Student fees were approved and they were very cautious to try to maintain them in a 2.97 aggregate increase. I note that residence hall room and board fees increased. Please note that the entire board expressed its strong support, in these difficult times, for sabbatical leaves. They realize how essential it is to our research mission at Northern. The appointment of Lisa Freeman as Vice President of Research and Graduate Studies effective in July was approved. She was present at the meeting. She received lots of praise. Degree changes were approved. The Board accepted the reports and accepted some changes in FOIA laws.

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

G. Resource, Space and Budgets Committee – Barbara Jaffee, Chair – walk-in report

B. Jaffee: You have my report here. I will just mention that the committee is mandated to meet regularly to discuss faculty input on resource needs and priorities. This meeting on March 3 followed the request of committee members to solicit faculty input from their various divisions on research needs and priorities. So we met to share that information. It was interesting to hear how certain interests and concerns are shared across a number of colleges and I listed these in the report as well as concerns that are more college specific. We will meet again on Monday, March 22, to fulfill our other responsibility to meet periodically with representatives from the upper administration. I want to thank everyone who talked to their representatives on the committee and shared their information, but there is time before Monday if anyone would like to contact either me or their representative on the committee who will be happy to bring that information forward at the meeting on Monday.

J. Peters: I can’t tell you how many budget cuts I have been through. The best thing to do is make sure that information is out there and people know, because otherwise you get rumors. Correcting an earlier comment that he made, President Peters stated: Our banker informs me I misspoke; we are still owed $62 million because the MAP money cannot be deducted from the general fund.

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. Conflict of Interest

A. Rosenbaum: During the Fall semester, Jim Erman informed the UC that NSF has instituted a change in policy, one of which requires institutions to provide appropriate training and oversight of those individuals supported by NSF to conduct research, including faculty, graduate students, post graduate researchers. It was also anticipated that NIH would post similar guidelines early in 2010 and that the NIH policy would be more heavily weighted toward conflict of interest policies. At that time, our conflict of interest policy was in an extended revision process.

Provost Alden, at that meeting, proposed that the Office of Research and Graduate Studies and the Office of the General Counsel take the current draft policy that was working its way through the various departments for larger university level conflict of interest and extract those sections that have to do with research and create a draft document that would then be brought to the Responsible Conduct of Scholarship Committee for review and then to the Graduate Council for approval, finally bringing it to the University Council. There was a motion that incorporated this proposal, and it was approved by the Council at that meeting. It was then handed over to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. It has now worked its way through that process.

Just to remind you that the reason we went through this procedure instead of sending it through University Council committee was because there was some urgency; it was felt that we needed to be in compliance; otherwise some researchers would not be able to continue their funding. The other issue is that every aspect of this has to be approved by legal counsel. So, if there are any changes, they would have to be reviewed again.

That brings us to where we are today, and that is that the conflict of interest policy has come back from this committee. It has been approved by the Graduate Council. The recommendation is for this policy to be inserted in the Academic Policies and Procedures Manual under General Policies and Procedures Item 10. I am going to ask J.Erman to move the policy. This is not a change of the Constitution so it does not require a second reading, and so, if the body approves by vote, this would become policy either immediately or at whatever date the University Council would like this to start.

J. Erman: What you have in your agenda is the complete revision for the Conflict of Interest Policies. And the revisions actually started in 2006-2007, worked their way into the Responsible Conduct of Scholarship Committee. They have been vetted through Legal Services with minor editorial changes. Editorial changes were also approved by the Responsible Conduct of Scholarship Committee this spring as well as the Graduate Council this spring. Primarily what is included is the definitions of potential conflict of interest and also requirements.

J. Erman: made the motion that the revised Conflict of Interest Policies be approved for inclusion in the Academic Policies and Procedures Manual.

P. Henry: was second.
**J. Erman:** noted that the revised guidelines are very similar to the previous guidelines except for two major revisions:

One is the composition of the committee on Ethics and Professionalism whereas in previous printed documentation there was a standing committee in which members were rotated every two years. In the revised guideline that committee on Ethics and Professionalism will be appointed on an ad hoc basis, as needed.

The second major revision is E4 which is on page 6 and that is the conflict of interest management plan. Whereas before if there were potential conflicts you needed approval to proceed; now, one actually needs a detailed conflict management plan in order to satisfy federal guidelines for federal research support. We included that in the conflict of interest plan. Those are the two major changes. One minor change is that financial conflict of interest has been set at $10,000 where the previous guidelines were $5,000.

**J. Peters:** called a vote on the motion which passed without opposition.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

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

**X. INFORMATION ITEMS**

A. Graduate Council Meeting Minutes 9/14/09
B. Graduate Council Meeting Minutes 11/2/09
C. University Benefits Committee Minutes 11/19/09
D. Undergraduate Coordinating Council Minutes 12/03/09
E. General Education Committee Minutes 1/27/10

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

**B. Burrell:** made the motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded and passed without dissent. The meeting was adjourned at 4:03 PM.