UNIVERSITY COUNCIL TRANSCRIPT
Wednesday, February 16, 2011, 3 p.m.
Holmes Student Center Sky Room


Parliamentarian Ferald Bryan was present


I. CALL TO ORDER

J. Peters: We call the February 16, 2011 meeting of the University Council to order.

President John Peters called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

J. Peters: Today, we have no walk-in items, so the agenda is as printed, and I would ask for a motion to adopt the agenda.

K. Thu: Motion.

J. Peters: Is there a second?

Unidentified: Second.

J. Peters: Alright, we have moved and seconded. All those in favor say, “aye.”

All: Aye.

J. Peters: Opposed? Alright, we have an agenda.

A. Rosenbaum: Remind them to say their names before they speak because we’re not getting some of the motions and seconds.

J. Peters: Right, I’ve been reminded that in order for us to have a proper record of our
proceedings, to grab the microphone and state your name before you do a motion or make a comment or put forward an amendment or criticize the Executive Secretary.

A. Rosenbaum: Especially that.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 26, 2011 UC MEETING (sent electronically)

J. Peters: Alright, you have received electronically the Minutes of the January 26th meeting. I will now call for any additions or corrections. I will call for a motion to approve those Minutes.

T. Bishop: Motion.

J. Peters: Let’s see, Terry Bishop has moved and we have a second?

J. Bowers: Second.

J. Peters: Okay, J.D. Bowers has seconded. All those in favor say, “aye.”

All: Aye.

J. Peters: Opposed?

IV. PRESIDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

J. Peters: Welcome everyone. I basically want to talk a little bit about the Governor’s budget. That happened at noon, so I’ve sort of been working on it for two hours, so my knowledge is not complete and my thoughts are not finished, but I wanted to get out there as quickly as I could. First of all, I wanted to thank everyone who participated for the planning and coming to the activities of the February 14th reflection on Monday. It was beautifully done. I want to particularly thank the Student Affairs people who really are responsible for putting that together, and we had 2,000 people who came. Interesting, many came back. We had many from as far away as Florida. We had students and others come back for that day of remembrance. I thought that was quite touching and all the five families were here over the two days of the activities. So, I want to thank everybody. It’s hard to believe it’s our third anniversary.

I want to talk a little bit about the budget, and I was working on remarks, so I’m going to work from my remarks. These will be up in an edited form sometime later today or this evening, whenever I can do some reediting. Governor Quinn presented his budget at noon today and obviously there’s always much more to the budget and then he gave an announcement. He had an 11-page speech and when you go through it, it’s really short on specifics, so you have to dig. You have to grab the budget book and dig through it to find out whether, what’s happened to the University or universities or other programs. So, we’re in the process of doing that, but we were able to dig a little bit out of that. Governor Quinn outlined his State budget proposal for the next fiscal year and he signaled his spending priorities for fiscal year ’12.
His speech focused mostly on reduced funding levels and emphasized the importance of restructuring the State’s unpaid bills backlog by borrowing approximately $8.75 billion to pay off most of the outstanding debt owed to hundreds of service providers throughout the State, including NIU and all the State universities. So, the focus was he talked a good bit about spending reductions and several programs. He didn’t lay them all out, but then he hit the focus on the borrowing bill. So, you’re talking about somewhere in the neighborhood of a $50+ billion budget that includes obviously, that has to be a balanced budget, and that includes revenue estimates based upon existing and new revenue. If some fund shifting budget cuts and the borrowing bill because he has to produce a balanced budget so that that $52.7 billion has to have strings attached to revenue sources or shifts. So, it’s kind of hard to figure out exactly where all the money is coming from, and there will be a lot of criticism as there always is about what’s real and what’s not real. Nonetheless, it is what it is as of today.

The Governor was straightforward and forthright when he stated that fiscal 2012 would be a lean year for State spending. Despite this, the Governor made it clear that he believes education spending represents an investment by the State in its future and when he says education, we know he always means K12 and maybe pre-K12 and you have to dig out the details to see if education, if that concept extends to post-secondary education and higher education. The spending plan he presented calls for level funding for public universities. That is the same general revenue allocation as appropriated for fiscal year 2011. So, the same number for our operation budget, which is $107 million, something like that last year, is the same for this year.

Considering the fiscal health of the State of Illinois and the history of declining State funding for higher education, the budget proposal put forth by Governor Quinn for public universities and other entities in higher education, I think it’s as realistic and as optimistic as possible, given the State’s dire financial circumstances. However, recall that this year, 2011, our appropriation from the State was reduced by nearly $7 million because of the federal money came out. So, budgeting at NIU will continue to be very tight. Of course, when inflation is considered and the additional mandates that we will have to accommodate, payment for veteran’s tuition, so on and so forth, perhaps new healthcare costs, a flat budget amounts to a budget reduction. Expenses rise, our costs rise, and we are in an enterprise where the consumer price index doesn’t measure the real inflationary impact on us because the higher education price index is composed of items that have hyperinflation like library; serials, which you know that story; technology, which has a higher inflation rate.

So, austerity is going to continue to be our rule. But remember, put that in perspective now. Put that in perspective in terms of what is happening to other states around us in terms of budget cuts to their universities and I think this is as optimistic as it can be. But you know, the bad news, the bad news is, as I have said many times, we don’t have a budget problem per se, we’ve got a cash flow problem. So okay, you have your operating budget and it’s flat but right now, we’re owed $77 million for last year.

Anyway, another bit of good news gleaned from just a quick, cursory look at the budget, it appears that all of our capital appropriations, meaning buildings, previously approved for NIU remain intact. Now, let me parse that for you because it’s complicated. You know Cole Hall is taken care of, the money is here, and we received some disbursements for Stevens for planning
but not all, and we had that Court of Appeals ruling that said the revenue package that was put together to fund that capital project is unconstitutional and that remains to be seen, but that is already that was funded. What I’m talking about now is new things that we put forward that are in the Governor’s budget, namely the new Computer Science and Technology building, which is a $50 million item and a little further down the list, a big time renovation of Wirtz and some capital renewal money. I’m very pleased about that, but you have to figure out where that is in terms of the State’s priorities going forward. But it’s in the budget, that’s a very good thing.

Let me dwell a little bit about debt restructuring in the State. The Governor used his budget address before the Joint Session of the General Assembly to advocate for his legislative proposal to restructure the $8.75 billion backlog bills. The money in this debt restructuring, read that, borrowing bill, the money would be used to cover outstanding bills the state owes to NIU and other public universities, municipalities, schools, social service providers, etc., etc., etc. We are currently owed $77 million with just over four months remaining in the fiscal year, so it’s worse than it was last year at this time by $15 million. Then, we haven’t received maybe a little, but we didn’t receive MAP funding $12 million for the fall. So, add that to that problem that we’re carrying forward. If the State were to restructure its outstanding debt, not only would NIU receive its monies owed, but it would also, downstream, pay for health providers who carry our insurance, who have waited almost 10 months for reimbursement from the State for employee health insurance payments. I know that we’re all getting letters from various people saying we’re not going to pay up front. Makes you mad, doesn’t it? Makes me mad.

I think Governor Quinn made a compelling argument that the State should not spread these payments across 10 years. So, I mean the theory is that you take the revenue stream that you have because of increased marginal tax rate increase and then you borrow $8.75 million and you dedicate part of that new revenue stream to pay it off in 15 years or whatever. That’s the idea. I try to explain it on a level of a household as a bill consolidation loan, where you get all your bills together, you get one loan, you pay it off and then you exercise fiscal discipline and you move forward. But that, you know, don’t do anything and Quinn says that will take 10 years to pay it off, which is one alternative. Frankly, I really can’t envision a scenario that will allow NIU and others to wait up to 10 years to access funds for the fiscal year 2011 and still remain in any sort of operational status. I’m not that smart anymore. I can’t figure that out anymore how I would do that. These funds are needed now to keep universities and the community colleges and the schools operating to ensure services to some of our State’s most vulnerable citizens and to continue that help uninterrupted and to help businesses, large and small, keep their doors open and their employees working. So, we don’t pay a firm which has a contract for us to deliver a service and their margins are thin and they’re not getting paid and they’ve got an operating line of credit with a bank that says, “You better pay this off.” They lay people off, they go out of business. That doesn’t strike me as being sensible.

Due to the great cooperation and planning of all divisions at the University and the efforts of our faculty and staff to conserve and creatively work and deliver our quality education experience under extremely tight budgetary constraints, we have continued to maintain our programs and try not to let it show on students. We have met our payroll. We invest where absolutely necessary in our facility infrastructure and address safety and related matters while positioning the University in a very highly competitive region. That’s a real trick. So, we’re managing, utilizing
the strategies and priorities that we put in place two years ago and you know them well, employment freeze, lengthen winter shutdown, limited travel, maintenance and repairs on hold except for health, safety and those sorts of things. We’re kind of holding and doing that until the State steps up to its responsibility but quite frankly, we can’t continue to do this indefinitely. It’s like a continual migraine headache every day to try to figure out how to make payroll every two weeks, $8-10 million depending on the season. That’s hard to do when you’re not getting any payments from the State. It’s wearing thin on all of us.

The Senate Republican leadership in Springfield has declared the Governor’s borrowing plan to be dead on arrival, and I really hope that’s not the case. I can understand the perspective though. Let me put this in perspective, the 35th Congressional Senatorial District, the district we’re in, which is composed of two General Assembly districts, Bob Pritchard and now Joe Sosnowski, make one Senate district, which Christine Johnson inherited from Brad Burzynski. But that 35th Senate District is home to NIU, Kishwaukee College, Kishwaukee Health Systems and dozens of social service providers that, if you take a look at the debt and you allocated it by Senate district, the 35th is owed $104 million by the State this year alone and remember we’re $77 million of that. Our region is in the unenviable position of being ranked 5th in outstanding state payments owed to service providers throughout the State. There are students of political science out there, if you take a look at the debt and you allocated it by Senate district, you know there are 59 Senate districts and if you allocate the $8.75 billion across the 59, we rank 5th in money owed. Then when you kind of take a look at where the rest are, what do you find out? Many of the big ticket districts that are owed have what in their districts? Universities. What’s your conclusion? Who has been bearing the cash flow crisis for the State? It’s universities in large part. So, it’s kind of hard to say where we should go from here, but I think that at some point, they’re going to have to figure a way of straightening out the bills that they owe going forward.

The debate over our proposed budget has already begun and the only certainties are that the budgeting process is likely to be protracted and partisan and nasty. Now, in addition, then there are the things that were not mentioned that have to be addressed and then there are legislative issues that are unrelated to the budget that we are watching. But I just want to talk a little bit about one issue, that’s really a budget issue that probably has to be addressed and that’s pension reform, that’s the 1,000-pound gorilla in the room. Even though the subject of pension reform was not a centerpiece of the Governor’s budget message itself today, the importance of public pension underfunding is the single most important financial issue facing the State and is at the core of every discussion on the budget in Springfield, if not the core, it leads that to that. This is by far the biggest issue facing the State and each of us as employees and taxpayers. As employees, we faithfully and regularly contributed our 8% of gross earnings to the SURS pension plan during your tenure at NIU. You’re not eligible for Social Security during tenure under SURS. Unfortunately, our political leaders have for years, underfunded the pension plans and so now there’s a real crisis. So, rather than putting in the annual amount that would be needed to keep that as actuarially determined to keep the reserves right, they take a holiday and not pay it, so the problem develops, or they borrow to make a payment. So, it gets us in a problem. NIU’s pension and budgeting tracking, monitoring website is up and running and is accessible through NIU Today in the faculty/staff homepages and the URL is: www.niu.edu/budget. So, I’m sure most of you have that bookmarked. I encourage each of you to check it regularly for updates that affect funding for either NIU’s operating budget or pension
changes that could affect existing employees.

In addition, I don’t know if you noticed this or not, but due to the heightened importance of the myriad of decisions that the General Assembly has to make over the next months, our Government Relations staff is providing weekly reports via NIU Today to the NIU community. I urge you to read those and also to reach out to your legislators and express your opinion on the various proposals that will be before the General Assembly. We had a meeting of the IBHE yesterday and the presidents and the chancellors were all together for a meeting and we’re all concerned about this. But, we also know that Illinois remains a great state. It’s a huge economic engine, it’s very vital, a lot of economic activity. Our higher education system is really the envy of many. We’ve got a nicely differentiated public higher education system with high, high-end research institutions and great four-year and great community colleges. So, I’m confident that over the next several months, our government leaders are going to come together through compromise to put forth a comprehensive plan to address this situation so that they can move forward.

But, right now, it’s a very tense period of time, but I do believe that I can see a scenario that is, in the long term, mid- to long term, optimistic and that is, and I know I look at this in a simple-minded, simplistic way, there are three or four pieces that have to come into play for the State to move forward and in no particular order. But, one thing they did, as difficult as it was, and as perhaps controversial as it was, they did pass a revenue-raising bill, increase in the income tax. Now, I think we need major tax reform, all that, and Governor Quinn did announce a commission to look at this, but there is an increase in revenue, that’s number one. Number two, I think what has to happen is fiscal discipline, and that is spending really does need to be controlled and programs need to be looked at and everything should be on the table. I suppose that includes pensions and to take a look to see if we can’t figure out ways to make that work while not denying their constitutionally guaranteed pension. I think that is important. There are other things, Medicare, Medicaid, that they’re looking at. Number three, again, I don’t see a way, short term, of solving this without some sort of bonding to pay off the bills that are owed, get the ship right. So, you’ve got revenue coming in, fiscal discipline and discipline going forward, consolidate to pay off your bills, again more fiscal discipline. Then the thing that I think universities can do well and have done well and has to happen is stimulate economic development and economic activity so that the economy expands, more revenue comes in, so that you can move forward. I’m optimistic that if those things are done in some order quickly before the end of this session that this state will move forward. It may not be next year or the year after, but I do see the light at the end of the tunnel. However, I can also make a case for the other direction, but I’m going to work hard to make sure we move in that direction.

That’s my brief look since 12:00 at the budget. We’re still crunching and looking to find out what’s hidden in there and watch the reports. Now what happens, moving forward, there will be appropriation hearings coming up in March, let’s say sometime March period of time, where before the House and then the Senate, we’ll be working with the Office of Management and Budget to try to solve the cash flow crisis. Hopefully, we will be getting some payments from the State, no promises, but we’re going to start letting you know where we are on that. So, my spring is pretty much taken up with that and Vision 2020, which is moving nicely forward in all of that. So, I know that was a little long winded, but I wanted to kind of give you the kind of the
first blush comprehensive review of what I think is going on. Now, I do know that states around us, their higher education systems, their budgets are being reduced in real terms. Michigan tomorrow will announce the budget, and they’re expecting anywhere from a 5 to a 20% cut in their base budget. Wisconsin seems to be in a turmoil over a lot of things. I haven’t been following it that closely, but again, I think our problem is a cash flow problem and not necessarily a budget problem.

So, I’m going to end there and I wish I had something positive, I have a lot positive to say, but I thought you’d want to hear about the budget. Alright, I’ll take questions. Yeah, ask a nice question, will you?

A. Gupta: I want to just mention some observations and maybe suggestions or questions to you. First, an observation. About two days ago when I was listening to the T.V., WGN, channel 9, they mentioned about the pension reform, I think it was ______, it looks like a columnist or journalist, and he mentioned that when there was a talk about reforming the pension of current employees, not future hires, that the Governor says apparently that it is unconstitutional to change it for current employees, but the person was reporting, he tried to it seems twist it as it that’s a union move and it really should not be considered unconstitutional. So, I thought maybe the University, whoever is the person, contact the legislature or similarly maybe they should contact a media person who will also not put a twist on the facts or at least. Maybe they already do, but I’m thinking as an average person, they might be thinking that what’s the situation. A couple of other things also when I was thinking as you suggested, we should all contact the legislatures and 35th district, I’m sure people are contacting the senator or house member. However, there are a significant number of people who live outside the district and I was thinking when I contact at least all the engineering faculty, maybe we can point to an easy URL or whatever where they can put their address and immediately should show up, okay, you live at this address, you are in district such and such and this is the senator. I tried to do it myself, but I didn’t see any obvious or easy place where they could find. The reason I’m saying if somebody is politically active or at least politically aware, that’s not an issue. The problem is the other 90% who really don’t care and some don’t even vote probably, but they will be concerned considering it’s affecting salary plus potential or at least pension. So, if that can be done, maybe in the website, that link which provides the legislative contact information. Also, third, I know we should not use University time and resources to advocate anything. On the other hand, if I really need to contact people and make them aware of, the only way I can, unless I type in all the separate emails, and even if then, it will be an NIU email that I write to. I presume that’s okay, as long as I do it maybe 10:00 at night or 11:00 at night, I suppose that I’m not using University resources to advocate my viewpoint or probably in general facts.

J. Peters: Well, you raise a lot of good questions and my advice is check with our Government Affairs office or Steve Cunningham to make sure that whatever you do, you do in a proper way and we are all, I think we’re all successful graduates of the ethics test. So, we all know about the uses of University resources for political purposes. So, my role is to provide information about issues that are important and our Human Resource organization the same. Our Annuities Association, which is, that’s a separate entity, is a very good source for this sort of information because they’re actively involved.
A. Rosenbaum: Abhijit, my understanding is that you shouldn’t use the NIU email system for that sort of activity and it’s easy enough to get a Gmail account or some other account that you can use to send email on your own. But, you shouldn’t use the NIU system.

A. Gupta: Again, I am just following, yes, I was planning to use my personal email. The problem is when I send it out, the people who receive it, that would be their NIU email. I mean, I don’t know most of the people’s home emails. So, that’s where I’m confused.

A. Rosenbaum: I don’t think it matters as much who gets it as it matters how you send it. So, if you send it from your own account to an NIU individual, I think that’s okay, as long as it’s not a subordinate or someone who answers to you.

J. Peters: I think what I need to do is to plan on making sure our staff who are knowledgeable, whether they’re in Legal Affairs or Government Affairs, has answers to these questions to give you a proper interpretation of what you can and can’t do. I think that’s the best thing I can do. Anybody else? Alright, very good.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

VI. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS, AND STANDING COMMITTEES

A. FAC to IBHE – Earl Hansen – report – Page 3

J. Peters: Alright, shall we launch into our announcement. There is no consent agenda but I know that moving on to reports, I know Earl Hansen has a report from the Faculty Advisory Committee to the IBHE.

E. Hansen: You’re lucky.

J. Peters: Now you’re on.

E. Hansen: It’s too bad, I thought maybe I can keep it off. We met last month and from that particular meeting and I’m going to be cursory on it, we had a gentleman there from the Business Roundhouse that we tried to communicate with and trying to do something with internships, trying to establish it. We don’t seem to have, the University doesn’t seem to have a problem with placing nurses in internships and accounting majors and engineers and technology people and computer science people, but I was pushing him to try to get something going with the businesses in the greater Chicagoland area in regards to being able to take actuarians and political science people and philosophy majors and others out there that bring something to the table too to some of these industries. He has not gotten back to me. Probably the reason he hasn’t gotten back to me is that it was almost like an inquisition when he came in there because he went after the pension system and some of the faculty members on the Advisory Council took a personal affront to that. Not me, but others did, and he has informed the Chair of that committee that he’s quite upset with the Faculty Advisory Council, so we’re trying to mend that fence.
Now, yesterday, I was in downtown Chicago and John was down there too. He was there for the IBHE Faculty Advisory Council meeting, and this is the first time in my tenure of being in this position that I actually felt like the Illinois Board of Higher Education people that were in the room with us for the luncheon actually were on the same page with us. They want to see input from you and from any other institution’s faculty as to what we can do to address what we perceive as issues. So, what I need you to do for me is to contact me and say, “Well, this is what I think and this is why I think the way it is.” Now, I brought up the question that came up with the Faculty Senate Meeting last week on the plus/minus issue on grading. I asked the people in the room what they thought about that and the consensus was, “Well, we’ve gone to it and it works and we’ve gone to it and it doesn’t work,” and so on and so forth. So, for whatever it’s worth, I think we ought to sit back and look at that particular issue, just from what I heard from conversation, and look at the pluses and minuses and the studies that are out there on it as opposed to just charging off. I know it’s a vote item coming up, but I really think you should take a look at the research that’s out there on this, because I don’t know what the cost factor is in making that changeover with software, I’ve no idea. But, that’s basically it and then we discussed the budget issue and we’ve been pounding on that thing for months.

J. Peters: Okay, thanks Earl. Alright, any questions?

A. Rosenbaum: I have just a comment. Earl, I think the Senate did a pretty good job of being concerned about the costs that are involved and also we had a lot of research that was done by our committee, so this was not just a vote that was taken arbitrarily. A lot of research went into it, the Senate was very informed, and there are a number of stages left in the process before that becomes a policy at NIU.

J. Peters: I have only been through this three times.

A. Rosenbaum: The fourth time is a charm.


B. BOT Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee – Kerry Freedman and Ferald Bryan – no report

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

D. BOT Legislation, Audit, and External Affairs Committee – Jay Monteiro and Todd Latham – no report

E. BOT – Alan Rosenbaum – no report

F. Academic Policy Committee – Pat Henry, Chair – no report

G. Resources, Space and Budgets Committee – Laurie Elish-Piper and David Goldblum, Co-chairs – report – Page 7
J. Peters: Let’s move to G and we’ve got Laurie and David. Laurie, are you giving the report?

L. Elish-Piper: Yes. Much of our report simply reiterates what you just said, so I’m going to be brief here and just point out three things from our report that have not been discussed thus far. One of them is item 1F, which follows up on the idea of pension reform and House Bill 146, which is currently looking at putting a cap on salaries that will be used to calculate pension contributions for existing employees and a URL is there for more information about House Bill 146. Another item is item 1I, which talks about how NIU sold bonds before the end of 2010 to fund some renovations that relate to being able to kind of recruit and retain students. Those renovations deal with residence halls, the student center, parking areas, intramural fields and other facilities that are of interest to students. Then additionally, item 3, our group will be meeting with President Peters and Provost Alden on February 22nd. So, we’ll have a report then I guess after that.

J. Peters: Alright, questions for Laurie? Seems like these are all moving targets that the numbers keep, the issues are there but the numbers keep changing. Alright, thank you very much.

H. Rules and Governance Committee – Suzanne Willis, Chair – report – Page 9

J. Peters: Alright, now Sue Willis has a Rules and Governance report on page 9.

S. Willis: Yes. Okay, we actually have two items here that are related and what I would like to do is address very briefly the second one, which actually starts on page 28. The item that starts on page 9 is a set of revisions to Article 11 of the bylaws concerning grievance procedures. The proposed revisions that start on page 28 to the Academic Policies and Procedures manual are included now essentially for information. These are changes that we should make assuming that the changes to Article 11 get passed. So, I would invite you to look at, and as you will see, essentially what we’re doing is removing most of that particular item in the APPM because it has been replaced by Article 11. If we do not pass the proposed changes to Article 11, we will come back with a different set of deletions to that item in the APPM because a lot of it was already replaced by Article 11 when it was originally passed back in 2004 and ought to be removed anyway because it is duplicative and confusing. But in any case, so the APPM revisions are included right now for information. What I would like to do is move those after we act on the revisions to Article 11, which is what starts on page, whatever page it starts on, 9.

J. Peters: This is a first reading.

S. Willis: Yes. Now starting on, now pages 9 and 10 is a brief summary of the changes that we are proposing and then pages 11 through 27 include the entirety of Article 11 with the changes indicated in the usual fashion where things that we are omitting are struck out and things that we are adding are underlined. So, I would like to move this as a first reading that we make these changes.

J. Peters: Alright, so there is a motion on that we move this report on first reading in its entirety,
S. Willis: Yes.

J. Peters: Alright, that’s the motion. Is there a second?

P. Henry: Second.

J. Peters: Alright, Pat seconds. Alright, now discussion. That’s a lot here.

D. Haliczer: There were several changes, and we’ve met a lot with Sue and her committee, that we had proposed, and so one of the items is in 11.5.32(h). I feel bureaucratic. And we’re questioning why one of the lines, one of the items was eliminated from the final draft, and that’s the item that says, in that summary, “Summary of the principle evidence presented in support of the charge or charges in a preliminary list of witnesses, the University administration plans to call.” One of the purposes for including that line was to make sure that both the grievant and the grievance committee, the hearing board, would have not just the charges, but the justification for a termination for cause.

Unidentified: Could you repeat which one that was?

D. Haliczer: Oh yeah, it’s on the second page of that summary, and it’s item 11.5.32(h).

Unidentified: Page 9.

D. Haliczer: Page 9? Okay, yeah. So, that sentence that I said was not included and so what we were requesting was more information about the evidence, not just what the charges were but pieces of evidence that justify the termination for cause. So, can you give us your thinking on that?

S. Willis: Yes, we, as you recall when we first met about this, we met with a large meeting with a lot of people, including University legal counsel and my recollection of that meeting, which I have to confess gets less precise since time goes on, was that they felt that that had already been covered. I mean, I personally have no objection to putting that back in. If the rest of the committee is happy with it, I would be willing to accept it as a friendly amendment.

J. Peters: Alright, so that was accepted as a friendly amendment and will be back for a second reading, inserted for a second reading.

D. Haliczer: We have another item as well.

J. Peters: Alright.

T. Latham: One of the other issues that came, I first want to say it was a very fair process. I appreciate the fact that our Ad Hoc committee met with the Rules and Governance committee initially and then I was able to address the chair with some other issues and we, quite frankly,
have gotten almost all of them resolved. But, as my official responsibility, the one item that I think we have remaining is the title of the Senior Administrative Human Resource Office. It’s an okay title under 11.2.8 where the grievance procedure indicates that it’s filed with the Executive Secretary who then forwards it to the recommended title of the SAHR, and that’s fine because that individual might specifically know who the SAHR is. However, when you go onto 11.5.1, it specifically says that the complainant then will file the grievance form if it’s not resolved to that level of satisfaction with the SAHR again. My concern is that with new hires, it might be misconstrued who that person is. There is a specific timeline that we follow that would be very nice that one, it was delivered and it was in the receipt by that person that acknowledged that because the confidentiality of the grievance procedure, we want to make sure it gets in the right hands, that it’s basically something that is kept to minimal exposure and many offices like my own, if it’s not clear who it’s addressed to, somebody else could open it, which might cause further damage. I also want to just make sure that it’s consistent throughout the document. I understand the intent and I certainly respect that the term is something that would be almost generic that we wouldn’t have to go back and amend, but my question is, in doing so, does it kind of undermine the process and truthfully, the confidentiality of this grievance procedure. Is there a better title that we should be using and that’s something that’s maybe so loose that somebody else could assume that maybe they’re that person or someone might assume that they delivered it to the right person and actually it was the wrong person. There’s not that title on a website or under someone’s business cards or on their office. So, I’m just concerned that when we have a title, it’s the right title to the right person with the right intent.

T. Bishop: Can I speak to that Sue?

S. Willis: Yes, please.

T. Bishop: I speak to that because I’m at least partly responsible for the alternative language and actually, Todd, I think that what we’re proposing address that issue superior to the point of putting a specific title in. Putting a specific title in, and as Steve Cunningham will tell you, his title has changed quite a few times over the years he’s been here and so each time that changes, we would have to change the bylaws to accommodate his new title. And knowing that it takes somewhat of an act of God to change the bylaws here at this institution, it’s certainly a long time, the language, in its more generic form, allows that flexibility for the bylaws to live on while the names change. Obviously, what this requires then is somebody is known as or is distinguished as the Senior Administrator of Human Resources. Whether that’s a Senior VP, VP, Director, Assistant to the VP, or what have you. Now, I understand that there’s a lack of clarity under either set of circumstances, but this is probably preferable and more workable over the long term, and that’s why I feel that this is the appropriate way to handle it.

J. Peters: Okay, do you want to clarify or counter?

D. Haliczer: Continue the argument.

J. Peters: What?

D. Haliczer: Continue the discussion here.
**J. Peters:** Steve, I don’t know what your current title is, but you had something to say?

**All:** Laughter.

**S. Cunningham:** Well, one time it was _____ planning and we had to change that because we had so many “beam me up comments.”

**J. Peters:** I never knew what that was.

**S. Cunningham:** But we, and I too had the opportunity to meet with the committee before the new year and I think maybe between first and second reading, I’ve not really had the opportunity to provide the committee with, just given our experience with administering this procedure for the last seven years, we do have a good sense where there are many ambiguities the participants have about the procedure and questions that come up. So, we’ll have a little, some not major, but some additional feedback for the committee here between first and second reading and perhaps we can address that issue too with that feedback.

**J. Peters:** So, what I’m hearing you say, you’ve got a few things that you want to discuss with the committee that would help the document, including perhaps this?

**S. Cunningham:** Yes.

**J. Peters:** Senior administrator issue?

**S. Cunningham:** Correct.

**D. Haliczer:** What we had suggested and what we really would like you all to think about is the title, VP, HR or Designee, which means that it goes to Steve or one of a very few of the rest of us. The whole purpose the SPS Council had in bringing this forward was because we were very concerned about ambiguity and confusion on the part of people who needed to file grievances and so we’re trying to direct them to a single document and a single person as point rather than risk, some of the complaints that arose when we first did the grievance procedure back when Sue was here with University Council, and that is people were not sure where to send it, documents allegedly got lost and people became very mistrustful of the process. So, we want this to be as specific as possible. That being said, we really appreciate the Council acting on this, and you have the great thanks of all of our SPS Council.

**A. Rosenbaum:** One thing I’d like to add, sort of in support of what Deb and Todd are saying is that our experience with the Constitution is that it seems to outlast the people who framed the various pieces of it, and we very often find ourselves wondering, “What did they mean by this or what was the purpose of this?” So, as specific as we can make it, that makes it easier for people down the road who will not know what we have in mind here when we rewrite this. So, I would agree that as specific as we can be about the title, that will make it easier.

**J. Peters:** Alright, Dean McCord has his hand up.
C. McCord: A few things very quickly. First of all, on that specific point, on page 21, I think it’s 11.5.34(b), the old title, I think it’s the one place where it wasn’t changed to SAHR, so there’s one rogue title in there.

Unidentified: ____ two others.

J. Peters: The issue to the Associate Vice President.

C. McCord: The point Deb was making earlier, the question about sort of providing notification is in the document, it’s simply not in the summary and since the summary is for information purposes for this meeting, I’m not sure how consequential it is whether it’s in the summary or not. The point is, it’s in the document.

S. Willis: No, if I could cut in briefly, she’s talking about an extra list item, which in fact, is not in the document.

C. McCord: Okay, I thought she was referring to the language in 11.5.32.h, but if I have to reluctantly acknowledge as an administrator that I don’t know what I’m talking about, I’m happy to back out.

S. Willis: If you look at page 18, there’s a list of added items there, and there was yet another added item, which our committee omitted from that list, and she would like to have it in.

C. McCord: My real point was again, in desire for clarity after the document is established and those who wrote it are perhaps no longer there to describe it, I’ve had a recent conversation with Steve Cunningham and I hope between this and the next reading, there are some fine distinctions between dismissal for cause and nonrenewal of a term appointment. There is a small shade of meaning, which is explicitly differentiated in the old document and which is only implicit in the new document by silence and asking people to interpret silence is always a little more risky. So, I would just ask if there is a need to clarify the distinction between how is grievances involving dismissal for cause and grievances involving nonrenewal of a term contract, how are those clarified.

S. Willis: Well, we did add a new definition in the appendix where we defined dismissal for cause.

C. McCord: Right, and I note again, it is silent on nonrenewal but again, it is only by silence that you infer that it’s not included and silence again, I would suggest, is always a possibly risky way to know what is and isn’t included.

J. Peters: Alright.

D. Haliczer: I think some of that ambiguity, Chris, could be remedied in a revision that needs to happen to the original APPM document that talked about SPS policies and procedures, including language about nonrenewal, language about termination for cause and Sue has, and the
committee have looked at that document. SPS Council and HR I think also, if I can speak for you, Steve, need to see some changes in that document and I think that that could remedy most of the lack of clarity that you’re raising.

C. McCord: I simply commend it to their attention.

J. Peters: Alright. More?

A. Rosenbaum: I have a couple of items. One is, it’s on page 18 and the item says, “No further information shall be provided to the grievant in this case except at the discretion of the grievance committee.” When we started this, the General Counsel for the University sort of gave the opinion that the grievant would have the right to some of that information. So, I’m sort of wondering if this was hashed out with the General Counsel if there was some consideration of that issue.

S. Willis: Okay, this is in the case where the grievance committee decides that there are not causes to hold a hearing.

A. Rosenbaum: Right.

S. Willis: And the grievant has already received the response from the respondent, we did put that in there.

A. Rosenbaum: Right, they’ve received the response but then it says, “No further information shall be provided,” and the General Counsel had given an opinion that the grievant was entitled to other information such as the membership of the committee and things like that.

S. Willis: Alright … because we discussed specifically later on the issue of the committee membership and okay, I guess I’ll have to get back to the General Counsel on that. I was under the impression that that was something that did not have to be disclosed in that case.

A. Rosenbaum: Well, that was the General Counsel’s opinion. The committee doesn’t have to necessarily follow that, but that was what was recommended. The second item, in the item (h) below that where it says, “Once scheduled, the Executive Secretary and a SAHR shall immediately notify.” I think when you have the “and” in there and two different people are responsible for doing the same thing, it can become confusing. I don’t know why just one of the two can’t be designated as the person to do that. So, there would be no problem with the Executive Secretary doing that. So, just the idea that both are doing the same thing seems a little awkward and prone to have things fall through the cracks.

T. Latham: I do have a response maybe to the question about why the grievance committee would have some release of information at their discretion. In our discussions, we talked about the possibility of retaliation or even some concerns or threats that might be made against the members or an uncomfortable situation. So, I know in our discussions, we kind of agreed that there might be some information that would not be released just to kind of secure that grievance committee and kind of protect them in some ways. We talked about some different scenarios
that might exist, certainly as information that they could release but there might be some that they might not. Is that what you’re referring to?

**A. Rosenbaum:** It is what I am referring to and although that makes a lot of sense, it’s the only situation in which the names of the committee are not available to the grievant. So, if they were to decide there were grounds and then go onto have a hearing, the grievant would know exactly who was on the committee. So, we wouldn’t want this to be a way for the committee to avoid that sort of disclosure.

**T. Latham:** Right, and I agree with that. I think it was in the case where the committee was formed and they decided not to hear the case that their names then wouldn’t be released. I think that was one scenario we looked at as well.

**A. Rosenbaum:** Right, and that was, you know, again, a grievant in a case that raised this problem was what led the General Counsel to give the opinion. So, I think we just have to find out more about how significant that issue is and whether we are doing something that is violating somebody’s legal rights by not disclosing that information.

**J. Peters:** Steve Cunningham?

**S. Cunningham:** Yes, thank you. I would just, we’ll follow up on the comments that you made Alan and also with respect to that matter as part of our coordinated responses as we go through to the second reading. The General Counsel was concerned about due process rights. I know we discussed that and so we’ll flesh that out a little more with the legal counsel as we provide feedback. In terms of, there are interesting things in the procedure about custody of documents and administration of the procedure and it is, in many cases, a jointly administered procedure with the executive secretary in my office. So, we’ll try to clarify those points where they exist if there is ambiguity about who does what and we can still do that.

**A. Rosenbaum:** Okay, the other, the last point I have is that under 11.5.34(c), this is all new language and specifies a different procedure for SPS and faculty with regards to whether the grievance ends with the President or whether it’s transmitted to the Board of Trustees. Could you just talk a little bit about why the two separate processes or what the committee was thinking in doing it this way?

**S. Willis:** This just preserves the existing situation. This, the text on page 21 and 11.5.34(c) comes directly from the existing procedures for dismissal for cause of SPS that are now in the APPM and we did not change them. So, we’re not changing anything, we’re just moving it to a different document. It’s the same procedure.

**A. Rosenbaum:** Okay, but I’d still be interested in why there are different procedures for SPS and for faculty with regards to where the grievance ends. Was there any discussion of that?

**S. Willis:** No, there was not. Although, if I might add, this procedure does not cover dismissal for cause of faculty, that’s covered elsewhere in the bylaws, and that is not something that we looked at in this context.
**A. Gupta:** Regarding going back to the documented, I would like to share, maybe it was mentioned in some previous meeting, at least one person who served on the committee before, he came to me and he said in the future, he would not serve on a committee if the names are disclosed in the case of denial of further proceeding. He feels very insecure if the names are released, so I thought just share that that sentiment is out there.

**J. Peters:** Pat?

**P. Henry:** Going back to the question of being specific about who things should be sent to, I noted in the appendix on page 26 at the bottom there, kind of spelling this out in a way that maybe is buried too deep to be useful, but I sort of, I can sympathize with the fact that if titles change and then you have to go through the entire document and change who this is as opposed to just having one place where you define the senior administrator responsible for human resources as blank for now, then you just have to change that part, if in fact it stopped being the Vice President for Administration and Human Resources and had a different title. Is that just not, is that buried too deep in the weeds for it to be useful in your opinion?

**D. Haliczer:** Because we change our titles so much in HR and you all know that, we thought that a simple title of Vice President for Human Resources would encompass whatever change has happened. Vice President for Human Resources or Designee and then if we changed that person’s name to Senior Vice President, still the Vice President if it’s the Vice President for Enterprise Planning, Human Resources and Administration or whatever, that at least that will be the generic top title as I joked with my boss before, Steve, I don’t think we’re going to promote you higher than Vice President, so that seems like the ultimate title that’s generic enough. It’s just to eliminate confusion for our grievance.

**S. Willis:** I was going to say, my original suggestion for that was rather than Senior Administrator, what I had said was the Vice President responsible for Human Resources, with an abbreviation of VPHR and my committee overruled me on that. It’s a process, what can I say.

**J. Peters:** More? Alright, so where we are now is we have a motion and a second on first reading with many comments and directives given to be accommodated for second reading. Are we ready? Do we have to vote on first reading?

**B. Ferald:** No, you don’t have to vote.

**J. Peters:** We don’t have to vote, but there is…

**Unidentified:** (inaudible).

**J. Peters:** Is everyone comfortable? Now, I suspect that if you have something that comes to mind, this is a very complex document, that you will get those, this may stimulate more discussion for a second reading. Okay, thank you Sue. A lot of work there. This has been coming for a long time. It’s important to get it right.
I. University Affairs Committee – M Cecil Smith, Chair – report

1. 2020-21 Academic Calendar – Page 37

J. Peters: Alright, now University Affairs. Sue, are you done?

S. Willis: Yes

J. Peters: Alright, Cecil?

M C. Smith: I’d like to call your attention to the academic year 2021 academic calendar on page 37. If we could be optimistic and assume it will still be a viable entity in another decade if the budget situation is resolved. I would like to move on behalf of the University Affairs committee that the academic calendar for 2021 be approved.

J. Peters: Alright, Cecil made that motion, is there a second?

T. Latham: Second.

J. Peters: Alright, discussion? Who’s going to be around?

All: Laughter.

J. Peters: All those in favor of accepting the academic calendar for 2021 say, “aye.”

All: Aye.

J. Peters: Opposed? We’ll be here.

2. Guidelines and Principles for Establishment of Academic Calendar – Page 38

M C. Smith: So then moving on, on the back page of your academic calendar, guidelines and principles for establishment of academic calendar, you see some edits, some additions to this document, which these changes basically indicate specific days of the week for particular events. So again, on behalf of the University Affairs committee, I would like to make a motion that these changes be approved.

J. Peters: Alright, there is a motion to approve the guidelines for establishing the academic calendar. Is there a second?

R. Smith: Second.

J. Peters: Okay, now discussion? All those in favor say, “aye.”

All: Aye.
J. Peters: Opposed?

3. Comprehensive Review of the President

M C. Smith: Finally, if you’d looked at the agenda and saw this comprehensive review of the President, you may have wondered where this came from. So, I’d like to give you a little background as the University Affairs committee was tasked with preparing a review of the President. I’ll refer you to bylaw number 18.7, Performance Reviews in the Constitution, 18.71, the President, so I’ll read this to you.

“The President shall be subject to a comprehensive review of that officer’s performance in office at the beginning of the sixth year of service in the position and at the start of each fourth year thereafter. The comprehensive review shall be conducted under the auspices of the University Council and shall provide opportunities for input from all appropriate segments of the University community. The results of that review, together with the University Council’s recommendation regarding the President’s continued performance in office shall be forwarded to the Board of Trustees. The University Council may meet in executive session to formulate its conclusions and recommendations regarding the performance of the President.”

Now, I’ll give you some relevant dates. President Peters’ tenure began on June 1st of 2000. The beginning of his sixth year of appointment was June 1, 2005. So, at that time, according to the Constitution bylaw 18.71, a performance review should have been conducted by University Council. I do not believe that that occurred. The beginning of his 10th year of appointment was June 1, 2009, so again, a performance review should have been conducted at that time according to the bylaws and again, I don’t believe that that occurred. So, University Affairs discussed the possibility of conducting a performance review at this time. We decided against that and rather to make a motion to conduct a performance review which would be on schedule at the beginning of the 14th year of appointment, which would be June 1, 2013. So, I would make a motion that University Council conduct a performance review of the President at the beginning of the 14th year of appointment in 2013.

J. Peters: Okay, so that is a motion from the committee, is there a second for that?

S. Willis: Second.

J. Peters: Let me comment a little bit, not as the person to be evaluated but as somebody with not a lot of runway left. My counsel was that this process, the major responsibility of the Board of Trustees is hiring, evaluating, selecting, terminating if need be, a president. I go through annual evaluations, the president goes through annual evaluations with the Board and contractually with five-year reviews. So, I have gone through 10 annual reviews and two major reviews. Now, I think what has to happen, is bringing into concordance that process, the trustee responsibility, which they will guard very jealously, as they should, with this process to make the one flow as input to the other, and that would be my suggestion, and I do think that the current trustees want to do that. So, that’s my two cents. I happen to like evaluations. I’ve been evaluated my whole life, but I hope that’s helpful. Alright, now that’s my two cents. Comments? Yeah, Dean McCord?
C. McCord: President Peters, could you clarify whether the five-year cycle for, if we can say it this way…

J. Peters: Yeah.

C. McCord: Comprehensive review at the Board level. Is that like likewise specified somewhere in Board regs or anything like that?

J. Peters: No.

C. McCord: Or is that simply current practice of the Board?

J. Peters: That is practice and sometimes it’s embedded within contracts.

C. McCord: Okay, but to bring those in accord with something which is in the Constitution and bylaws, potentially we would need to worry about those being things that sit on rather different levels and operate in rather, according to different people’s wills.


All: Laughter

J. Peters: Alright, all those in favor of that? Actually, what they said is that if I’m around in ’14, you’ll have your annual review. Alright, all those in favor say, “aye.”

All: Aye.

J. Peters: Opposed? Abstained?

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

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

IX. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

J. Peters: Alright, where are we? Unfinished business, new business? Alright, anybody have anything from the floor that you want to talk about?

A. Rosenbaum: I have something.

J. Peters: Okay, Alan.

A. Rosenbaum: Just a quick question for Dr. Seaver, some of the students were asking about the
plus/minus grading process. Earl referred to this earlier as many of you know, certainly the faculty members on Council know, the Faculty Senate overwhelmingly passed a motion to endorse a plus/minus grading policy for the University. That policy, once passed, is being given over to the academic councils, the Undergraduate and Graduate Council and APASC and the students I think are wondering about how student input will be woven into this, what the timeline is, what process happens next. As far as the Council is concerned, whatever comes to us from those academic councils will have to be ultimately approved by the University Council because we have to approve all changes in the language of the various policies. But could you talk to us a little bit about what the process is going forward and how the students will be able to have input into it?

E. Seaver: Right, from the undergraduate level, the policy that was approved by Faculty Senate and Alan and I have already talked about this, will go to APASC, and the meetings of APASC are up on the University Council website but if you can’t find those, you’re certainly welcome to contact my office and we’ll provide you with the date of that. So it will go there first and then any recommendations that comes out of APASC will then go to the Undergraduate Coordinated Council. Those dates are also published. We do have student membership on UCC. We were supposed to have undergraduate representative on APASC, I’m not sure how many students have that, but Pat I believe those memberships are also on the University Council website so you can see who the representatives are. But when this came through a few years ago, APASC and UCC were very willing to have students attend to give their input at that point as well. As far as the Graduate School is concerned and that will go through the Graduate Council. But for the undergraduates, those will be the meetings and we intend to bring the proposal to APASC at the next meeting of APASC, which I believe is around the first Wednesday or second Wednesday of March. We’re kind of in the off cycle with Faculty Senate and University Council. But, if you can’t find us, you’re certainly welcome to contact my office and we can give you those dates, but they’re on the University Council website, as is the membership.

J. Peters: Does that address your issues, Alan?

A. Quick: We had a few conversations the other day. I guess the major concern for myself and for many of the students that I have spoken with is the first we heard of this for many of us, and a lot of us are student leaders that are very involved, is what we saw in the Northern Star and it kind of scared a lot of students because we haven’t heard anything and all of a sudden we see that the Faculty Senate picture with everyone voting, as you said, almost unanimously, and it scared a lot of students and people were unaware. Yes, her picture was right up there.

J. Peters: There she is, the party of the first part.

A. Quick: It just, it’s one of those things like, I appreciate your forwardness in the process with us and the bigger thing is there’s only five or six of us, how are we supposed to inform the entire student body that they can go to these meetings and all these acronyms and stuff scare a lot of students as it is and they don’t get involved.

E. Seaver: Well, if you’re planning on having 18,000 students there, it would be helpful for me to know because I need to go get the Convo Center rather than 225 and 203. But we certainly,
the last time this came up, we did work with the Student Association leadership. I would be happy to meet with you, to talk to you about how the process will play out, the kinds of things. There’s a number of issues that need to be discussed about this. I think, as Alan said, and Earl [Hansen] brought up, there’s a number of questions that have been debated and I think we need to come, I have people working already and trying to answer some of those questions about costs and how this would work and so, we’re already looking at those issues that will bring that information forward so that the faculty and students on that committee can make the most informed decision. But, you’re more than welcome to contact, one of my roles is to be the liaison with the Student Association as it relates to academic areas and so if you want to get a hold of me, we can set up a meeting and talk about it and we can talk about maybe what’s the best way. I think certainly having people there to hear the discussions so that it’s an informed decision, I know when we looked at this, I think it was, Alan was about four years?

**A. Rosenbaum:** 2005.

**E. Seaver:** 2005. I did meet with the leadership of the Student Association and we did get them information and certainly made sure that people were there to be able to give their side of it and knowing both APASC and UCC at the undergraduate level, they’re very open to listening to the students and weighing that information. So, if you want to get a hold of me, we can set up a meeting to certainly start to talk about the process and how you might start to get that information out to the students.

**A. Quick:** And just for my sake, since I wasn’t here four or five years ago, was this a proposal before and it did not pass?

**E. Seaver:** That is correct. It was primarily, I think that we’re in a, it was really a whole different process that it’s hard to compare what happened the last time versus this time. There’s been a lot more open discussion about it this time at the Faculty Senate level. It just was kind of brought forward to APASC where we tried to get a lot of information, some of the information that Earl [Hansen] talked about, some of the research that has been done, and we were in a different place at that time relative to our student information system. So, it was not supported, it was not supported by the students at that time for various reasons, but there was not, I have to say that the openness of the discussion, Alan and I talked about this late last week, that the openness of the discussion has been, it’s been much more transparent this time than I think it was the last time. It kind of popped up on the radar screen on APASC. So, if you want to get a hold of my office, I would be happy to sit down and talk with you and we can talk about how, when the meetings will be, how it will go and then to be there certainly to listen to the information that APASC will, because that’s where it will start for the undergraduate level. Grad level, you’ll need to talk to Brad Bond.

**A. Quick:** And I guess my final question would be, as far as the process, once it goes through these committees, the final approval for whether or not we go to this system would be in University Council, am I correct on that?

**E. Seaver:** Well, Alan and I have kind of talked about this. You have to read, the final vote as far as undergraduate curriculum is with the Undergraduate Coordinating Council, UCC. Those
minutes do come to this body and then if you look carefully in the Constitution and bylaws, it talks about the role that this is, and Alan, maybe you can clarify, you and I have not had a chance to talk about it, but ultimately, it comes to this group, which can reject, well, I guess send back for consideration is what it would be or give its blessing for acceptance. So, in the way of our governance, actually UCC makes the decision, but this council does have the opportunity to review that and either send it back for further consideration or to accept it.

A. Quick: And currently what is the timeline for this as far as the process? Are we looking at this to be something that’s finally decided upon towards the end of the school year or this academic school year or is it something we’re just, that’s my last question, where are we in this process and how is that going to…?

A. Seaver: Well, Alan and I talked, we talked last week a little bit. I would like to get this in front of the APASC as soon as we possibly can. We do not meet as committees once the school year ends. So, one of the issues is the catalogs have to align, we have to talk about how the student system is set up, we have to talk about implementation. There’s a whole number of questions that Faculty Senate talked about, all are issues that have to be answered as to what do we mean by a C or better. So, I think all of those things that you see or you see in the proposal, those are all things that faculty and students have to talk about how we’re going to deal with that in the catalog. So, we want to start the discussion right now. The timeline will be however long it takes us to have, to move this in a timely fashion, to have a discussion, to make a decision.

A. Rosenbaum: If you are worried about this happening, for example, in the fall semester, the odds of that are pretty slim. So, we’ve talked about the likelihood, if this does go through as it was voted, it probably wouldn’t take effect until the fall semester of 2012.

E. Seaver: There’s no way this can be done for fall and we essentially are done with our curricular decisions for the catalog that will go into effect next fall and our student information system runs off our catalog. So, as Alan and I talked, the earliest this could be implemented would be for the fall a year from now.

A. Quick: For the new catalog, so then the students that are already currently here, say there are people who are freshman now, they would not be under that, and I guess these are things we can bring up in that committee so we’re not taking up.

E. Seaver: These are all the discussions that faculty have to have as to how this is going, how it will impact students who are currently here and how it will happen with new students. So, those are all issues, and we have people in Registration and Records who are very well versed in the system, and we are also, have been in conversation with other universities that have plus/minus systems and have different types of plus/minus systems that are similar to the one that the Faculty Senate. So we do have some information that we are going to come back and share with the faulty as they make their, as the committee, which is faculty and students, make the decision at the undergraduate, for the undergraduate, which is the only part that I deal with.

A. Quick: Great, thank you.
J. Peters: Pat?

P. Henry: As someone who went into my class the day after my picture was on the front page of the Northern Star…

J. Peters: Yes, it was a good picture at that, too.

P. Henry: My students were fairly concerned about it too and one of the things that I got from that conversation with them is a lot of uncertainty about how this would work. I really think that the document that was brought forth from the Faculty Senate should be disseminated as widely as possible…

J. Peters: Good document.

P. Henry: …amongst the students because it has a lot of answers to some of these questions I think.

E. Seaver: And obviously that is the role of the Faculty Senate, not APASC. I mean, I think that would be very helpful to get that information out, but our role really is to take what’s given to us and work it through the government system of the institution.

J. Peters: Todd? Oh, did you have a comment on that first?

A. Rosenbaum: Yeah, just one comment is that the transcripts of the Faculty Senate are public record, and they can be accessed by anybody on our website, so people can see exactly what was done. Also, the Northern Star could certainly request a copy of that if they felt like putting it in its entirety, but I don't know what other mechanism there might be for getting that document to the student body as a whole.

E. Seaver: And it would be an attachment to our minutes from APASC that are posted on the University Council website.

T. Latham: SPS Council doesn’t have any direct representation on the UCC or the Grad Council directly, but we do have some concerns regarding the proposed grade change system, just three quick ones. We want to know how this would affect scholarship eligibility, as some of our employment categories operate these types of departments. Currently, a lot of the cutoffs are like a 3.0. You can still have a B- and have a 2.67, so that might change how individuals are eligible for scholarships. The second point would be if you are a grad student, a 3.0 is the cutoff for good standing or probation.

A. Rosenbaum: If I could just cut you off for a second, these are all issues that we have considered, and this will be considered by the committee and input should be given to the committee in some way. So, this is not, I think, a matter for the University Council at this time.

E. Seaver: I can say to you, Todd, that the way in which this played out before, we didn’t do at one meeting because people would say, “Well what’s this mean about this, what’s it mean about
that?” and then there’s really a lot of give-and-take back to the colleges and to other individuals to say, “Okay, I know you say a C or better, what does that really mean? Is that really a 2.0? Does it take into account C-?” So, as Alan and I have talked a couple of different times, these are the things that are going to have to work through the faculty with a lot of discussion outside of those committee meetings before committee, before decisions are made by the committee. So, I know the last time we did this, we were able to reach back out plus talk about what the consequences were in terms of programming systems. So, we already have a group of people who have been raising these questions already that need to have answers. So, we haven’t just been waiting by waiting for Pat to raise her hand on the front page of the paper. We’ve been looking at, okay, what does this really mean and part of it, we’ve had to wait until people decided what the real process was because there are some implications with regard to the specific policy that was passed that’s a little different than other institutions. So, we have a whole set of those same kinds of questions that the APASC and the faculty and the students on that, they’re going to have to get answers to that before they make a vote.

J. Peters: Alright, yes, Sue?

S. Willis: I just wanted to sort of give a little friendly shout out to the SA and suggest that this has been a very active discussion at the Faculty Senate for several months now and probably, the Senate agendas and minutes are on the web and that would probably be a good thing for you guys to be reading all the time so you’re aware of these things before they show up in the Star. We actually don’t operate in secret really exactly quite.

A. Quick: And that’s one of those things that we’re, just to comment, what we do, but again, there’s how many, 25,000 students roughly who don’t and that’s where we’re trying to. There’s only so many of us and especially in this council. I will be very honest, we’re outnumbered, and there’s a lot of different variables that are in place. So, we’re just trying to make sure that we have the full concept of it and I understand that this is maybe not the time for University Council but just to make sure that we are definitely kept in the loop and again, if we’re the student leaders here who are not really familiar with it and understand, I can’t imagine a freshman in biology who doesn’t have a clue about what’s going on except what they read in the paper.

S. Willis: My son is a freshman in Electrical Engineering. I heard from him too.

A. Gupta: I understand fully Austin’s concern that how students would know and it would sound like they would go to the Faculty Senate website. One possibility is that in the University main website, where students do not control, they are among all the other important things that are mentioned, maybe just have a separate tab or whatever it says, proposed grade change or grade change under consideration. That way, every student, when they go to the NIU website, they know what’s going on, and also giving permission who they should contact.

J. Peters: Well, let me just say that I was a little big glib before, saying I’ve been through three of these and I have and assessment is at the heart, and evaluation, of what we do at universities. We were just talking about evaluating a president, an executive secretary, faculty get evaluated all the time, tenure process and students routinely, and there’s nothing more important than a fair and understandable system of evaluation. I remember as a faculty member, the hardest thing I
did, and I know how faculty feel this way, is the evaluation of students, and you need everything in your toolkit to do a fair and accurate assessment because, in fact, the awarding of grades and the matter of grades, the judgment of the faculty member is final, except when the grade was awarded in an arbitrary or capricious manner and then you have a procedure. But it puts faculty at the heart of the process and, therefore, it seems to me appropriate that from time to time, whether you need it or not, faculty talk about the process by which they evaluate and the standards and the scale or whatever, because it stimulates an awful lot of good discussion about evaluation and so I know I always felt as a faculty member, I wanted a system that gave me enough nuance so that I could make a distinction between a B- and a C+. You know, you go through that, it’s hard, it’s very, very hard. So, I want to commend the Faculty Senate and those that took this up. There are externalities that are technical that are associated with this, about how much does it cost, can the systems do it. And there are concerns that students have, will this disadvantage my current GPA as I go to apply to law school or so forth. Of course, we all know that law schools and graduate schools, they take all these numbers and the re-compute them to their own standard number, they normalize them all. But we need to do that, so I’m very pleased about that. I remember at one institution, we did this for three years, the debates went on for three years, and they moved from a system like ours to one of pluses and minuses except no A+. Nobody is ever that good. We were ready to go and the math department said well, “If 13 positions are good in evaluation, let’s have 40, so no grades but from 0 to 40,” and that blew the whole thing up. So, this place still has the same grading system they had in 1983. I’m making light of this; this is a very serious matter and I’m really pleased and look forward to seeing the outcome. Alright. Yes?

J. Bruce: I was just going to say that if you’re going to try and communicate to students, I know I am a student, I can speak for myself that I’m not going to be too keen to read through an entire length of six months of minutes from the Faculty Senate, that maybe just go to the Star or put it on the NIU webpage just a brief summary of bullet points of what the key new things with the new proposed grading system is, just so students can actually understand what’s potentially coming into place.

P. Henry: There is an executive (inaudible).

J. Peters: I don’t know who is responsible for putting this.

E. Seaver: I think Alan and I can talk about how we might be able to communicate and we need to drag Brad Bond into this discussion as well who I don’t see.

X. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. University Assessment Panel – December 3, 2010 minutes
B. Committee on Initial Teacher Certification – November 12, 2010 minutes
C. Committee on Advanced Professional Certification in Education – December 6, 2010 minutes

XI. ADJOURNMENT
J. Peters: Okay, motion to adjourn?

Many: So moved.

J. Peters: So moved.

Meeting adjourned at 4:37 p.m.