
VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Bohn, Peska, Schoenbachler, Walker (on sabbatical)

OTHERS PRESENT: Armstrong, Blakemore, Bryan, Caldwell (for Michael), Douglass, Freeman, Klaper, Sunderlin, Williams

OTHERS ABSENT: Cunningham, Freedman, Kaplan, Michael, Prawitz, Slotsve, Snow, Waas

I. CALL TO ORDER

J. Peters: Let me call the October 10, 2012 meeting of the University Council to order.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

J. Peters: We have no walk-ins today, so I will call for adoption of the agenda as it is written and printed.

D. Haliczer: So moved.

J. Peters: Alright Deb Haliczer moved.

T. Latham: Second.

J. Peters: We have a second from T. Latham. Alright, all those in favor say aye.

Members: Aye.

J. Peters: Opposed? We have the agenda.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 12, 2012 UC MEETING
(distributed electronically)

J. Peters: Approval of the minutes of the September 12 meeting that were distributed electronically. I'll call for additions or corrections. Hearing none, is there a motion to approve the minutes?

R. Lopez: So moved.
Vohra: Second.

J. Peters: Moved and seconded, got that. Alright, all those in favor say aye.

Members: Aye.

J. Peters: Opposed? Before I say anything, I want to turn over to Alan who has a comment.

A. Rosenbaum: You may recall at the last meeting there was a question about the accuracy of the minutes. There was a correction to the minutes. The item had to do with sending something back with either academic policy or to the CUAE. It was supposed to be CUAE. The person who raised that correction was correct. The minutes have been changed. They were approved on the basis that they would be made correct and they have been. We’ve already approved those minutes. They have been changed in accordance with the comment that was raised. So I think it was very good that someone read the minutes and caught the mistake. So thank you for that and that’s all I have to say about that.

J. Peters: Okay, if you remember, we approved the minutes subject to that clarification. Is the clarification acceptable to you?

D. Munroe: Absolutely.

J. Peters: It proves we can be flexible, right?

A. Rosenbaum: Right, we seek the truth.

J. Peters: I don’t know about that, but we’re flexible in seeking the truth.

IV. PRESIDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

J. Peters: Time for my announcements. I really have very little to say today because, as you know, tomorrow is my State of the University address and I’m saving all of my pearls of wisdom for tomorrow and I hope you can come. There is going to be a nice reception afterwards. It’s not a free lunch, it’s a free reception. The price you have to pay is listening to me for about 40 minutes. It’s going to be a little bit different. We’re going to have a lot of video tomorrow. We’re going to try and do something multi-media this year. I look forward to seeing you there. If you can’t be there beginning at 3 p.m., it will be live-streamed. You go on our Web site and click or you go on NIU Today and get it that way. That’s tomorrow.

I will say that as far as the general revenue status of the university, Dr. Williams informed me that as of this date, we are owed from last fiscal year 11-12, we are owed $12 million which is $12 million, but it isn’t as it was last year, $30 million. That’s the good news – I guess that’s good news. There’s a promissory note, let’s say, that that will be paid by December 30th of the year, 31st of this year. The bad news is, we have yet to receive a payment or vouchers from this year and that total must be moving up toward $40 million I would think. Every day that, but it’s nothing that we didn’t – we expected it, we planned for it, we’re handling it. So I think that’s pretty good news because our cash flow is a little bit better because we have $28 million more at
this time than we did last year from the state. That takes care of a couple of payrolls anyway so I am very pleased with that.

The other thing I want to mention is that we have Board of Trustee committee meetings on November 8 and that will be followed in early December by the board meeting. It’s hard to believe that we’re already approaching half way through the semester. This is homecoming weekend and we’re playing I think Buffalo. And we have an exciting team and I’m hoping for a good crowd and they’re beginning, I guess even beginning this week, beginning Sunday, we have a round of homecoming activities. And I was informed this week, given plans, that we have a new and improved approach to the homecoming parade which is not on its traditional Saturday morning. I guess it’s very difficult for students to get up Saturday morning especially when you don’t go to bed on Friday night and you go to bed on Saturday morning when you should have been in been on Friday night. There is a nice parade route and it will end over on the north end by Barsema Hall and engineering with a very quick and controlled bonfire. This is president talk for a what, a bonfire? Okay and so I am looking forward to all those events and hope we have a very, we’ll have a lot of folks back for homecoming weekend. We have a very good, exciting football team, a lot of visitors, a lot of people returning, and let’s have a safe and fun-filled weekend and we’re hoping for some pretty good weather. Right now it looks like it’s going to be rainy but moderate temperature. We’ll see, but it is northern Illinois, so you don’t know. With that I’m going to end and just ask the provost and Dr. Williams, do you have anything to add or, Lisa, on the research side? See I didn’t prepare today. My lecture wasn’t prepared, but tomorrow it’s prepared so come and see that. Alright? Good.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Academic Diversity Programs Advisory Committee – Approve the addition of this existing committee to the “Committees of the University” section of the University Council Website – Pages 3-6

B. Intellectual Property Committee – Approve the updating of this committee description in the “Committees of the University” section of the University Council Website – Pages 7-9

J. Peters: Let’s move on to the Consent Agenda. These are pretty standard items to update the committee book. They’re not substantive in nature. Is there a motion to accept the consent agenda with these two items A and B?

A. Small: So moved.

J. Peters: So moved Andy Small. Is there a second out there?

D. Munroe: Second.

J. Peters: Okay we have a move and a second. All those in favor of accepting today’s consent agenda say aye.

Members: Aye.
**J. Peters:** Opposed? All right, we have a consent agenda.

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

A. FAC to IBHE – Sonya Armstrong – report – Pages 10-11
   - The Three-Year Bachelor’s Degree, AASCU (distributed electronically)
   - MAP 101 (distributed electronically)

**J. Peters:** We’ll move to reports. The first report is from the Faculty Advisory Committee to the IBHE. It is a written report on pages 10 and 11 and Sonya Armstrong I think is here and are you prepared to talk? Okay, go for it.

**S. Armstrong:** I’m never prepared to talk. The September FAC IBHE was at Moraine Valley Community College. There were three major topics that I wanted to report on and then also three small discussion points.

The three major topics, first of all, there is some positive news regarding IBHE staffing. Three new IBHE staff members have been hired and it looks like they are going to wrap up the search for Bob Blankenburger’s replacement as deputy director. Looks like end of this month or beginning of November. Sounds like they will be fully staffed in the near future.

The second major topic was the three-year bachelor’s degree. I did send through the article that was the basis for this topic. I’ll tell you that it was posed to us with some sense of urgency, but later in the meeting when we spoke with Senator Malloy and Representative Pritchard, they didn’t seem to find it to be very urgent. They didn’t seem to think that there were any looming mandates or anything like that. I bring it to you just in case it’s of interest and just because it was presented with some urgency.

The third thing is something that I reported on back in May and that is the development of a Faculty Fellows Program and that’s been approved now through the IBHE. So at this point, they are still working out the logistics, but basically faculty will have opportunities to use their sabbatical time to work on specific projects with the IBHE. If anyone is interested, let me know if you have any specific ideas. I can certainly take that back.

Much of the rest of the meeting was spent with Maloney and Pritchard and they kind of gave us some discussion points and things to consider regarding higher education in the coming year and those are at the bottom of your page. First and foremost was MAP funding. That’s always going to be at the top of the list I’m finding. Also performance-based funding and one thing I can tell you is that we’re supposed to have a performance-based funding 101 presentation just as we had the MAP 101 presentation last time. We’re supposed to see this at the next meeting so I’ll be able to bring that back as well. And then finally a major question, suggestion actually, was on how we in higher education can better communicate with the press and do better with public relations. And so Senator Malloy and Representative Pritchard made some suggestions as did the executive director, George Reed, and those are listed there. That concludes my report. I’ll take any questions though.
J. Peters: Good, very good. Sonya. She’s been very active, new kid on the block. And what are your impressions so far of the Faculty Advisory Committee and the receptiveness of IBHE? Do you feel you have a voice?

S. Armstrong: It seems like so far, it seems like what we’re saying is being taken back and also the staff members at the IBHE are frequently at our meetings and so we actually have a direct line of communication with them. Yes, it is my sense that there is communication going on.

J. Peters: Good. Well we look forward to your report. Okay, any questions?

B. BOT Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee – Kerry Freedman and Andy Small – no report

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

D. BOT Legislation, Audit, and External Affairs Committee – Todd Latham and Rosita Lopez – no report

E. BOT – Alan Rosenbaum – report – Pages 12-13

J. Peters: Moving on, Alan has the report, we’re at VI. E. on the last Board of Trustees meeting, pages 12 and 13. This is a written report. Alan.

A. Rosenbaum: Okay this is the report on the September 20 full board meeting. Chair Murer began the meeting by welcoming the new trustee, Elliot Echols, student trustee, and commenting on the fact that our freshman enrollment was up a bit which was a very positive thing. That had reversed a four-year declining trend in enrollment. She also noted that the GPA of the class as well as the number of students coming from the top 25 and top 10 percent of their high school graduating classes was also up and that the university moved up five places in the U.S. News and World Report rankings of four-year institutions.

The other major areas of business, you can read the whole report, I’m not going to read it to you. The Board of Trustees approved the fiscal year 2013 internal budget which is close to half a billion dollars and they also approved the FY 2014 budget guidelines in which the university requested three percent increases in salary, utilities and technology which don’t always make it through the budgetary process, but nevertheless we keep trying. The president reiterated that faculty and staff salaries are our top priority.

The board approved the fiscal year 2014 appropriated capital budget request. This is where we ask for money to improve various buildings and the new proposed computer and technology center has now replaced the Stevens Building I think as number one on our list. And so, hopefully, at some point we’ll have a new computer and technology center. Then the president updated the board on the Vision 2020 initiative. Highlights included, again, enrollments of first-year students and also the strides that we’ve made in our honors programs including almost doubling the size I think of our number of honor students, and increasing the average ACT score of our honor students and the average high school GPA. That was all positive news.
And then the board did what we thought was a very good idea, they went into executive session at the end instead of the beginning. So instead of everyone coming at 9 o’clock and then having to go have breakfast or do something until 11, they waiting until the end and went into executive session and we didn’t have to go back for the end of it so that was a great development. That concludes my report such as it is. Any questions?

J. Peters: Very good. Questions or comments? The only problem with that switch is it means I have to put more food out for the staff and faculty and students that come, but I’m happy to do that. Thank you Alan.

F. Academic Policy Committee – Sean Farrell, Chair – no report

G. Resources, Space and Budgets Committee – Paul Carpenter, Chair – report – Page 14

J. Peters: Moving on to VI. G., we have a written report only from the Resources, Space and Budgets Committee. Paul Carpenter prepared the report. It’s on page 14. Just take a moment and take a look at that if you have any questions, but it’s pretty self explanatory.

H. Rules and Governance Committee – Melissa Lenczewski, Chair – no report

I. University Affairs Committee – Kathleen Coles, Chair – no report

J. Student Association – Delonte LeFlore, President, and Austin Quick, Speaker – report – Pages 15-16

J. Peters: Then moving on to J., we’re already down to the Student Association, and I believe that there is a written report on 15 and 16 and I believe Austin is going to give the report? Delonte is going to give the report. Okay.

D. LeFlore: Hello everyone. September 21 through the 23 we hosted the Illinois Board of Higher Education Student Advisory Committee retreat. We had over 30 students come out and talk about restructuring of the SAC committee that has been going through some challenges in the past. And so right now we are looking at ways to increase involvement with other institutions to get participation through it and also outlining its objectives for the year. We have two appointments from NIU that sit on the board. Nick Bender, he acts as the budgeting chair, and myself acts as vice chair. We also met with the City of DeKalb, the city manager and acting vice president of student affairs, continue efforts to build a relationship with DeKalb community, talk about issues with safety here on- and off-campus primarily dealing with off-campus safety issues. Also today we will be hosting our round table discussion with various student leaders to talk about safety tips as we race to homecoming and preparation for homecoming events. We’re also providing shuttle busses for Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Then our students won’t have to drive and it will go until 3 a.m. Saturday, we’re going until 4 in the morning. I think that’s it.

J. Peters: Okay, thank you Delonte. Anyone want to comment or questions on that good report?

K. Operating Staff Council – Andy Small, President – report
J. Peters: Alright then, we’re moving on then to Andy Small and the Operating Staff Council, VI. K.

A. Small: Thank you. Today I’d just like to give a quick oral report since we are moving quite rapidly through the agenda to get out of here quickly I see.

J. Peters: It’s never happened before.

A. Small: To get out of here quickly? What’s the record, 15 minutes, a half hour? Our operating Staff Council did meet and we took our council to the new residence hall and had a tour of the new residence hall. Very nice facility, very accommodating people out there. We were joined by several of our members from the Supportive Professional Staff Council as well as Dr. Cunningham and Tom Morelock from the systems office came up to visit us from Champaign and Urbana. For those of you who don’t know Tom Morelock, he started out here as an old Huskie ten years ago, and so he got promoted out to take over the systems office for all of the Civil Service employees of the State of Illinois. He does a fine job for us down there. We discussed the nuances of Civil Service hiring versus SPS hiring and what we could do to make sure that those processes were taken care of and the things that we can do to make sure the state statutes are followed. A great discussion, I appreciate all of the Civil Service, excuse me, supportive professional staff people that did attend, maybe 10 or so people did attend, and a great discussion ensued with that.

Upcoming events, on October 23rd through the 25th, we will be visiting Northeastern Illinois University for the 15th Annual Council of Councils. This is an organization that started right here in this room 15 years ago where all of our operating staff councils get together from all of the 12 state universities on an annual basis to discuss issues that are pertinent to all Civil Service employees around the state. This year it’s being hosted at Northeastern. We look forward to that particular event. That concludes my report but I would be glad to take any questions if anybody has any.

J. Peters: Okay, thank you Andy, any questions? What did you call that? The Council of Councils?

A. Small: Council of Councils.

J. Peters: 15 years ago right here?

A Small: 15 years ago we started right here in this room. It’s been around the state a couple of different times already. I’ve challenged my counterparts at the supportive professional staff level to look into potentially doing something with that organization also as far as state organization-wide. It’s been very helpful for us to learn about the different institutions around the state.

J. Peters: Well you could do what the students do and have a tug of war between the two and that will settle all your problems based on the playing field. Thank you. Any questions?

L. Supportive Professional Staff Council – Todd Latham, President – report – Page 17

J. Peters: Todd Latham will present the Supportive Professional Staff Council meeting. There is
T. Latham: Thank you President Peters. On October, the purpose for our October meeting on September 13th our Council took some recent action. One of those items was a challenge from the Operating Staff Council for us to establish a dependent scholarship for SPS and we’ve taken up that charge and we voted to make that happen. One of the primary donations will take place first, a private donation from our council to make this happen. That will take place this month into next month to move forward with a three-year goal having that scholarship fully funded at $25,000.

Under committee action, we basically reviewed our first draft of our e-newsletter. That’s a publication that comes out three times a year to SPS employees, all electronically, to update them and better communicate with them about actions taken place at the SPS Council.

We recently had some more resignations that we’re dealing with. It’s become something that we’ve had to deal with as we replace our individuals. We lost two good representatives from our Division 6 as our athletics, so we wish them well. We hosted an SPS tailgate at the last home game. We challenged our Operating Staff Council to join us next year to celebrate Faculty and Staff Appreciation Day. So, hopefully, we’ll see them next to us there in the tent and I think it was a good activity for us – a good way to get some exposure to our employees.

We’re also tracking HJRCA49. As you know, that’s the legislation that questions the use of tuition waivers. Specifically our interest is those for dependents of university employees and we will continue to monitor that particular action as it proceeds through the state level. Our workplace issues, we’re encouraging all of our SPS to review their job descriptions. That’s important to us especially as we get to an evaluation timeframe which is conducted every year on SPS employees. We also reviewed our Code of Ethics. We are making it into two pages, but that will not make us less ethical, it just removes some redundancies in our language and consolidates that to a nice two-page handout looking at conserving paper.

And then we also had a recent complaint regarding disability and accommodations in the work place and our Work Place Issues Committee has stepped in to help resolve that issue.

And finally, under old and new business, our last catch-all category, as you know it’s important that when we have our Higher Learning Commission report that we have some type of evidence that we survey our employees and our council has done this for at least three previous time frames. We are getting ready for your 2014 survey in which we are going to have a focus group at our council meeting tomorrow to find out more from our constituents about what concerns they have as we fine-tune that instrument.

And then lastly we had some unfinished business last year from University Council that dealt with Article 11 and cleaned up the SPS Personnel Policies and Procedures and we’ll be voting on that tomorrow and then returning back to University Council to clean up that last remaining issue and that will conclude my report. Thank you.

J. Peters: Alright, any questions for Todd on his report?

D. Plonczynski: A point of clarification on the first paragraph, you said the Council will make
the first private donation toward the scholarship? Are you referring to the council members?

T. Latham: Our council members will be challenged at tomorrow’s meeting as part of a three-step phase. The first phase is to have council put the money where their mouth is. Then it will be carried on to a university-wide campaign as a second phase to encourage all SPS to make a donation in support of the scholarship fund. And then the third phase will be to reach out to our retirees or our alumni SPS to contribute as well in support of our final step to meeting this goal.

D. Plonczynski: Great plan. The way I read it, it seemed like the council as a whole, which is not a private organization, would be making the donation, so you’re talking about council members.

T. Latham: Council members, SPS Council members, yes, but we do accept all donations.

J. Peters: Alright, so we are clear on that important distinction. Alright thanks, any other questions for Todd?

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

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

J. Peters: That completes our reports. Is there any unfinished business to come before the house?

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Proposed University Holidays for 2013 – Steve Cunningham – Page 18

J. Peters: Alright, let’s move on to new business. We have a proposal, proposed university holiday schedule for 2013. It’s on page 18. This will require an action today on the part of the council. Steve Cunningham, unfortunately, has been dispatched to Springfield or someplace other than DeKalb to work on things like pensions so I think that’s a legitimate excuse. So, if you look on page 18, we have the proposed holiday schedule for 2013 and this will require a motion and a second and then discussion and then a vote. Is there is motion to approve the 2013 holiday schedule.

D. LeFlore: Moved.

T. Latham: Second.

J. Peters: There is a second by Todd Latham. Okay, discussion? Todd?

T. Latham: Just one point, I would like to point out that for staff that would be Civil Service employees and SPS, we are charged on this proposal one vacation day. I believe our council, Andy correct me if I am wrong, we’ve discussed this and we are all in support of this. It’s similar to previous practice. We just have requested that Human Resources make the announcement as early as possible to make sure that employees have enough vacation time and that they make proper preparations.
J. Peters: This is of specific interest to your council and Andy’s council and what you’re requesting is early notification because of that. Alright and that has been agreed to by Steve?

T. Latham: Correct.

J. Peters: Okay any other comments or questions? Do we use the?

A. Rosenbaum: We can try.

J. Peters: Do we have a technical glitch here?

A. Rosenbaum: Well we have Pat not here.

J. Peters: Oh my.

A. Rosenbaum: So Ferald is going to try to operate the computer, so you can use 1 for yes, 2 for no, 3 for abstain.

J. Peters: Alright, 1-yes, 2-no, 3-abstain, begin voting. Alright we’re ready to close voting. Close voting.

Ferald: 45-1; 15 -2; 1-abstain

YES – 45
NO – 15
ABSTAIN - 1

J. Peters: Alright, 45, 15

Ferald: 45, 5 and 1.

J. Peters: 45, 5 and 1, the motion passes. Good job, Mr. Parliamentarian.

IX. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Alternate Policy – Page 19
B. Annual Report, University Benefits Committee
C. Minutes, Academic Planning Council
D. Minutes, Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee
E. Minutes, Athletic Board
F. Minutes, Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee
G. Minutes, Committee on Advanced Professional Certification in Education
H. Minutes, Committee on the Improvement of Undergraduate Education
I. Minutes, Committee on Initial Teacher Certification
J. Minutes, Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Experience
K. Minutes, Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum
L. Minutes, General Education Committee
M. Minutes, Honors Committee  
N. Minutes, Operating Staff Council  
O. Minutes, Supportive Professional Staff Council  
P. Minutes, Undergraduate Coordinating Council  
Q. Minutes, University Assessment Panel  
R. Minutes, University Benefits Committee

J. Peters: Now moving on, we have information items. Alan is going to make a comment about at least one of these items.

A. Rosenbaum: The item I want to call your attention to is Item P., which comes to us in the form of the minutes from the Undergraduate Coordinating Council. The University Council does not have control over this committee, however, this is one of the committees that must send its minutes to the council and the council can, if it so chooses, send those minutes back to the committee from whence it came. If we send it back, we have to send it back with the reasons why we are sending it back and then that committee has a number of choices which are articulated in Article 14.5 of the Bylaws. We have minutes, as you know, in almost every meeting but we don’t always call them to your attention.

I’m calling this one to your attention because it involves the plus/minus grading system. If the council does not act, the default is that this will become policy. And so that is what we typically do, we typically don’t do much but we certainly could. But, if we choose to, we can send it back.

I want to give you just a brief history of this plus/minus grading system and how it was arrived at. This has been introduced in senate many times in the past, about two and a half years ago, I don’t remember the exact date. It was introduced yet again. The Academic Affairs Committee of the senate did a very thorough vetting of the issue and made recommendations to the senate. The senate polled the faculty. It was unanimously supported by the faculty with only three departments voting no and so we felt that there was very strong support on the faculty. The senate then passed that along to the Undergraduate Coordinating Council. The Undergraduate Coordinating Council has representation from all constituents in the university, including a large constituent of students. The Undergraduate Coordinating Council sent this to APASC who did a vetting of their own and eventually, after a number of different processes decided to support a plus/minus system that does not contain an A+ and does not contain a C-. So it is a ….

J. Peters: Or D-.

A. Rosenbaum: It doesn’t contain anything below a C, there are no plusses or minuses. So there is no D+, there’s no C-. And so this system was approved by the APASC subcommittee of the Undergraduate Coordinating Council and it was subsequently approved by the Undergraduate Coordinating Council. So the situation is, if the University Council does nothing, this will become policy and we will have the plus/minus grading system that I just described to you in place in the fall 2013 semester. As many of you know, we already have a graduate plus/minus system that is already in place, so this would be the counter point to that. This does not require a vote of the council I am simply calling it to your attention.

J. Peters: Okay, Austin Quick.
A. Quick: I would like to make a motion that we do return this item back to the Undergraduate Coordinating Council for further review.

J. Peters: Alright, we have a motion to return it to the Undergraduate Council for further review. We’d have to specify reasons. Is there a second to that motion?

D. LeFlore: So moved.

J. Peters: Alright, second, Delonte has seconded. Alright discussion of the motion to return?

A. Quick: Obviously, this is something that we have

D. Plonczynski: Can I ask a question? So the undergraduate proposed grading system, is that consistent with the grading system adopted by the Graduate School?

A. Rosenbaum: No.

D. Plonczynski: So what’s the reason?

A. Rosenbaum: The Graduate School has the C-, the undergraduate does not. The main reason is that there are certain programs in the university that a grade of C- makes it impossible for a student to either qualify as a teacher or to get into certain sub-programs. So the way the APASC committee chose to handle that, was to eliminate the C-B But there is a C- in graduate school for those people who use, since a C- in graduate school is almost irrelevant anyway, but it is on the graduate side.

J. Peters: So we have a motion on the floor, we have to speak to the motion, but that’s a point of clarification and maybe you could follow up within the context so we’re not talking about the graduate, this is undergraduate. You’re speaking in support of the motion.

A. Quick: Correct. One of the things that concerns us, the student body, obviously you can tell there is a lot of us here today. The plus/minus system is something that we have heard a lot about over the last couple of years, both in this body and in other ones outside of this as well. Obviously, this year, the Graduate School did implement the plus/minus grading system, but currently, with the information that we have, which is very little as far as what we’ve had prior to today, we have looked at different schools on our own accord and compared. One of the schools that came to mind and when we were looking at the various schools that I’ve looked at an implemented a plus/minus grading system for undergraduate, was Ball State University, which is a school of similar size and demographic. They went back and did a report regarding on how a plus/minus has been implemented at their school and how it has been handled. And the arguments for and the arguments against from the school, this is from the university itself, show by and large that they did not feel that it was as good as they expected it to be. Faculty members, for example, did mention that they did not think that the plus/minus helped students who were weaker performing. Most grades went down, and the number of As that were awarded to students also declined in their school. The perception of the implementation – before the implementation of the plus/minus as a measure – GPAs did decline. GPAs did go down. And there are many different things, I can go on and on, I know we want to keep this short, but there is concern for us and we would like to see a little bit longer dialog on this. Obviously, this is
something that if we do feel has merit, will come back again. I do have question on the number of students that were even present at this meeting. One of the things that obviously I’ve spoken to Dr. Rosenbaum about it, about the fact that a lot of times students are appointed to this, these particular committees, with very little information and a lot of them don’t come and they’re appointed through the student advisory councils. Now that it is definitely in our view, and we thought last year it was taken care of, so this was surprising to use to find out that it was back again and obviously we were wrong. We ask the council to respectfully accept our request and just submit this back to Undergraduate Coordinating Council for further review of the implementation of the plus/minus system.

We did just a standard poll requesting students if they supported it with the information that we had been given and we had hundreds of students, I think there were four students who voted yes and over 400 that signed on with their signatures, Z IDs, everything regarding plus/minus. I’m not saying that it’s not something that would not be beneficial in the future, but then again, it’s something if you’re going to change grading this drastically, that it’s something with a little bit more input from the student body as a whole who are the ones who are going to be affected by this at a time when graduate school, a lot of students are looking at graduate schools things like that, a few GPA points does affect them and again, maybe it’s just been miscommunication or we’re not quite understanding the purposes of this and how this may be beneficial to us. We’re not taking a stand either way, but we would like to take some further time to really look at this issue because it will affect us and I appreciate the work of this council and the other councils regarding this matter and the representation from Faculty Senate and their views of it. But at the end of the day, it’s going to be the futures of the students that are impacted by the plus/minus system that is most important. So I ask respectfully, again, that we do send this back and have some further review from it and work with different members of the Student Association and other bodies here to implement that. I yield.

A. Rosenbaum: On behalf of the faculty I would have to say that that is somewhat of a misrepresentation of the process. This has been thoroughly vetted for several years. You were at many of those meeting yourself in which the process was described. Students are well represented on those committees whether they choose to attend or not. This was not something that was done in a haphazard fashion. The grading system itself is the prerogative of the faculty. The faculty was strongly supportive of the plus/minus grading system and we’ve been doing this for about two-and-a-half to three years now. So this is not something that was passed through in the middle of the night and, in fact, I think the Student Association did a poll somewhere along the line several years ago which was presented to APASC and APASC did a very thorough job. They spoke to the advising deans, they spoke to student representatives. This was not a haphazard action. There has been ample opportunities to vet it. This is something that’s been suggested at this university since way before 2005. I think we have a professor emeritus here today who was talking about the history of the plus/minus system. This has been implemented at many schools. Western Illinois implemented it and reported to us that there were – it was absolutely flawless, it was seamless, there were no problems. The University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign uses a plus/minus system. Most of the MAC schools have plus/minus systems. This is not a controversial or cutting-edge development and on behalf of the faculty I want to ask the University Council to support this and to allow this to go through by not voting to veto it.

J. Peters: For the record, you were speaking in your role as the president of the Faculty Senate?
A. Rosenbaum: Right.

J. Peters: I got that, but not as executive secretary.

A. Rosenbaum: I said, on behalf of the faculty.

J. Peters: Okay. Professor, welcome, how are you?

D. Wagner: My name is David Wagner. I am the emeritus that was referred to. I wasn’t sure if I was going to talk, but since it was mentioned, I thought I would. I’m a historian and I think the historical facts should be accurate. The first time that this policy was brought up was on the University Council in 1968 and

J. Peters: Right after the Tet Offensive.

D. Wagner: Francis Stroup created the motion to adopt the plus/minus system. I moved that it be amended to include only pluses and I think that’s a better system, but it’s not relevant now. But that was adopted and the University Council in 1969 did adopt this program and it was the official grading system of the university for about two years. It was never implemented and I think the Graduate School went along with it too. I was chair of APASC in the late ‘90s I think and I introduced this again, primarily with Professor Stroup. And we did discuss it although never took any action on it. Professor Stroup introduced this motion because he thought it was in the interest of students that the records were as accurate as possible. There are so many things that depend upon your GPA and he thought the system was necessitated for that reason. When I was chair of APASC, I thought that the best reason for adopting this was that it gave a stimulus to students who had like two Bs at the beginning of the semester and didn’t think any possibility of getting an A was likely, but this would stimulate and make it possible to improve your grade going to the final. So both Professor Stroup and myself introduced this for the benefit of the students. I am somewhat surprised at the reaction that was given. I then did make, I think I was the first to bring it up at the university Faculty Senate in the early, ten years ago or so, so it’s been around for a long time and I think that our motives should be recognized and the length that this has been discussed.

J. Peters: Thank you and welcome back. Alright, so we have a motion on the floor so take up your clickers.

A. Rosenbaum: Are we clear on this.

J. Peters: We’re clear on this. One would be voting for the motion to send this back to the Undergraduate Council for further deliberation and review; two would be no; three would be abstain. And we have question?

N. Bender: I would like to speak briefly if I may.

J. Peters: Oh sure, I didn’t mean to foreclose any debate on this.

N. Bender: Nicholas Bender, director of governmental affairs for the Student Association. I wanted clarification from myself. What the students are asking is for this to be sent back so that
we can… Me myself, I have not personally delved into how this would affect students more than for maybe ten minutes. I’m heavily involved in the university and anybody here who knows me, knows that, so I’m not just saying this out of my ear. We’re asking for a little bit more time to send it back, let us review it, let us talk about it. The general consensus, as we said, we’ve been filling out these surveys, there’s over 400 students who say they don’t want it, so that in my opinion, and again that’s my opinion, gives us ground for some kind of concern.

J. Peters: Okay thank you.

K. Bak: Kyle Bak, director of academic affairs for the Student Association. As Dr. Rosenbaum pointed out, yes there is student representation on the Undergraduate Coordinating Council as well as the APASC committee, however both at the September 6th meeting of UCC where it was passed and April 18th meeting where it was passed at APASC, no student representatives were available. In the April 18th meeting at APASC, there was one student representative on the committee and he was not present. At the UCC meeting where this passed to come to this body, there was no students even on that committee. We’re not asking for this plus/minus system to be completely shut down, however we are asking for it to be brought back to the UCC so students could actually have a voice on these committees. The procedure is for the student advisory councils to select students to sit on these committees, however not a lot of students go. So what we’re basically asking is a chance for the Student Association to appoint these students so we can actually have a voice in the committees where these decision are being made. That’s what I’m asking. Thank you.

D. Plonczynski: I’m interested in the rationale of regarding why the graduate plus/minus grading was not implemented simultaneously with the undergrad or visa-versa. I’m not aware of the historic significance of this.

A. Rosenbaum: There were two different groups that were in charge. The Undergraduate Coordinating Council deals with undergraduates, the Graduate Council deals with graduates. So they are two separate bodies and they vote on these things completely independently. So the Graduate Council adopted the proposal as written by the Faculty Senate. The Undergraduate Coordinating Council and ASPASC modified it.

D. Plonczynski: A follow-up question, please. The absence of an A+, could you explain that?

A. Rosenbaum: Again, I’m speaking for the committee, so I’m going to give you my interpretation of why I think they did that. If there is anyone here that is on the committee that would like to speak to it a little bit more officially, then fine, but my understanding was that they felt that it creates problems when you have a maximum GPA of 4.0 and that what would happen is that it would be eventually averaged down anyway, and so they decided not to have the A+. I don’t know beyond that what their logic was. The proposal that was put forward by the senate I think did include the A+ so that was removed by the, I believe APASC.

J. Peters: Alright, let’s go here and then here. Identify yourself.

M. Henning: I’m Mary Beth Henning in the College of Education and I know that this topic has come up numerous times over many years. But I think in this case I’m going to be very supportive of the student voice on this because we have been polled as a faculty numerous times
about our opinion on the plus/minus system, but I don’t feel that the student voice was very clearly articulated to faculty prior to some of those pollings and it has not really been until the last year that it has come to my clear attention how much the undergraduates are really opposed to this and it has swayed my opinion about whether or not we should be supporting the plus/minus as it is coming forward to us now.

W. Duerkes: Wayne Duerkes, I’m from the Student Advisory Council for Liberal Arts and Sciences and just a couple of questions here. Has the implementation plan been entirely set in stone? Is there a numeric value that’s been assigned to the pluses and minuses? Is this mandated across the board to all the colleges? Are all the professors required to do this? Basically what I want to know: Is the system in place to go along with the pluses and minuses or is that yet to be determined? If it is yet to be determined, the question is: Why would we vote on something that is incomplete as a package?

A. Rosenbaum: First of all, we’re not voting on it. Second of all, the first question is: Have they determined a numerical value? I believe they have, although I am not certain about that. There was another question in there. What was the second question?

W. Derkus: Is this implementation mandated across the board?

A. Rosenbaum: It has always been the case that professors are free to use – or not use – the plus and minus system. So academic freedom allows a professor to say: No I’m only going to give As, Bs, Cs, Ds or whatever. This allows a professor to give plusses and minuses as I articulated before, but doesn’t require it. That would still be up to individual professors as to whether or not they wanted to use the plus/minus system.

J. Peters: Are we ready to vote? Again, this is a vote. If you vote 1, yes, that is a vote to send back to the committee and what I heard the reasons were is to involve more student input and voice. There wasn’t an argument made that it was positive or negative, but just more voice. Am I correct in that because we have to have reasons?

D. LeFlore: That is correct but also work with the Student Association because it’s the Student Association whose been working with the students to gather this information to say we’re not supportive. I don’t know if the students if they select for it but we have to look at the whole body so we can work with the Student Association.

J. Peters: That’s a one, that’s voting yes. Voting two, is no and then three is abstain and a vote no, what that affectively does is, that unless there are any other motions, there’s no action required by this body and this is an information item that becomes policy. Are we ready? Open voting. One, yes, two no, three abstain, vote. Closed.

YES – 27
NO – 19
ABSTAIN - 4

J. Peters: That means the motion passes. I think we needed a simple majority. It will be referred back to Undergraduate Council with those provisos: student input, work with Student Association.
X. ADJOURNMENT

J. Peters: Any other questions about the information items? I skipped over comments and questions from the floor because I knew we were going to have a substantive discussion of that. Any comments or questions from the floor? State of the University tomorrow at 3 p.m. If you can’t be there, live stream. See you at homecoming. Motion to adjourn. We’re adjourned.