UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MINUTES
Wednesday, October 10, 2012, 3 p.m.
Holmes Student Center Sky Room

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


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: called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

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. T. Latham: was second.

The agenda was adopted as written without dissent or abstention.

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.

R. Lopez: So moved. P. Vohra: was second.

The minutes were approved as written without dissent or abstention.
J. Peters: Alan has a comment on the minutes that were tentatively approved at the last meeting.

A. Rosenbaum: You may recall at the last meeting there was a question about the accuracy of the minutes. The item had to do with sending the respect question issue back to the committee from whence it came. It was supposed to be CUAE but incorrectly stated Academic Policy Committee. The minutes have been changed. We’ve already approved those minutes on the basis that they would be made correct and that has been done.

J. Peters: asked if the correction was acceptable to D.Munroe who pointed out the error.

D. Munroe: Absolutely.

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. 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.

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, we are owed $12 million. There’s a promissory note for the balance of last year’s appropriation that will be paid by December 31 of this year. The bad news is, we have yet to receive a payment or vouchers from this year and that total is approaching $40 million. So I think that’s pretty good news because our cash flow is a little bit better because we have $28 million more from the state than we did last year at this time. 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 full board meeting. This is homecoming weekend and we’re playing Buffalo. We have an exciting team and I’m hoping for a good crowd. 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. Let’s have a safe and fun-filled weekend and we’re hoping for some pretty good weather.

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. Is there a motion to accept the consent agenda with these two items A and B?
A. **Small:** So moved. **D. Munroe:** was second.

The Consent Agenda was approved without dissent or abstention.

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)

**S. Armstrong:** The September FAC IBHE meeting was held 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.

Much of the rest of the meeting was spent with Maloney and Pritchard and they 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.

**J. Peters:** 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: 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 next report.

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

A. Rosenbaum: Okay this is the report on the September 20 full board meeting. Chair Murer began the meeting by welcoming the new student trustee, Elliot Echols, and commenting on the fact that our freshman enrollment was up a bit. 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 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 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 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.

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

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, and myself. We also met with the City of DeKalb 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 prepare 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.

K. Operating Staff Council – Andy Small, President – report

A. Small: 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. I appreciate all of the 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 23 through the 25, 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 event.

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

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 the proposed university holiday schedule for 2013. It’s on page 18. This will require an action today on the part of the council. 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.

T. Latham: I would like to point out that for staff, that would be Civil Service employees and SPS, we are charged one vacation day under this proposal. 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 [Cunningham]?

T. Latham: Correct.
The University Holiday Schedule for 2013 was approved by a vote of:

YES – 45
NO – 15
ABSTAIN - 1

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 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 informational items, as you know, in almost every agenda 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.

I want to give you 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. The current version was approved by the Faculty Senate about two and a half years ago. 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 strongly supported by the faculty with only three departments voting no. The senate then passed that along to the Undergraduate Coordinating Council. The
Undergraduate Coordinating Council has representation from all constituents in the university, including 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-.

**J. Peters:** Or D-.

**A. Rosenbaum:** There are no plusses and minuses below the C. So there is no D+, there’s no C-. This system was approved by APASC 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 in place, so this would be the undergraduate version. This does not require a vote of the council; I am simply calling it to your attention.

**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 Coordinating Council for further review. We’d have to specify reasons. Is there a second to that motion?

**D. LeFlore:** Second.

**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 system has the C-, the undergraduate does not. The main reason is that there are certain programs in the university where a grade of C- makes it impossible for a student to either qualify as a teacher or to get into certain other programs. So the way the APASC committee chose to handle that, was to eliminate the C-. But there is a C- in the graduate system.

**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.

There was a lengthy discussion of the issue of whether to send the plus minus grading system back to the UCC for further consideration. The position advanced by the student representatives was that there was insufficient student input into the decision and that there was a great deal of student opposition to the plus/minus system. They also noted one school, Ball State, which they claimed implemented the plus/minus system and was not completely satisfied with the consequences of that change. They claimed that GPAs decreased as did the number of As earned.

**A.Quick:** 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. 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.

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. [To
A. Quick] You were at many of those meeting yourself in which the process was described.
Students are well represented on those committees [APASC and UCC] 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
grating 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 hasty action. There have been ample opportunities to vet
it. This has been implemented at many schools. Western Illinois implemented it and the
changeover 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 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: recognized D. Wagner [emeritus], who asked to be allowed to speak and who
provided some historical context for the change.

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 6 meeting of UCC where it was
passed and April 18 meeting where is was passed at APASC, no student representatives were
available. In the April 18 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:** The Undergraduate Coordinating Council deals with undergraduates, the Graduate Council deals with graduates. 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:** 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 did include the A+ so that was removed by APASC.

**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. Duerkus:** Is this implementation mandated across the board?

**A. Rosenbaum:** Academic freedom allows a professor to give whatever grades they choose. This only allows a professor to give plusses and minuses, but doesn’t require it. It 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 from what I heard the reasons were 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 to work with the Student Association.

The motion to send the issue back to the UCC passed by a vote of:

**YES – 27**
**NO – 19**
**ABSTAIN - 4**

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

**J. Peters:** 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.