UNIVERSITY COUNCIL TRANSCRIPT  
Wednesday, December 5, 2012, 3 p.m.  
Holmes Student Center Sky Room

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Alden, Bak, Bender, Block, Bohn, Cappell (for Sagarin), Carpenter, Cho, Coles, Daniel (for Walker), Dawson, Downing, Duerkes, Entzminger, Farrell, Feurer, Fredericks, Gregolunas, Gupta, Haliczer, Harris, Henning, Hofer, Holly, Houze, Kapitan, Kolb, Kowalski, Latham, Lee, LeFlore, Lopez, McCord, Middleton, Mirman, Mohabbat, Munroes, Peters, Plonczynski, Prock, Quick, Rosenbaum, Small, Smith, Sunderlin (for Bond), Theodore, Thu, Towell (for Schoenbachler), VandeCreek, Vohra


OTHERS PRESENT: Armstrong, Birberick, Blakemore, Brady, Bryan, Echols, Freeman, Freedman, Klaper, Macdonald, Martin, Michael, Snow, Williams

OTHERS ABSENT: Cunningham, Kaplan, Prawitz, Slotsve, Waas

I. CALL TO ORDER

J. Peters: Let me call the Wednesday, December 5, 2012 meeting of the University Council to order.

Meeting called to order at 3:09 p.m.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

J. Peters: And our first order of business is the adoption of today’s agenda and we have two walk-in items and then I am going to make a suggestion for re-ordering today’s items.

We have a new item VI. F. 1. which is the online evaluation of teaching effectiveness. You should have that in front of you as a report. That will be a walk-in and then we have an informational item walk-in X. R. and that is Guidelines for Students Wishing to Resolve Various Complaints. That’s an information item but it is a walk-in and it goes under X. R.

Then what I’d like to do: Because we have a full agenda, and so much of the reporting which is non-action is front-loaded, I’m worried that if we have a couple of action items and substantive items that need debate and I’m afraid we’d lose a quorum and not get to them. Here is my suggestion. Under the President’s Report, IV. A., I want to move up VII. Unfinished Business, which is the reconsideration of the council’s vote to not veto the UCC’s grading policy change. And I can explain that when we get to it, but that’s back on the agenda as a reconsideration and I think we ought to put that under the President’s Report and deal with that issue.

Then, under VI. Reports from Councils, Boards and Standing Committees, I’m gonna request that we move F. the Academic Policy Committee’s report on online student evaluation, let’s move that up to the first item under reports.
So in that way we will have done our two action items and then we can go back and take reports. Does that make sense? So we got two walk-in items to approve on the adoption of the agenda and then I’m proposing we move Unfinished Business to the President’s Announcements IV, I guess that would be B., and then move F. under reports VI, up to the first item. With that, is there a motion to approve today’s agenda?

**D. Haliczer:** Move.

**J. Peters:** Deb Haliczer says yes.

**A. Quick:** Second.

**J. Peters:** All those in favor say aye.

**Members:** Aye.

**J. Peters:** Opposed? Okay good. Thank you very much.

### III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 7, 2012 UC MEETING  
(distributed electronically)

**J. Peters:** The minutes of November 7 were distributed electronically. I’ll now call for any additions or any corrections. Hearing none, is there a motion to approve the minutes of November 7?

**J. Kowalski:** So move.

**J. Peters:** It’s moved by Jeff.

**R. Lopez:** Second.

**J. Peters:** Okay, Rosita Lopez seconded. All right all those in favor of approving the minutes say aye.

**Members:** Aye.

**J. Peters:** Opposed? Okay good. I’m sure you all read those minutes.

### IV. PRESIDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

**J. Peters:** Well, we have a busy agenda, President’s Announcements. Just let me say, like the rest of you, how elated and stunned I was to get the call at two o’clock on Sunday afternoon from our commissioner of the Mid-American Conference that we are going to the Orange Bowl! And being a person who usually never gets caught off guard or surprised by things, even as long as I’ve been involved with intercollegiate athletics, and this will be my fifth Orange Bowl, I can’t think of anything that was more of a surprise to me, although I dare not think it, that we could go.
Knowing me, I was speechless for an hour and for me that, Jerry Blakemore is laughing; he knows I’m never without words. But what a tremendous achievement for our young men of our football team because it’s their achievement. They are a tremendous group of young men who have strength of character and who are going to the Orange Bowl.

We are doing all we can to get students to the Orange Bowl. We have been working with the Mid-American Conference because they are the ones with the money flows to the conference down to pay for these things. I’m trying to get every student who wants to go a seat on a bus and we’re trying to get hotel rooms. By the end of the day, I think, Kelly will have a number of what it would cost and we’re trying to keep it as low as we can to get as many students as we can to go.

I can tell you first-hand it’s a bowl experience like no other. There are three or four bowls like that: Rose Bowl, Fiesta Bowl, Orange Bowl. It’s pretty good on the beach if the weather is fair. Let me tell you it’s great and then to cheer on our team. Probably in the last 48 hours we have had more national publicity than we’ve had, maybe ever, and we certainly had global publicity when we had our tragedy. That’s a different kind of situation. But it’s fascinating to see we’re in the national spotlight. I’ve done a lot of interviews and it’s great for us. It’s great for NIU. We can sell our academic programs. We’ve had a spike in people interested in applying here. It’s going to be great and it’s what we play the game for. It is the pinnacle of where we can be. I just want to say I’m so delighted that we’re able to do this. And the logistics are unbelievably difficult on this, but anyway, if you’ve ever been to Miami Beach you know. And the Orange Bowl, you know it’s worth it, the Orange Parade and so forth. It makes a good Christmas present from parents too, I would like.

I will say that just a couple of things about budget and veto session. We are now, I know Eddie Williams is dealing with Orange Bowl finances, but we are now paid fully from what we are owed last year. At least, now we haven’t received anything for this year, but we are paid up for last year. So all the $12 million so that’s good. We have not received our payment from MAP, the $10 ten million. From the point of view from faculty and staff and annuitants, we are still not sure whether they will deal with pensions in the lame duck session or not. We’ll be watching that as we break for the winter break. We’ll be watching that very, very closely. That’s really all I have to report.

We do have some business to attend to and that is Doris Macdonald is here, who is head of our coordinating committee for our Higher Learning Commission Self-Study, leading to our ten-year accreditation. Now this may sound boring, we’ve got a lot of students here. We are accredited and given the Good Housekeeping stamp of approval every ten years. That certifies that we can operate as a university and that our degrees mean something and our programs are accredited. This is a big deal and it’s a very serious thing and it takes us a couple years to prepare. We have about 100 people involved in preparing the information so I’m going to turn it over to Doris Macdonald who is doing a great job of coordinating and I’ll get out of the way, right?

A. HLC Self-Study Process – presentation
   Doris Macdonald, HLC Accreditation Steering Committee Chair

D. Macdonald: Thank you very much for that introduction. I know some of you have heard from
me before and some of you are already in the process, but I know there are a lot of people in the room here who aren’t familiar with the process. I’m just going to sort of give you a little update, PowerPoint presentation about the process. I’ll try to keep it brief because I know you have a lot of business today.

Again, the HLC, it stands Higher Learning Commission. They are our regional accreditor. They accredit programs in 19 different states. They are the overseers of the process in that they determine how we are going to present ourselves in terms of what information and what data we have to have. And we are involved in finding information and creating a report to which they will respond. So I’ll tell you a little bit of background. This is a ten-year process as the president said. Our last complete review was in 2004. When the Higher Learning Commission came, we did this lengthy report for them. They sent site evaluators to come to visit us and after that report there were a couple of items that they felt we needed to address as an institution. So after that 2004 ten-year review, we did a follow-up report in 2007 and addressed a couple of the things they wanted us to have a look at. That follow-up report was accepted by the Higher Learning Commission. We filed a report for them again in 2010 on our off-campus locations. As you know we have NIU Rockford, NIU Naperville and NIU Hoffman Estates and reports on those locations.

We are also in the process now of requesting a substantive change in our description at the Higher Learning Commission and what we – we are moving from an institution that offers fewer than five percent of its programs online to an institution that offers between five and 20 percent of its programs online. In terms of distributed learning, we are moving along and one of the things we have to do there is also let our accreditors know that we are moving along there and asking for them to recognize that as part of our accreditation. But what the teams have been doing, and there are over 100 people, and I know there are people in this room – students, staff, faculty and administrators – who have been involved in this process and we are very excited that we’ve had such involvement from people. Committees have been working close to a year now in gathering evidence and data and information about what we do here as an institution to put into our self-study report and we’ve begun drafting that report. We will be prepared then, fully prepared, for a site visit from evaluators in March of 2014. So the very first week of March, March 3 to 5, site evaluators will be here.

I’m putting up here, NIU’s new statement of vision and mission. And the reason I’m putting this here, the statement of vision and mission and a set of core values were approved in May of 2012 by the Board of Trustees. The vision statement and the mission statement and the reason these are key is because, throughout our reporting on what we do as an institution, we speak to our mission. One of the things that the Higher Learning Commission evaluators will look for when they come to campus to look and when they read our report is to say: Are we doing what our mission says we are doing and how are we doing it? So this statement of vision and mission, and I hope you all familiarize yourself with it. I hope there will be opportunities for you to see it sort of out there more often in the coming year. But the statement of vision and mission are key to what we are doing here. They are key because one of the first criteria that we speak to in the report that we are producing is the mission. These are five criteria that are determined by the Higher Learning Commission, they are presented very briefly here, but these criteria are fairly well developed with a number of sub components and questions, detailed questions that need to be responded to and they are criteria that are produced to be sort of applicable to all the sorts of
institutions that the HLC approves, which can be four-year liberal arts colleges, large universities like ours, larger universities, small even small, for example seminaries. The Higher Learning Commission accredits institutions that are quite diverse, but it has a set of core things that it looks for across all these institutions. The first thing is that what we do in our mission is that is guides all the operations of our institution. That our mission statement is our guiding document and the mission statement is I think memorable and I think it speaks to exactly not just sort of where we’ve been, but really where we want to go and reflects us well where our plans and our priorities are headed with Vision 2020.

But it’s not just in this one criteria and where we speak to this. We speak to the mission throughout and there is a second criterion we speak to is about integrity, ethical and responsible conduct. It’s about how we present ourselves, that we’re transparent in how we present ourselves, and that we have policies and procedures in place to maintain ethical behavior.

Criterions three and four are about the teaching and learning mission and we have so many students here at the meeting today. I hope you realize that that is the core, key thing that we do at this institution, teaching and learning. Teaching and learning includes what happens in the classroom, what happens outside the classroom, what happens with research at this institution too. And so we will speak to the quality, the resources, the support. Do we offer programs that are appropriate for higher learning, for higher education? Do we make sure the outcomes that we state our students will have are outcomes that are met by our programs? Do we evaluate what we do? Do we assess what we do and do we use that information to continue to improve what we do in the classroom and outside the classroom and all the ways that we address teaching and learn?

And then the fifth criterion that we have to speak to is resources, planning and institutional effectiveness. In times of fiscal crisis these are difficult things to speak to, but this university has done an exceptional job in planning ahead. It was very good to hear that we’ve been paid for 2012 now. Let’s hope that money comes in continues. One of the things that this institution has done well that we will speak to is his plan ahead and preserve things that are important for the teaching and learning and the outreach and the service and the creativity and the scholarship missions to keep those missions strong.

The committee that is helping me to collect this data is a steering committee of nine faculty members on campus, representing all the colleges on campus. Each of these people is heading up a sub-committee of 10 to 15 NIU community members – students, faculty, staff, administrators – distributed across all of these sub-committees and they are out there finding information, interpreting that information, determining or helping us determine what it is important to include in this report to show NIU at its best, but also to say: Here are the challenges we face and there is the opportunities that we are going to take. That’s really what’s key to this report is that an accreditation visit is an opportunity for us to look at what we do well. To examine all the things we do well. To examine all the things that we’re not sure we’re doing well and find opportunities to improve those. And that’s, in fact, what the Higher Learning Commission will do when they do visit. They will verify that what we say we do is what we’re doing. They’ll consult with us and they’ll make recommendations. So there’s an assurance part of what they do. They are demonstrating that they are a sign of public assurance that we are doing what we’re doing but there’s a recommendation consultative function. That’s an important piece of the accreditation. It’s not just checking off a list and saying yes you’re doing this. They’re also the liaisons between
federal regulation and what we do here to be compliant with federal regulations so that’s Title IV, that’s credit hours, it’s everything that the federal government says an institution on higher learning must do and they assure that we are compliant with those things.

When they come for their site visit on March 3 to 5 in 2014 there will be 10 to 12 people coming to visit, none of them from the state of Illinois. They’ll come from a variety of different institutions: small colleges, big universities. They will come from and one of the 19 states, or any number of those states where the Higher Learning Commission accredits. There will be a number of planned meetings on campus. So there will be opportunities for everyone to meet with the evaluators either in a planned meeting that’s scheduled, or in open forum, there will be student forums and there will be faculty staff forums, there will be open forums for anybody to attend, and I’m encouraging everyone here. I know that many students may be graduated by then, but I hope you will pass this information on also to your colleagues. Don’t forget that you’re key here, the students are important members of this community and we hope that they will participate. I know that I can count on my faculty colleagues to participate and I know that there’s support from the administration for participation. So we’ll look for opportunities and those things will be very well publicized. You’ll know when those things are. After they come to visit, they will write a team report, the whole team will write a report and they will then make recommendations to the institution and, if we have to address any of those issues, we will do those after about a month or so after the visit.

How you can help? One thing is: Commit to the process. In a way, I’m speaking, sort of preaching to the choir because I know a lot of people here have already committed a lot of time and energy to this process by serving on sub-committees or being resource people helping us find information or helping us guide us to how to construct the self-study report, so we’ve been asking people for information and we appreciate requests that are being answered in a timely manner. We’ve had many, we will be, continue to be, making requests for information or for action and we appreciate anything you can do to help that.

The other thing I’m really asking for too is to encourage participation amongst your peers, amongst your colleagues, participate in the process in any way you can prior to the event and especially when the site visit happens. An important thing and it’s almost tangential to this process because each one of us should be really familiar with the statement of vision and mission for this institution. In anticipation of this visit, it’s a great opportunity to take the time to familiarize yourself with the new statement of vision, mission and the values and again to spread the word not only about the new mission but about the Higher Learning Commission site visit and about the accreditation process as a whole.

I’ve got some items here for more information if you’d like to know more about policies, procedures and process that are determined by the Higher Learning Commission. You can go to their website. You can also go to our website NIU.edu/hlc and we post there the minutes of our meetings, announcements, the steering committee lists are there, there’s a countdown clock. A more lengthy version of this PowerPoint is also available there if you wanted to look for more details in a PowerPoint. We also post, did I say our minutes and our agendas as well and our meeting schedule is posted there and anything that comes up that will be an event that’s related to the Higher Learning Commission self-study and the site visit will be posted there. We also have an e-mail address where you can contact us if you have any questions. It’s a pretty easy on,
J. Peters: Do we have questions? This is an extremely important endeavor. I want to thank you again and your committee because, having done this at a couple universities, I know it, you have a day job too I suspect?

D. Macdonald: Thank you very much. We have a lot of support from a lot of people on campus.

J. Peters: So you’ve been informed and actually this is one of our requirements isn’t it, this process that everybody be informed?

D. Macdonald: Everybody be informed and we’re just trying to get as much word out as possible so thank you.

J. Peters: Excellent, okay thank you Doris. Now, as I indicated last time we were going to make a feature of the President’s Announcements until a successor is chosen for me by the Board of Trustees. We’re going to have a report from Alan who sits on the search committee and our general counsel is here, Jerry Blakemore, who can answer technical questions. And I know that there is an important meeting of the board and the search committee tomorrow to affirm a job description, but I’m not really involved in the process so that’s why I am going to turn it over to Alan to give you an update.

A. Rosenbaum: The Board of Trustees held a special meeting last month and at that special meeting they authorized the search committee we told you about this last time. They authorized a search committee and also the search firm was approved. That search committee met immediately after that and began working on the profile, the description, the profile for the new president. It’s sort of a combination of what characteristics we want in a president and what we are sort of identifying as the job description for the president. That process was rather lengthy and included input from all of the different constituents in the university so there was input from students, from faculty, from administrators, from the Foundation, from the Alumni Association. That process will continue until tomorrow. Tomorrow is the deadline for developing the profile and the job description so that we can begin advertising the position and so that our search firm can begin soliciting applicants that are appropriate for us. That meeting will take place between noon and 1 p.m. with the search advisory committee by itself and then we’ll be joined by the Board of Trustees following that meeting and between the search advisory committee and the Board of Trustees, we will hopefully hammer out the job description. Then we will begin putting advertisements out. The search firm will begin doing its work. The deadline for receipt of applications I believe is February 13 or 15? 15. And so we will collect the applications up until February 15 but we will begin, I believe, looking at the applications in January when the search firm puts together the materials that have been submitted. That’s where we stand right now. We’re at the very beginning stage of this process and we will be working together with the Board of Trustees tomorrow to finalize the position profile and the job description. Any questions?

J. Peters: Jerry, do you want to add anything? Okay, good, questions? So there will probably be
some reporting on this on Friday morning. From what I hear, it’s moving along quite nicely and they’ve got a good committee and the board is engaged. No questions.

B. Student appeal of the University Council’s declination to veto the Undergraduate Coordinating Council’s grading policy change – Pages 13-15

**J. Peters:** Let’s move on then to under President’s Announcements, remember we are moving Unfinished Business and that is student appeal of the University Council’s declination to veto the Undergraduate Coordinating Council’s grading policy change and that’s on page 13-15.

And if you remember, and Alan can help me out here, it came to the University Council a couple of meetings ago as an information item from one of our university committees and the University Council has a certain amount of time to act or not act on that issue or it goes into effect into our academic procedures – it becomes policy. The first action was to send it back to the UCC to consider student input and listen to student input. They reaffirmed their decision to put in place the plus/minus grading system and then it came back and there was a motion made to veto it which would require a two-thirds majority. That vote was taken and it failed the two-thirds requirement, which would mean it becomes academic policy.

Then I received on November 16 a petition of over 1,000 students, and I didn’t check them I just assumed the names were correct, to appeal the decision under Article 3, Section 3.5 of our bylaws which indicates that if there is a petition process and a certain percent of the constituent group can seek a reconsideration of any action taken by the University Council within a period of time. This was sort of new to me. I’ve not experienced that in 13 years. So, I did what any president does, I have a good lawyer and I asked Jerry Blakemore and I think Greg handled it and he is here to give me an opinion because I didn’t know how to proceed. Is a veto or a non-action an action? I wanted to be sure I did the right thing. So here is our legal opinion. It’s the opinion of the Office of the General Counsel that pursuant to bylaw 3.5, the president must place this appeal on the agenda of the next regular meeting, that’s today, or I could have called a special meeting but I didn’t choose to do that, to require the university to reconsider the vote on the action taken. What that means is, and after further just to cut through this, it’s placed on the agenda as a motion ready to be reconsidered. It is not placed on the agenda for a vote to determine whether you want to reconsider which triggers a parliamentary procedure that’s pretty arcane, but no it is now a motion on the floor to be reconsidered. Does everyone understand that or want to challenge any of those interpretations?

**K. Thu:** So what’s the sufficient number of votes needed for reconsideration.

**J. Peters:** It’s an action that is as if it were moved and seconded as a veto vote. So it’s the same vote as we had last time.

**K. Thu:** So it would be two-thirds?

**J. Peters:** Two-thirds, right. Everyone understand that? So actually we’re not voting to determine whether we should reconsider, we’re actually reconsidering and so we’re into discussion and a vote. Does everyone understand? It’s pretty simplified. Now, let me say that, it’s on the floor, it doesn’t need a second. With us today, we have a lot of students with us today, but we also have
members of the UCC who have been party to this and they are here and I’ve asked them and Alan has asked them to kind of just go through the process by which we got there and I think Professor Snow is going to do that or maybe you all are going to do that?

C. Snow: I am Cason Snow. I am the faculty chair of the Undergraduate Coordinating Council. What I’m basically going to go over is how the student participation was solicited during the whole process and then we’ll open the floor to questions. Student input was solicited in five different ways that we’ve identified through this process.

There is student representation on APASC which was the original committee that debated this, the plus/minus system. There are places for three student representatives on this committee. On the Undergraduate Coordinating Council there are six student representatives.

Number two, the NIU Student Association and the college student advisory councils were asked for input via a March 11, 2011 memo and that memo was sent from David Wade, the chair of APASC at the time, and Gip Seaver the vice provost, asking for feedback on four possible grading systems that were sent to them. This memo was sent to the NIU Student Association, the college student advisory councils, college advising offices, and the college curricular deans. This memo presented the four different graded plans and it concluded with the statement that APASC is again requesting the input from the Student Association, all college student advisory committees, advising deans, and all college curriculum committees regarding grading options. It is the intention to review all of the input prior to making a decision.

The NIU Student Association submitted findings from a survey, which we don’t know the nature of that survey on the UCC, indicating a preference to not adopt the plus or minus grading system. They cited concerns where the inclusion of a C minus, the repeat policy, and non-mandatory participation by faculty.

Number four, the student advisory representatives on APASC at the April 13, 2011 meeting, indicated a plan to start a petition for a plus only system. That petition never materialized.

Lastly, number five, all feedback including student feedback was shared with relevant groups and this policy that was voted upon is – the currently recommended plus/minus policy – reflects the compromise in response to concerns about the C minus grade regarding the C or better language in the catalog, limited admission programs, etc. The repeat policy and capping the GPA at a 4.0, which led us to drop the A+ from this current plan, these concerns were raised by both faculty and students and so this current grading policy is a compromise position. Thank you.

J. Peters: All right, anyone else want to add? We invited them for context so that the council...we had not heard from them before and they are not a committee of this group but they are a university committee.

A. Birberick: I am Ann Birberick, I’m vice provost and I’m co-chair with Cason on the University Coordinating Council. I just want to speak, first I want to say that I have no investment one way of the other in how this policy decision goes. I had opportunity for input when I was a faculty member. I was polled like other faculty members in my department and I contributed my input at that time. But as vice provost I have no take one way or the other on how
I do want to speak to the issue about whether the UCC really gave serious consideration or not about reaffirming our original decision and we did. We had Alan Rosenbaum join us, Mike Theodore join us, they both spoke about it. They had the opportunity to listen to one another, respond to one another if need be, and then we had a good discussion afterwards. One of the student representatives was present at that meeting and also had input into that conversation. We did consider all the ways in which students’ voice was listened to and the fact that you were looking at a compromised grading policy, one that is customized in response to both student and faculty input. I think that’s very important to emphasize. This is a customized. I have to say, in my professional life, I’ve never quite seen a grading policy look like this before and the reason for that is because student and faculty input were taken into consideration. At many points, they dovetailed with one another. So we looked at all of that and we did give that very, very serious consideration. One final thing to point out, and I think this is really important, that shared governance worked in this case. It really did. You see that in the compromised policy but all too often there’s a misunderstanding and that having a voice and having input is not quite the same as getting exactly what it is you want. If I can put my old faculty hat on once again, as I said, I had input as a faculty member and I can assure you as a faculty member when I look at this grading policy that’s now before everyone, it wasn’t exactly what I wanted, but I do respect the process and all of that. Thank you.

J. Peters: Okay, any other committee members that want to say something? All right now, let’s move into discussion of council voting members only. Does anyone like to speak positive or negative to the measure? Austin, you can go first.

A. Quick: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the University Council. I first want to thank the president for his leadership in this issue and also, Mr. President, to assure you that I saw firsthand the number of students that helped to get the thousand plus signatures and I can assure you that they worked very hard and those are valid signatures. I’m going to let, in a second here, my colleague speak, but one thing I wanted to speak to is a comment that was just made by a UC member in the fact that shared governance and you don’t always get what you want. One of things the strikes me is, yes, we can say shared governance, we say it a lot and everyone has a seat at the table, but when the table is slanted towards one direction or the other and you have, I think three was the total members of students on a boards of I don’t remember the number to actual members of that committee, it isn’t a fair. Just like in here, we can say that the operating staff and they have a voice here, but the one or two votes they have compared to the 30-something or 40-something other people, they really don’t have an opportunity to vote a certain way. I think that is something we need to look at and when we’ve heard this discussion obviously this issue come up multiple times this year and previous years, it always comes back to well we talked to this faculty, all the departments went back and polled the staff to see what they wanted, to talk to the faculty to see what they want. No one did that with all the students. We did it with the two or three students that were on that committee and I do remember the memo that came in April and we sent back that we still had issues with it, so yes they asked our governing body, but they did not go back and poll all students like they requested. But at this time I’m going to yield to my colleague Nick Bender.

J. Peters: Okay, I am going to be fair on the balance of time, so if I rotate back and forth, I don’t
want to disrupt your presentation but I want to be fair on both sides.

**N. Bender:** Thank you. Nicholas Bender, director of governable affairs for the NIU Student Association, I have one quick question for you, sir, before I continue. The memo that was sent on the plus/minus grading system to the student advisory college at the College of Business, can you give me a date on when that was sent to them? I sat on the College of Business advisory council for the last two years and I can’t remember when that was brought up.

**C. Snow:** All the memos went at the same time. The date on the memo was March 7, 2011.

**N. Bender:** Thank you very much … Good afternoon everyone. I’m coming here before you today in regards to the plus/minus grading policy being implemented. As representation for the students, 2000 plus students, who have signed the petition that is responsible for bringing the plus/minus grading policy topic back to University Council. First, I’d like to say thank you, President Peters, for giving the students a chance to speak again on this subject and thank you everyone here on University Council for your patience on this matter. I respectfully ask this council to approach this subject with an open mind setting all pre-suppositions aside for the sake of impartiality.

UCC said there was adequate student input taken into consideration. However, a large amount of students I have personally talked to about this new policy were entirely unaware of the plus/minus policy and/or its implementation. If they are not aware that it is being implemented, then I would be willing to say that their input was not adequately taken into consideration. That is not to say that they would in any way, whoa pardon me, that they would sway a decision or that they would change the grading system. But it to say but not only were they not part of the decision, they were not aware of a decision actually being made.

We have a very intelligent student body and an even more intelligent student government body and I think it would be a wise decision to have students’ input taken into consideration. I feel that I should mention the students that are here understand that this is not a game and action must be taken whether it is for or against the plus or minus policy. We are not here to delay, debunk or destroy the policy. I am unaware of how many voting members there are here today, but we need forty votes to veto this action. The last time the vote was 24 for veto and 22 against veto, two no votes, leaving us with approximately 16 votes to sway to the veto side. Seventy five percent of the no veto vote. This university prides itself on being student centered and our constitution it says that every action will take student opinions into consideration. I’m paraphrasing that majorly. I say you give the students a chance. We are reasonable people. We are professional as they come in college student form. Let the students talk and deliberate and set up committees. Let the students go to council meetings and hear what they have to say on this matter. We have one semester left before the student government body changes hands. And I say that because I can only speak about the student government body that I currently know. We are trying to do the right thing. I propose that we veto the plus/minus policy with intention of having student input in conjunction with the Student Association taking into consideration a far greater number than was previously done. Thank you for your time. I yield.

**J. Peters:** Yes.
D. Plonczynski: Plonczynski, I’d like to pose a question as well a point of clarification.

J. Peters: Did you identify yourself? I didn’t hear.

D. Plonczynski: Plonczynski. The Student Association our professional members here have made a really strong argument that there was, in their opinion, inadequate representation and it seems that part of the argument was that there was a disconnect between the membership on those committees and the Student Association. I’d like clarification on APASC and on UCC, that three members and six members, were those actually members of the Student Association?

A. Birberick: The committee members that, the student committee members that sit on APASC and on the UCC are selected through the colleges. It is entirely possible that those students who are selected are also members of the Student Association. It should be pointed out that those two committees are academic committees and they are involved with curricular matters. So the current process we have for selecting the students, as well as selecting the faculty, runs through individual colleges and representation through colleges. I would put to the Student Association, if they feel that their representation is inadequate or they would like to have more representation or to be insured of having students who actually represent the Student Association, sit on those committees, that they take the appropriate steps to change the guidelines for how student representation is currently determined.

D. Plonczynski: May I follow up? Just to make sure I understand, there’s no requirement for a student who sits on those committees to report to the Student Association?

A. Birberick: No, there is no requirement for that.

D. Plonczynski: So at the college level or at the committee level, there’s no requirement?

A. Birberick: Right, exactly and so that was one of the reasons why back when APASC was seeking input on the various policies, grade policies that were being considered, that’s one of the reasons why they specifically reached out to the Student Association and then they also reached out to the student advisory councils precisely for that reason.

D. Plonczynski: I guess I just want to make sure I really understand the point that has been made and that is that after the Student Association made suggested changes to those committees there was no requirement for any student body, no student sitting at that committee to return comments to the Student Association?

A. Birberick: Correct.

J. Peters: Okay, this young man right here.

M. Theodore: Thank you. Michael Theodore, Student Association. I just want to put in at least some perspective from the Student Association here and what we’re thinking. The one issue that stems out of this is not, I mean I understand the argument that it was a compromise and that it came from our concerns. I do remember back in 2011 when those concerns came up. I have here buried here the original memo with the four options. We were directly reached as well as several
other bodies what our perspectives were and at the time, due to the feeling we had from our constituencies and the many concerns students had about the plus/minus system, we listed just several complaints and several worries that we had and that was good. That was the process of shared governance in action. But the thing is, the compromise then happened and was approved and went right through and we weren’t aware that the compromise actually happened. So while we did send back concerns, we weren’t actively involved with a compromise. I do understand that we do have a unique system here where it’s not a full plus/minus system and it’s not something as was brought up plus only petition that didn’t go anywhere. I don’t know where that was. But this is a very unique system, but at the same time, we didn’t know that compromise was existing and we weren’t actively participating in it. Students may have been involved with that process and were involved with that process on the committee, but we weren’t actively involved with this and most of the constituencies that we represent weren’t involved with this and this a big surprise to all the student body when we realize that a compromise has been made and the policy has been approved. From what I see, this policy it goes through a lot of work, it goes through a lot of debate, it goes through a lot of talking to make sure it’s done right, and then we come to the compromise choice and then it goes right to policy and its packaged and its ready to go. That really, when it comes down to it, is our concern is that when it came to the compromise choice, then it’s ready to go, but what we’ve been arguing is that, if this is the compromise choice, then we should be actively dealing with it just like we did with the original memo so that we can bring it back to our constituencies. With that I yield.

J. Peters: Going ahead.

W. Duerkes: Wayne Duerkes, student advisory council for the College of Liberal Arts and Science and I would like a little clarification, if I could, as far as his concern and maybe Dr. Birberick you can address this. I’ve been hearing a lot of discussion about the design of this new program here, the grading system. The one thing that has been brought up to me by most of the students that I talk to is that component of what happens to the students that are presently here and how do they transition in with this new system? Has that component of that entire design been addressed in your council? Because I think maybe some of the lack of communication that students are concerned of maybe doesn’t necessarily deal with the design of the program, but how is it going to affect them during this transition period because that seems to be the thing that I’m getting the most e-mails and text and talked about so may I ask, has that component of this design been discussed.

A. Birberick: No, not at this point but if this policy goes through, that would be the next step. That would be the operational aspect of it and that would involve a conversation with various constituents about how it would be best implemented and operationalized and surely everyone has in the forefront of their thinking, the fact that we wouldn’t want to do any harm. So there would be conversations about, you know, we’d carefully go through the catalog, figure out where there are sticking points and we would work to resolve them. But at this point, that conversation hasn’t happened because we don’t know what the system is going to look like. So you can’t have something kind of in a vacuum. You have to really know what you’re dealing with. But, should the plus/minus grading policy go through, then that would be, again, a moment for a conversation with college offices, with student representatives, APASC would have to look at various grading models and there’s precedence for this at other universities.
W. Duerkes: And I appreciate that you know categorizing that as operational shall we say, but obviously by not vetoing this, the students I talked to are concerned about going forward with such an open-ended type of thing. How is this going to turn out? There’s just thousands of students that are concerned about what will it translate to after those conversations are done. Maybe the conversation on the other end would be best suited by bringing some of that forward. Just a thought.

A. Birberick: And I appreciate that thought and I empathize with all the anxiety that the students would be experiencing. I can say that it’s not just the students who are anxious, in terms of programs and things like that. I will also say that a lot of this anxiety went away, or the things that were making people anxious, went away when we stopped at the C grade because that took care of a lot of elements that were issues in terms of limited admissions, terms of grades for programs, in terms of repeat policies. So we got rid of a lot of those things with this customized grading policy.

W. Duerkes: Thank you.

J. Peters: Does that answer your question?

W. Duerkes: Yes.

Z. Bohn: Bohn, Operating Staff Council. First, good afternoon, Mr. President, and everyone else here in the discussion. I have the great privilege of sitting amongst this council as both operating staff and as a student of this university and I simply would like to pose a question. Through all the discussion and things of that of misrepresentation, lack of discussion and preparation and things like that, I’ve heard multiple things about this new grading process that could be detrimental to a student whether it be effecting their GPA negatively, scholarship implementations, core requirements, things like that and I’ve yet to hear a single advantageous outcome that could come of this system. I would like to pose a question either to the UCC council members or simply an open forum: What are the advantages of this new grading system?

J. Peters: Okay.

C. Cappell: I’m Charles Cappell of sociology and I was chair of the Academic Affairs Committee that drafted the original plus/minus grading system proposal and was part of the negotiating team with APASC to reach a compromise and Steve Martin. I’m allowed to vote today, I’m substituting as an alternate for Brad Sagarin and my colleague, Steve Martin from the Physics Department, was a very active member and co-drafted the proposal with me.

In brief, the plus/minus system kind of modernizes our university. It makes us comparable to Ball State, Western Illinois, most of the MAC schools, the Big Ten schools, which all have plus/minus systems. The primary point is: If you look at grade distributions across universities of our rank, you find roughly about 70 percent of the students receive a grade of A or B. That’s almost a national based data. That means professors right now have the freedom to classify 70 percent of our students into two categories. Those of us that teach feel that we’re capable, and that students will benefit from, a more refined system that rewards higher performances in each of the grade levels which have a fairly large range and can incentivize the system perhaps a little
bit. The ultimate result of this from the surveys we’ve done of universities basically shows no appreciable, if even substantively, meaningful change in the average grade point average of students when the universities have transformed from a pure letter grade to a plus/minus system. We’ve done our homework on this issue. I can share details with you but I’d like Professor Martin to chip in.

S. Martin: Thank you. So, also to address this issue of what does it do for us. I was sort of flabbergasted when I was hired by this university to find out that I could not distinguish in grading between a student who gets an 89 in my class and a student who gets an 80. I have to give them both Bs according to the extremely course-grained policy that we now have in place. So it’s an issue of accurate representation of student performance. That’s a very meaningful difference in student performance in class when you have a student who has an 80 and a student who has an 89, and we ought to be able to distinguish that.

There is also the issue of fairness. If you are designing a grading system, in a large class in particular, and you have a student who has an 80 and you have a student who has a 79.5 and you have to put the dividing line somewhere. So the student who has the 79.5 perhaps is going to get a C and the one who has the 80 is going to get a B. We really have to do better. A more fine-grained system is really necessary.

Just to put a little bit more detail, we did consult the registrars at Western Illinois who transitioned in 2010 and at Ball State, they transitioned quite some time ago in 1996. Again, there’s only one other MAC school that does not have plus/minus grading. They both said they did not see a significant change in student GPA. At Western Illinois, they actually said the number of grade appeals which was another concern, the number of formal grade appeals actually decreased after the change. Although, both before and after the change the numbers were so small, you could say it was not statistically significant.

We did consider a plus only system, but I think there’s value in having a system that many other universities use. Although, some universities do use a plus only system, they are a small minority. Also, addressing the fact that this is a compromise system. It’s a compromise, but it’s not an outlier system. The main difference between this and what’s at place in many other universities, is that we don’t have the C minus. And the reasons for that are well documented as far as the compromise and the special situation we have in Illinois with the teacher certification requiring a C.

I guess the last thing I’d like to say is this proposal of plus/minus grading, a lot of times people view this with some fear that I think is not justified. This is not some system that has unknowable consequences, some reckless experiment. This is the system that most universities, including most universities in the Big Ten, most universities in the MAC throughout this country, use. It’s not something we should be scared of. There was a comment when I was talking to the registrar at Western Illinois, that once they implemented the system, they found that a lot of the things people were very worried about, didn’t happen. That it actually worked out relatively smoothly. That’s all I have to say.

D. LeFlore: So for the most part of it, it’s to be like other institutions to follow that particular grading scale is what I’m hearing is the reason why the institution wants to move in that
direction. That’s the ideal of it. I think that’s the wrong ideal to have just to follow that trend of other places. We can say that following the trend to legalize concealed weapons in other states, how they’re doing that and we’re fighting against the ideal of doing it here in Illinois. We shouldn’t do things just because other places are doing it. That’s why the Student Association and the students are here to basically say: Can we re-evaluate this plus/minus system and come up with ways to try to figure out, I guess the students are more so not knowledgeable of the plus/minus system and how it’s really going to effect this institution. What benefits besides catching up to the other MACs and the Big Tens as far as having the same grading scale? How is this going to benefit the students? How is this going to hurt the students and actually explain to the students how will this system get implemented?

As students, it’s hard for us to feel comfortable in voting for something and accepting something such as this when we don’t have an outlined plan of how this system would happen. We always talked about, when we brought up the plus and minus system that professors have the freedom to use whatever grading scale they want in their classrooms and that we, as students, should infringe upon their right to have that right and I think that, as students, we’re not trying to come against their right as professors to use whatever grading scale they want, because I have a professor right now who uses the plus and minus system in the class, but when it gets implemented by NIU it’s only A, B, C, D. What we’re asking here today is for us to come back to the table and work with the UCC, the Student Association is to work with the UCC on acknowledging us about the plus and minus system and how this is going to impact the students. That’s the motion that we’re going for as students.

J. Peters: Take Jeff Kowalski and then Austin.

J. Kowalski: As I have been following this issue for several years now and we’ve reached this point, there’s several things that occurred to me that in part they are a series of questions. And the first of the of these was: What would be the upshot of a University Council decision to veto a decision made by the UCC because, at this point, a great deal of effort and research has been expended doing the kind of comparative research on the different types of plus/minus grading systems that are in use at other universities. As Charles mentioned, generally speaking, they’ve demonstrated no, or extremely minimal, impact on student GPAs at the institutions that have tried it.

Another question that I wanted to find out more about or in a sense have answered is: What is the goal of the Student Association in a sense? Is it to have the entire issue completely reinvestigated, re-researched, which in fact scotches most of the effort that’s been put into it thus far. Or is it to provide adequate time for a kind of final hearing from the Student Association based on some research done or further student input at which point another vote might be taken by the UCC.

And another question that occurs to me is: What kind of signal do some of the members of the University Council send, not only the students, because obviously students have felt that their voices have not been given adequate consideration in some of this process, but also, what sort of signal do some members of the University Council feel they might be sending to members of this body, such as members of the Academic Policy Committee, or members of the UCC who have spent a great deal of time consuming and careful work and given careful consideration to some of
the issues that we’re considering here today too. It’s a complicated problem. Those are the questions that occur to me and I’ll stop there.

J. Peters: Now, Austin.

A. Quick: I can understand the discussion from the faculty side of things in looking at this and to answer a couple of your questions as we’ve stated multiple times, what we’re asking for is more time. We are not taking a stand either for or against plus or minus. We are asking for more student input. We hear a lot about facts and information that’s been gathered by UCC and APASC regarding other schools in the Big Ten and the MAC, but we don’t hear from the people that are to be affected by this at our university which are the students. That’s what we are asking for. We’re asking for more time, more information. Let’s educate students so then if we do see, if these facts are correct, and I assume they are, but the students hear that these things actually are not detrimental that they will be beneficial to them, then you’ll have a student body that’s in support of this and it’s not a contentious battle. That’s what we’re asking for.

As you can tell today, we have a number of students who have taken time out of their day, which is sometimes difficult, to come here, to show their support for more time for education to have an actual voice. In this council, we’ve seen through the last vote in this meeting, that we have a great number of students here. We have I think 17 roughly on the University Council. It is not the majority, nor should it be, but we’re one group and we’re representing the 20-some thousand students that are not here today and I think it is for the betterment, not only of this council, but of the university, to show that, you know what, we hear our students. And yes, I understand and I appreciate the hard work of UCC and APASC and I don’t in any way undermine the work they’ve done. It doesn’t say anything bad to them because I don’t question the data. What I’m asking for and what we’re here today is to say: We’d like more input. I think it shows UCC and APASC that, yes, University Council appreciates the work you’ve done, but we do feel it’s important to get more student input from the people that are going to be affected by that. I honestly, I agree with Delonte. I don’t care what other schools do. This is about the 20-some thousand students that decided to come to Northern Illinois University and how it affects them. Again, this is not a for or against the policy, it’s strictly more time, more input from the constituents that it affects.

J. Peters: Okay, Jeff.

J. Kowalski: One thing I’d like to say with regard to the question of more time being needed. There needs to be some sort of method by which we determine how much more time we’re talking about then because this needs to be an issue that cannot go back through years and years of reinvestigation or else the hard work that’s been done by these committees is being negated. It needs to be something, I would suggest, that comes back after due process and presentations and is again acted on by the UCC, preferably by sometime during the next semester.

J. Peters: Let me break in here, I think we’ve got a technical problem. By the way, this has been the best university substantive debate that I’ve witnessed in 13 years. It warms my heart, but if I were sitting on the UCC and this was vetoed, I wouldn’t be particularly pleased to take this issue up. So I don’t see where there is, given the rules, if it’s vetoed, there is no pathway for reconsideration, unless someone comes up with some compromise that this council doesn’t
control because then it’s in the academic setting. I don’t think there’s a pathway to it, but maybe someone smarter than I can come up with a pathway.

**J. Kowalski:** I’m not going to propose a pathway but that’s why I opened with my basic question: What is the upshot of this veto? And the one other thing I’d like to go back to for just a moment is that I don’t believe that the major reason that this system was being considered was so that we could simply keep up with our neighbors or keep up with the academic Jones’ so to speak. It’s because of the argument that, if you have discrepancies that can go from let’s say 80 to 89.5 percent in a particular grade level, that it gives students recognition that their grades are being assessed with a more careful and considered and more accurate discrimination and I think that’s the main reason why the system is preferable as opposed to the straight A, B, C, D, F system. It’s not just because other universities do it.

**A. Rosenbaum:** I’d like to call the question. Do we need a second for that Ferald? No. Do we need a vote?

**J. Peters:** We’re on a vote to call the question which is not debatable and requires a simple majority. Correct?

**A. Rosenbaum:** The parliamentarian says it doesn’t require a second.

**J. Peters:** Does everyone understand, we’re calling the question. We’re voting on calling the question which a yes vote means, call the question means we’ll go to a vote without further debate. No means we continue the debate.

**Unidentified:** Since this a called question as a motion to be ????

**A. Rosenbaum:** No.

**J. Peters:** No it’s not debatable. When the question is called, it’s not debatable you go to immediate vote as I understand.

**A. Gupta:** I’ll just request the motion being displayed on the monitor I guess it was so that we are not confused what we are voting for.

**A. Rosenbaum:** We’ll display the actual motion as soon as we decide whether to call the question or not. So the vote is to call the question. If we call the question, we’ll put the motion up.

**J. Peters:** One is yes to call the question. Two is no. Are we ready, Pat, to vote? Voting is closed.

Question is called:

34 – YES
14 – NO
0 – ABSTAIN
The motion to end discussion passed.

**J. Peters:** So that means we’ve called the question. Now we move to a vote on the main motion which is the reconsideration of …we’re going to put it up. When we get to it, yes means yes to veto, no is and we need two-thirds.

**A. Rosenbaum:** Is that visible? Can we get it outside that frame? Is there any way to get it up on the screen? As you can see, one is a vote to veto the policy, two is a vote to not veto the policy.

**J. Peters:** Are we ready to vote? Is everyone ready? No one press the button yet. Keep your hands off the button, including the president. Pat, tell us when you’re ready. We are now ready to vote.

**A. Rosenbaum:** One to veto, two to not veto.

**J. Peters:** Voting is closed. What is the report, Pat?

First Vote:
28 – YES – VETO
21 – NO – NO VETO
0 – ABSTAIN

**J. Peters:** All right, so the veto measure fails. Let me give you, just take a point of privilege, again it’s a great discussion. Yes? What do you want to talk about because I have to determine if you are in order or not.

**R. Holly:** The actual voting somebody made a comment that people were voting and it was too early and several people then got a clear screen and tried to vote again and then nothing happened. We need somebody to make it very clear to start voting.

**J. Peters:** Yea, that’s what I was trying to do. The parliamentarian given that there’s a challenge to the vote, should we re-vote? We don’t know how many people are here, but 49 people voted. Should we re-vote? Now, everybody hands off the clicker, number one. This is like my grandchildren. Everybody leave the controller alone. Only grandpa can do this. We are ready.

**A. Rosenbaum:** One to veto, two no veto.

**J. Peters:** Vote. Not taking the vote. Maybe it’s just not registering. Get another clicker. We’re closed. Voting is closed.

Second Vote:
28 – YES – VETO
22 – NO – NO VETO
0 – ABSTAIN

**J. Peters:** So that was the same vote right? So it was recorded. Austin.
A. Quick: Point of privilege, just because of the important issue that we brought up, I would request, I don’t know the technicality for it, I would request either a hand vote or something that we actually can make sure these are working correctly. Even mine was kind of funky and I know we’ve had this in the past but it just hasn’t been this close of a vote so I would ask for a hand vote or whatever is in order under Robert’s rules.

Unidentified: Count the number of voting members and then you’ll know.

J. Peters: How many voting members do we have? Everybody raise their hand. All right, Pat, count and if the total comes up we got a vote.

P. Erickson: 51.

J. Peters: We have a vote. Let me do a point of privilege as president 13 years that was a great discussion. I have two views on this. One as a faculty member, I have three views; one as a faculty member, one as a student and one as president.

As a faculty member, I argued this in 1983 before the Faculty Senate or the Academic Senate at the University of Nebraska and we had a plus system but not a minus system which was not a good system. And the argument that I made at the time, on behalf of the committee, because you have to represent a committee. You might now always agree with everything a committee does, but the argument went like this. The most important thing and the most thing that faculty do is the evaluation of students and performance in a class and that’s a decided faculty issue. It is an integrity issue and it is difficult because in the awarding of grades, the judgment of a professor is final except when the grade is unfairly, or arbitrarily or capriciously and then there are remedies for that. But that evaluation is key to a university. Then the argument goes, that professor needs whatever tools they have to make that job doable and valid and easier. At the time, the argument was that just the plus system did not have enough gradients and I think Professor Martin was arguing this point, to make that distinction. So they went to a – they added minuses, no A plusses and I don’t think there were D minuses it was a D. So that’s what it was.

At the time, I can’t remember if there was student concern, because I don’t think students were involved in that process. That was a completely closed process. We’ve come a long way. The impact of that as we get into, right as I left in ‘90/’93, was a concern on the part of faculty that adding the minus system and more gradients led to grade inflation and so there was a big debate about that and they determined that was not in fact the case, that it was about the same.

The other issue at the time that student’s were concerned about was whether or not that would hurt them in some way as they went on to graduate school or professional school, when in fact we know that most professional schools normalize to A, B, C, D, they don’t use the plusses. That’s one view.

The other view that I see here is a disconnect in a perception of what our participation system of students on these various committees is. Over a long number of years here, we’ve developed an elaborate shared governance system where the academic committees are populated by students who are within colleges, our academic departments, just as faculty on those academic committees are within departments and don’t necessarily represent the Faculty Senate. They are academic
college representatives. So then we have issue where students come up and the student feels their voice wasn’t heard and I guess that’s kind of the real issue here. I don’t even think it’s the issue of plus or minus grading system. I don’t think that student input or student centeredness means that if 51 percent of the students say we should have a plus/minus system we should have it. I don’t think that’s the issue here. My suggestion is that students and us get together and work on a better, a more rationalized student input system.

And the other thing, historically, student input on committees has varied depending on the generation of students. This generation happens to be they get it. You participate, where previously, you know students don’t show up or whatever. Then the other thing I ask is that when we implement this policy, which will now be implemented, Anne?

A. Birberick: Yes.

J. Peters: Then I want you to hear the voice of students in the implementation.

A. Birberick: Agreed.

J. Peters: I’m asking as a favor as president for 13 years going. Let’s move on.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

VI. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

F. Academic Policy Committee – Sean Farrell, Chair – report

1. Online student evaluation of instruction – walk-in

J. Peters: Now reports from Councils, Boards and Standing Committees. We’re moving the Academic Policy Committee action item on online course evaluation to the top and Sean Farrell the Chair of the APC is here. I want to thank the students for coming today.

S. Farrell: And I thought everybody was here to hear about the evaluations but apparently that’s only my ego speaking. Thanks everybody who is here. I’ll try and get this quickly as I’m hosting a party at my house in half an hour, maybe. The Academic Policy Committee’s main issue that we’ve taken up here or we’ve been forced to take up or asked to take up has to do with the issue of student evaluations of instruction.

In the report I kind of go through outlining a bit of a background there. The big issue here has to do with online versus paper evaluations in class. Briefly, several years ago, the UC passed a policy that allowed for the use of both systems for the use essentially of online evaluations in the process. More recently one college began to require online evaluations. Some faculty complained about that and the matter was taken up by the Faculty Senate. Charles Cappell, who’s here, headed up a committee of the Faculty Senate and did an exhaustive, high quality study of the issue that found that the faculty concerns about online evaluations were merited. That, in fact, they had smaller sample sizes and that they tending to skew negative and this can have implications for both tenure and merit raises that are very negative for then for faculty colleagues.
The Faculty Senate, on the basis of this, had a wide ranging discussion and proposed some language to essentially ensure that the faculty of a department had input into what evaluation system would be selected. That was then kicked up to the UC and several questions were asked about some of the ambiguous nature of the language that was in that two-sentence memo. It thus came to our committee. We met on November 6 to take up the issue and although there were significant differences as to the value and the use of online evaluations, there was consensus that we needed to perhaps tighten up the language. In wordsmithing the sentence that you see before you on the second page, the flip side of your report, I was very much guided by one of my committee member’s notions that, if we legislate, we should legislate minimally because of the moving target of both technology and evaluated mechanisms as we see. I have the language there. We changed it from the two-sentence language that came out of the Faculty Senate to a one-sentence that reads, the decision to use online or paper evaluation forms will be made at the department program level. I think that reflects the spirit that faculty at the department level will have an input into the system of evaluation.

J. Peters: So that’s what we’re voting on?

S. Farrell: That’s what we want to discuss, for discussion and then hopefully a vote.

A. Rosenbaum: You have to move the sentence.

S. Farrell: I would move that we establish .

J. Peters: Is there a second?

C. McCord: Second.

J. Peters: Dean McCord second. All right now let’s have discussion. I see several hands. We’ll take Jeff Kowalski first.

J. Kowalski: I applaud and appreciate the effort that’s gone into streamlining the language of this. However, based on the considerations that were given to this issue earlier, the one thing that I would like to suggest and offer as a friendly amendment to this language is that the italicized line in the new form be amended to read, “The decision to use online or paper evaluation forms will be determined by the faculty at the department/program level.” That’s offered as a friendly amendment and my reasons for doing so or rationale is that I feel that we need to make sure that it’s understood that it is a faculty decision. And in my opinion, although I am sure the effort to streamline was being made in good faith, that this is a somewhat ambiguous wording and I would prefer to see it made very clear that the faculty determine whether or not online or paper forms will be used particularly given the statements as currently understood these skew negative when they’re online and fewer students actually participate in responding to them.

J. Peters: Well, Sean, would be the person who would accept that as a friendly amendment, but I think people want commentary before we get there. Alan?

A. Rosenbaum: Jeff the only thing, you would then have a conflict of the first line of the policy as it now exists where it says each department with the participation of the student advisory
committee shall adopt. So either both lines would have to be changed, or they would be in conflict of each other. So are you proposing that that be changed to take out the participation of the student advisory committee?

**J. Kowalski:** Or it could be amended to read each department with faculty approval and the participation of the student advisory committee.

**A. Rosenbaum:** Okay so that’s the language your proposing?

**J. Kowalski:** Yes, I would add that as my recommended friendly amended language.

**J. Peters:** So say it again.

**J. Kowalski:** Each department, with faculty approval and the participation of the student advisory committee.

**A. Rosenbaum:** So the decision to use online or paper evaluation forms will be, keeping with the language here, will be made …

**J. Kowalski:** I believe that would make it compatible. If other people disagree…

**J. Peters:** Does everyone have an understanding of what the friendly amendments are?

**A. Rosenbaum:** We’re going to have get an exact working.

**S. Farrell:** I’m fine, I should probably perhaps explain here that one of the reasons we went with the streamlines and simplified language there is essentially that type of language is what had led to questions over what “faculty” means. Is this an individual faculty thing or is this faculty input into a department level that had raised the questions that forced it to be kicked to our committee. That was one of things that led there. I’m fine, if people don’t bring up any kind of logistical problems with the friendly amendment that has been offered. I’m fine with the sense of it if colleagues don’t raise questions about the ambiguity about what some of that means.

**A. Rosenbaum:** Jeff, we’re going to have to phrase that exactly so he can accept the precise wording. So could you look at that sentence and give us an exact phrase.

**J. Peters:** Meanwhile let’s hear from a few other people who want to comment. I know what the concept is. The concept is: Are we going to have chaos and have no online and some online, no consistency which is not a good thing. I think that’s the argument. Dean McCord?

**C. McCord:** Our clear intention was to signal that it is faculty as a collective noun, not faculty as individuals. The decision does not rest with the individual, it rests with the collective. That’s the very, very clear intent of the committee is that by whatever process, and I understand Jeff’s point, he wants to insure that that process is not an administrative process, but whatever process the unit makes a decision. Once the unit has made the decision, individual faculty, individual instructors, do not have the option then to opt out of the departmental decision. That’s very much the intention of the wording.
J. Peters: All right, Sean is agreeing. The provost and then professor.

R. Alden: I just had a comment to remind the UC why this came forward to begin with, and I’m not arguing one side or the other, but with the tremendous amount of time it takes for staff members to re-type on-paper surveys and the budgetary situation we’re in and the sort of shorthandedness we’re always faced with, considering that Blackboard is now coming on with a confidential student survey module and with mobile devices being what they are, having a paper in front of you or having your iPhone in front of you to enter the survey and add your comments, one requires considerably less amount of staff time to re-type. In other words, it doesn’t have to be re-typed and yet the same the responses would be there because if a faculty member is concerned about the responses whether they hand out the on-paper surveys, or ask everybody to bring in their iPads and iPhones and get onto Blackboard and respond during the class period, it seems to me that that response issue goes away. I would just want to go on the record that when departments make these decisions assuming this is going to be approved, that they take that new technology and new capability of Blackboard into consideration because it’s not an inconsiderable amount of work on the part of the staff to re-type all those comments.

D. Munroe: The way this is phrased it makes me think that this for a department, this is an either or process, and if I look at my department, we have face-to-face classes and we have online classes. A paper evaluation system, if that were voted on by my program, would not help me as a faculty member who teaches primarily online, so the fact that it’s written as an either or, I find troubling.

J. Peters: Sean you want to comment on that?

S. Farrell: If you look at the broader APPM, this section accounts for that already. There is language already within the APPM section on the grading and the sections where the department is allowed for exceptions so that you wouldn’t have silly situations like an online class that then requires paper grading. There’s flexibility within the existing policy to already allow for that adoption.

D. Munroe: Then the second question is: Does every department have a student advisory committee?

J. Peters: I don’t know. I think it’s in everybody’s bylaws, whether they have them or not, I don’t know.

N. Bender: Every department has (mic was not on)

D. Munroe: Did I ask that?

J. Peters: Some colleges may choose not to have departmental type committees and for some this decision is a collegiate decision and not a departmental decision.

D. Munroe: I mean the first phrase in that section says, each department with faculty approval and the participation of the student advisory committee, and my question was: Does every
department have a student advisory committee? So that maybe that term, “student advisory committee,” is too narrow.

A. Rosenbaum: And your suggestion would be that it should read student input or participation of students within a department?

D. Munroe: Exactly.

J. Peters: Dean McCord, did you have a comment on that? So where are we? We’re on the friendly amendment. Is it up there? Jeff is still working on it.

J. Kowalski: It doesn’t have anything to do with the student input, but I’d like to take another shot at possible wording that will clarify the intent of the proposed friendly amendment language I made earlier and it would then read: Each department with approval by the either vote or vote of its faculty, I don’t know which people would feel is more clear, by faculty vote and with the participation of the student advisory committee, etc and we may amend that, but that’s another issue. Then regarding the italicized line that could then read: The decision to use online or paper evaluation forms will be determined by faculty vote at the department program level. I believe insertion of the word vote implies that it’s the faculty as a collective that’s making this decision.

S. Farrell: That’s fine.

J. Peters: That’s been accepted as a friendly amendment.

A. Rosenbaum: Does it have to be accepted by the seconder? Seconder? Who was the seconder on the original?

J. Peters: There was a second from Dean McCord.

C. McCord: Yes, so I second the original motion. I’m comfortable with accepting this as a friendly amendment.

J. Peters: All right Jeff again.

J. Kowalski: I’d just like to say that I hear what Provost Alden has said regarding a newer technology superseding older ones and that use of clicker systems might make it easier for us to get broader student participation in a classroom. But I also do believe that if the faculty are confident that that broader participation simply gives a new sort of technical edge to getting the same kind of feedback that we’ve been getting with the paper distribution of forms in the past that faculty will have no problem voting to affirm that type of system.

J. Peters: Okay, yes?

D. Plonczynski: In the spirit of friendly amendments, I would like to suggest that we remove the student advisory committee and included student input.

J. Peters: Appropriate student input.
D. Plonczynski: Right and the realization that we don’t actually have them in all departments or units. And, secondly, that with all the friendly amendments, that we now perhaps have made the second sentence, which was our original amendment, obsolete. We’ve not made that first sentence so robust that it is inclusive.

J. Peters: We’ve been robust?

D. Plonczynski: It has been robusted, yes.

A. Rosenbaum: So we still have the friendly amendment to take out student advisory committee and replace it with participation of students?

J. Peters: Yea they got that in there.

A. Rosenbaum: They got that already.

D. Plonczynski: There’s two places for that please.

J. Peters: Another friendly amendment is to take out the bold?

S. Farrell: I guess a point of order on that, since we had not taken up that particular question as a committee and your just essentially rewriting the APPM, that strikes me as, changes to make the existing APPM consistent with what we are adding to I think or part of that process, rewriting the APPM seems a little…

J. Peters: So it’s not accepted as a friendly amendment.

S. Farrell: I’m just raising the question. I frankly would accept it if it got me out of here quicker.

A. Rosenbaum: I think we have the authority to do it if this is in keeping with the spirit of what the committee has wanted and what the body would like. I don’t think that that’s a problem.

???: Real quick I apologize, I’ll try to get you out of here real quick, I understand the appropriate student input is going forward. ESPA does not have a student advisory committee but the entire college student advisory committee is comprised of all the different departments and maybe, I’m not suggesting this, but maybe if we agree on this we say college of student advisory committee’s input be taken into consideration.

J. Peters: That won’t work in most colleges because of the centrality of the academic department to determining how they do their evaluations. I guess you’d have to use the rule or reason here and some colleges like Business, the College Advisory Committee would be the appropriate.

J. Kowalski: This is a first reading correct?

A. Rosenbaum: No, it’s not a constitutional bylaw, its APPM so we can vote on it.
C. Cappell: I urge a positive vote on this. This language captures the spirit of the motion that emerged out of the senate deliberations.

J. Peters: Ok good. It’s good to know that.

A. Rosenbaum: So we’re deleting that bolded line. Is that correct? And we’re adding program where it says department program?

J. Peters: No I thought that Sean was reluctant to accept that as a friendly amendment because it did damage to the intent of the …

S. Farrell: Actually let me, there were so many friendly amendments flying about from so many sources before me. Let me look at that.

J. Peters: He’s pondering. Redundancy isn’t bad, it’s if it changes the meaning.

S. Farrell: I guess that’s fine. I think it is redundant.

A. Rosenbaum: So if we put department/program that will capture the other part of it.

S. Farrell: The only thing, my colleague here has just pointed out that and the participation of appropriate student input perhaps is a little offensive to the English language and we can just go with the approval by faculty vote and appropriate student input.

A. Rosenbaum: Appropriate student input.

J. Peters: Yea we got that in there.

S. Farrell: Take out the participation of please.

A. Rosenbaum: Pat, add program after department so it says department program.

S. Farrell: To make consistent with the original.

J. Peters: All right now read it over. That’s what we have before us. More discussion? This is not first reading this is an actual vote. Yes professor?

T. Kapitan: You just removed the sentence that was critical. I think that sentence is not entirely redundant.

J. Peters: You have to get a microphone to be on the record.

S. Farrell: Thomas wanted, I mean he’s just arguing that the sentence is critical.

???: I see that’s a (no mic)
S. Farrell: As President Peters said actually, redundancy, it’s not completely redundancy, but redundancy sometimes is not necessary the worst thing.

J. Peters: So you are withdrawing your acceptance?

S. Farrell: I’m withdrawing my acceptance.

A. Rosenbaum: Please pull the sentence back in.

J. Peters: It’s in. All right, this is the motion as amended. We have a question.

M. Henning: I’m just wondering what exactly the implications are for implementing this in a particular college there may be a dean currently who has mandated and online systems which is not Blackboard and when can faculty rely upon this and what can they do at the department level?

A. Rosenbaum: Policies that are passed by the Council become effective immediately when they are passed. So this would become policy as soon as we pass it.

R. Alden: I should say the Blackboard system hasn’t been rolled out yet. That’s just been implemented by Blackboard, we have not gotten it in our updates, so digital measures is the only online student evaluation system with confidentiality that I’m aware of, there may be others out there, but I don’t know of anybody using them.

J. Peters: But isn’t the question: Currently there is a mandated online policy within a college or a department? Well then you have to go through your shared governance process and debate this and come up with an appropriate implementation mechanism. It’s a college or department issue. Let’s grab your clickers. Don’t touch them. Grab them but don’t press anything yet. Pat, tell us when you’re ready. One is you’re voting for, two against. Vote. Close voting.

32 – YES
7 – NO
0 – ABSTAIN

The motion passed.

A. FAC to IBHE – Sonya Armstrong – report – Pages 3-4

B. BOT Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee – Kerry Freedman and Andy Small – report – Pages 5-6

C. BOT Finance, Facilities and Operations Committee – Alan Rosenbaum and Greg Waas – report – Pages 7-8

D. BOT Legislation, Audit, and External Affairs Committee – Todd Latham and Rosita Lopez – report – Page 9
E. BOT – Alan Rosenbaum – report – Page 10

G. Resources, Space and Budgets Committee – Paul Carpenter, Chair – report – Page 11

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

K. Operating Staff Council – Andy Small, President – no report

L. Supportive Professional Staff Council – Todd Latham, President – report – Page 12

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

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

IX. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

X. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Minutes, Academic Planning Council
B. Minutes, Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee
C. Minutes, Athletic Board
D. Minutes, Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee
E. Minutes, Committee on Advanced Professional Certification in Education
F. Minutes, Committee on the Improvement of Undergraduate Education
G. Minutes, Committee on Initial Teacher Certification
H. Minutes, Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Experience
I. Minutes, Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum
J. Minutes, General Education Committee
K. Minutes, Graduate Council
L. Minutes, Honors Committee
M. Minutes, Operating Staff Council
N. Minutes, Supportive Professional Staff Council
O. Minutes, Undergraduate Coordinating Council
P. Minutes, University Assessment Panel
Q. Minutes, University Benefits Committee
R. A Guide to University Resources for Students Wishing to Resolve Various Complaints

XI. ADJOURNMENT
J. Peters: Now, we can go one of two ways, it’s five o’clock we can trundle on. It’s basically reports. Or we can adjourn and carry over reports to the first meeting of the new academic year. What is your pleasure?

Unidentified: I move to adjourn.

J. Peters: There’s a move to adjourn. Is there a second?

Unidentified: Second.

J. Peters: All in favor say aye.

All: Aye.

J. Peters: We’re adjourned. See you at the Orange Bowl.

Meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.