UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MINUTES  
Wednesday, April 1, 2015, 3 p.m.  
Holmes Student Center Sky Room


VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Arriola, Bond, Campbell, Chmaissem, Coronado, Dawson, Doederlein, Donovan, Fredericks, Liu, McCord, Mogren, Schwartz-Bechet, Shannon, Starofsky, Summers

OTHERS PRESENT: Armstrong, Birberick, Bryan, Coryell, Kaplan, Klaper, Phillips, Stafstrom, Weldy

OTHERS ABSENT: Falkoff, Stoddard

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 3:05 p.m.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

A motion and second to approve the agenda were received from the floor. Agenda was approved.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 25, 2015 MEETING

A motion and second to approve the minutes were received from the floor. The minutes were approved.

IV. PRESIDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

W. Pitney provided an update on the program prioritization process:

- The data team is currently doing a survey to identify all of the academic and administrative programs.
- The criteria team has taken the university-wide survey data and worked with APC and the RSBC (thus far there have been three meetings) to identify the criteria for use with the process here at NIU.
- The communications team has been updating the website and addressing frequently asked questions.
- A nomination process for the task forces was established and nominations are being processed. At this point there are 72 nominations with all colleges represented except for the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology. For the administrative program
task force, all divisions have representatives nominated except for four: Athletics, International Affairs, Marketing, and Advancement.

- A motion was approved by Faculty Senate, a subsequent letter was sent to the Provost last Friday documenting the motion that was to have a proportional faculty representation on these task forces and for the selection of task force members to occur at the respective college level. This was discussed today with Provost Freeman and Vice Provost Carolinda Douglass. This issue will be sent to the prioritization coordinating team.

D. Baker provided an updated on the Interim Vice President for Research search. Jim Ciesla is chairing that search committee. A nomination process will occur in a couple of weeks.

L. Freeman announced that two of our senior deans have recently announced that they will be leaving NIU to pursue other career opportunities: Dean Rich Holly and Dean Jennifer Rosato Perea. NIU will now be looking for a leadership transition in those colleges because it is too late in this year to launch an external search for deans.

D. Baker provided an update on the state budget. University leadership testified in the Senate two weeks ago and then the House of Representatives last week. Several students also attended. The state has a very large $6 billion problem that may get bigger with the pension case that is going to be decided in the Supreme Court. There is also a real understanding of the impact that a 31.5 percent cut would have in higher education. In addition to the revenues from the state, we must also consider our enrollment numbers. They’re not where we want them to be and we need to pay attention to student retention.

D. Baker commented on the recent audit findings reported in the paper, specifically the contract issues for a consultant. He began by offering a context of the time when he became the president and asked A. Phillips to comment on the findings. A. Phillips reported that soon after he took his position, he was in an audit with members of the Auditor General’s office and McGladrey, NIU’s external auditor. Audits are a very common and reoccurring process. NIU had a number of audit findings. Most of them were administrative in nature. With regard to the contract issue, personnel from procurement and legal are examining and reworking the process to ensure that all the processes and procedures are in place in an appropriate amount of time so that we do not have this problem in the future. Another audit finding related to the management of procurement cards. We are in the process of revising our regulations to try to make sure that doesn’t happen.

A more significant finding was that we had an individual who was reimbursed for travel that, according to state travel policy, was not eligible for reimbursement. While there were agreements in place, the state policy supersedes any agreement or contract that one might have with the university; thus this was a violation of state policy. NIU will go back and ask that that money be repaid. NIU has worked already on this issue and is in the process of ensuring that all the numbers and the expenses are accurate and correct. All policies and procedures will be revisited to ensure that these kinds of issues and problems do not happen again. Also, during the audit our controller and assistant controller were interim. In discussions with both McGladrey and the Auditor General’s office, they had exemplary things to say about NIU’s accountants and personnel who worked with them through the audit. Another notable issue is that, even though there were findings, one of the comments that they made was there were no federal findings associated with any of our grants or funds that we received from the federal government; this is very unusual. We have already started the process to address each and every one of these
findings. In many cases, they’ve already been corrected as they were administrative in nature or they were bookkeeping errors. In some cases if a report is submitted late for whatever reason, that’s an audit finding. Those aren’t the things that he worries about a great deal. What he does feel comfortable with is that all of our funds are being properly accounted for, aside from the clerical, other issues and other minor problems, the transactions are all being recorded in an appropriate manner. There are a couple of issues procedural and process such as the contracts and the P-cards, and those kinds of things and the travel issues which we are going back and more specifically working to fix, but by the time we get finished, we will have addressed each one of the audit findings and we will be in compliance with all federal and state guidelines, criteria, policies, and requirements.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

VI. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

A. FAC to IBHE – Sonya Armstrong – reports
   February 20, 2015 – Pages 4-5
   March 20, 2015 – Pages 6-7

S. Armstrong noted that at the March meeting there was a lot of discussion about program prioritization as well as legislative updates. The FAC received a presentation on the To & Through project—the link to this is in the report. For the caucuses we have decided to have each caucus raise one topic to the board and to the IBHE staff and for public universities it will be the budget cuts.

B. BOT Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee –
   Dan Gebo and William Pitney – report – Pages 8-9

W. Pitney noted that the BOT-AASAPC endorsed the Nankai/NIU International College. They also heard sabbatical reports and viewed the report on sabbaticals. The AASAPC also had an information item related to curricular diversity at NIU and learned about the Multicultural Curriculum Transformation Institute as well as some of the potential that the new PLUS program has with respect to addressing curriculum diversity. H. Khoury asked about the expenses associated with the Nankai/NIU International College. D. Baker clarified that there will be no net loss. It will be all positive revenue. These students will pay full out-of-state tuition when they come to campus. So the first two years in Nankai with NIU curriculum, the second two years here with full out-of-state tuition. H. Khoury asked about the sixth annual report after sabbaticals. W. Pitney clarified that it was the sixth time the sabbaticals have been reported to the Board of Trustees. H. Khoury asked why, given the statement in the report that NIU has a strong and robust history with a focus on continuous improvement and basically attention to equity, attention to several other components, why is there a need to have a new administrator on board for that purpose? D. Baker replied that one of the key findings from the diversity task force last fall was that NIU has a lot of excellence in different areas and a lot of activities around diversity, but there is currently no coordination of these activities. With integration and coordination, NIU could really move forward to enhance our students’ education, build our culture, build our faculty and staff, work with the community, etc. So we took a position that currently existed and was open, and reshaped it. It’s not a new position but a reshaping of an existing budget line. L. Freeman explained that NIU’s diversity mission was fragmented. This
was apparent in the diversity workshop that he called three administrators to put together as well as in the work of our academic diversity committees where we’ve had less leadership in terms of diversity and multiculturalism in the academic side than in terms of enforcement and compliance or perhaps student affairs. The task force came out with the recommendation for hiring a new administrator, I think we’re all cognizant of the concern of administrator salaries. After taking the Provost position, a number of lines in the provost’s office were eliminated: a position of deputy provost; two special provostal appointments that were part-time positions occupied by retired provost staff; the coordinator position for the diversity committee which was a partial faculty buyout, a position which really lacked the gravitas and the reporting structure necessary to really move our diversity position forward; and there was another special provost assistant. Thus there were actually five lines all together that were eliminated.


This was a written report only.

D. BOT Legislative Affairs, Research and Innovation Committee – Deborah Haliczer and Dan Gebo – report – Page 12

This was a written report only.


This was a written report only.

F. BOT Enrollment Ad Hoc Committee – Bill Pitney – no report

G. BOT Governance Ad Hoc Committee – Deborah Haliczer and Bill Pitney – no report


W. Pitney highlighted a few items from the written report:

- The BOT approved the student health insurance fee totaling $1,052 per semester for students.
- The BOT received a first reading for the tuition remittance program for the Ph.D. in health sciences. The funding structure for that program is different than the funding structure for other programs. Eventually that program will become self-sustaining. Thus, what was proposed was a new tuition remittance program. An employee wanting to seek a degree in that particular program would have to have his/her department pay that employee’s tuition and there would be a memorandum of understanding generated that would articulate and stipulate that that employee, once the degree is conferred, would serve a number of years afterward as an employee in that position.

H. Khoury asked whether the student health insurance fee is comparable to what other institutions charge. W. Pitney explained that this concern has emerged recently and he discussed this with Vice President Weldy. It was found that the student health insurance fee at the
University of Illinois is substantially lower than NIU’s as are the fees at Western Illinois. For the University of Illinois, including all of their campuses, the volume of students allows them to get a reduced rate for the fee. E. Weldy noted that this is one of the factors. Some other things that impact cost are the Affordable Care Act as well and some of the requirements in regard to certain things that we need to provide our students through the health insurance. Another factor is the number of claims that are submitted by our students, which is very high. H. Khoury asked how many of our students take the NIU insurance? E. Weldy stated that, on average, we have 6,000 students opting for the health insurance. D. Baker added that this price was arrived at by going through an RFP process. We had six bids, and there was a competitive bid. Our procurement office will look at that process. H. Khoury asked about the types of policies offered. E. Weldy commented that these are PPO’s.

D. Domke asked if students able to use this healthcare or insurance at other health care facilities besides NIU. E. Weldy clarified that they can use their health insurance at other facilities. D. Domke asked what direct benefits are students getting with the nearly a $300 increase? E. Weldy clarified that through the Affordable Care Act, we’re required to provide additional services. For example, in the past if you had a pre-existing condition, the insurance would not cover it. That is not the case now.

I. Academic Policy Committee – Virginia Naples, Chair

1. Proposed revisions to NIU Bylaws Article 15.5 and 15.6 – Pages 17-41
Standing Committees of the Undergraduate Coordinating Council
FIRST READING

V. Naples presented a proposed revision to the university-level curriculum committees. She noted that this actually is a process that has been undergoing for several years with quite a number of different people looking at it and trying to find a way to allow us to accomplish all of the missions of these various committees, reduce redundancy, and be more efficient in the amount of effort for the people who are involved in the various committees. She noted that an ongoing issue has been the length of time to get curricular changes through the approval process and we would like to eliminate that particular problem as much as we can. W. Pitney added information about the committee consolidation and how the current proposal emerged over time. D. Block stated that she is on the Academic Policy Committee and it’s estimated that this can decrease the time for approval for new programs by a number of months. This is very important in our economic situation and the higher education situation that we be as nimble as we can be and that’s another plus to this new organizational scheme. D. Baker complimented the committee. In the same spirit, he has asked Al Phillips to undergo process reengineering.

J. Resources, Space and Budget Committee – Ibrahim Abdel-Motaleb, Chair

1. RSB Budget Survey – Pages 42-45

I. Abdel-Motaleb provided information on two items:

The RSB decided that we need to have a survey to understand the problems related to the budget and the hiring process. H. Khoury asked why faculty were not included in this process. I. Abdel-Motaleb commented that the committee decided to poll the people who are directly involved with the budget. Faculty may not be involved with the budget directly. H. Khoury stated that faculty are being impacted by the budget and hiring So it would be
nice to acknowledge the voices of the faculty in this process.  I. Abdel-Motaleb acknowledged that this was a good point and he would take it to the committee for discussion. D. Baker asked and I. Abdel-Motaleb clarified that the data will come back for faculty input. Senate will be involved also as a faculty representative.

2. Proposed revisions to NIU Bylaws, Article 2.8 – Pages 46-48 Resources, Space and Budget Committee

FIRST READING

W. Pitney presented a proposal to update the Resource, Space and Budget Committee composition and duties, and also add a provision that allows the RSB to operate outside of the calendar year without a quorum. The proposal adds two tasks to the Resource, Space and Budget Committee: items D and E. Item D is to advise the president and executive vice president and provost on critical, time sensitive, budget issues affecting the university. And Item E is to participate and advise the president and executive vice president and provost on resource allocation matters and revenue generation opportunities that arise. In addition, the proposal allows this group to function outside of the academic year without a quorum providing there are at least five voting members, the majority of which must be faculty. Alternates would be allowable. In addition, it id proposed to increase the number of faculty from eight to 12 because faculty tend to be on nine-month contracts as compared to staff. Their availability outside of the academic year tends to be a little bit more problematic. In order to participate, it is felt that increasing that number from eight to 12 would increase the availability of at least three faculty.

Discussion about the possibility of having representation from each college on this committee took place and R. Feurer moved to have a clause added to require representation from each college. B. Jaffee seconded. Motion Passed.

B. Jaffee commented: When we talked about this in Steering Committee, this 2.8.4, the last bit about alternates for the committee operating outside of the academic year will be selected by the executive secretary of the University Council, the reasoning, the rationale behind that was that if you didn’t have representation from every college, that it would be important that there be a way to sort of insure diversity in the event of needing alternates. The language elsewhere in the constitution is that alternates are selected by the member themselves. That’s what we were trying to compensate for, but if we’re going to have representatives from every college, maybe we don’t need that last sentence.

B. Jaffee moved to eliminate the last sentence under 2.8.4. R. Feurer seconded. D. Baker asked if it might be easier to let the chair do that as opposed to trying to rally, and then get into the complexities of how many people in college have to vote to get the person. Discussion concluded. The motion failed with the following vote:

1 – Yes – 13
2 – No – 21
3 – Abstain – 3

K. Rules and Governance Committee – Jana Brubaker, Chair – no report

L. University Affairs Committee – Greg Long, Chair – no report
M. Student Association – Joe Frascello, President – report

J. Frascello provided an update on the S.A. elections. He noted that the S.A. strives to best represent students and their interests, while still maintaining its bylaws. They are sworn to protect the sanctity of the bylaws and often struggle with the sometimes conscious decision between upholding the spirit and the letter of the law. The official results from the election were:

- For president, Nathan Lupstein of the Voice of Change ticket with 1,682 votes is the winner.
- For vice president, Reginald Bates, Jr. from the Voice of Change ticket had 1,802 votes and he was the winner.
- For treasurer, Mark Calvey of the Voice of Change ticket won with 1,397 votes.
- For student trustee, Raquel Chavez on the Voice of Change ticket ran unopposed and won with 2,150 votes.

D. Domke noted that this was the first year that they had online elections so the process was a little rocky. The S.A. will be looking at some things to kind of shore up some different things to minimize the gray area. Two student representatives were added to the program prioritization coordinating committee. I, myself, will be the undergraduate representative and then Brian Cunningham, who is a retired Navy veteran in the Law School, will be the graduate representative.

N. Operating Staff Council – Jay Monteiro, President – report – Pages 49-51

J. Monteiro noted that President Baker was the guest at the last meeting and he addressed a list of questions that the council had given him ahead of time. Employee morale was addressed with a presentation from the council’s ad hoc committee on employee morale. They presented a two-part plan, and part one consisted of requests to the president and his cabinet which included support for the operating staff personnel advisor position, recognition of potential employee morale issues during the program prioritization process. Also they were requesting an addition of a comment or a suggestion form on the resources for faculty and staff web page at niu.edu, which he believes has been accomplished; an improvement of communication through the inclusion of important and timely employee information, specifically looking at using the payroll advice forms to share important information.

The other part of the plan was the council’s initial action plan steps that they looked to do which would include implementing a series of brown bag luncheons, specifically designed for Civil Service employees. They also want to continue to develop the relationship between the University Council and Operating Staff Council so that we are communicating clearly and promoting communication between the councils and our own Civil Service employees. One of the ideas they have come up with is rotating their monthly meeting three times a year to different locations on campus in order to get out and see their own constituents and become more accessible. One of the other items is adding an e-newsletter which they tried last month and it worked very well. They are continuing to send paper copies to areas that do not have computer access. And then encouraging efforts to recognize employee accomplishments, especially at the supervisory level. In the vein, coming up shortly we will be announcing our recipients of our outstanding service award winners.
O. Supportive Professional Staff Council – Deborah Haliczer, President – report – Page 52

D. Haliczer invited all UC members to attend the April 14 awards reception. Also, SPS Council is discussing the flex time policy with Provost Freeman. The NIU Annuitants Association and the HR Center for Training will offer a series of noontime brown bag discussions on retirement questions – not talking about retirement planning or finances or SURS.

P. University Benefits Committee – Brian Mackie, FS Liaison to UBC – no report

Q. Elections and Legislative Oversight Committee – Mary Beth Henning, Chair – no report

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Proposed revisions to NIU Bylaws, Article 9 – Page 53
   Faculty and SPS Personnel Advisor
   SECOND READING – ACTION ITEM

D. Baker called on W. Pitney to present this item. W. Pitney asked for a motion to postpone the vote for this since some individuals have left and there was no longer enough voting members present for the motion to pass. J. Frascello moved. D. Haliczer Second. Motion passed.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Proposed revisions to NIU Bylaws, Article 2.3 – Page 54
   UC-Minutes Committee
   FIRST READING

W. Pitney introduced the proposal to delete the minutes committee.

B. Proposed revisions to NIU Bylaws, Articles 2.2 and 2.5 – Pages 55-58
   UC-Rules and Governance Committee
   UC-Elections and Legislative Oversight Committee
   FIRST READING

W. Pitney introduced the proposal to consolidate the Elections and Legislative Oversight of the University Council with the Rules and Governance Committee. So that would become one committee. The proposal also included making the newly consolidated committee a joint committee between the Faculty Senate and UC.

C. Proposed revisions to NIU Constitution, Article 4 – Page 59
   Standing Committees of the University Council
   FIRST READING

W. Pitney introduced a proposed change to the NIU constitution. The change is to move away from listing every standing committee of the University Council and simply insert that the standing committees of the University Council shall be as defined by the NIU Bylaws.
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, Honors Committee
L. Minutes, Operating Staff Council
M. Minutes, Supportive Professional Staff Council
N. Minutes, Undergraduate Coordinating Council
O. Minutes, University Assessment Panel
P. Minutes, University Benefits Committee

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.