

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL TRANSCRIPT
Wednesday, March 1, 2017, 3 p.m.
Holmes Student Center Sky Room

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Alarcon, Arado, Baker, Bateni (for Chung), Bishop, Briscoe, Buck (for Staikidis), Carlson, Chitwood, Collins, Cordell (for Olson), Demir, Doederlein, Freeman, Haji-Sheikh, Hathaway, Henry (for Block), Hernandez, Johnson, Kassel, Khoury, Kremenec, LaGioia, Long, Macdonald, Martin (for Wilson), McCord, McHone-Chase, Mogren, Naples, Newman, Nicholson, Novak (for Boughton, Pavkov, Pitney (for Elish-Piper, Pluim, Reynolds, Riley, Russell, Saborío, Slotsve (for Chakraborty), Smith, Tahernezehadi (for Ghrayeb), Thu, Torres, Towell (for Rajagopalan), Wang, Wyzard

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Block, Bond, Boughton, Chakraborty, Chung, Cibrian, Dannenmaier, Elish-Piper, Farrell, Ghrayeb, Hanley, Kreis, Olson, Penrod, Rajagopalan, Scherer, Shin, Staikidis, Tan, Williams, Wilson, Zaucha

OTHERS PRESENT: Bryan, Falkoff, Grush, Klaper, Pinkelton, Stoddard, Wesener Michael (for Stang),

OTHERS ABSENT: Coryell, Hoffman, Johns, Kaplan, Stang

I. CALL TO ORDER

D. Baker: Call us to order. Welcome to winter again. Thanks for coming out and braving the wind and the snow.

Meeting called to order at 3:04 p.m.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

D. Baker: Call us to order and ask for a motion for the adoption of the agenda. Do I have a motion?

T. Arado: So moved.

D. Baker: Who was it? Thanks. Second?

A. Smith: So moved.

D. Baker: Great. And as a reminder, everybody please, you know, use the mic so she can hear it, and we can get it on captioning and give your name. Thanks. Since you're not a mind-reader yet. All right, any edits to the agenda? Hearing none, all in favor, please say aye.

Members: Aye.

D. Baker: Opposed? Thank you, it passes, we have an agenda.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 1, 2017 MEETING

D. Baker: Can I have a motion to approve the minutes of the February 1 meeting. Doederlein moves. Second?

T. Martin: Second.

D. Baker: Thank you. Any discussion? All in favor, please say aye?

Members: Aye.

D. Baker: Opposed? Thank you.

IV. PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

D. Baker: All right, President's Announcements. I want to talk to you a little bit about the legislature. So some things are going on in the legislature. At the last meeting, I noted that the senate was working on a grand plan, and it had 13 pieces to it, and it still has 13 pieces to it, and some of them were voted on yesterday. So I want to talk to you about each of those and where we are.

So the bills include things like tax hikes, a property tax freeze, gaming expansion, minimum wage increase, funding for THIS fiscal year, pension reforms, procurement reforms, etc. Yesterday the senate passed a few of the less controversial pieces of those 13. Local government consolidation, procurement reform and gaming were passed yesterday. The pension bill did not pass, however, it's being sent back to tinker with so there's some hope on that. And Joe might talk to us about that here in a second. It'll be revisited soon, I believe.

Today the senate's tackling some of the tougher issues such as pensions, tax hikes, etc. The tax hikes are a tough sell in some quarters, but I think that the legislature's come to the conclusion that, with an approximately \$11 billion structural deficit, that we're not going to cut our way of this. So there needs to be a revenue increase and a spending reduction. So I think people are now talking about how big the increase will be, and what flavor it will be. And there are various pieces to it, from income tax to sales tax to sin taxes like your Pepsi, that kind of stuff. Now it's probably important to reinforce that there's a poison pill in all 13 bills – that if the other 12 don't pass, the 13th one doesn't. So they all have to pass as a package, there's that poison pill in there. So the idea is, you may hold your nose and vote for a tax increase because you're going to get a gambling casino, you know, in your town, something like that. So there are these trade-offs that will give them some cover.

I will note that in the senate yesterday, that about half the Republicans were coming across the line to vote for these. So the Democrats were voting for them and about half the Republicans. I think that's a positive sign. And I've spoken with some of the senators, and they are saying, we know we need to get something done. We're willing to make some compromises, and there's enough play in

this bill that I can vote for this other one that I wouldn't normally. So the poison pill so far seems to kind of be working.

So we're hopeful that in the next few days the senate's going to get something done. The house will be back in session next week. It's hard to say what will happen in the house. Now the governor's not been very vocal about these 13 pieces. He's actually been relatively supportive and he's been caucusing with the senate, so I think that's a positive sign that he's caucused with the senate. And about half the senate Republicans are voting for it. So, you know, the log jam is creaking.

But there are a lot of unknowns. And the unknowns are also in the judiciary side. You saw that, a few weeks ago, Attorney General Lisa Madigan had asked to join a lawsuit that allowed state government workers to be paid even though there was no state budget. She approached the court. The court denied that, but she said she will appeal it, but we don't know when. So that's an unknown. And so her basic argument is it's not constitutional to be paying people if you don't have a budget. Okay? And that would call the question and force the legislature to do something or shut down government or agencies, I guess I should say. We don't think we would be affected by that. We would maintain our operations because of our tuition revenues.

Also we don't know the full implications of the vote by AFCSME workers who took a vote last week and had an 81 percent approval to strike if contract talks with the state don't progress. So we're not sure what the implications of that are. So you've got these other couple pieces moving out there that are also putting some heat on the legislature to get stuff done.

We're tracking a number of bills in addition to the budget issues. For example, one of the bills would prohibit us from doing background checks on incoming students for criminal records. The police departments on university campuses around the state are not supportive of that. They would want to know if certain types of criminals were coming in. So if you've had a sex offender, or something, coming in to campus, you would want to know that so you could take appropriate precautions and whatnot. So there's work on those.

I will be in Springfield testifying on March 30 in front of the senate, and in front of the house on April 13. Those are the traditional budget hearings, appropriations hearings that we hold each year where we go down and make our case. We won't be the first up so we'll have some idea of what the legislators are going to be asking the other schools, and then we can be prepared for that, so that's good. In the past, I've taken students with me to testify. I found that to be fairly effective when they could tell their stories from the heart about the impact of the budget on them and their educations. I'll hope to do that again this year, depending on the guidance we get from the two committees and their willingness to allow us to have you there.

Joe's going to talk about the pension bill, but let me just say a little bit about it. Are you going to talk about Senate Bill 11? Okay. So here's what I know, and Joe can correct me. So the General Assembly, it eliminates the General Assembly retirement pension program, creates a hybrid plan for new hires as of July 1 of 2018, and it requires Tier 1 employees, by March 31 of 2018, to pick between receiving the current COLA (cost of living adjustment), but no future raises counting toward their retirement, or 2) reduced COLA and future increases in pay used in the calculation. So employees choosing the reduced COLA are offered a 10 percent lump sum payment as

consideration. The bill also includes a cost shift to universities and school districts who must pay the state's share of the retirement contribution for people earning over \$140,000 a year. So it's a cost shift at the upper end to defray some of the cost and put it on us. It's another unfunded mandate to us or a hidden budget reduction.

The bill's 269 pages long. So we've read it, but we're studying it to kind of get into the fine print to make sure we're not missing anything. But that's kind of what I know. Joe probably knows a heck of a lot more about it. And so I'm going to turn it over to Joe, and then I'm going to come back and make a couple more comments. So Joe Grush is here from the Annuitant's Association. Joe, thanks for being here.

A. NIU Annuitant Association and State Universities Annuitant Association
Joseph Grush, President, NIU Annuitants Association
Senate Bill 11 Summary – [Work in Continuous Progress](#)

J. Grush: Thank you for inviting me. You have a one-page summary of Senate Bill 11 where it lists the 13 bills. It gives you the substance of each bill, and the status was at the end of the day yesterday as in midnight. I do not know what is going on in Springfield today. For those of you who believe in Carl Jung's principle in synchronicity, as you are hereby assembled, they in Springfield are talking about the same items that you are considering.

There are a couple things, before I get to the pension thing, other items in these bills that are of importance or significance to the inhabitants of this room. Senate Bill 4 is to float \$7 billion in bonds to reduce the backload and expenditures. And you might think, well who cares about that. There is a member of our organization who had to undergo a specialized medical procedure and had to pay \$25,000 in advance because they did not trust Springfield to make good on the payments. He had to take out two credit cards and max them to the limit and pay \$300 a month in interest, which he'll never get back. This bill would reduce the number of people subjected to that. And it's even worse for our retired members who live out of state, for example, in Arizona or Florida, because many of those states know that Illinois' financial situation is very bleak, and they don't want to take the chance. So that's an important bill for a number of our members and a number of current workers.

Senate Bill 6 is a very important. As worded, at least the copy version I have, it says, "Appropriate funds to agencies for costs incurred before July 2, 2017." Well it turns out – I did not know and again Lisa probably didn't know – that NIU is an agency. And if this bill were passed, and the package were passed, NIU would get \$42.8 million. So this is a significant bill with significant impact. That's passed as an individual bill.

The other bills, their current status, again as of last night, I don't know what the votes are today. That will give you an indication of where they're at.

The pension reform bill is a nightmare, and for anybody in this room, or who has a family member or friend who is in the traditional plan, if this were to pass, they will have to make a choice between two alternatives, neither of which is attractive.

And Doug made reference to some of the provisions, but to be clear, one of the choices that you would all be asked to make if you are traditional – and you'd have a 60- or 90-day window in which to make the choice – you would get a ten percent rebate of all of your past contributions into the system; your current payment of eight percent of salary or compensation would be reduced to 7.2 percent; your raises would count in your final rate of earnings – any raises you get now before you retire would count in the final rate of earnings, which is the base upon which your pension is determined; but the AAI – that's the automatic annual increase – it's not a COLA, but it's an automatic annual increase, which is set at three percent – you would give that up, it would become half the rate of inflation not to exceed three percent and in two various reports of this bill, there are two other provisions that go along with that. Whatever you got when you were retired by way of payment, that would not be compounded. And compound interest, if you follow Albert Einstein, allegedly said, that's the eighth wonder of the world. In 24 years with three percent rate of automatic annual increase, your pension would double. If you do it at half the rate of inflation, and there's no compounding, you will probably lose out in the long run.

So the increases are not compounded and, moreover, one of the sub-provisions in one of the versions said that you will have to wait five years after you are retired to receive any automatic annual increase, whatever that might be, or wait until you are age 67, whichever comes first.

So essentially what they're saying is, "We're going to give you some money now, ten percent rebate on what you have paid in, ten percent reduction in what you have to pay, your raises will continue to count in your final rate of earnings, but we're going to take away the automatic annual increase. And the state has been interested in doing that for a long time, because aside from health care costs, nothing adds to the cost of the state with regard to pensions and all matters as well. So that's one half of the choice.

The other choice is to continue to receive the three percent automatic annual increase. But the final rate of earnings would be frozen based on your current salary history. I repeat, frozen on the base of your current salary history. So if you were to work 30 more years or 20 or 25 more years, whatever those raises are, they would have no impact upon your pension, but you would get the three percent at the end.

This is a horrible choice for people to make for the simple reason that most people will not be able to calculate what is the financial consequences of these two choices. To be able to make that calculation, you have to know when you're going to retire. You have to know what raises you might get from now to when you retire. You have to know how long you are likely to live. You will have to know what the rate of inflation's going to be during all of those years from retirement til the time you die. You have to know all of those things or make an estimate. And as we all know, predictions are hazardous, especially if they concern the future. If you can't make those calculations, you can't make an informed consent.

John Carr, lawyer and lobbyist for SUAA, believes that this provision is unconstitutional unless people are given the choice to retain what they currently have. So they're offering you two choices that have different consequences, and they all concern the future. And you have to estimate what those consequences will be. People are not prepared to do that. I did some back-of-the-envelope calculations, and it's very difficult. What that led me to believe, anybody who's nearing retirement

should keep the three percent automatic increase, because you're only going to work for a year or two or three, and you're going to live 24 years, you want that three percent automatic increase. Young people, it's a toss-up. If you're a faculty member, however, and you stand to be promoted to associate, you get an \$800 a month bump; and get promoted to full professor and get \$1,000 bump; and you might pick up grants or become an administrator and go from a nine- to a ten-, 11-, 12-month salary and pick up those increases, then you probably would want to count the current raises towards your pension. All the people in between are the great unknown, and we believe that's unfortunate.

And the intent of SUAA with acting in cohort with the NIUAA, would be to sue. The only problem we don't know is how many machinations the state's engaged in that we might have to file suit over. Pension reform is only one. To delay paying people for their health insurance is a denial of a benefit that was promised, and that's unconstitutional in the view of our attorneys. And that would be another basis for a suit. But as you all know, suits cost a lot of money. The two suits that we've won on your behalf to preserve the health care after 20 years, that suit, as well as the defeat of a prior incarnation of pension reform, to defeat that, those two pieces of legislation, to fight all the way to the Supreme Court, cost \$550,000. So we will have to pick and choose what fight we're going to fight, depending on what gets passed.

I will respond to one other question, and then I think I'll allow some times for questions so I can follow what Greg gave me by way of advice. And that is to say – Greg said, how do we keep track of what's going on? How do people in this room who have curiosity about what might happen, have curiosity about whether the tuition waiver for the children of current employees is going to be removed. How do we keep track of all that stuff? Well the best answer I can give you is to join the [State Universities Annuitants Association](#) and [NIU Annuitants Association](#), because with that you get many briefings. You get newsletters. You get, as important legislation passes, a blast through the email system as to what is going on. It is the best way you can keep up with events. And the cost of joining those two organizations is a grand total of \$36 for the year. If you pay through payroll deduction, that's \$1.50 per pay period. Put differently, it's ten cents a day to protect your benefits. That's what I have to say with regard to Senate Bill 11, as well as how do you keep track of all of these things. I can respond to any questions you might have. Yes sir.

M. Falkoff: I have a question. Within Senate Bill 11, is there any provision about what would happen to the rest of the 13 if the courts were to find that this pension reform scheme is unconstitutional, which I cannot imagine that they wouldn't. It seems very clearly unconstitutional. But if there any language about what the effect of a court ruling would be?

J. Grush: Well you have to separate two processes. One is to get the vote to create the law. I doubt that there would be a single law encompassing all 13 bills. I think those would be all enacted separately. As Doug mentioned, just the pension bill alone is 269 pages long. You can imagine what that bill would be like if you wrote all 13 of them. So I suspect it's a vote to approve all 13 as a strategic maneuver to get people who will find something in there that they like more than the other elements they dislike, to get passage of the grand bargain. So I think these bills, if they do pass all 13, then I think they would be legislated individually and litigated individually.

M. Falkoff: Thank you.

D. Baker: Others?

E. Mogren: I'm wondering, actually, and this may be premature, if the administration here has considered what the consequences would be of getting a pension reform in terms of retaining faculty. For those people who are eligible to retire, who have, you know, we've not had a three percent raise for years. If this is passed, I can imagine that there would be a great deal of interest in seeing your faculty retiring, because the likelihood of them getting raises that would be important enough for them to opt out of the three percent traditional structure is pretty small. And so I can imagine if this is passed, has the administration considered what the consequences would be on basic staffing at the senior level. Also, of course, those folks who would be incentivized to take essentially a guaranteed three percent raise every year as opposed to something less than that by staying here are also the folks at the university who are the senior level, who provide the leadership and the instructional and the research core of the university. Have you, as the university, thought about what the consequences, long-term consequences, would be for students for our research positions and for our status here within the state?

J. Grush: I'm retired so I won't answer.

E. Mogren: Well I know that, Joe, and congratulations.

D. Baker: You're our role model now, right? We have talked about it. And I think you have to assume that, if that's what happens, and if there is that incentive to, we're going to have to deal with the consequences. So how do you deal with the consequences, knowing that you may just have to make a fiscal decision that you do retire. So how do you then deal with it internally? You need to have a prioritized list, I guess, that you work with the faculty and chairs and deans to prioritize hiring and probably think about hiring at different levels. So if you lose a large cohort of full professors, you may want to think about if you're going to maintain your research and teaching or outreach expertise, what's the mix of junior and senior faculty that you need in the department to be effective going forward? So you may need to hire middle-level or senior positions to provide that leadership. It's hard to have a full department full of assistant professors and get what you need done.

E. Mogren: Well and just to follow up on that then, is the administration really committed then to replacing people, senior faculty, who might be leaving, might be incentivized to leave, by the pension program? Is there some incentivizing, is there some commitment by the university to essentially replace senior level with junior level moving forward?

D. Baker: Senior level with junior level?

E. Mogren: Well that's essentially what you said. I mean, what you've said is that people who are at the senior level who might be incentivized to leave because they are going to be essentially guaranteed a three percent raise annually, which is more than what they're getting now, what you've suggested is that the administration is suggesting, or thinking about, then replacing those people with junior-level folks.

D. Baker: I don't think that's what I said.

E. Mogren: Well then perhaps you can clarify for me.

D. Baker: I think what I said was you need to look at the department and its array, its demography and then come back and hire strategically, potentially at middle and senior levels so that the department can fulfill its mission.

E. Mogren: So the administration is committing itself then to hiring at the mid-level or senior level to replace people who might be mid-level or senior level who are leaving.

D. Baker: I'm committed to looking at that strategically in department by department, depending on the demography and what it's trying to do, where it is in its development. There's not going to be a blanket, we're always going to hire at the junior level kind of strategy. But I think you can't just make a blanket thing. You've got to look at where's the department, where is it in its development, what kind of faculty do they need going forward? What are the expertise levels? What clusters are they trying to build to be good, etc.?

E. Mogren: And what sort of incentives could the administration offer to bring in people laterally or at the senior level given the continuing financial crises and retirement issues that we have at hand?

D. Baker: Well one of the things we've tried to do, particularly in the research areas, is build areas of clusters of research, to have kind of the gravitational pull around a particular expertise. I think we were very successful in that in the last few years, for example, where we've built kind of a gravitational pull into a very strong department that continues to attract high-quality folks. So I think if you have those thematic areas where you're excellent, that's one example.

Start-up, as people bring in external funding and your ability to support that, I think, is another one. Lisa, do you want to say anything else? Oh philanthropy, of course, too, yeah. I had a series of meetings with donors this week and actually across a number of colleges. And I talked to them about where we are in Illinois and what support we need. And I think among our alumni and potential donors, there's growing interest to help us in this regard.

E. Mogren: Thank you.

D. Baker: Marc.

M. Falkoff: I just want to make one more point – that the last time we had the pension reform go through, you looked at that bill, if you were familiar with the state constitutional provisions and the case law, it seemed pretty clear that that was going to be ruled unconstitutional eventually. And of course, you all went to the Illinois Supreme Court and won there. Nonetheless, of course, as soon as the legislation was passed, what we saw was an exodus of professors, people rationally deciding that they had to retire because they couldn't wait to find out what would happen in the courts. And this new legislation seems even more clearly unconstitutional, I guess equally unconstitutional. But the same thing is going to happen. So if this kind of pension provision gets passed, regardless of

what we lawyers think of it, there will be retirements, and that's going to affect us, so just making that observation.

D. Baker: And, Marc, thank you for your analysis in the past on these issues. It's been very helpful.

M. Falkoff: I think that's why it was deemed unconstitutional.

D. Baker: Yeah, it's nice to have our resident lawyer who knows about this stuff, although you're not providing counsel, I should say that, right?

M. Falkoff: No, that's right.

D. Baker: Anybody else? Well, Joe, thanks for coming.

J. Grush: I'd like to make one final comment. Excuse me, I've had a terrible cold. If you go out onto NIU's web page and under A-Z, click on A. And you go down to Annuitants Association and click on there, you will find two links to a public forum we had on legal issues including, but not limited to, pensions. And there was a question/answer format where we had moderators ask questions, as well as questions from the audience. And then we had John Carr give his legal opinion, as a lawyer, whether he thought those provisions would be legal if passed, but also as a lobbyist, whether the state legislature was inclined to act on those. And so if you're interested in these types of things, you can find 24, roughly 24, questions answered with regard to if the state did X and Y, would this be legal? And if so, would they be likely go after that? And there are a couple very dramatic provisions that are being contemplated and being talked in the hallways, but are not articulated publically because of the adverse fall-out to the politicians. One is a change in federal law to allow states to declare bankruptcy. If that were to happen, it is theoretically possible that everybody's pension, whether retired or still working, could be dramatically reduced. I'll leave you to look for the pros and cons for that particular thing, and Marc can fill you in with Section 10 of Article 1 of the U.S. Constitution that would come into play with regard to that. But there's also discussion – and Rauner's a proponent of that – is to go to an amendment to the State Constitution negating the protection of benefits to employees as well as retirees. And you can imagine if you ask the average citizen, not what you think is right, but do you want to pay more in taxes so that retirees and those about to retire from public work can have cushy pensions and health care benefits and to raise your taxes to pay for that, we know what the likely outcome of that proposed amendment would be. So if you're interested in those types of legal, quasi-legal issues, it's another benefit to pursue on NIUAA where you can find those answers. And I think there was a plan to have a spring session of a different focus and one again next fall. But that again is what members gain from being in the organizations. I thank you for your time. I thank you for being invited, and I will now take my leave.

D. Baker: Mike had one question.

M. Haji-Sheikh: I have one thing for you. They're going to start voting again at 3:30.

D. Baker: 3:30.

M. Haji-Sheikh: Today, so they should be starting, going back in, they were on recess.

D. Baker: All right, stay off your phones. Thanks, Joe. And I actually haven't heard that bankruptcy or constitutional change talked about in serious tones, so I don't want to make it sound like that's an imminent thing. I think those are people playing with ideas, but, Marc, do you have any thoughts on that?

M. Falkoff: I think the constitutional amendment is always something that's in play. I mean, things have to break right. But it's not clear that, if there were a constitutional amendment, that it would have retroactive effect. But that's a much closer question. But I think it's a possibility.

D. Baker: Aren't you cheery? You lawyers.

Let me shift to one other issue I wanted to say a few words about. Maybe it's time for a pause on good news. Our enrollment, you know we've been working hard on enrollment this year, both transfers and freshmen are confirmed students appear to be up. So that's good in both transfers and freshmen. And my belief is that, when we come to the tenth day of the semester in the fall, we will be up in our incoming class. That's not going to overcome our overall decline, though, because we had a small freshmen class this year, we'll have a small sophomore class next year, because of the demographic shift. And we've got a big senior class going out. So we will be down because of the demography, but you will be turning the corner if we can get our incoming class up. So I think that's good news. I appreciate all of you continuing to work on recruitment and retention. Retention can have a huge impact, and it's the academically appropriate thing to help our students succeed and move forward. So thanks for all of your good work on that. I think that's the good news portion.

One other comment I wanted to make is the letter in your packet from the Resource, Space and Budget Committee. And I think they bring up some very good concerns in there, and also a good thank you for Al Phillips, who had his retirement and exit from the university yesterday. And we wish him well in his retirement. His wife, Nanette, spoke about not seeing him for the last few years and appreciating him and the to-do list that – or the honey-do list she called it, that she's got for him. Larry Pinkelton's here today, and Larry's our new CFO for the institution on an acting basis. Appreciate him taking this on. RSB, I think, had some very good issues that they talk about in there, and that is about RSB's advisory role to the Executive Budget Committee. The Executive Budget Committee's really been focused on trying to figure out the state revenues and what the implications are and the boundary conditions for our budgeting. And so we haven't gotten very far through the budgeting process at this point. I met with the Executive Budget Committee today. I'm going to assume the co-chairmanship of that with Al's departure. And Larry and John Heckmann will be reporting to me on an active basis while we undergo the search for the refill. Lisa Freeman, the provost and executive vice president, is also co-chairing with me. And we talked about the budgeting process for '18 and then '19 going forward, and how we want to better integrate stakeholders internally including the Resource, Space and Budget Committee. And so I'd like to have a joint meeting of RSB and EBC in the next few weeks to update you on where we are in the budget cycle and get your feedback on that. Lisa will talk about that more in her Program Prioritization update. But we'll want to show you the framework for the budget cycle that we're working on and where we think the RSB can fit into that and get your feedback on that in a number of places in that cycle.

There's one other comment in there about changes in academic programs being made through the Program Prioritization process. And it seemed to imply not going through shared governance. I want to assure you, when you do academic program changes, they have to go through shared governance. So it just can't be done outside of that with some Program Prioritization pronouncement. So just to underscore that piece.

Any questions on that? Thanks to the RSB for the letter. I thought it was well done and made some great points. Ah, let's see, I guess those are all my comments.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Program Prioritization – Lisa Freeman, Executive Vice President and Provost

D. Baker: So let's move on. Nothing on the consent agenda. Unfinished Business, before I turn it over to Greg, Provost Freeman has an update on Program Prioritization.

L. Freeman: Thank you President Baker, and I'm going to keep this brief, and I'm going to follow on the comments that have been made by the president and also provide an update on one of the initiatives I talked about last time we were at University Council.

An update to the Program Prioritization website is underway. A tool has been developed that's essentially a table with a hover function so that you can see where the reports have come in, what the due date is, and what the final decision is. The text is being developed for that as Jennice and her team are building it. And we think we're about ten days, two weeks, from having a full launch. We'll be updating it regularly once we get it up, but we're working on getting that out.

And I want to also comment on Program Prioritization transparency and the RSB and APC and the representatives that we said we would engage in the process, and who we will engage in the process. To date we have had one meeting where the Executive Budget Committee had attendance by the faculty chair of the Academic Planning Council and the chair of the Resource, Space and Budget Committee. And we talked there about the rubric we plan to use to compare programs that have unfunded requests throughout Program Prioritization. And one of the suggestions that emerged at that meeting was that the questions and the weighting factors that we used for academic hiring be extended to staff hiring as well. And in fact, those have been incorporated into the applicant tracking system that's going live now, so that all hires at the university will be subject to the same types of questions and answers, and there'll be similarity in the template. And so that will be part of how we do things in terms of hiring going forward.

In terms of Executive Budget Committee, we have not really revisited Program Prioritization decisions at the Executive Budget Committee, because a lot of the complex conversations are actually rolling up now. And those are the ones that have budget requests of significant magnitude that they would need to be directed to the Executive Budget Committee. And also because, as we've heard a number of times today, the Executive Budget Committee has been dealing with the inability

of the state of Illinois to keep its promises to public higher education, to public employees and annuitants, and to students who depend on MAP. And to go to Eric's question, we've been running lots of scenarios. We've been looking at what the turnover implications would be. We've been looking at revenue and expenditures under a number of different assumptions, none of which is particularly cheery, to be honest, but some of which are worse than others. And that and the transition with Dr. Phillips departing, have really occupied us to the point where we're making hazardous predictions because they involve the future, but we haven't been focused as much on Program Prioritization as a result. As those requests are starting to stack up and we'll have a bunch that we can look at together, we will again engage, as we promised, the Academic Planning Council and RSB representatives to help us into fiscal '18 and '19 as we use the task force reports, the results and action plans and the president's report as a guideline.

I'd be happy to take questions too.

M. Haji-Sheikh: Dr. Freeman, I've got one question just out of curiosity. Do you guys have a total cost for this project, you know, line item by line item?

L. Freeman: Actually, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness is assessing each stage of it, and part of that assessment is tallying the cost. It's a work in progress, but it's always been our intention to share that as we go forward.

M. Haji-Sheikh: Could we start seeing summaries of that on like a quarterly basis?

L. Freeman: Let me confer with Carolinda Douglass and the office to see what would be a reasonable reporting interval. And we're certainly happy to start sharing the data that are available. Quarterly may or may not be the right answer, depending on how things are looked at.

M. Haji-Sheikh: I understand.

D. Baker: Anybody else?

B. Follow-up on Faculty Senate response to December 22 Baker Report – Greg Long

D. Baker: Okay, I'll turn it over to Greg.

G. Long: Okay, under Item B, Follow-up on the Faculty Senate response to the December 22 Baker Report, just wanted to mention that, during last week's Faculty Senate meeting, we continued our discussion. The primary purpose of this discussion was to identify and develop additional questions for President Baker when he attends our next meeting on March 29. Following his reply to these questions, then some informal question and answer, the senate will discuss and decide what, if any, additional follow up is desired. I'd like to ask the University Council to continue to respect the desire of the Faculty Senate to lead the discussion in their meetings and continue to provide feedback to the University Council.

M. Haji-Sheikh: Do you want someone to second that or make a motion?

G. Long: We don't need to you, I mean, it's up to you. Oh, Kendall first.

K. Thu: So, Greg, just as a matter of process, once the Faculty Senate has come up with a conclusion, then is the plan to bring that back before the University Council.

G. Long: I would assume that we would share the information with the council, but the Faculty Senate may very well act independently.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

D. Baker: All right, new business.

VIII. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

A. FAC to IBHE – Paul Stoddard – [report](#) – Pages 3-5

D. Baker: Reports, on to the reports. Paul, FAC-to-IBHE?

P. Stoddard: Thank you. I believe you should have my notes from the meeting so I'll keep this relatively short. We had a long discussion with textbook publishers who are keen on looking at providing content digitally. There's a lot of good things that can come out of that, but there are also various concerns that might come out. But you can get a lot of feedback about how your students are doing and what areas they're having trouble with and so forth from the various tools that the publishers are providing. There were concerns about privacy and other issues, however. All that's pretty fully laid out, I think, in my notes, so I won't go into that in any greater details.

As you may remember, the FAC has been concerned about faculty representation on the IBHE. They are working with some people in Springfield, state senators, to introduce a bill that would increase the representation of faculty and also allow for faculty to choose their representatives. I think we're looking to model it after the way the students are represented. The students have two representatives of their own choosing. The faculty currently have one representative, apparently of the governor's choosing. So we're looking to introduce legislation to change that.

We also talked a little bit about Attorney General Madigan's proposal, and the opinion from the IBHE liaison was the same as our president's, that it probably will not affect university workers since we get paid out of tuition moneys and not anymore from the state. Maybe that will change.

D. Baker: Let's hope.

P. Stoddard: Let's hope. Apparently, there is a proposal to double employees', university employees' share of insurance premiums, and let CMS raise that ten percent for each of the next three years. That can make a significant impact on people's take-home salary. So that's something that bears watching.

And finally we discussed out-migration of students from Illinois to our neighboring states. This is something that's been going on since before the budget impasse. The budget impasse has not helped

that at all. So we got some depressing statistics about what that looks like. And again, all of these are more fully listed in the notes that should be in your packet.

D. Baker: Any questions for Paul? Stephanie, as an IBHE member, Stephanie Torres, anything you want to add to Paul's report?

S. Torres: Nothing necessarily to add. I just have a quick question, perhaps open it up. But with the discussion of textbook affordability being an issue, is there any discussion within the university to perhaps have some kind of task force to look into it and see how we can reduce the textbook costs?

P. Stoddard: Textbook costs, of course, are something that universities have wrestled with for a long time. I mean, obviously, they've gone way up, and digital delivery is one of the ways to try to reduce that. And one of the big concerns we had I think, was especially when it comes to costs. The thought is the publishers would probably like to have some sort of exclusivity contract with a campus say, if you get all of your texts from Pearson, we'll give you a great discount on all of those. That would seriously limit the faculty's ability to choose the texts they think most appropriate for their courses. So if there's give and take on that, we all understand that textbook costs are a major hurdle for students to try to overcome, but at the same time, we recommend specific textbooks generally for reasons. And so it's difficult. And like I said, there's pluses and minuses to the digital delivery. You know, I think it's exciting and, if I were planning on being here much longer, I might look into it more seriously. But that's kind of where we are with it. It is, I mean, there have been a lot of interesting ways to try to go about it. I think SIU-Carbondale, I believe, actually has a textbook rental program, but that they say will be endangered by a digital system. So it's, yeah, I mean, I think, though, especially if the students want to take the lead and put together a task force, I mean, are you talking at Northern or are you talking statewide?

S. Torres: I'm referring specifically to Northern. I know the students on IBHE, this is a topic that's reoccurring. It comes up every single year, and it seems like nothing is necessarily done about it, or the issue isn't approached as it should be. But specifically, I mean every university and community college is different. So the way that we approach it here would be different than somewhere else. But specifically here at Northern.

P. Stoddard: I would recommend that you guys put together a proposal or a task force, bring it back to this body, which would, I think, the most appropriate place to consider it, and you know, so you would have student representation, faculty representation. I'm not sure who else might want to be in on that, but I think something like that would be very appropriate for this body to consider. And if it came from you, I think it would have a lot of force going forward.

D. Baker: So there might be another important player here. Our bookstore reports to Student Affairs to Kelly Wesener Michael, who happens to be here today. And she's been working on this issue, and she might have a bit of an update too. So maybe we've got a triangle of interest here. Kelly?

K. Wesener Michael: Good afternoon. We actually at NIU have a really great opportunity to retake a look at textbooks and what we do at NIU to best serve our students and our faculty in this process. We have been doing some research on what is not only current practice, but next practice, and best

practice in textbook rental, how we run bookstores, what does that mean, what's the digital piece of it, what's the virtual piece of it, and how do we best serve our campus community as a whole. So we have done lots of research internally. We have bookstore consultants, actually some of the best in the nation, who will be providing us feedback on our model and what potential models are viable for us as we move forward as part of the Holmes Student Center renovation process. It will also create an opportunity for us to have a larger conversation across the campus as to what are the needs of our students, our faculty, so that we can pick a model for our bookstore, and the textbook model that we use that's going to be best for our community as a whole.

D. Baker: So it might be good to bring that back here or RSB maybe or Academic Planning Council? Just a second. Lisa's going to come in, then Kendall.

L. Freeman: I just want to say that I appreciate Professor Stoddard's comments that the faculty own the curriculum, the faculty have good reasons for choosing the textbooks that they choose. But I also want to say that I think we have very innovative faculty who care deeply about our students and their expense burden. And I think it would be wonderful for SA and Faculty Senate to maybe look at what could be done as an innovative pilot among the willing to look at this issue, look at what's been done in other states. I know in Georgia, there've been some innovative things done. The first statewide electronic textbook was for introductory computer science, and it was a faculty-driven effort to look for something consistent, to look for something that would be more affordable to students. And I think we have such a wonderful system of shared governance and students who are very concerned about their education and faculty who share that concern, that I think that would be a wonderful way to start a conversation on our campus.

K. Thu: I just want to add that, as a parent of college students, I see it from that end as well. But if we listen to some of the students who are so innovative at finding textbooks in places and spots that are, I would never consider. So the first week of class, we have a discussion of, well where did you get your textbook. And they compare prices across students. It's sort of like shopping for a plane ticket. And they learn from each other, and they find where the cheapest book is coming from. And sometimes they'll take it back and go back and learn from their peers. So you guys know more than we do about it.

D. Baker: Others? So we can get a follow-up with that say. And Kelly, your work, and bring it to the faculty as well. So that'd be great. Somebody else have their hand up? Sorry. Go ahead.

T. Martin: I heard you saying that there was some sort of research that you guys were working on, like the next practice of textbooks. What sort of research have you guys done? Like what sort of specifics do you have on that?

K. Wesener Michael: Well, just broadly defined, we've been taking a look at what is the next generation of bookstores on college campuses. As you know, books and all that's evolving, so we've taken a look at different models in terms of what we do now. There are different concierge models are out there where you have, you order your textbooks ahead of time and you just pick them up. Amazon has some different models out there with Locker System. So we've been taking a look at what's happening across the country and what are the models that we think are on the verge of really meeting the next generation needs for college students. And again we'll have experts who

are a part of the consultation process as we're looking at this as part of the Holmes Student Center renovations.

T. Martin: Thank you.

E. Mogren: I've certainly run into the situation where students who are on scholarship, for example, are required to purchase their books through the bookstore often at full price or something like that, when they could be able to purchase them at a discount from some other vendor. Have you thought about the ways in which we could integrate the scholarship programming that students have with making certain that they can get books that are cheaper from perhaps some other vendors and sort of disconnect the textbook purchasing from their scholarships? Is that something you guys have thought about?

K. Wesener Michael: We certainly want to be sensitive to student price points. The piece with the athletics, there's things around NCAA and some obligations and things like that that are real specific that I can't necessarily speak to. But it's part of, you know, we want to be sensitive to some of those initiatives just in terms of our obligations with compliance. Specifically, on our campus, about 70 percent of textbook purchases go through our charge on the bursar's bill and use financial aid. We're really sensitive to that, that our student population probably needs that. And as we're looking at different models, for us, it's non-negotiable that we're able to use financial aid in the textbook purchasing process, because we know that that's important for our students, and a lot of our students use that. And as we're looking at different models, some are, in some that is an option, in others it is not an option. But for us, that is of critical importance to support our student community.

G. Long: And just very quickly, as the Faculty Senate and University Council have already done this year, passed a resolution in support of the Disability Resource Center. As you are thinking about textbooks, from an accessibility standpoint, looking at texts that have an electronic version is really, really very important as a way of insuring accessibility for all students. So just throwing that out there as an additional consideration for the committee.

D. Baker: All right, good conversation. Oh, was there one more? No? You look pondering.

T. Buck: I was pondering. I was just thinking, I'm from the School of Art and Design, and we have monthly licenses to software, you know, at Creative Cloud, Photoshop and those. And I recently taught a design class where the book on the shelf was about \$45. The e-book version was only \$16. But I was wondering if there might even be potential for an e-book license so you're not actually even buying the book, you just have a temporary license for it, maybe for the duration of the semester. And if you really want it, then you can purchase it. I don't know that publishers would go for that, because they're not making as much per unit, but the thing I find with e-books is some of these publishers are getting more creative in their presentation. So they're starting to add video and animation, maybe for each chapter, to help keep the information kind of exciting and engaging. And since it is digital, there are a lot more things they can do than in print. So, just some ideas.

D. Baker: Yeah, that actually is being done by some publishers, Kelly?

K. Wesener Michael: Yes, lots of different publishers have lots of different approaches to this, and as we know, as technology advances, what's new today is going to be very old tomorrow. So as we're looking at this, and again we're going to be really comprehensive in how we're approaching this to make sure that we're taking into consideration all of these pieces of now what's today – because we know that that's textbook industry, and the book industry in general, is just very, it's moving very quickly and very fast, and how that's morphing. And so rest assured that we are going to be comprehensive and make sure that we're setting ourselves up not only for today, but for the future in terms of meeting the needs of faculty and staff on this particular issue.

M. Haji-Sheikh: You might want to consider that not only is the book an important component, but sometimes it is used in the testing and evaluation part. So my students, I always do open book tests, because I know that they're never going to find the test there. But they can at least find the material. Now if you use an e-book, those students are lost, because finding the material in an e-book quickly is near to next to impossible. You can't tab it easily, you know, it's just that much more difficult. So people when you're doing this, you also have to take into account how the different disciplines test.

K. Wesener Michael: Absolutely, we'll be comprehensive in our approach in making sure that different approaches by different faculty members are met through this process.

D. Baker: All right, great, thanks.

- B. University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees – no report
Cathy Doederlein, Greg Long, Holly Nicholson,
Rebecca Shortridge, Kendall Thu, Leanne VandeCreek
- C. Academic Policy Committee – no report
- D. Resources, Space and Budget Committee – Sarah McHone-Chase, Chair – report
 - 1. Approve [Annual Budget Report](#) – Pages 6-8

D. Baker: All right, let's move on to the Resource, Space and Budget Committee, Sarah McHone-Chase.

S. McHone-Chase: Thank you. So the letter that the committee produced is on pages 6 through 8 here, and I wanted to thank President Baker and Executive Vice President and Provost Freeman for addressing some of the points in the letter already. And I wanted to move to approve the report, please.

T. Arado: So moved, Arado.

D. Baker: Do I have a second?

H. Nicholson: Second, Nicholson.

D. Baker: Any conversation?

K. Thu: I just want to get a little more clarity. I understand that the Executive Budget Committee is going to be meeting with the UC committee, but as I read this the first time, it, in between the lines, there was a sense of frustration that data wasn't being provided or budget numbers weren't being provided. And, you know, there has never been a very clear process – and I know it's more difficult these days – for the UC to be involved in the budgeting cycle, the budgeting process. When I was on the budget committee many years ago, we weren't given any numbers. It was basically, it was done in some sort of black box somewhere on campus. And I think it would be important for the kinds of numbers that is being requested by the UC committee, to be handed over to the University Council in general. I want to know how are we surviving today? How are we operating? We have no state budget. How long can we operate? What's going to happen with these various models that Lisa had mentioned earlier? What do those models look like? That's the level that I would like to know so that I can have a sense of when I'm going to retire.

D. Baker: Happy to have that conversation with the RSB, and then you can bring it back however you want to bring it.

L. Saborío: General question here. Have they started construction again on the building?

D. Baker: Yes. On Stevens?

L. Saborío: Yeah, on Stevens.

D. Baker: Yeah, they're going full board. Kendall can give you an update.

K. Thu: One bright spot in my life. So I've been through three different tours of the Stevens Building in the last three to four weeks, and it is going great guns. They're making a tremendous amount of progress on both sides of the building, both theatre and anthropology. They're putting dry wall up, so it's taking shape, you can actually see what it's going to look like. There's going to be all sorts of goodies for students in there, including the large classroom that I think it's going to be a sort of a rejuvenating force on campus. So very much look forward to it. I'm going to miss Grant Towers, but I'm looking forward to Stevens Building.

D. Baker: Paul Kassel seconds your.

P. Kassel: I just want to let you know that Romeo and Juliet is playing this weekend at the middle school. It might be your last chance to see one of our shows at the middle school, so you want to be there. We're hoping next year for a spring opening, and Alex Gelman has a terrific play planned for the hopeful spring opening next year.

D. Baker: Right, and in terms of opening, I think our current plan is, I think John Heckmann, our associate vice president for facilities area, has said that it's probably a second semester opening. If magic happens and we get open in the fall, great. But it's probably not going to happen, because they've still got to build that center piece in the building, so that's going to take a little time. We'll have a big gala event and all kinds of fun stuff, right? Okay. It's going to be great. There's a question over here.

A. Smith: My question was answered.

D. Baker: Okay.

A. Smith: Thank you.

D. Baker: Won't that be nice? Let's have a big party.

P. Kassel: We're going to.

D. Baker: Okay. All right, thanks, we'll look forward to the EBC/RSB meeting set up. Oh we need a vote, oh yeah, oh you parliamentarians. Are you ready for the question? All in favor, please say aye.

Members: Aye.

D. Baker: Opposed? Well done, thank you. Way to keep us on track.

E. Rules, Governance and Elections Committee – Therese Arado, Chair – no report

F. University Affairs Committee – Linda Saborío, Chair – report

1. Approve [2026-27 academic calendar](#) – Pages 9-11

D. Baker: University Affairs, Linda.

L. Saborío: The University Affairs Committee was asked to review the 2026-27 academic calendar, and the proposed calendar is on page 9 in your packet there. And it's followed by the guidelines we used to determine the calendar dates. Yes, we do this ten years out (I hear someone behind me snickering – what year?).

D. Baker: They're going to be in their third job or something when we get to this.

L. Saborío: Yeah, long gone. So now if there are no questions and I need to make a motion to approve the calendar.

D. Baker: Is there a second?

M. Haji-Sheikh: I second.

L. Saborío: Thank you very much.

D. Baker: Any discussion? All in favor, please say aye.

Members: Aye.

D. Baker: Opposed? All right, here we go. Thank you. Anything else? Is that it? Are you sure?

G. Student Association – report
Giuseppe LaGioia, President
Christine Wang, Speaker of the Senate

D. Baker: All right, let's move on to the Student Association, Giuseppe?

G. LaGioia: Hello everyone. A few things going on in the S.A. March is our elections month so we have had two election candidate meetings so far. And that election will take place the 29th and the 30th at the end of this month. So that will be going on, you'll see a lot of promotions, stuff like that, happening.

As far as from an executive side, there are two events actually happening tomorrow. One, there's a cultural talent show in the Regency Room at 10 o'clock, that kinds of showcases different cultural talent such as dancing, spoken word, and things like that. So that should be a really cool event, so I'm excited for it. As well as, there's the unveiling of the #OneLoveNIU event that's going to take place at 12 o'clock tomorrow in the Blackhawk Atrium, just downstairs. I'm not going to say what the revealing is yet, but I'm really excited for it and, hopefully, it lasts a while.

Other than that, Caleb, our director of governmental affairs, has been working on creating a DeKalb City County voting information packet with mayoral elections coming up, just to kind of hand out to students so they're a little bit more well informed on how to vote on things like that.

Other than that, that's pretty much what we've been working on. There's a few more things coming up in April as far as like I know there's an advocacy group conference that we're trying to hold, I believe will take place on April 2 or 3, more details on that to come.

D. Baker: And Christine Wang.

C. Wang: Just to clarify really quick on the elections, the elections are actually taking place on the 28th and 29th, Tuesday and Wednesday. So just to clarify on that. If you have students who you think would be interested in running, please make sure that they attend the last candidates meeting on Thursday. There may potentially be a last-minute meeting on Monday, but that's still in the works. So if you have any students who are interested, please let them know that it's taking place tomorrow at 6 p.m. in this building in the Illinois Room. So if you have students who are interested, please let them know.

So this month, we were quite busy. We finished fixing the election policy so the fruits of our labor are coming up right now, actually in progress. And then there are a lot of other things that we did for, basically for the state of Illinois and the budget crisis that's happening right now.

I did actually get a chance to go to the IBHE SAC meeting, was invited by Stephanie and it was a great meeting. I got to meet a lot of student body presidents and student body leaders from all over the state. There's a lot of unfortunate things going on, a lot of frustration, a lot of, you know,

students who feel like they really don't have a voice anymore, who really feel like they don't have a chance to continue with their education. Was able to talk to some of the Chicago State, I think it was the Chicago State student body president was there. And he talked about how the MAP grants were affecting, the uncertainty regarding the MAP grants, was affecting enrollment. While we might understand that the state might, will, cover the MAP grants at some point, a lot of the students don't. And that's the biggest thing, because that affects their decision whether or not they're going to be attending college. And so that's something that continues to be a problem, will always be a problem, and something that we'll always be fighting for as well.

Then we also went to the MAP Grant Rally on the 8th. That was fun, actually. It was quite interesting. We had to drive through a blizzard to get there, but we made it safely, thankfully. And we saw a lot of anger, a lot of frustration, from state legislators, from different, you know, from different groups. And that was just something that was really, I mean, it kind of really motivated me to continue to work on this issue as well.

We also were invited to speak with Lauren Burdette from the Illinois Secretary of Education. And from that conversation, there sprang up an NIU student activist network. So there's a bunch of students who are working together to collaborate on student activism within the DeKalb community and within NIU as well, which was really great.

Moving on to city things. So the city of DeKalb, we had an event at O'Leary's on the 1st. We had, I think, over 70 people show up from NIU, which was really great. We talked about issues that needed to be corrected between the City of DeKalb and NIU. What could possibly entice students to come to DeKalb downtown area. And so actually today is our first debrief meeting after O'Leary's, so that will be interesting to see what kind of feedback we're going to get and what the next steps are moving forward.

We're also thinking of hosting a mayoral candidate forum, hosted by S.A. And actually, Amarius Clinton from NAACP and has worked very closely with NIU. He approached us and said that it would be a great idea, and I totally agree. So obviously, there are still details to be announced, but we will be working on that as well. Did you have a question?

M. Haji-Sheikh: Yeah, they, there's about 11 of them already so you may not be able, this late, you may have a problem squeezing another one in.

C. Wang: We will, we'll try to work something out. I think it would be great to have something hosted on the campus for the students, because they are the ones who vote as well.

M. Haji-Sheikh: I'm telling you.

C. Wang: I know.

M. Haji-Sheikh: Personal experience [inaudible]

C. Wang: Yes. No I understand.

M. Haji-Sheikh: There's 11, there have been 10 to 11 of them already. So if you want to get one in, you need to contact the candidates quickly, because they are losing, they only have one month and they are losing any opportunity to have a forum for any other groups very quickly.

C. Wang: I understand, thank you, though. We've, I've been in touch with several of the candidates, and we are working very quickly to get this up.

M. Haji-Sheikh: I haven't heard that.

C. Wang: We're working on it, I promise. And other things that we've been working on as well with Dr. Gilson from honors, we are looking into creating a resolution to support the structural change in honors, so that's something that we'll be working on.

And then a couple things to look forward to is that on March 8 is the Day Without Women that is hosted by the Student Association, so very much like the Day Without Immigrants, we'll have women show up to work with reasonable, obviously with reasonable, you know, you've got to tell them in advance that you're not coming or anything like that, but women will not be showing up to work, showing up to school, everything like that, to see what it's like in a day without, you know, in a world without women, what it would be like. So I imagine it would be pretty empty.

And then on April 3 to 6 is going to be our cultural week, like Giuseppe said. And we have a lobby day on the 5th. And Governors State University is also hosting another day for all state institutions to be collaborating as well. So it's very much like our MAP Grant Rally that we had, but for Governors State University. So I'll be attending that as well.

There's a lot we've been working on in the last month. Are there any questions.

D. Baker: Yeah, you've been very active. Questions? All right.

C. Wang: Thank you.

D. Baker: I do appreciate you all going down to the rally at the capitol. I think you did a good job with that and also had some good conversations with legislators. Those are always impactful.

H. Operating Staff Council – Holly Nicholson, President – no report

I. Supportive Professional Staff Council – Cathy Doederlein, President – report

D. Baker: Supportive Professional Staff Council, Cathy Doederlein.

C. Doederlein: Sure thing. So just a couple quick updates. We have completed our SPS survey in terms of the response window, and we had just under 270 participants, which was actually a pretty good number for us to work with data-wise. Several things weren't necessary surprising, in terms of, you know, we'd all love salary increases and things like that, not a shocker. But there was definitely also a lot of useful information gleaned from it. And we've also got some good things that we can compare looking at things like job satisfaction relative to number of years at NIU, hours

worked relative to a person's role or title. And we are going to do our first presentation to the council on that next week in talking with sort of the top three to five findings, and then dig a little bit deeper. And I suspect next month I'll be able to share some actual specific items from it that might be of interest or use for a larger audience.

And then just another reminder again that our SPS awards ceremony will be April 12, and we really appreciate the nominations that we've received for those, but then also the participation in the actual event, so definitely consider joining us for that.

D. Baker: Great. Any questions for Cathy?

IX. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

D. Baker: All right moving on, comments and questions from the floor? Anybody? Kendall, do you want to say anything about the ceremony at the Pick Museum that's coming up? Isn't that at 5 o'clock today? Pop quiz.

K. Thu: I don't know. I'm sad to say I should.

D. Baker: So I think the photographer that did the exhibition at the Pick Museum is having a speech over there today at 5.

K. Thu: So go at 5 o'clock to the museum.

D. Baker: Okay. Thank you for that affirmation. Anybody else?

X. INFORMATION ITEMS

- A. [Minutes](#), Academic Planning Council
- B. [Minutes](#), Athletic Board
- C. [Minutes](#), Baccalaureate Council
- D. [Minutes](#), Board of Trustees
- E. [Minutes](#), Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee
- F. [Minutes](#), Comm. on the Improvement of the Undergraduate Academic Experience
- G. [Minutes](#), General Education Committee
- H. [Minutes](#), Graduate Council
- I. [Minutes](#), Graduate Council Curriculum Committee
- J. [Minutes](#), Honors Committee
- K. [Minutes](#), Operating Staff Council
- L. [Minutes](#), Supportive Professional Staff Council
- M. [Minutes](#), University Assessment Panel
- N. [Minutes](#), University Benefits Committee
- O. [Minutes](#), Univ. Comm. on Advanced and Nonteaching Educator License Programs
- P. [Minutes](#), University Committee on Initial Educator Licensure
- Q. [Annual Report](#), University Committee on Initial Educator Licensure

XI. ADJOURNMENT

D. Baker: Do I have a motion to adjourn.

Unidentified: So moved.

D. Baker: Who did it?

C. Wang: Christine Wang, Student Association.

D. Baker: All right. Did you get two? Pick two randomly.

J. Novak: Second.

D. Baker: Thank you. All in favor.

Members: Aye.

D. Baker: Opposed. Goodbye. Be careful. Stay warm.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.