The meeting was called to order at 3:20. Gip Seaver, deputy provost was introduced.

The budget process is a complex process that starts a year in advance by planning for the IBHE big picture meeting. We submit five priorities to the IBHE, and these priorities have been the same for several years. They are: faculty salaries, deferred maintenance, three priority program requests (nursing and clinical laboratory sciences; web-based, off-campus baccalaureate completion programs for community college students; and teacher preparation—STEM areas). After we submit our budget priorities, the IBHE puts out a priority list of their budget priorities. Then the governor comes out with his budget. The governor cut higher education by 5 percent for FY14. The House has been given a 1 percent cut, but we are still asking colleges to plan for a cut between 2.5 and 4.5 percent. The other challenge is pension reform. The pension costs may be unloaded to us, and this is especially difficult because 80 percent of our operating budget is in personnel.

The IBHE Performance Metrics was distributed. One half of 1 percent of our budget is based on performance funding. Every institution has numerous variables, and each has weightings specific to the institution. The state pulls these data from information that is submitted to them. Performance funding costs us money every year because of the way the IBHE set up the performance metrics. When we first started working on this, we thought we would be allowed to set our own benchmarks, but then the IBHE set it up using absolute numbers. Institutions receive premiums for graduating certain types of individuals (minorities, STEM and health care fields, low income, etc.). The model right now is relatively revenue neutral, but some people want to ramp up the percentage that is assigned to performance funding. Right now the committee is working on refinements for FY15, but the changes will be nominal. The IBHE staff is very cognizant of what we are up against. We have had a decline in graduate enrollment, and there is a measure on overall cost efficiency. As enrollment has gone down, our position to costs with other universities has gone up. Retention and graduation rate measures are for first-time full-time students. The more transfer students we recruit and graduate will help us. The degree production part of this is huge. We do get a relatively larger number of low income diverse students who graduate, and this helps us.

The provost is working with colleges to develop performance metrics for the colleges. We are gathering data on a college by college basis. Right now we use the 10 day count data set. We are able to get these data down to the degree level. The degrees per FTE measure factors for all of our students. We are looking at both undergraduate and graduate degrees. What is really of interest is what is growing and what is not growing. Using these data also picks up departments that offer a lot of general education courses. We have data from 2003-2011. With the retention data we take the 10 day data file and look at what we call “leavers.” We look at who left one year out and what percentage graduated, what percentage was dismissed, and what percentage was eligible to enroll. We are particularly interested in the students who are leaving that are eligible to enroll. About half of these students are academic causalities and half are eligible to enroll. Our focus has been on how to change this. The numbers that are increasing are those that are eligible to enroll. This year we asked the colleges to provide the provost with retention plans. We have also done some things at the university.
level too. Yield relates to enrollment too. Yield is the percentages of new freshmen, transfers, and graduate students who are admitted and enroll. Faculty have the greatest impact on yield. NIU has had approximately a 28 to 29 percent yield the last couple of years. ISU’s yield is 35 percent, and UIC’s yield is 33 percent. The yield nationally for institutions like NIU is 35 percent. Every 1 percent increase in yield is 100 students. We don’t have to have more applications; we just need to improve our yield. We need to identify who has been admitted and actively try to get them to enroll here. The admissions counselors deliver admitted students to our door, but then the colleges need to get them here. We are currently developing a metrics for scholarship and artistry. We are a member of Academic Analytics, so we will be able to compare ourselves against other institutions. The intent is to use these performance measures to make budgetary decisions.

A list of initiatives for the Great Journeys Strategic Plan was distributed. We are currently in phase II of the Strategic Plan. All the initiatives listed were funded, and we also have outcomes for these initiatives. There are a lot of student success initiatives linked to primarily getting undergraduate students to graduate. We also have interdisciplinary research clusters. This is a $4 million endeavor. The funding from year to year is based on outcomes. We are currently collecting the FY13 outcomes. The number of students impacted is huge. The Strategic Plan aligns with Vision 2020.

Distributed learning is the next item on the agenda. We are expanding our distributed learning initiative. A list of steps that we have followed was distributed. Where we are at now is the RFP for external vendors was filed on April 12. We have developed a list of potential distributed learning programs and certificates which we could offer online or use a hybrid delivery. Vision 2020 said we need to expand in this area. We need to have a robust distributed learning initiative. The demographics in our region are changing; there are more Hispanic students who are generally more place bound and more adult learners. If we don’t do this, someone else will. It will take resources to get these programs online. We have to build an infrastructure internally or look at external vendors to help us with this. We identified three external vendors and one internal vendor (Outreach) to get things moving. We would like to launch some programs next fall. We need some quick success, and then we will start to build in this area. We have had to completely evaluate all our financial systems and student services. We are a little behind other institutions on this initiative, but we do have some strengths, and we already have some programs online. These programs are using the small cohort contract model. The Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center has the ability to train people, and we have a model for stipends to help faculty convert courses. Outreach has the ability to build, but it doesn’t have the ability to deal with the upfront costs. We might use an outside vendor for a couple of years. When the contract is over, we could do this in-house. Most public universities are doing it this way. You need to invest millions of dollars in upfront resources. We don’t have these resources on campus. We would use a revenue sharing model for this initiative. This was a large negotiating process, and the model developed is not the most commonly used model. There were real concerns on campus that we had to address. The new president may change some of this in the future. Most on-campus vendors want somewhere between 40-80 percent of the tuition. There were concerns about what we need beyond that to run the programs. The online fee will replace the on-campus fee, and the technology fee will be amortized to credit hours. Half of the remaining tuition and online fee will be distributed to academic affairs, and the remaining half will go to university operations and finance and administration. The technology fee would be allocated to the technology fee account (technical infrastructure). The concern on-campus by the upper administration was that if we go online and uses a tuition sharing model, all the programs would want to do this. Each year the total (on-campus, off-campus, and online enrollment) of each department will be assessed against a benchmark equivalent to its average enrollment for the past eight years. If this benchmark is exceeded, the program/college will receive a larger allocation to allow for additional faculty positions to be hired or to enhance the program. The academic affairs funds would remove direct instructional costs and, for the programs not above the benchmark, 50 percent of the remaining funds would go to academic support services and the other 50 percent would go to the department/college for program enhancement and capacity building. For programs above the benchmark, 30 percent of the remaining funds would be distributed to academic support services, and 70 percent of the remaining funds would go to the department/college for program enhancement and capacity building. This model is complex because of the complexities of concerns
raised. The distributed learning programs will use one of the assessment programs that are the national standards for quality online programs which will require training, licensing, and software support. We have asked the vendors which programs they want to meet with first. We will talk to the deans about what they can provide and what the needs are.

We are currently engaged in a course transformation initiative. One thing that we noticed is that everybody thinks course transformation is about doing some things with technology in the classroom. When most people set up their syllabus, they plot out the 15 weeks, and then they look at content. In the course transformation initiative you start with the student learning outcomes and figure out what is essential, and then figure out what you want to use to obtain the student learning outcomes and how you will deliver the material. The Course Transformation Project (CTP) is designed to improve student success in large, lower-division courses. The function of CTP is to give students meaningful learning opportunities. There were seven courses that went through this process this past year, and they were primarily general education large lecture courses. Six courses have been identified for course transformation next year. This initiative came out of Vision 2020. This summer we will offer Course Transformation Project-Lite that will work on transforming one unit at a time. This is really a two year commitment. Training on how to redesign the course is provided, and then faculty have to teach the course. The colleges have to be onboard to do this. After the course is offered, assessment data is collected. Priority is given to general education courses, STEM courses, and large lecture courses. This was modeled on what was done at the University of North Texas (UNT). They have been doing this since the late 1990s. You can do experiential learning in large lecture classes, but you have to give up content. You can also do group work in large lecture courses. Students who are C and D students tend to do better, but the F students were pretty much the same. This type of model challenges the students to work harder. At UNT they did notice a ding in the student evaluations the first time the course was taught after it was transformed, but when word got out about the course, the student evaluations started to increase. This also might not be for every student. We are hoping these people will be the early adopters to help us spread the word.

The last item on the agenda is an update on Vision 2020 and academic enrichment initiatives. A handout was distributed that explains how the Vision 2020 money was used for academic enrichment. These initiatives were the: Course Transformation Project, NIU SMART devise retention application, development of honors courses, Passport to Engaged Learning, global NIU study abroad site visit, first-year honors study abroad program, teacher certification/TAP, teacher certification/professional development schools, and Northern Lights Faculty Ambassadors Program. We are trying to strengthen the honors mini-sections. A pilot training program is being developed with the college of Engineering and Engineering Technology. The Passport to Engaged Learning is a co-curricular program. All business majors have to participate. This needs to line up with the engaged student database. We funded some external speakers (Diane Doberneck and Julie Hatcher) to talk about engagement. J.D. Bowers will be taking students to the Hague on a study abroad trip in June 2013. There will be a First-Year Honors Study Aboard program in Montreal in May 2013. For the teacher certification initiative, an individual was hired to oversee and coordinate the duties related to the preparation of teacher certification students for the Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP) exam. The state changed the requirements for the TAP recently, and it had a drastic impact on the pass rate. Our pass rate used to be around 80 percent; now it is between 20 to 30 percent. The decrease in pass rates is not unique to NIU. We are in the planning stages to develop the middle school certificate with three partner schools. The original initiatives for the Northern Lights Faculty Ambassadors Program is being reconfigured. We are in discussions with individual colleges regarding one time funding for initiatives related to recruitment and retention. Academic affairs was given $8 million dollars for Vision 2020 initiatives. One-half million dollars went to distributed learning, $1 million dollars went to research, $1 million went to enrollment management, and $4 million was used for campus infrastructure.

This is the last meeting of the academic year, and we appreciate all of the time you spend on this council. The APC will become more and more important as a committee as we go into the evaluation of programs and new ways of offering degrees.
The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Cradduck