
T. Smith attended for R. Butler.

Parliamentarian Ferald Bryan was also present.


I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

President Willis: Before we approve the Agenda, I’d like to call your attention to the last page, it’s a walk-in, which is an item from David Wagner. I would like to put that on the Agenda under New Business. So with that modification, does someone have a motion to accept the Agenda? Second?

The Agenda was approved.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 5, 2003 FS MEETING (Pages 3-6)

President Willis: Okay, the minutes of the February 5 meeting, pages 3-6, does anybody have any changes or modifications to the minutes? Move to approve the minutes? Second? All those in favor?

The Minutes were approved.

IV. PRESIDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS
President Willis: Okay, the President’s Announcements, I don’t have too much today. As you probably know, the budget situation is still a mess and very undetermined. The President was supposed to come to this meeting, but he is in Springfield. He is in Springfield a lot these days. I talked to Kathy Buettner yesterday at the Board of Trustees Meeting and she said that they had just spent quite a bit of time educating the Governor’s Chief Aide about NIU and visions of higher education and what not and, of course, he resigned so that didn’t --- anyway, it’s still a question.

The P-20 Initiative – there’s information on this item in the back of your packet. This comes from Fred Kitterle and Anne Kaplan; they will come and talk about it at the next meeting but they wanted you to have this to look at ahead of time. The P-20, this is instead of K-12, most other places are calling it P-16 so it is preschool through college, we’re calling it P-20 because we want to include not just the undergraduate but also the graduate. We give the whole picture and part of the idea of this is just to get some consistency, articulation and transitions between one step and the next and give some guidance for teacher certification. Anyway, that’s why that’s there.

Finally, you will notice that under elections, we’re taking nominations for my position. People have asked me if I’m going to run again and if I’m eligible and the answer is yes, I’m eligible and yes I will run.

All right, that is all I have for President’s Announcements.

V. ITEMS FOR FACULTY SENATE CONSIDERATION

A. Nominations for, and renaming of, the Bob Lane Award

President Willis: Moving to Items for Faculty Senate Consideration, the Bob Lane Award. Last year, the recipient, Jim King, suggested that we consider renaming this award, which has been the Bob Lane Bottom of the Deck Faculty Spokesperson Award, to something which was a little less – how could I put it – adversarial – yes, that’s a good word, but that would still retain the idea as to the values Bob personified of not letting anything get past him. We talked about this in Executive Committee and we thought a good name for it would be the Bob Lane Eternal Vigilance Award. So, could I have a motion to rename this award to the Bob Lane Eternal Vigilance Award? Second? Any discussion? All those in favor? Opposed?

The motion passed.

The intention of this award is to recognize someone who has been vigilant in promoting shared governance from the faculty side and keeps watching out for the interests of the faculty and in general, just keeping the administration on its toes. The nominations for this award can come to me or any member of the Executive Committee. So if you have anyone in mind, you don’t have to tell me now, but do tell me. We will be taking nominations over the next month or so.

Speaking of nominations, this is a bit out of order, but we do need to candidates for Faculty Personnel Advisor. So if you are interested or if you know anyone who is interested or anyone
who might be good and whose arm I might be able to twist, please let me know.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Avoiding vacation “creep” – see memo from S. Willis to M. Cordes (Page 7) – refer to Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

President Willis: Moving on to the Consent Agenda, we have just one item, which is an item which would go to Faculty Rights and Responsibilities on avoiding vacation creep now that we’ve decided not to have classes at all on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Could I have a motion to accept the Consent Agenda? Second? All those in favor? Opposed?

The Consent Agenda was approved.

VII. REPORTS FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEES

A. FAC to IBHE – Patricia Henry – report – walk-in

President Willis: Let’s move on to reports; the first one is Pat Henry.

P. Henry: Yes, thank you. There is a walk-in that’s a report on the meeting that was held last Friday at Parkland College in Champaign, Illinois. Once again, I’ve itemized the things that will be covered in 1-8 here. I won’t try to deal with all of them but there are a couple of points that should probably be brought out. Since this was at a community college, the Parkland College president discussed community colleges and general and they are in particular trying to keep the ratio of full time to part time better than it was. It has moved up to 60 from 40 now. Another item that was brought up by the FAC Chair, Ken Andersen, concerned things in general about the state support of higher education, affordability problems, college readiness. One item that we talked about both here and then later on - I’ve got a little item on that too - is the matter of defining administration the cuts in administration – the notion that the Governor’s office is interested in having institutions cut administration has raised some concern as to how these are actually categorized. What counts as administrative costs, and how is this going to be done? He has sent a letter to the Board of Higher Education. The very last page of my walk-in has excerpts of a draft letter to the IBHE from the FAC president and the concerns particularly are how one defines administrative costs. Some universities – or institutions – have quite different things that fall into that category including, in some cases, sabbatical leaves, technical support, advisors, clinical staff in the case of places with medical schools, librarians, learning center staff and so forth that are all counted in the rubric of administrative costs. He and the FAC in general want to make sure that the IBHE realizes that cutting some of these may well result in under-serving students and also in adding much more burden to regular faculty as well so that was one concern. Faculty erosion, as he says, leads to erosion of faculty governance. The information part of the meeting was a presentation by Virginia McMillan who is the executive vice president of the Illinois Community College Board. I had not really realized this, but there is an Illinois Community College Board alongside the Illinois Board of Higher Education alongside the Board of Education, so we have three boards. There was some concern as we were discussing this with her as to whether the ICCB has a overlap with what goes on in the IBHE since the IBHE also
represents community colleges as well as everybody else. Her feeling was that it wasn’t, in fact, all that redundant – there may be some redundancy, but that the ICCB does act very much in an advocate role for community colleges and speaks to particular issues that might not otherwise be dealt with by the IBHE. There is, I think, an argument although different people did not agree with this, but that community colleges do serve multiple roles and having them on the IBHE makes a certain amount of sense as regards this articulation process; having them have their own separate boards dealing with their own separate issues, especially since they are mostly local issues, makes a certain amount of sense as well, but there was some discussion as to whether there was some overlap there. We also brought up the fact that we really wish there were a faculty member on the IBHE – since there is a student member of the IBHE – there is a student member on the ICCB but there is no faculty member on the ICCB and we’re just going to have to lobby for that. We’re not sure how we’re going to do that. I think that’s the main part of her discussion.

I met with the Public Policy Committee. As you may recall, we’re trying to find out how higher education in general is coming across to the legislature. We met with our local legislators. I met with Representative Wirsing and presented these six questions – what is going on and what kind of things we can do as faculty to assist legislators especially in making the case for higher education, how are our missions conceived of and so forth. Many legislators in districts that have institutions of higher education are pretty sympathetic and had a variety of anecdotes about how indeed higher education is not well understood. The role of faculty particularly is not well understood. People really don’t get the fact that although you may be teaching in the classroom six hours a week you’re actually doing other things as well; the consensus was to try and come up with a variety of small items of information concerning faculty profiles or vignettes of success stories, talking points and so forth to be used by individual faculty to communicate with the legislature. We’ll see what we can do on that. That’s what we’re going to try to work on for the next time. Number five, the business meeting – there was some discussion of the assessment concerns that I had mentioned last time. There’s the Pew Grant project that is going to be implemented in Illinois at least in certain institutions. I don’t actually know, is NIU one of those institutions? Do we have – are we participating in this? I think we are to some extent.

President Willis: I think so.

P. Henry: People are kind of troubled by this in terms of what agenda the Pew Charitable Trust has here. Basically it’s to get some information that can be used to give us a grade on this test or ranking that we came in number one about three years ago and then we came in number three last year. There’s a number of categories that are assessed – affordability, quality of education and so forth. They can’t really grade you on quality of education because they haven’t got a common metric, so the Pew Charitable Trust is trying to come up with something that can be used to assess universities across states and then will be able to compare us. Many people on the FAC were not thrilled with this but the feeling is that it is better to be in on the ground floor and to have some impact. People who are involved in developing this study or in testing the study will have some impact and some feedback to be able to give to the test itself so if it’s a really terrible test presumably the people who participated will be able to express that opinion.
Finally, there was an action item and I did e-mail this to you I think before the meeting itself. The final copy of it is in boldface here. The proposal for the addition of a seventh goal for the Illinois Commitment that is that the collective efforts of university colleges and universities will enhance and enrich the quality of life for all Illinois citizens. Some of you e-mailed back wondering how is this going to be assessed and well you might ask but, I think in a sense this is partly a symbolic gesture of something that may not well be very easily assessed - that there are issues of quality of life that are important and that higher education does, in fact, enhance these things and at this point, presenting this as a proposal for a seventh goal – it’s not going to be in there yet. When the IBHE decides to revise the Illinois Commitment, then this is going to be there on the table for them to presumably add as a potential seventh goal so I think most of you had a chance to read this ahead of time and from the e-mail that I sent and as you can see, it did not change terribly much.

The next item, the IBHE staffer, Doug Day, also made some observations on the messiness of the budget situation and he clarified the fact that the Pew project should not be confused with the kind of assessments that we do as a regular thing in assessing our students. People pointed out that some people get nailed with having to do assessment of this, assessment of that and it tends to overlap and he promised to try to make some effort to get it so that you could at least use the same assessment report for various requests for assessment. One note, by the way here, you may have heard this morning you may have heard of NPR that the public universities and community colleges are going to be asked to reserve 8% of their budgets in anticipation of future budget cuts after a financial review that presumably will end up by the end of the month. The report mentioned that NIU’s share of this will be $8.6 million; this was in the works but had not been announced at the time this meeting was held, so I’m sure that there are implications of this coming down all over campus in terms of what – if we’re going to have to do a rescission or some such but at this point I think it’s just holding it in reserve, figuring that probably we will have to use it.

Finally, other committee reports I’ll just summarize briefly there. Technology will be doing a survey of how we use technology in our classes. The Quality Committee is working on a position paper regarding assessment in general. Personnel is working on a diversity statement; Public Policy will continue talking points on higher education’s image. Budget didn’t even bother trying to do anything this time because it’s all so up in the air. Then the rest of the report there is just these excerpts that I mentioned of the letter from the FAC President, Ken Andersen. So I think in conclusion, the concerns about assessment are still very much there and in particular the Pew project is still fairly confusing but we’ll keep trying to find out more about it. Okay?

**President Willis:** Okay, thank you. Questions for Pat? John?

**J. Wolfskill:** Pat, I would like to ask about the proposed seventh goal for the Illinois Commitment.

**P. Henry:** Yes.
J. Wolfskill: I believe I understand philosophically what is the intent here and it’s probably good. I would, however, very cynically like to point out that this could come at a very real cost. Specifically, what I have in mind is the following – I happen to have the honor to be writing my department’s program reviews and one of the things that has to be done for all six items in the Illinois Commitment is I have to say how the Mathematics Department is meeting the needs of the Illinois citizens in each of these areas. This would be yet another item; I’d need to say what are math professors doing to enhance the quality of life for the state of Illinois and that’s not something I’d really look forward to doing.

P. Henry: That was a concern. All I can say is that as it is envisioned, it would be something that you could address in a fairly qualitative as opposed to quantitative manner. I think it’s simply a place to list things like there’s more people who know math. It does have the disadvantage of being somewhat nebulous but I think the intention was to provide some means of recognizing the fact that not everything that is provided by higher education is able to be nailed down in the way that some of the rest of them were; but I understand your concern. By the way, you had asked previously and I tried to get the information about to what extent the need of students to take courses over added to the total cost of their education and I’m still chasing that down. I was referred to Dan LaVista but he hasn’t responded yet.

President Willis: Okay, other questions for Pat?

B. BOT Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee – Paul Loubere and William Tolhurst – report – walk-in

President Willis: Moving on to the BOT Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee, Paul Loubere was there.

P. Loubere: Thank you. I don’t have anything to report that will have you reaching for your cell phones. But you’ll be probably happy to know that the Board and the administration seem very supportive of the sabbatical concept so that’s something that will be resisted if challenged at the administrative and board levels. Other than that, the meeting was pretty routine. There were some emphases added, some emphases deleted; that seemed non-controversial. The University’s Higher Ed ten-year accreditation is in process without anything specific at the moment. The memo that I’ve got here in this package outlines a general timeline for that. Then there were standard reports on oral proficiency and on under-represented groups on campus.

President Willis: Okay, thank you Paul. Any questions for Paul?

C. BOT Finance, Facilities and Operations Committee – Sue Willis and Jim Lockard – report – walk-in

President Willis: Moving on to the BOT Finance, Facilities and Operations Committee. I was at that one. By the way, these reports are all in your walk-in, if you didn’t see that, since they all met yesterday. The Finance, Facilities and Operations Committee – I’ve listed here what they did. The only thing I really wanted to say – well, let me say a couple of things. When the Northern Star said today that the Board raised the health insurance rates by 17 and some odd
percent, this is technically true although they really didn’t have much choice in the matter. That’s the contract that was negotiated with the insurance provider. Also, our student health insurance continues to be a bargain. This makes the semester rate go from something like $180 to about $205 or something like that so I was thinking boy, I pay a substantial fraction of that every month for my family. So the coverage is good and the price is still quite affordable even compared with other student health plans. Other than that, the other fees were held to very small, if any, increases. We really don’t have any control over the health insurance fee. We have to negotiate with the provider and then what they charge is what we pay. The fees that we did have a little more control on, they kept the increases to just over 2.5 % which is pretty good I think so the fee increases are minimal. Let’s see, these pass-through authorizations – this is money that comes from somewhere else but the university needs authority to spend it. So if you get a large enough grant so that it comes under Board notice, which I think is over $250,000 or something like that, then they have to authorize the university to disburse your grant money so this is all just routine stuff – it’s not any extra money in that second paragraph there. Let’s see, the intergovernmental agreement to provide mutual assistance and cooperation – this is something that goes on anyway but it just formalizes it a little bit. It governs how our police coordinate with the local and state authorities. Which as I say, they do anyway but it’s good to make it a little more formal. That was about it. Oh, the other thing I wanted to say about the fees is that they’re not formal until the full Board votes on them so this committee has voted to pass them on to the full Board; I expect they will also pass them but they’re not formal up to that point. Okay, any questions about that committee meeting?

**J. Lockard:** Sue, you might want to just comment on that program enhancement and technology surcharge that’s under discussion.

**President Willis:** Oh yes, that’s right. Yes, I do need to say something about that. If you look at the last sentence, there’s something called an “Academic Program Enhancement and Instructional Technology” surcharge. This is something that was actually originated, I believe, by the Board at their December meeting. The idea is to look at our instructional technology costs in bringing more smart classrooms on line and that kind of thing, and to consider a surcharge - which in some technical way is different than from a fee - that would help defray those costs. There are other universities, many other universities, that have such a thing so it’s certainly not unprecedented. The President was talking about it and said he seemed to think that probably a $100.00 a semester was too much but – so, that’s the kind of thing they’re thinking about. Yes, Pat?

**P. Henry:** Would this be in addition to the fees that like, for example, in Foreign Languages we charge a fee for using the Language Learning Center, and so forth?

**President Willis:** Yes, this would be an overall fee. I think the idea is that things would be directly tied to this fee so that, kind of like those signs you see on the highway, items would have little tags on them that would say “provided by your” whatever it is fee – surcharge, excuse me. Yes, Carol?

**C. Minor:** Isn’t there already a $50 a semester technology fee for students?
President Willis: No, not all students. There’s some surcharge in the dormitory – excuse me – in the residence halls.

C. Minor: Oh, okay because I knew I paid one.

President Willis: There is a residence hall fee.

C. Minor: Could be a residence hall fee, okay.

President Willis: Obviously, not all students live in the residence halls and that’s for services provided in the residence halls and not academically. So this will be an academic surcharge. Any other questions about that?

D. BOT Legislation, Audit and External Affairs Committee – Sara Clayton and Beverly Espe – no report

President Willis: Okay, the BOT Legislation, Audit and External Affairs Committee will meet next week and the full Board will meet the week after that so we should have those two reports next time.

E. BOT – Sue Willis – no report

VIII. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Academic Affairs – Jody Newman-Ryan, Chair

President Willis: Let’s move to Standing Committees – Academic Affairs – I don’t know if I saw Jody. I don’t think she’s going to have a report.

B. Economic Status of the Profession – Jim Lockard, Chair

President Willis: Economic Status, Jim.

J. Lockard: Thank you. I have a couple items of information here and then a request of the Senate as well. Two things that the Committee has been looking into for a while are still under investigation and we’ll report to you as soon as we have anything. One has to do with a state pattern of changing insurance carriers at some interval, with the attendant changes, unintended or unobserved, in how benefits are handled for all of us and we’re finding it remarkably difficult to figure out exactly when, why and how that all happens but we’re trying. The other thing is that we are investigating what, if anything, can be done to persuade CMS or whoever it is that the base upon which reasonable and customary charges is calculated should be the Chicago area base and not the boondocks base which we’re 99% sure we are now in the way they’re doing it. That would have a dramatic impact potentially on the reimbursement for procedures. We’re quite convinced that in this area we pay Chicago rates, we just don’t get reimbursed at Chicago rates by the health plan. So those two things are still very much active and things that need to be finalized if we can get it done this year yet.
A couple of things for your information: 1) reports that have come back to us from Human Resources suggest that the switch over to Cigna this year has resulted in an increased number of denials of claims, many of which turn out to be clerical errors on the part of Cigna staff. So you and anyone else that you know should be encouraged not to accept denials at face value but rather protest them with all possible vigor. There’s a very reasonable chance it was wrong in the first place, but if you simply sit back and say “oh well, they turned this one down” and pay the rest well, it’s your money, but it’s not the best way to use it, in all likelihood. A second point, and this is where our committee overlaps or interfaces with the University Benefits Committee, there is apparently a bit of a track record in the past during the LaTourette years of the President having had some ability to influence CMS by taking strong complaints to them about ways in which health insurance in particular had been handled. The University Benefits Committee would be very open to receiving any anecdotes from any employee of the institution about difficulties they have had so we can amass enough volume to go to twist the President’s arm so that he can go and try to club CMS into some sort of submission on this if at all possible. In the absence of much data, we have very little that we can use even with the President, much less with CMS. Those things can be routed through me or any member of the Committee as well and we’ll try to collect things and hope that we can come up with enough that it might be useful to the UBC.

The third information point was somewhat news to me because we started out thinking that perhaps we as a committee, on behalf of the Senate, could work with HR in a new way to help people make more intelligent choices when it comes to the benefits choice period. People, I think, after they’ve been here awhile tend to forget that every May we get this same information and have to do something about it. In ways that make perfect sense when you stop and think about it, the timing goes something like this. The benefits choice period begins on May 1 of every year. The HR staffs from around the state are called to Springfield on the 29th of April to be given a verbal report of what the changes in the benefits for the following year are going to be. Booklets, that we may or may not always see, end up arriving on campus somewhere around the 10th meaning that our month in which to make up our minds is, in fact, at least a third to a half gone before we ever know what in the world it is we’re making our minds up about. It makes it darn difficult to do very much of an education job at all, particularly May 10th to the 15th means gee, graduation has come and gone, the semester is over and a lot of people have gone their way for other purposes. That’s a problem over which we have no control at this point, unless we can find a way to persuade CMS to mend their ways; that is an interesting challenge. It’s worth noting that it doesn’t do us any good to try calling HR in advance because right now the best they can tell us is there probably will be very few changes other than it might very well be reasonable to expect that the health insurance premiums will increase just as they did for the students this year already. That seems a foregone conclusion. Benefits are not likely to increase – cross your fingers – nor are they decreased somewhere along the way but be very, very alert to that information when it finally reaches you, whenever that is in May.

Finally, the thing that is our request of the Senate is this. We had talked with HR about trying to find ways as a committee or as a Senate we could work with them to better inform our colleagues on the campus of how benefits work, how to most effectively utilize the benefits that are available and so on. HR is, as I’m sure you realize, as affected as anyone else by budget cuts.
Their staff is decreasing at a time of increasing workloads just like everyone else’s and so on. Our original goal of hoping to achieve some sort of a fairly extensive set of, call it whatever, brown-bag lunches or something of that sort that we might invite everyone on the campus to take part in, seems to not be very practical. However, a counter-proposal was offered which I think merits attention and support from this body and that is, through Deborah Haliczer, we’ve reached an agreement to expand the offerings of what will take place on March the 27 in the context of the Wellness Fair. The exact additions are not yet firm but I believe we will see things like sessions on how to work with flexible spending plans, how to understand Cigna’s forms which are widely acknowledged to be far more confusing than the ones from the previous carrier, how to make good use of the SURS on-line estimator. These were some of the ideas that Deborah and I talked about at least in this conjunction. It is the request of HR that the Faculty Senate officially co-sponsor this aspect of the Wellness Fair on March 27 hoping that that additional name recognition will encourage more people to take part in a very worthwhile event. So, I would move that the Senate officially co-sponsor the Wellness Fair with Human Resources this year.

President Willis: Okay, so it’s been moved and seconded that we officially co-sponsor these informational events at the Wellness Fair on the 27th of March. I talked to Jim about this and he assures me that it involves no money so I see no reason why we shouldn’t do it. Question?

L. Kamenitsa: I was just wondering if it also makes sense to invite one of the staff organizations to participate because aren’t they just as affected by most of these benefits as well and might it help to have their name on this also?

J. Lockard: If you can do it quickly enough for the sake of publicity, I’m sure that it would be more than welcome. There’s no problem there.

L. Kamenitsa: I’m just wondering if it might not be an appropriate thing for the Senate to reach out and make this offer. I’m sure it can probably be done with one phone call and it would probably look good.

J. Lockard: I’m not sure what the publicity deadline is quite frankly but ---

B. Espe: What would it entail to co-sponsor?

J. Lockard: Absolutely nothing. As my understanding goes, except that as the literature is produced it will say “presented by Human Resources in conjunction with Faculty Senate, Operating Staff Council” whatever else we can get there. The whole idea is nothing more than how can we assure the best possible turnout. We think it’s a good thing, that’s there’s good information being made available to people and that the normal turnout is not nearly as good as it should be for what’s being offered.

P. Henry: Perhaps when this does come out we can, in our own departments, ----

J. Lockard: Absolutely, as senators, as staff members, whatever – anything you can do to encourage participation is obviously desirable.
President Willis: Okay, so we have a motion and a second on the floor to co-sponsor this event. Is there any other discussion? If not, all those in favor say aye. Opposed? All right, we will co-sponsor.

The motion passed.

President Willis: Yes, Pat?

P. Henry: One other question for Jim. Was there any further conversation about possibly generating a web page that HR could use for keeping people up to date on some of these things?

J. Lockard: Yes, I didn’t mention it because I’m not sure how rapidly it will actually happen. If I’m not mistaken, one of the positions that may have fallen by the wayside was the unofficial webmaster for the operation there, but the same kinds of areas that I mentioned as ones that I believe they’re going to try to organize specific little seminars or presentations on at the Wellness Fair are also very much on the list of things to add to the Human Resources website so there will be better access to information. The question is again, how quickly and how readily can they get the technical work done to get the information there.

President Willis: Okay, any other questions for Jim?

C. Resource Space and Budget – C. T. Lin, Chair – report (Pages 8-12)

President Willis: Okay, Resource Space and Budget. C. T. Lin was not able to be here but there is a report in your packet and Bill Goldenberg is here. Bill, do you want to say anything about your report?

B. Goldenberg: Well, I can certainly answer questions. You probably had time to read it and I don’t need to read it to you. I can just summarize the topics. We had a long meeting and met with many officials from various areas. We had two sub-committees on the committee; one was trying to deal with the problem of students getting to classes on time because the distance between buildings has become so far. So we looked into several possible solutions to that since advising and the students planning themselves seems not to be working. We were told that CUAE, which is a standing committee of the UCC, is working on that and is finding a solution to the problem so we’ll allow them to do their work and succeed at it. Then we had a Technology Sub-Committee that invited three guests; we heard from Frederick Schwantes and he talked about the situation with smart classrooms. We’re close to 50% of the general purpose classrooms having been turned into smart classrooms. We heard about ITS from Wally Czerniack and he seems to feel that their situation is – despite the budget cuts – on pretty solid ground because we’ve already done the work we needed to do before this big financial problem arrived. Murali Krishnamurthi from the Faculty Development Center spoke to us about the use of Blackboard on campus, which is quite widespread now and very popular and being put to good use. You will see that he provided us with a two-page summary of their work with Blackboard and faculty members. Then, in another segment of the meeting, we heard about planning for the use of land that the university has acquired, particularly the committee was very
interested in what’s going to be done with the very far west campus, which is west of the Convocation Center. There’s only one building there now, the Family Violence Center, and apparently it’s very undecided, but you can read the report. They’re consulting with many different constituencies about what to do with it. Research and Development looks like one important use for that land. Then we heard from Provost Legg and from Associate Vice Provost Cassidy about academic planning and, again, you can read what they had to say but they spoke to us about the priorities for the future which they continue to say that salaries are a high priority as well as hiring more faculty – we all know there’s a situation with lots more students and not enough faculty to teach them at this point with all the budget cuts. Then they described the possibilities in terms of budget cuts and how that might affect NIU and apparently from what Pat Henry said, we’re going to get a huge one I guess if 8% was ---

**P. Henry:** I think that’s the reserve.

**B. Goldenberg:** Yeah, but – that must mean they need the reserve. Well, we’ll see. Anyway, the way they described it at our meeting was anything beyond 5% would be a big problem to deal with. All right, if there are any questions, I’ll be happy to tell you what I know which probably isn’t too much.

**President Willis:** Okay, questions for Bill?

D. Faculty Rights and Responsibilities – Mark Cordes, Chair

**President Willis:** Moving on to Faculty Rights and Responsibilities, Mark?

**M. Cordes:** We have no report but I want to remind my committee that we’re going to meet immediately after this meeting.

**President Willis:** Okay, we’ll try to be efficient.

E. Rules and Governance – Gretchen Bisplinghoff, Chair

**President Willis:** Rules and Governance, Gretchen?

1. Placement of Ethics Statements – see memo from Sue Mini, FIRST READING, as Article 9 of the Faculty Senate Bylaws (the present Article 9 would then become Article 10) (Pages 13-14)

**G. Bisplinghoff:** Yes, if you’ll look at page 13. The memorandum on page 13 refers to the Ethics Statement that the Faculty Senate has already passed which is also on page 14. It’s reproduced for you there. What this memorandum asks is that it addresses the question of the placement of that Faculty Ethics Statement that we passed and so at this point the Council’s Rules and Governance Committee is recommending that each group that’s governed by the statements decide where they should be placed and possibly that could be in the Bylaws, possibly as an amendment. Today we’re just presenting this statement for consideration as a first reading
and we’ll vote on it next time. So, I guess at this point I’ll open the floor if there’s any
discussion.

**President Willis:** Okay, I did look at our Bylaws. Right now we have 9 Articles, the ninth
being how to amend the Bylaws. So I would suggest that we could make this its own article. It
would become Article 9 and the present Article 9 would become Article 10. That seemed to me
to make sense. There’s also one typo there which is the last two sentences of five should be one
sentence. We fixed that on the website and that is the correct wording. Okay, questions or
discussion of the Ethics Statement? Gretchen, you didn’t have anything else did you?

**G. Bisplinghoff:** No, that’s it.

**F. Elections and Legislative Oversight – John Novak, Chair**

**President Willis:** Moving on to Elections and Legislative Oversight.

1. Nominations for Executive Secretary of University Council/President of Faculty
Senate – See list of University Council members eligible to be elected (Page 15)

**J. Novak:** Yes, on page 15 there’s a list of all faculty who are eligible to serve as the Executive
Secretary of the University Council and President of the Faculty Senate. Donna, are the people
who have asterisks also eligible? Do we know who it is?

**D. Mathesius:** Robert Miller and Diane Cearlock need to be removed.

**J. Novak:** Okay, so not Robert Miller and not Diane Cearlock?

**D. Mathesius:** Richard Orem, Larry Gregory and Pat Henry were all re-elected to University
Council.

**J. Novak:** Do these need to be seconded, these nominations or just nominated? O.K., so we are
open for nominations from this list.

**G. Bisplinghoff:** I nominate Sue Willis.

**J. Novak:** Sue Willis, is there a second? O.K. Sue Willis. Any more nominations?

**J. Wolfskill:** I move that nominations be closed.

**J. Novak:** All in favor of closing the nominations say aye? Okay, we’re finished.

**President Willis:** You’re not all desperate to sit up here.

**IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**President Willis:** Nothing under Unfinished Business.
X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Grading System – see memo from David Wagner – walk-in

President Willis: Under New Business we have David Wagner’s item which was on the last page of the walk-in. Dave, do you want to speak to that?

D. Wagner: Yes, I think my statement is clear. Sue suggested I write it and there is an element of “pique” involved in this because the policy was adopted by the University Council in 1969 and then never implemented and every year as I have to make out grades I get angry I guess and think that something needs to be done. I have talked to several people – maybe I’m exaggerating – but I did bring this up at the Academic Affairs meeting we had a week ago and everyone seemed to agree with me that strong consideration of the existing policy is necessary. So, I’ll move – so there’s something to discuss I suppose – that the grades A/B, B/C, and C/D be added to the present grading system.

President Willis: I would suggest that perhaps it should be referred to the Academic Affairs Committee first?

D. Wagner: Well, don’t you need a motion to refer it?

President Willis: Yes.

D. Wagner: That’s why I made the motion so that there would be something to refer to the ---

President Willis: Well, you can move just to refer this.

D. Wagner: All right, I’ll move that consideration of the existing grading system be taken up by Academic Affairs.

President Willis: Is there a second? Okay, discussion? Yes, John?

J. Novak: The one thing I’m really puzzled about – this goes before my time, forgive me – but can you explain how this came to be that the system was approved but then never implemented.

D. Wagner: It’s one of those mysteries that I don’t understand. It was said that the computer was not able to handle it.

J. Novak: If it was said then, they’ll say it again, probably.

D. Wagner: I think we’re a more sophisticated university at this time than we were then, hopefully. You know, we do have scan things that we didn’t have at that time. Everything had to be done by hand so it would be much simpler to do. I can explain how it was introduced if you want to know that.
**J. Novak:** Do I understand you then that this was approved as official policy more than thirty years ago but Registration and Records simply stonewalled and never did it?

**D. Wagner:** Well, and then about three or four years later I think it officially was returned to the A, B, C system. It was adopted at the University Council and the next year was adopted by the Graduate Council for use with graduates. It’s probably even more necessary in the Graduate School than it is for the undergraduates but I think it’s essential for undergraduates.

**R. Meganathen:** I have three problems with this. Number one, this was adopted in 1969. In 1969 even the Faculty Senate didn’t exist and since ’69 a lot of things in the running of the university have changed. So, my suggestion is they should start from scratch and work this thing through and I have never heard of any university using the A/B, B/C, C/D. I have heard of a plus; I have heard of a minus.

**D. Wagner:** The system that I proposed in ’69 was just add a plus so there’s be C+, B+ - I guess D+ - but it counts 0.5. The University of Wisconsin uses this system of A/B, B/C, - I’m not sure if they use the C/D – but it is used at the University of Wisconsin and I think that’s adequate to defend its validity.

**R. Meganathen:** The third point is that by adding a plus will we contribute to grade inflation?

**D. Wagner:** Can I respond to that? I think it may well decrease grade inflation. I find the difference between a B+ and an A- much greater than the difference between a B+ and a B- so I end up giving students A’s that they don’t deserve just because they deserve it much more than the B I give the B-. I don’t know what the result of this would be but I don’t think it is assured that it would contribute to grade inflation. I think it probably would not because you would be able to make much more accurate grades.

**President Willis:** We’re just debating whether we should refer this to the Academic Affairs Committee. So, I would suggest that detailed suggestions of substance might be directed to that Committee assuming we refer it to them. Yes, Pat?

**P. Henry:** I was just going to say that the kinds of questions that are raised it’s useful to consider ahead of time and I had never thought of as contributing to grade inflation and I do know that there’s many other schools that do do it so I’m in favor of it, but ----

**President Willis:** Okay, is there other discussion? Yes?

**L. Kamenitsa:** I would just concur that if we’re going to refer it we should give that committee some opportunity to have some leeway, to consider pluses and minuses as well as A/B, B/C and not be limited to that.

**President Willis:** Yes, I think once we refer a topic to the committee they’re free to do what seems best to them – we hope that they feel that is their job.
D. Wagner: I did have in my notes that there are two issues, one whether the system needs changing and then secondly, how it should be changed.

President Willis: Okay, any other comments? If not, all those in favor of referring this to Academic Affairs say aye. Opposed? Okay, let’s see what they come up with.

Moved to refer to Academic Affairs.

XI. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

President Willis: Are there any Comments and Questions from the Floor? Yes, Pat?

P. Henry: Is there any word yet on any decisions concerning salary increases this year? Just wondering.

President Willis: The state does not have a budget at this point. The Governor is not going to be presenting his budget to the legislature until the 9th of April. So, we may know something by about maybe the 7th of April but I would say much before that, things are just totally uncertain as to what the budget is going to be and what his particular request will be. The university’s legislative people, Kathy Buettner and her staff, have said that they are functioning in a manner that is not their usual one. Usually the budget comes out and then they go and lobby. Now they’re lobbying. So they’re doing something - what do they call it – pre-appropriations – they’re having actual pre-appropriations hearings, but they’re all really operating in the dark. So, we’re not going to know anything until April.

P. Henry: But the decision is due for their – you know, what percentage of the budget goes to raises as opposed to other things. That awaits the word of the budget?

President Willis: Yes, it depends on what the budget is. Clearly there is a priority for salary increases and I believe the request that we put through out Board to the IBHE includes salary increases but until there’s an actual state budget it’s just numbers on a piece of paper. It needs some connection to reality. Yes?

C. Minor: As a follow-up to that, isn’t there usually a recommendation by the IBHE to the Governor about salary raises and has that been made at all?

President Willis: I think so. I think that was made at the usual time, which would have been in December, or something.

C. Minor: Was there a recommendation for a raise?

President Willis: Yes, my recollection is that their request contained something like a 2% raise or 2+1+1/2 – you know, they have these complicated things that they do – but it was one of those things. Typically, they have a tendency to look very different by the time they come out of the legislature. I suspect this time they’re going to look more different than usual. Yes?
S. Nord: I was wondering if anyone heard anything further – last week we were listening to how the Governor was considering the payout for old sick leave and retirement. Has anybody heard anything?

President Willis: He is apparently looking into that. He seems to be regarding the amassing of sick leave with the one-time payout at retirement as being some kind of boondoggle. So he’s planning on looking into whether he wants to suggest that the state not do that anymore. I think that’s – I don’t think that’s something he can do by himself. I think that would have to be the legislature.

S. Nord: But he is considering it for not just university employees but also police and everybody.

President Willis: Yes, I don’t think he’s focused on universities with that one. I think it’s all state employees for whom that is an option. Of course, for people not on nine-month salaries who actually get vacation, the same thing works with vacation as well – it’s not just sick leave. Of course, we don’t get vacations. Okay, any other questions or comments? Could I have a motion to adjourn? Okay, see you next month.

XII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Northern Illinois University’s P-20 Initiatives – from F. Kitterle (Page 16)
B. Minutes, Academic Planning Council
C. Minutes, Athletic Board minutes
D. Minutes, Campus Security and Environmental Quality
E. Minutes, Committee on Initial Teacher Certification
F. Minutes, Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum
G. Minutes, Graduate Council
H. Minutes, Undergraduate Coordinating Council minutes
I. Minutes, University Assessment Panel
J. Minutes, University Benefits Committee minutes

XIII. ADJOURNMENT