I. CALL TO ORDER

P. Stoddard: Welcome to the February 9 Faculty Senate Meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 3:06 P.M.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

P. Stoddard: The first thing is the adoption of the Agenda. I’d like to make a small change. Under President’s Announcements, A. New Chair for Academic Affairs. This is something we actually have to vote on so I’d like to move that down to Items for Faculty Senate Consideration and under President’s Announcements I always reserve the right to add whatever other stuff needs to go in there and today, as it turns out, there are a couple of things so albeit a bit more long winded then usually on IV.

Can I have a motion to approve the Agenda as amended? Thank you. Any discussion? All in favor say aye. Opposed? Okay, we have an Agenda.

The agenda was approved as amended.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 19, 2005 FS MEETING

(Pages 3-6)

P. Stoddard: Next up is approval of the minutes. Any additions, corrections, suggestions, deletions, etc., rephrasing of – all right. Thank you. Any further discussion. All in favor say aye. Opposed? Thank you.
The minutes were approved as written.

IV. PRESIDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

P. Stoddard: Okay, under announcements, a couple of things. Be an excellent time to raise those concerns with Wally who is head of ITS.

A. State Pension Commission Suggestion

Steve Cunningham has been keeping me appraised of what’s going on down in Springfield regarding the State Pension Commission. As you are probably aware, the State has been woefully poor in funding its obligations to the State’s employees pension funds and the includes SURS and the Teacher’s Fund and a couple of other State employee funds and so they’ve been looking at ways to address that. Part of the problem is that their added liability for next year exceeds any additional revenues that they’re planning on getting, the State is, in terms of the improved economy so they’re looking for ways to make up the short-fall. They have come up with several suggestions and that’s all they refer to them as. These include proposing a moratorium on new pension benefits that do not have a funding source so that doesn’t negatively impact anything other than what might be. Reducing costs of living adjustments. Right now, everybody gets – all annuitants get a 3% adjustment every year. They would like to reduce that to 2%. Current members of the pension system get 3% and that probably is protected by the Constitution. We are not allowed to negatively affect benefits to any existing employees so this would be something for future employees to worry about as are most of these. Limiting the State’s financial liability when pension members received – there were inflated final salaries to generate greater income, retirement income, so a lot of people – you know, your pension payment is based on your best four years salary-wise at NIU and they are concerned that people are getting huge raises in those last four years merely to improve their retirement pay. Right now there is a cap on that. You’re allowed to increase your salary by 20% by each of those four years. They would like – this commission suggests – capping that at 5% instead of 20%. Now there are exemptions to that so if you do summer teaching, that’s not considered part of the raise, the inflated final salary, but they are looking at capping things so if you go from, for example, from a regular teaching faculty member to a dean or deanship or something like that then you might incur a large raise as a function of doing that, that would be capped if it happened in the last four years. You could get the raise, but it wouldn’t count towards retirement much.

They’re looking at eliminating the money purchase plan which affects probably most of us in this room if it applies to current employees. They don’t think it would apply to current employees but what they would like to do was cap the interest rate. Right now, SURS is getting about 8.5% return on its investments. It is investing the money that we put in as part of our salary contributions and it is calculating that 8.5% return for the money the State should have been putting in. Since the State has not been putting any money in, that’s kind-of phantom money that SURS is estimating the State actually owes and they would like to cap that at 6% and say well, we don’t care how good you’re doing, we’re not going to put in more than 6% interest.
They’re talking about raising full benefit retirement age for future hires to 65. Right now, 60 is the standard. I think that’s the main thing and then the other one which might well apply to use as current employee, is making more employees pay more into their retirement systems. So right now, we pay 8%; the State is supposed to be paying 8%. The State has not been paying 8% so they would like to make us pay 9% because the State has not been doing their share so Steve Cunningham is calling this a tax. The State is calling it additional contributions. It would be a tax that applies only to the people in the State pension funds so in other words, because the State has not been fulfilling its obligations to use, we have to pay an additional tax that nobody else in the State has to pay as State employees.

**W. Tolhurst:** Sounds like ???.

**P. Stoddard:** Sure, we’re good at that here. So, that is the Pension Commission suggestions. It still has to go to legislature; that’s where the real battles get to be fought like I said and the President has said Steve Cunningham has really been on top of this. I think he knows everything that’s going on down there regarding the pension and he’s encouraged me already to start getting in contact with my counterparts at other State schools making sure that we’re all on the same page when the battle begins in earnest.

Moving on, the question was raised at the last meeting about why we have to determine our course schedules so early on. I spoke to Registration and Records about this and basically she gave me a long list of things that have to be in in order to do this but basically, the bottom line is that they want to be able to post the schedules in early to mid-March for students who have to start registering by April so they want to give the students enough time to be able to put together a good schedule, meeting with their advisors, etc. They want to post these things by March 14. Now, this is about a week earlier than they had been issuing the printed schedules and they still do print some schedules that go to departments and so forth so that was still a part of their consideration. She assured me that this is very much in keeping with what other institutions are doing. They all post their schedules about the same time. She said we could push registration back and that would enable them to post the schedules later and enable us to set the schedules later and suggested that if that’s what we wanted to do, the advising deans would be a good place to start talking and see what they had to say about such an idea. So, that’s what I found out. If people would like to pursue this at greater length, I’d be happy to listen to suggestions, form committees, get out torches, do whatever we need to.

**W. Baker:** May I ask a question about your previous report concerning pension schemes. Could you please make this clear? As I understood it, these are merely proposals brought forward by a commission. Is this correct?

**P. Stoddard:** This is correct.

**W. Baker:** Number 1, number 2 that this commission was set up by the Governor. Correct?

**P. Stoddard:** This is also correct.

**W. Baker:** And Number 3 that there will apparently be considerable opposition to this?
P. Stoddard:  You can count on that.

W. Baker:  Number 4, the opposition – what are the stages in this in terms of executive down in Springfield please?

P. Stoddard:  I’m not sure of the timetable on this but this would have to be taken up by the legislature.  It would have to be voted on in both the House and the Senate – State Senate – then it would go presumably if passed by both of those it would go to the Governor for his signature so there are several places to fight this.  My suspicion would be that waiting until the Governor got it would be a bad idea.  We probably want to talk to our Representatives who are behind us on this.  Other Representatives that represent districts with universities in them tend to be very sympathetic to the universities so I’m sure we can count on a lot of support there.  Those are places to be looking.  Yes?

W. Baker:  May I asked for one other point of clarification?  In your report back, did you say something about future and a distinction being made between future government employees and present local government employees?

P. Stoddard:  Yes, most of the suggestions made would affect only future employees because present day employees cannot see a benefit reduction without a Constitutional amendment.  Constitutionally, they cannot do that so this would make recruiting people much more difficult since we’re not quite as competitive as we’d like with salaries, we have been able to boast a reasonable pension plan and that would be weakened.

W. Baker:  Why can’t we constitutionally do it?

P. Stoddard:  The Constitution prohibits the decreasing of benefits to current state employees.  So when we agree to work for the State, we sign a contract essentially that says we’re entitled to the following benefits and so it would be a breech of contract and a breech of the Constitution to change those benefits.  But new people would be hired on under a different benefits scheme presumably.

W. Baker:  In order words, to change that would cost them too much in legal fees.

P. Stoddard:  If you want to look at it that way, quite possibly, yeah.

W. Baker:  Thank you.

P. Stoddard:  Bill?

W. Tolhurst:  You said most of what your talking about, which were the ones that weren’t talk about.
P. Stoddard: The additional contribution or tax into the pension plan for current employees and perhaps the limit on interest that SURS is charging the State so they’d like to cap it at 6% instead of 8.5% and presumably that could apply ---

W. Tolhurst: Because that wouldn’t constitute a reduction in benefits that would be in violation of the State Constitution.

P. Stoddard: Well, it would be a reduction in the amount of money SURS has or can count on and how they deal with that would be up to them. Buck and then Beth and then ---

J. Stephen: I think also that the Constitution does not protect our medical benefits after retirement so that’s another thing to worry about.

P. Stoddard: Right. I have not seen that mentioned yet but nothing is off the table.

J. Stephen: Something to watch out for.

P. Stoddard: Beth?

B. Miller: Did you not say also the cap for the teaching – the limit for final years of service – would that not also be current?

P. Stoddard: Yeah, that would be current too I believe.

B. Miller: The 20% to 5% is also current.

P. Stoddard: Yes.

R. Meganathan: It seems to me, many years ago I vaguely remember there was a court case against the state that they have to put in money into the retirement account and the court agreed with the representative so what happened with the court case position?

P. Stoddard: I don’t know. Anybody? Deb?

D. Haliczer: What I have been told it was settled in favor of SURS.

P. Stoddard: It was settled in favor of SURS and not in favor of the faculty member. Okay. Why don’t you check ---

R. Meganathan: My understanding was the State was ordered to pay the full obligation to SURS. If they did not follow, why they did not follow – was there a follow-up on it?

D. Haliczer: What I’ve been told by Steve is that the court case was settled and that the court found that SURS was correct in its application of payments and that the faculty member’s suit was not supported by the court.
**J. Stephen:** That doesn’t mean they have to continue to meet their obligation. I think you have to sue them every year to get them to do that.

**R. Meganathan:** Is there a way to appeal?

**J. Stephen:** No I think they caught up their funding for awhile there and then they’re waiting to be sued again or something.

**P. Stoddard:** There was a law passed in ’95 that was supposed to help assure funding and I guess people didn’t follow up on that as carefully as they should have or whatever or there were loopholes or – I don’t understand it but the timing seems that the law might have been in response to this suit and I think Buck is probably right that they did pay up at that point but have lax since then.

**R. Meganathan:** Talking about SURS and when we are talking about all of this, that should have come up but I don’t see ---

**J. Stephen:** That’s probably what the new law did was provide them a loophole for not paying that and listing it as an obligation of the State for SURS investing in the State or something like that the way people borrow money from the Social Security fund.

**R. Meganathan:** Then the Feds can do the same thing.

**P. Stoddard:** As long as they don’t do it to the federal government, right? Bill?

**W. Tolhurst:** Just a clarification about the cap on increase in salaries, I’m assuming that’s a cap on your rate of pay so if someone went from a 9 month contract to a 12 month contract, that’s not a significant increase in rate of pay that would ---

**P. Stoddard:** I believe you’re right. Yes.

**W. Tolhurst:** Okay.

**B. Miller:** Just a point of clarification, in a situation like you were talking about suing SURS or suing the State because they didn’t pay SURS, I was talking to Brad Burzynski our senator, about another situation where Cigna wasn’t paying for a number of people. They weren’t paying insurance benefits and he came to speak to a group of people and he suggested a class action suit because we aren’t making any progress. What is it – what is the scenario that happens literally with a situation like this, I mean, is there – is it an individual who takes this to court of is there an agency of the university or groups of university people who.

**P. Stoddard:** I think it would be an individual, I mean, what has to start happening is people have to start not getting the benefits they thought they were going to get or that they had been assured they would get.
B. Miller: But in the case of the people who are potentially being recruited, there isn’t someone yet.

P. Stoddard: Well, anybody who’s potentially being recruited today, I mean, if you’re looking to hire someone in your department now, I think in all fairness you’d have to tell them well, this is the current benefit plan.

B. Miller: You’re saying there’s really not somebody out there who’s going to say I would’ve come to NIU except – that’s not going to be like somebody who’s going to go sue.

P. Stoddard: Right, presumably because they didn’t come.

B. Miller: Right. There’s not that person out there who’s going to take a class action suit?

P. Stoddard: Right, oh at this point, yeah, and that’s part of why it would apply more to new hires than current hires. Current hires would have a vested interest in trying to make sure they got the benefits they were due.

B. Miller: Right. You’re saying in the case there’s this non-person, the recruited person that we couldn’t get, who would take on the responsibility of actually fighting for this cause.

P. Stoddard: I don’t see that person existing. I think you’re right.

B. Miller: Okay, so the way to do that then is what?

P. Stoddard: I suppose if somebody really wanted to make a case, the department could say look, we were about to hire this excellent person. They didn’t take the job here because we couldn’t guarantee them the benefits that it was going to take to get them here, the benefits they would have gotten last year if they would have signed up and so you have cost our department and then make whatever case you can, ……… in the back, David.

D. Lonergan: I just wanted to comment that this is the classic 2-tier system that is used in union busting and that’s where it was pioneered because the people that are denied benefits, don’t exist yet.

P. Stoddard: Right, so it’s easy to say screw them since they don’t exist. Right?

J. Holt: Just for clarification, did you say one of the things that might be eliminated is something that affects all of us, the money value?

P. Stoddard: Money purchase plan. Right.

J. Holt: So the different types of retirement, one based upon the number of years and one based upon dollars put in so it’s the one based on dollars put in?
**P. Stoddard:** Correct. People who have worked for a long period of time, but maybe not 35 years and haven’t seen huge spikes or huge step functions in their salaries especially in their later years, those people generally do better by the money purchase plan. You know, you max out at 80% of your salary. You can never get anymore than that so most people with the money purchase plan actually hit that 80% plateau several years before they would using the formula plan which has 2.2% for every year you’ve been employed. So that’s about 35 years that way and most people can do it sooner with the money purchase so they, in effect, would be telling you to work longer.

**J. Holt:** And that is something that would not be effective for current employees? That’s something that would be effective for perspective employee pensions?

**P. Stoddard:** I believe that’s true but I wouldn’t swear to it. I think we had – alright, go ahead.

**R. Meganathan:** In regards to Cigna, you are given a list of doctors and you are given a list of hospitals, right? When the hospital gives you a bill or the doctor gives you a bill by looking at your tongue, whatever, they turn around and say we pay 80%. Is there an agreement between the state and the health care provider as to what is 100% maximum?

**P. Stoddard:** Go ahead Buck.

**J. Stephen:** I asked about this a couple of years ago and that’s considered price fixing so that they way they decide what 100% of the benefit is by what is called reasonable and usual expenses and one of the problems that we have is that we’re in a region where what’s reasonable for DeKalb is not based on anything much further to the east of here so what’s reasonable for our region is lower than what would be reasonable for somebody say who went to a doctor in Chicago but no, there’s nothing in terms of an agreed upon price unless they’re a preferred provider organization in which case they do have an agreement about how much they will pay and the same thing goes for most psychological services where they have – you’ll get an explanation of benefits and it might say $80 not covered, $17 preferred provider network and then they’d pay all but $15 of he remaining $63. But for just an arbitrary doctor visit, no there’s no agreement as to what 100% would be.

**R. Meganathan:** For hundreds of dollars, I’m talking about going to the hospital because the doctor says you have to go even though you know there’s nothing that – they’re going to put you through all these tests and then they give you a bill for $2500 and then you have to come up with the rest.

**J. Stephen:** That leaves us with the preferred provider network in which case you’re protected from that but that also means your closest hospital might be Kishwaukee or something like that and if you go – want to see a more serious hospital or more experienced one or however you want to word that – you might end up outside the network and paying a lot more money.

**R. Meganathan:** I get a bill for $600 and they say they’ll pay $200 or whatever and I had to pay $400.
**P. Stoddard:** I think for individual cases like this, you’re best bet – I’m going to punt – would be your benefits coordinator over in Human Resources. They can address – they know much more of the specifics than I do or most of the people here do and I think – it sounds like you’ve got a lot of things you’d like to talk to them about and so I’d suggest that’s probably the best place to get those answers. You’ll get the best answers over there. Yeah?

**E. Arriola:** The lawyer’s perspective from the College of Law. I just wanted to suggest that some of these issues might be addressed in a class action lawsuit and that, although there might be differences based on whether or not it’s a claim in State court versus Federal court and depending on the challenge, that there is a theoretical basis in the design of class action lawsuits to accommodate current interests and future interests and what you do is categorize it by the claim and what you try and find is a person who adequately represents the very specific kinds of injuries, economic injury in this case, because the way in which the insurance companies are not abiding by an expected interpretation of what the benefits should be. Now the incentive would be to find, you know, someone who really has, you know, good complaints, that represents the complaints of many others who are in the plan who are, you know, who has an interest and then it even addresses the possibility of the future like the future person who would have come here had it been for whatever – misrepresentation and the way you handle that is all you need is the name of somebody who you think, you know, would represent that category. What you’ve got to find is a good lawyer here to take on the insurance industry and practices because these are reasonable, viable cases and they’re worthwhile to a lawyer because the expected gain from getting the provider to essentially abide by the terms of an agreement, you know, are certainly worthwhile when you multiply that by the number of employees. It’s just that it get complicated in number one, finding people who are willing to hang in there and be a representative for a class and for the various groups of classes and then finding a lawyer who’s willing to hang in there and can do it. They’re not impossible, they’re just really hard and complicated law suits.

**P. Stoddard:** Bill?

**W. Tolhurst:** To clarify, if I’m not mistaken, none of the concerns about medical insurance have anything to do with the State Pension Commission’s suggestions?

**P. Stoddard:** That is correct. Anything else on the pension? On scheduling of classes? Okay.

The other thing that I have to announce and this is something that I was just handed a half an hour ago. Did you give copies to everyone? No, okay. This is – you’ll get an e-mail to this effect probably by the time you get back to your office or soon thereafter. There’s been a change in the CMS prescription, or there will be a change in the CMS prescription management contract. Basically, Caremark is going away and Medco is taking their place effective July 1, 2005. The memo that you get will point you to a more detailed description. To summarize it, there’s a paragraph that says “CMS did an extremely good job in picking one of eleven vendors to give us a new contract. Medco is an excellent provider and we’re luck to have them”. That’s paragraph 2; I’m paraphrasing. Paragraph 3 lists all that plans that are affected by this change and does nicely list the plans that are not affected by the change. Paragraph 4 says the process for obtaining prescriptions will remain the same whether they are short-term or long-term medications. More information will be available in the coming months, however, members are
urged to check the benefits website and that site is given, etc. So that’s hot off the presses and if you have any questions, I’ll have to refer them to our University Benefits person.

S. Sytsma: You said the insurance would be the same as what? The most recent changes that we had with Caremark?

P. Stoddard: Yes, basically the same as you’re doing it right now or should be doing it right now or in the next six months – 3 or 4 months. Buck?

J. Stephen: Does that mean local providers will be able to fill 3 month prescriptions or do they have to go through that 6 or 7 months process that they had to before and do we get the canonical one dollar increase again?

P. Stoddard: I don’t know. Deb, you want to ---

D. Haliczer: You basically know what we found out this morning and my bet is Buck you’re right, that all the providers are going to have to re-certify with this new company but I started giving them the information too – the pharmacies – about the new information we just heard about today. So, I’ll work with them and hopefully we won’t have the delays we had before which were ridiculous – remove the editorial comment.

P. Stoddard: Augden?

A. Windelborn: Is that (not on mike).

D. Haliczer: The e-mail is going out to everyone on Groupwise. Check the Human Resource website because I have the article posted with a link to the CMS website.

P. Stoddard: Now if Groupwise forwards to your regular mailbox, you should get it although it might be from you and not from HR. Any other questions? Okay, well that’s all I had to announce. I thought that was enough.

B. Walter Czerniak Visit

The easy one is – I’ve invited Walter Czerniak, whose name is misspelled here – that’s my fault, to come visit us next time so I know we’ve expressed various concerns about how computing decisions are made on campus and next meeting then would

V. ITEMS FOR FACULTY SENATE CONSIDERATION

P. Stoddard: Moving on then to Items for Faculty Senate Consideration, the current chair of the Academic Affairs Committee is on sabbatical this semester so we needed to find a replacement and David Lonergan from Libraries has agreed. We need, as a body, to confirm that change. So, if anybody – thank you. Buck? Thank you. Any comments? Okay. All in favor of the change say aye? All opposed. Congratulations Dave or condolences whichever you prefer.
VI.  CONSENT AGENDA

**P. Stoddard:** We have nothing to consent to. Well, I guess you could have consented to that but that’s okay.

VII. REPORTS FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEES

A. FAC to IBHE – Patricia Henry – [report](Pages 7-8)

**P. Stoddard:** Reports from Advisory Committees and first up as ever, the very lovely Pat Henry.

**P. Henry:** This is with the most recent FAC meeting, Faculty Advisory Committee meeting on January 26 when we met at Governor’s State University. You’ve had a chance to look at this so I won’t go over it in great detail but the usually sort of range of discussions with both people at Governor’s State, with people from the IBHE staff and, as has become traditional now, with the local – one of the local representatives or senators from the general assembly, in this case Representative William Davis. The discussion centered around much as we have here, sort of the on-going problem with the budget. In particularly there’s really I think some interest that the IBHE in sort of developing a coalition of administration/faculty/students/business interests to sort of try to make the case the case for higher education in a sort of more global sense. There’s a number of ways we’re trying to do that that. One of them is sort of directly talking to the people in the legislature and FAC continues to try and sort of work out ways of discussing this both individually and in committee. One of the things that was brought up was that indeed, higher education tends not to have as much connection with the public since we don’t have PTA’s and things like that and trying to get the word out as to what the impact of these budget cuts on higher education is, therefore, a little more difficult and I’ve got to say that especially given the fact that this pension situation is going to be quite a fight. That’s not going to be the best PR for us to try to make the case that, you know, we’re working very hard and doing our best but all we hear is that we’re fighting for our pensions which is not to say we shouldn’t fight for our pensions. We certainly should but there is a problem trying to sort of get across to people what it is that’s being lost when higher education is cut and that end actually, the FAC is encouraging people to come up with slogans. I know this sounds a little silly but we are in kind of a sound bite war and FAC members have addressed this to their classes and faculty bodies and I will address it to you too. There’s a number of ones that have come across already – “Thank your teachers, teacher”. “Support Illinois higher education”. “Teachers need the best teachers”. “Support funding for K-16 in Illinois”. All those sort of focused on the fact that the K-12, which is usually what gets the most attention, is, in fact, intricately involved in higher education as well in the sense that that’s where the teachers get trained so that’s one angle.

I should also point out under 3 there, yeah, at the bottom of the page, one of the things that has been a problem I think is the notion that the accountability aspect of the PPA Committee one always wonders if they are just getting more and more accountability requirements that require more time and effort. I just actually got a report from the PPA Committee, Committee B, which is looking at that and they have several suggestions for regulatory relief that I’ll summarize if I actually have a chance to look at it but that is one thing that is on-going now with the IBHE is
that the PPA Committee is trying to sort of get some sense of how this is working. Rep. Davis and I think this was mentioned before is that House Bill 750 which is actually having more to do with K-12, is something that could be expanded to include higher education as well. We’re sort of keeping an eye on it. It’s also worth pointing out in this context here that Speaker Madigan is holding budget summits throughout the state and I had just today received a report from one that was held in Carterville. The plan is to hold a number of summits around the state. We should find out about these and when one is being held in our area, go and make the case for higher education as well. I don’t have the actual locations of the ones that will be in this area but I’m sure there will be some. There’s plenty of people who showed up in this one in Cartersville especially making the case for how these cuts have affected nursing homes, Medicare, all sorts of things – K-12 and I think one or two representatives from higher education were there as well and one of the observations in this report was that this should not be seen as a rally for tax increase. Anytime anybody mentioned tax increase, everybody applauded and there is definitely a sense that yeah, we don’t have enough money. We’ve got to get some more money and we can’t do anything if we don’t.

In number 5 there just to sort of touch back on the question of the pension, we were responding to the Task Force recommendations that were coming out that clearly looked like things were getting cut and clearly things were going to get cut to create a two-tiered system. I’ll just sort of read through. There’s a couple of typos here that you can correct. The resolution that was adopted by the FAC “Because the financial problems in the SURS system are the result of long-term failures to adequately fund” – not fun, in no sense fun – “that system; and Because the recommendations of the Governor’s Pension Commission are all focused on reducing faculty benefits, especially for potential” I think we also said future hires – “hires; and Because it is never desirable to create an underclass of faculty; Therefore the FAC/IBHE resolves that the Commission’s solution should be rejected in favor of real, long-term, constitutional and full funding to all public educational retirement systems, in order to protect the quality of higher education.” I think that’s sort of our opening salvo. I don’t pretend that it will immediately get a lot of response but I think the FAC is very much committed to passing on to the IBHE that it’s just a terrible idea to try to and set up these two-tiered systems and hopefully get that across to the legislature as well.

I think that’s pretty much it. The budget situation is just a website there for you to look at. It does – the IBHE budget that they did pass recommended 2.1 billion for higher education. Interestingly enough, that is exactly the amount of restructure deficit that we have so I wouldn’t hold me breath for all that and even then it’s only basically keeping it even but the FAC does support this in as much as it doesn’t slash things up any worse than they were already. Okay?

**P. Stoddard:** Buck?

**J. Stephen:** The President of the United States has met us half-way on one of his campaign promise and raised PAL Grants by 500 instead of the 1,000 he suggested, but made them unavailable to more students. Is the FAC looking at the effect of that on our affordability studies?
P. Henry: I will bring that up. I think that’s a very good thing to bring up. I know that that is just sort of – they also as I remember hearing yesterday I think along with increasing the amount of PAL Grants, they reduced some of the student loan programs, the Perkins Loans. I’m not sure exactly how that affects it but yeah, that would be a good thing to look at.

P. Stoddard: Anybody else? What is House Bill 750?

P. Henry: I believe that is the one that proposes an exchange of property taxes for I think income taxes? I’m not sure, but I mean it is set up in such a way that it mainly has to do with K-12 at this point but it does have the potential for increasing the amount of money that becomes available and I think there’s a way in which some of that could work for higher education as well.

P. Stoddard: It is my understanding that it is basically a property tax or income tax swap. I’m not sure how it would work but I think the implication is then that K-12 gets paid out of the same pool of money that we do which might have the opposite consequence of what you’re worried about or what you’re considering. So, in any event, this bares close scrutiny. Any other questions for Pat? Okay. Thank you Pat. We have no reports from the Board of Trustees.

B. BOT Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Personnel Committee – Joseph “Buck” Stephen and Ferald Bryan – no report

C. BOT Finance, Facilities, and Operations Committee – Paul Stoddard and Xueshu Song – no report

D. BOT Legislation, Audit, and External Affairs Committee – Donna Smith and Shey Lowman – no report

E. BOT – Paul Stoddard – no report

VIII. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Academic Affairs – Chair – no report

P. Stoddard: Does the new chair of Academic Affairs have anything to report?

D. Lonergan: No.

B. Economic Status of the Profession – Radha Balamuralikrishna, Chair – report – walk-in

P. Stoddard: Report from the Economic Status of the Profession. Radha? This is a walk-in item.

R. Balamuralikrishna: I’m going to start off in a lighter vein this afternoon. Our Committee just met prior to this meeting and a couple of members said Radha, you always bring interesting
to our committees and I couldn’t help thinking gee, that means we are doing our job. Well, I get most of my interesting news from Deb Haliczer so I’ll blame it on her.

We met on January 27 what I’ll share in today’s report are basically some of the high points. I think the report speaks for itself and I’m not going to elaborate on all the items. However, some of the key points that everyone needs to pay attention to is that, as you all know, some of us are on nine-month contracts and when you don’t get paid during the summer, it becomes your individual responsibility to pay the insurance premiums and it has come to our attention that in at least a few cases, benefits ceased to exist because of non-payment or not making payments on time. So, at the very least, the progress to get reinstated is very cumbersome and so HR is working on an early warning letter that will be sent to all members sometime during April.

A female employee has sued the State of Illinois based on the fact that her employee benefits didn’t include contraceptive medication and if you were an employee from August 1, 2000 up to this date, then you are automatically in the class action suit unless you specifically said otherwise and that had to be done prior to January 4 of this year.

One of our colleagues, John Butler, he pointed out that our current plan doesn’t cover the cost of Hepatitis B and C vaccines. However, it does. Hepatitis A is not covered but Hepatitis B and C is covered if you’re under 24 years of age. Our Committee discussed this to some extent and we feel that the nature of our job demands that we are close to people and people are close to us so the Committee’s opinion is that all vaccine should be covered, you know, not just this and maybe it’s worthwhile looking at some of these things. You know, how we could make things happen. Particularly what Professor Butler said was that Hepatitis A it affects gay people much more than the general community and so he made some case along those lines. If you need more details I’ll be happy to provide them. There were some corrections here as well. The Speech and Hearing Aide Clinic, that’s old news, you’ve been hearing that for awhile. The next item, the Domestic Partner Inclusion Waiver Proposal, that should really read “children of domestic partner” okay? As you all know, spouses don’t get inclusion benefits right now, okay, so if I’m wrong on that, Debbie can correct me I’m sure. And a time release of 30 minutes for working – it should say operating staff and supportive professional staff. I think that’s the second correction I would like to offer. At least from HRS’ point of view, there are no complaints from faculty regarding insurance reimbursement. We don’t know if that’s because of faculty fatigue or --- yeah. Finally, the premiums paid by physicians for malpractice insurance is much higher in our state and a figure of $80,000 for the year was mentioned compared to say $8,000 in neighboring Wisconsin or Indiana. So this affects us in at least two ways, you know, access to these specialists and, of course, costs. On that note, I’ll be glad to conclude my report. Thank you.

**P. Stoddard:** Thank you. Any questions for Radha Yes, Bill?

**W. Tolhurst:** Not so much a question, I’ve been on a nine-month pay schedule for a long time until I discovered it was costing me money because when I paid my insurance premium during the summer, they were taxed and so it seems to me it would not hurt to encourage people to do this in their self-interest.
**J. Stephen:** In addition to that, if you use flexible spending accounts, that’s a problem over the summer too to collect the money that you may have used because you can only use those for a certain period of time. You can only collect from your flexible spending account while you’re actually getting a paycheck.

**R. Megananathan:** Since you brought up the vaccine, as you all know we were to get the flu vaccine and then they cancelled it because the vaccine was not available but recent reports indicate those plenty of vaccine, however, I don’t understand why that wasn’t reinstated.

**J. Stephen:** I called up the clinic two weeks because I had pneumonia over Christmas and the clinic says they don’t have any flu vaccine.

**P. Stoddard:** Anything else? Yeah? Pat?

**P. Henry:** Just one quick question and this may have come up at a different time but in terms of the domestic partner or the children of domestic partner tuition waiver, what is the status of domestic partners or the children of domestic partners with regard to health insurance? Are they covered in NIU’s plan?

**R. Balamuralikrishna:** Right now that is sitting on the President’s desk I believe. It has passed through all the bodies that are concerned so it will be – we’ll see.

**P. Stoddard:** Anything else? Okay, moving on then. Thank you Radha. Resource, Space, and Budget I believe we don’t have a report. I don’t think we have a Chair so a report would be more difficult.

C. Resource, Space, and Budget – C.T. Lin, Chair – no report

D. Faculty Rights and Responsibilities – Joseph “Buck” Stephen, Chair – report

**P. Stoddard:** Faculty Rights and Responsibilities. Got anything to tell us Buck?

**J. Stephen:** No, other than I’ll be meeting soon with Chief Grady and also with Walter Czneriak concerning privacy issues that we’ll be discussing at a meeting with the that the committee has scheduled.

**P. Stoddard:** Okay, thank you. Any questions? Yeah?

**J. Holt:** I’m not sure if this would be your committee Buck but I’ve had a lot of faculty asking me if we are doing any about or making any statements about that Rate-Your-Professor website that the students have access to that has all of our grade distributions?

**J. Stephen:** Yes, we are.

**P. Stoddard:** By we Buck means Buck.
**J. Stephen:** There are two Rate-Your-Professor type websites out there. One is called ratemyprofessor.com and that one only includes student input identified by the class and the semester taken and you’re rated on how effective you were, how easy you were, whether you’re hot or not. The entries put into that website they’re actually monitored by an NIU student who makes sure that anything that is too in appropriate gets filtered out and that multiple posts from the same isp gets filtered out. The other one is x/a-pickaprof.com. Those are the people who give grade distributions and they also allow students to put in feedback, not monitored by students. They do allow professors to put down information about their teaching style, etc., but the purport to give distributions of grades. Those grade distributions after discussions with about 7 different people and looking closely once I could get them magnified enough and change the color because I’m color blind. They don’t seem to be accurate. They same to be only based on students reported grades and one thing I’m planning on doing is trying to talk to maybe Gerald Sheldon at the Star about the difference in these two websites. In general, I’ve noticed that ratemyprofessor.com is much more popular with NIU students. In fact, if you haven’t gone there, you will probably find yourself listed there. Some NIU professors are listed with as many as 30 or 40 ratings. I have 27. Some people maybe only have one. Any other questions about that?

**J. Holt:** The concern, I guess, is the pickaprof then. The concern our faculty has is having grade distributions on line period because the obviously students pick the east instructors. So is there anyway that we can not have student have access.

**J. Stephen:** Those didn’t come from the university. That we chased down through Don Larson and had a long discussion with Ken Davidson who received a letter from pickaprof in June of 2004 requesting that under freedom of information thing and he refused it and the only recourse to getting that is to appeal that to President Peters and President Peters did not see such an appeal. I was disturbed because of my own grade distribution for a graduate course. It was correct but it was somewhat of an accident that the percentages were correct. They didn’t have the full reporting number of students. If you find that the recording number of students and the distribution is correct for one of your faculty members, I’d be very interested in that. Personally, I had an incredibly hard time with their website because it’s all in melons and yellows and stuff like that and I’m too color blind – I had to take it up 500% before I could read it.

**L. Kamenitsa:** Didn’t President Peters tell University Council a few months ago that he’d entered into a contractual agreement to provide information for one of these sites? Does anyone remember this? Did I dream it?

**J. Holt:** It was Faculty Senate a month ago – two months ago.

**P. Stoddard:** We asked about it. We never got an answer that the university had done this. I know there was an article in the Star about it too. I’m not sure exactly where any specific information would have come from. Any other questions for Buck? I just had one. Were you rated as hot?

**J. Stephen:** No, I’m not.
P. Stoddard: Sorry – moving on then. Rules and Governance, Augden?

E. Rules and Governance – Augden Windelborn, Chair – report

A. Windelborn: Okay, Rules and Governance had been given the task of addressing the issue related to members of the University Council having to attend Faculty Senate meetings. The question was what could be done about it because there was a redundancy in terms of what was being covered at both those meetings. Originally, the idea was that possible members of the University Council could be excused or something from attending. After consideration and reading of the Bylaws and the intent of the whole Faculty Senate, the conclusion was kind of reached that the solution to the problem didn’t lie in telling University Council members not to attend. In fact, what we will be proposing and what we’re hopefully going to be able to introduce next week is a modification of the agenda so that material that is important to all and information and views of the Faculty Senate would be provided first and that forum would be present and then the meeting would conclude with information that would be provided again at the University Council meeting, the idea being if a member desired – not saying they have to – but if a member desired to leave at that time, a University Council member not a Faculty Senate member, they could do so because they would be hearing the same information again at the University Council meeting. So the idea is we’re going to try to. We’re going to see if it works because, to be honest, this is a whole lot simpler solution than trying to change multiple bylaws and overturn the principle of the Faculty Senate. Anyways, that’s my report.

P. Stoddard: Any questions or comments?

W. Tolhurst: Yeah, it seems to be a bad idea to change bylaws and things like that but if a practice developed whereby some University Council members attending the Faculty Senate wanted to chose to represent some of their colleagues who could there and wanted to note it on this sheet, but would not require any special action by anybody and would ensure that people knew that they did have some obligation to come; they should come regularly but that they could find someone who could attend on their behalf as well as their own and they could find out what, if anything, they missed and just letting people know they weren’t just blowing off the meeting. That would not require any action by anybody except those who wanted to do it.

P. Stoddard: Okay, well it sounds like we’ve got a couple of workable ideas that can help alleviate the time constraints on members of both bodies so we will see how they work? Any other comments, questions, etc.? Okay, thank you Augden.

F. Elections and Legislative Oversight – Gretchen Bisplinghoff, Chair – report

P. Stoddard: Moving on, Gretchen from Elections and Legislative Oversight who has a little bit of business to conduct. The information of interest is not on page 10 but rather on the back of the walk-in from Radha or on the front and Radha’s was on the back.

1. Selection of a committee for the Evaluation of the Executive Secretary of University Council and the President of Faculty Senate – see Faculty Senate Bylaws, Article 7 – walk-in
G. Bisplinghoff: Okay, we need to select the membership of two committees according to certain compositional rules. This is your lottery portion of the program. The first committee that we’ll be drawing names for is the evaluation of the Executive Secretary of University Council and the President of the Faculty and we need to select a couple of folks from UC first. The first name is Kent Gallagher. You can speak to Donna after the program. I would immediately go out and buy a lottery ticket if I were you and David Wade and we need one alternate. Jean Pierce. Now we need two Faculty Senate. Jack Marchewka I believe and Greg Barrett and finally an alternate, Rangaswamy Meganathan. So we have those three. We seem to be having a run of gender identity here. Nick Pappanduros and Greg Marcus, as the alternate. Okay. There we go. That takes care of one committee.

2. Selection of a committee for the Evaluation of the Faculty Personnel Advisor – see Faculty Senate Bylaws, Article 7 – walk-in

G. Bisplinghoff: Now we need a select a committee for the evaluation of the Faculty Personnel Advisor. Three and an alternate. Jean Pierce. Okay, we’ll do that one over. Scott Wickman. Sharon Sytsma. Augden Windelborn. He doesn’t have enough to do and an alternate, C.T. Lin – oh, he’s on sabbatical. Okay, I thought he was going on or was on. Okay.

P. Stoddard: Okay. Thank you all in advance for your service.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

X. NEW BUSINESS

P. Stoddard: We have no Unfinished Business. Under New Business the question was raised about the possibility of bus service to the Elburn Train Station when that becomes functional. I briefly talked to the President about this and he’s under the impression that this is something that will happen. He suggested that I talk with Bob Albanese or Eddie Williams to get more details and so I will do that. But it does look like this has been thought of and it’s something that we would definitely like to try to do.

A. Possibility of Bus Service to Elburn Train Station

XI. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

P. Stoddard: Are there any comments or questions from the floor about anything at all? If not, I’ll entertain a motion to adjourn. All in favor? All opposed? We are adjourned.

XII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Minutes, Academic Planning Council
B. Minutes, Athletic Board minutes
C. Minutes, Campus Security and Environmental Quality
D. Minutes, Committee on Initial Teacher Certification
E. **Minutes**, Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum  
F. **Minutes**, Graduate Council  
G. **Minutes**, Undergraduate Coordinating Council minutes  
H. **Minutes**, University Assessment Panel  
I. **Minutes**, University Benefits Committee minutes  

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 4:12 P.M.