
J. Bentley attended for F. Jaeger; J. Rintala attended for P. MacFarlane; T. Heinze attended for D. Munk; L. Gregory represented D. Robertson.

Parliamentarian Ferald Bryan was present.


I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was approved as written.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 9, 2005 FS MEETING

The minutes were approved.

IV. PRESIDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Wally Czerniak, Associate Vice President, Information Technology Services attended the Faculty Senate meeting to answer questions.

W. Czerniak opened by announcing that the Registrar has requested that we lock the students’ e-mail addresses in Blackboard and that in order to do so, we also had to lock the faculty e-mail address. We locked these faculty e-mail addresses to whatever they are today. In the future, we would add their NIU assigned e-mail address, but we would allow the faculty to call in to the customer support desk to change the e-mail address to whatever the faculty wanted. It’s our plan to implement this between Spring and Summer sessions.

W. Czerniak answered a wide range of questions regarding ITS and Telecommunications, involving the status of the Corn server (M. Kipperman), the Blackboard/email address issue (J.
Stephen), software support (J. Pierce) and the unintended consequences of software upgrades (B. Miller), the new high speed internet access and its impact of fee structures (A. Windelborn), smart classrooms (B. Miller), problems with the “Do Not Call” list in residence halls (J. Stephen), and the responsiveness of ITS to the students (A. Windelborn, R. Orem, B. Miller), annuitants (W. Baker), and faculty (S. Sytsma, W. Baker, B. Miller). There are no plans to discontinue the Corn server. Students will still be able to forward email from their z-accounts to accounts of their choosing. The new Internet II service will not impact fee structures. Telecomm’s hands are tied by law in terms of the “Do Not Call” list.

B. Miller: Do you have any suggestions for the Faculty Senate, with regard to ways in which the faculty could review the issues that we’ve been talking about and how we could be pro-active in the process?

W. Czerniak: One of the ways is through a committee called the Computing Facilities Advisory Committee. We meet twice a semester and we do try to address issues like that. The FS president has been attending meetings as a guest. Those meetings are open. The minutes are published on the ITS webpage. At the suggestion of the CFAC and FS president, whenever we start a major project, there will be a sub-committee that runs for at least one to two years while that project goes on. We’ve now made a decision that we will find at least one faculty member to volunteer to sit in on those committees and help them. So there are ways faculty can get involved. Clearly through their chairs and their own department meetings they can help. When I get recommendations from the faculty across multi-colleges, I can take that to the Deans Council and ask them to look at it and so that’s another mechanism where I can help the faculty if they help me.

C. Booth moved that the Associate Vice President for ITS be invited every spring semester to address the faculty and answer questions. The motion was seconded and passed.

P. Stoddard announced that the pension battle is continuing. The Governor has made his recommendations, which were summarized in the President’s e-mail to the community. It’s not yet gotten to the legislature. It’s not at all clear how the legislature is going to respond to the Governor’s proposals for modifying the pension. B. Miller asked for clarification regarding the appropriate roles we could take either as a body or as individuals with regard to the pension issue. P. Stoddard responded that, as individuals, we are always free and encouraged to contact our state representatives who are Rep. Bob Pritchard and Sen. Brad Burzynski, at least in the DeKalb/Sycamore area. The Faculty Senate could fill an informational role, but advocacy could be an ethics violation. We might point out that what’s being proposed is a two-tiered system where new hires are going to see reduced benefits compared with what current hires get and we might want to make the case that that is inherently unfair, but also that this is going to severely cripple our ability to recruit top flight new faculty state-wide. B. Miller: I was wondering what our roles were as representatives back to our department. P. Stoddard: It’s certainly not an ethical violation to inform other members of your department what is being considered. It certainly would not be unethical to say how you should write representatives. B. Miller: What exactly would be the difference between my department writing such a letter and the Faculty Senate writing a letter similar to what you described? J. Stephen: As a group, if we take a particular
stand we count as lobbyists and we’re not registered lobbyists. As individuals, it’s part of our responsibilities under our shared governance system to acquaint our constituents in our departments and colleges of possible changes and where they can get information on these changes and how they can communicate their concerns and any communication that you make representing yourself as a university employee is not considered lobbying. If you say that you’re speaking on behalf of your department, your college or the University Council or the Faculty Senate, then it is considered lobbying and we shouldn’t do that. There’s a link on the FAC meeting minutes to a form letter on the UPI4100.org site that’s essentially a form letter that you can print out; however, individually worded and written letters have a greater impact than massive amounts of duplicate form letters do.

R. Meganathan: This letter writing business, is there a difference between state of Illinois and the federal government? Like today, I received an e-mail from the Science Magazine. There were 758 professors from different universities protesting the federal government dipping into the NIH (National Institute of Health) funds to fund the so-called bioterrorism initiative saying that that is o.k. so they protested it because 40% of the health grants are going to be cut and all this was done by e-mail so if that’s legal, why is it illegal for us to make the e-mail to the government or whoever?

P. Stoddard: Again, what they did though was they signed each one individually. They didn’t claim to represent the national association of microbiologists or whatever. This was 758 concerned individuals and that’s what we just said we could do here, you could sign one letter as 15 or 20 or 4,000 concerned individuals and that would be all right. What Buck was saying is that if I write one as the head of the Faculty Senate, representing this body, that takes on different implications. If I write a letter or if we have a letter and everybody on the Senate signs it that’s different than my signing it for everybody and so that’s, I think, the difference in the two situations.

V. ITEMS FOR FACULTY SENATE CONSIDERATION

A. Nominations for the Bob Lane Eternal Vigilance Faculty Spokesperson Award (Page 3)

P. Stoddard: We have one item for Faculty Senate Consideration and that is the Bob Lane Eternal Vigilance Faculty Spokesperson Award, formally known as the Bottom of the Deck Award because this is a person who always tries to catch the administration dealing form the bottom of the deck. We’re asking for nominations. Any faculty member is eligible.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

VII. REPORTS FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEES

A. FAC to IBHE – Joseph “Buck” Stephen – report – walk-in

J. Stephen: Passage of HB750, the property and income tax reform bill, seems very unlikely. A recent AAUP report places Illinois in the lowest 20% nationwide in relations to salaries paid at public universities. Harper College has hired their own lobbyist to represent their interests at the
legislature. Last year 16,000 eligible students didn’t get MAP grants. This year, the number was 50,000.

In the discussion concerning the financial crisis in the Illinois Higher Education System, Eastern Illinois University has come up with sort of a novel idea. They have students develop a series of brief discussions about their college experiences and problems and send these to their legislators and to the Governor. The FAC thought it might good for professors to do something similar. Students might be urged to contact their legislators with their views about the state of higher education in terms of affordability and such. A poll of students at Northeastern Illinois University showed that they favored an increase in tuition because of the decline in resources at the university.

For those wishing to send letters to legislators concerning the possible changes in the pension system, there is more information at the URL listed in the report.

There are two interesting articles, one in The Chronicle of Higher Education (Feb. 25, 2005) about the relationship between business and higher education in Virginia and one in Academe called “Insuring the Nation’s Future: Preserving the Promise of Higher Education” which may also be of great interest to some of you.

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 – report

P. Stoddard reported on the special meeting of the Board of Trustees at which it was announced
that the university is buying the Monsanto Campus in town$12.4 million, of which $8.4 million
is coming from the federal government courtesy of our very own Denny Hastert, so thanks to
Denny Hastert. The other $4 million will come from bonds and/or refinancing techniques.

VIII. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Academic Affairs – David Lonergan, Chair – no report

B. Economic Status of the Profession – Radha Balamjuralikrishna, Chair – no report

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

D. Faculty Rights and Responsibilities – Joseph “Buck” Stephen, Chair – report – walk-in
J. Stephen reported on the committee’s investigation into campus privacy issues, specifically the video surveillance after the visit by the numerous politicians last fall, the number of video surveillance devices on campus and who controls them, policy for acceptable use of cell phones with imaging capabilities, and e-mail retention and the monitoring of web activity by ITS. The video surveillance was the least intrusive option offered to NIU police by the Secret Service, and as best as can be determined, the tapes were destroyed. There are over 100 video surveillance devices on campus, but it is still unclear who controls them. Emails not stored by the sender or receiver are written over, according to ITS. Monitoring of web activity is done to ensure NIU does not enable downloading of copyrighted material.

J. Pierce wanted to note that the concern was expressed by a faculty member who was being filmed and certainly not one of the protestors who had run. C. Minor asked if the committee plans to follow up on the unanswered questions because a couple of them are particularly important. J. Stephen: The committee will try to. Some questions will be referred to the Campus Environment and Security Committee and to Larry Boyles’ office.

J. Stephen further reported that the PickAProf.com web site did get the grade distributions for Spring, 2004. The General Counsel informs me that this is the Freedom of Information Act issue. The only thing they asked for that meets the criteria for exclusion is student evaluation of instructors, because we use those for merit evaluation. It’s not generally agreed between Ken Davidson, Gip Seaver and Don Larson that this actually happened; however, I find it pretty universal that they don’t think release of this information is appropriate. L. Kamenitsa pointed out that if grade distributions were used as part of merit evaluations perhaps they should also be excluded from FOIA requests.

J. Newman-Ryan asked if it would make any difference if the Senate takes a stand on the issue. J. Stephen: I don’t think it would make a difference because without a reason for exclusion, it’s a Freedom of Information Act issue and Ken Davidson is legally compelled to release. P. Stoddard indicated that Ken Davidson had requested input from the faculty on releasing information under an FOIA request.

W. Baker asked about the admissibility of student evaluations in the merit process. P. Stoddard answered that the aggregate information from the survey portion is to be used for merit evaluations, but my understanding is that the written comments students make are the property of the instructor only and that the instructor cannot be compelled to share that with anybody. I would feel much more comfortable if anybody got that directly from Ken Davidson rather than my understanding of what I think Ken said. W. Baker: Could you get back to us on that please? P. Stoddard: I certainly will.

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

A. Windelborn submitted for first reading a proposed change to the Senate’s order of business. This is to move those items that University Council members would be hearing twice if they stayed for the whole meeting to the end of the meeting so they could leave if they wished. C.
Minor pointed out an inconsistency between the wordings in the proposal and the bylaws. P. Stoddard indicated that this will be cleaned up for the second reading.

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

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

G. Bisplinghoff opened the floor to nominations for the position of Faculty Senate President and Executive Secretary of University Council. J. Stephen nominated Paul Stoddard to continue for another year. P. Stoddard indicated his willingness to continue.

G. Bisplinghoff acknowledged a motion and second that the nominations be closed. The motion passed.

P. Stoddard thanked the Senate for the vote of confidence.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

X. NEW BUSINESS

XI. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

D. Haliczer has been looking at a communication from the NIU Annuitants Association, who suggests we all go on line to their website, annuitants@niu.edu where they give guidance on how to write a letter to advocate for some of the pension reforms. Joining the NIU Annuitants Association so you get the bulletin is quite useful.

B. Miller asked about the summer graduation issue. P. Stoddard responded that summer graduation this year has been cancelled. Most of the complaints about this are due to the fact that it took place this summer so quickly with so little warning to the students who planned on graduating this summer. The Provost’s office is not entirely unsympathetic to the concerns of those students and has been working with the advising deans to facilitate participation by affected students in the spring ceremony. J. Stephen wondered about the rationale for the move, and noted that the students were not happy about it. R. Orem asked if the change was brought about because when the academic calendar was changed there was a conflict with an event scheduled for the Convocation Center. P. Stoddard: The debate about whether to continue with summer commencement ceremonies has apparently been going on for quite a while and this conflict may have been might have been what finally forced the decision to be made one way or the other. R. Orem: Why wasn’t at least the University Council approached? P. Stoddard: This was a decision about whether or not to have a ceremony. Degrees will still be conferred in the summer. L. Kamenitsa: You’re saying because we were going to rent out this for-profit building, that students at a university were not going to be able to have a ceremony. I just wanted to make sure I got our priorities straight there.

XII. INFORMATION ITEMS (Minutes)
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 4:35 P.M.