Disclaimer: These minutes should not be taken as a verbatim transcript but rather as a shortened summary that is intended to reflect the essence of statements made at the meeting. Many comments have been omitted and, in some cases, factual and grammatical errors corrected. The full verbatim transcript is available online at the University Council website under Faculty Senate / Agenda Meeting Transcript.

E. Frederick attended for Debra Zahay-Blatz

Parliamentarian Ferald Bryan was present.


I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:06 p.m.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

A. Rosenbaum: noted the addition of a walk-in item: a resolution of the combined committee (FRR and Economic Status).

D. Wade made the motion; E. Hansen was second. The agenda was approved with the addition of the walk-in item.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 18, 2009 FS MEETING (sent electronically)

K. Thu made the motion; J. Kowalski was second. The minutes were approved as written.

IV. PRESIDENT ’S ANNOUNCEMENTS
A. Rosenbaum: Reminded the Senate of the upcoming Day of Remembrance (2/14/10), and also of House Bill 4706 (which will discontinue the tuition benefit for university employees). Senators were reminded that as NIU employees they are not supposed to use university facilities, either letterhead or telephones to contact state representatives.

A. Rosenbaum: reported that, as requested prior to the break, several Senators polled their departments regarding issues they would like to see the Senate address. Three responses were received. They were:

1. Reconsideration of the NIU grading system to include intermediate grades such as +/-, or AB, BC, CD, etc. The history of this issue was reviewed, including the fact that the Senate considered this about five years ago and opted not to act. Problems that were raised at that time included the fear of grade inflation, concerns about the impact of the A+ grade on the maximum GPA, what expenses to the university might be involved, and the implications of starting this in the middle of someone’s academic career at NIU.

Senators were asked to poll their respective departments regarding interest in this issue.

2. It was suggested that the faculty should have a stronger voice in how money is spent at the university and whether we should have greater participation in the budgetary process.

K. Thu: pointed out that not only should faculty be involved in budgetary matters, it is specified by the Constitution and bylaws that we do. That is, in the Preamble to the University Council description, University Council is to be consulted in both the preparation and the execution of the budget.

G. Slotsve: stated that at the LA&S College Council level there is a budgetary planning task force that members of the College Council are appointed to as representatives of the faculty.

M. Kostic: Added his support for greater faculty influence in the budgetary process.

3. The state’s failure to pay insurance claims in a timely fashion is causing financial difficulties for many employees.

E. Hansen: noted that the information available to the FAC to the IBHE paints a grim picture of the state’s finances, which is at the root of the delay in payments to healthcare providers.

A. Rosenbaum: reminded Senators that the Faculty Senate meeting is covered by the Northern Star.

V. ITEMS FOR FACULTY SENATE CONSIDERATION

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

VII. REPORTS FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEES

A. FAC to IBHE – Earl Hansen – no report
B. BOT Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee – Joseph "Buck" Stephen and Ferald Bryan – no report

C. BOT Finance, Facilities, and Operations Committee – Alan Rosenbaum – no report

D. BOT Legislation, Audit and External Affairs Committee – Jay Monteiro and Bobbie Cesarek – no report

E. BOT - Alan Rosenbaum – report

A. Rosenbaum: briefly summarized the report from the Board of Trustees meeting which is on page 3 and 4 of the agenda.

VIII. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Academic Affairs – Charles Cappell, Chair – no report

B. Economic Status of the Profession – Sonya Armstrong, Chair

C. Resource, Space and Budget – Michael Morris, Chair – no report

D. Faculty Rights and Responsibilities – Rosemary Feurer, Chair

R. Feurer: At the September meeting we, the Faculty Senate, authorized the two committees listed here to investigate issues of equitability of resources across academic and administrative divisions and throughout the fall semester we met – we either met or corresponded by e-mail trying to get information in a form that we could subject to statistical analysis.

A. Rosenbaum: Those of you who are not aware, the university is required to publish the salaries of every employee. These are published in what are called the "working papers of the university". They are available at the library. They are in book form and a request was made to administration to provide them as an Excel spreadsheet or some other type of spreadsheet which could then be easily analyzed using statistical packages. The President made assurances that the data would be provided but the deadline for providing the data kept getting pushed back. Finally, on December 18th, President Peters proposed forming a university wide committee to examine the raise equity question in a more inclusive fashion and also promised that the committee would have full access to the data.

R. Feurer: Our joint committee met and also corresponded by e-mail and came up with the following resolution that recommends we approve participation and this is the resolution that we are bringing forward today.

The provisions of this participation are: 1) the faculty representatives will be approved by the Faculty Senate. 2) Faculty members of the commission will have full access to added data from the first meeting of the commission. 3) That the faculty members of the commission will have the right to request their own analysis of these data, the analysis that they think necessary or
important and that the first meeting of the commission should take place shortly after the resolution passage after today, proceed expeditiously and have a report by March 19 which would include recommendations regarding equity of salary increases over the past 10 years related to the academic and administrative divisions. In other words, to essentially do the investigation that we started out to do in September.

R. Feurer: made the motion. K. Thu seconded.

C. Cappell: inquired about the process of approval by the Senate.

A. Rosenbaum: responded that the committee placed this requirement in the resolution to make it clear that faculty committee members are responsible to the Senate and they must report back to the Senate. A. Rosenbaum further clarified that what the President has suggested is that Ray Alden and A. Rosenbaum co-chair the committee, that we meet and make decisions about how many people are on the committee. Also, that the President’s notion was that faculty would be the largest group on that committee. The administration is not trying to exercise any control over which faculty members are on that committee. One issue is whether or not we want to select those faculty members for the commission from the Faculty Senate or whether we want to have broader representation and whether or not we need to vote on them today. One of the issues here is that the committee wants to get this going quickly and no drag into another semester.

D. Valentiner: stated that it doesn’t seem practical that we can, as a full Faculty Senate, do a selection that’s expeditious so you had raised the possibility of maybe the Executive Committee doing that selection. Is that something that they can do expeditiously or is that something they can accomplish in a week or so?

A. Rosenbaum: Yes. We can call an Executive Committee meeting at any time to deal with issues like this.

D. Valentiner: recommended a wording change from “by the full Faculty Senate” to “by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate.”

A. Rosenbaum: noted that despite the change in the wording, the appointment would be in the name of the full body.

J. Jeffrey: questioned the sincerity of the administration and asked A. Rosenbaum to give an opinion regarding what the intentions of the administration might be.

A. Rosenbaum: noted that he could not speak to President Peters’ intentions but thought that there were both charitable and less charitable ways of looking at the administration’s actions.

A. Rosenbaum: offered two possibilities: One is, as we all know, data can be cut up and looked at in a number of different ways and so there are ways to look at data that makes them appear better than they are; there are ways to look at data that makes them appear worse than they are. My guess is that this data set can be examined in a number of different ways, just like any complicated data set can be and I think that there is concern that if it’s looked at one way it will
produce a result that is perhaps less favorable to the university than if it’s looked at another way and perhaps there is concern that the administration needs to manage the way the data is looked at. Another possibility is that by making it a broader issue, in other words by bringing Operating Staff and SPS into it, one possibility is that the faculty will not be able to complain quite as much because we’re in much better shape than some other groups on the campus are. So it may be a way of diluting the arguments that can be made for any disadvantages to the faculty. In other words, we may be able to say well, administrative raises are much better than faculty raises but faculty raises are so much better than what they’re getting down in the trenches so to speak.

W. Baker: inquired as to the options available to the Senate.

A. Rosenbaum: One is to say that we don’t want to participate in a commission; we want the data in order to go forward with our original plan and that the Senate has voted to ask the university to provide the data as requested.

A. Rosenbaum: stated his opinion that since the President will have to make any decisions regarding the findings of either the Senate or this committee, it might be an advantage to proceed as the President asks.

B. Lusk: expressed her concern that this is a very complex issue and it is possible that people might be hurt if we did not take more time in examining the various questions that might be relevant.

P. Henry: I can appreciate that too but I think the commission would have the right to say that this is a preliminary report; this is as far as we’ve been able to get to as of this spring and lay the groundwork for further consideration. I don’t think it has to be a complete rush to judgment but at least we can find out something. Further the joint committee that has been working on this has a grounding in this and that the members of those committees would be a natural pool for at least some of the members of the commission to be drawn.

C. Garcia: moved to amend the first point here to where the faculty members would be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate. Kowalski seconded.

R. Feurer: agreed to consider this a friendly amendment.

R. Feurer: advocated for selection of committee members from the membership of the Senate.

J. Kowalski: added that although I agree that if we delegate the ability to appoint faculty members of this commission to the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, that I’d like to let them have enough discretion if they feel there’s an individual who has special expertise in statistical analyses of something of that sort that would be helpful, they would be able to exercise it.

A. Rosenbaum: The amendment that we have on the table at this moment is that the faculty members be appointed by the Executive Committee in the name of the Faculty Senate.
The motion carried with a vote of 33 in favor, 7 opposed, 5 abstentions.

The next question is whether it should be restricted to the Faculty Senate or whether we should open it up to allow people both from the Faculty Senate and from the faculty at large to be nominated for this commission.

**P. Henry:** moved that the Executive Committee select the faculty members of the committee from the Faculty Senate. **W. Baker** was second.

**C. Garcia:** commented that the Executive Committee should be allowed to select whoever they thought would do the best job.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the issue of whether membership should be restricted to the members of the Senate. Concerns were raised regarding the appointment of people who might have their own agenda, concerns that non Senate members might not be responsive or accountable to the Senate, and whether committee members ought to be tenured, for their own protection.

**A. Rosenbaum** called for a vote on the motion that the committee members will be selected from within the Faculty Senate. If approved, only Faculty Senate members would be eligible to participate on the committee.

The motion was defeated 20 in favor, 26 opposed.

**P. Henry:** suggested that given the closeness of the vote, the majority of members be from the Faculty Senate.

**A. Rosenbaum:** stated that the Executive committee will select the members largely from the Faculty Senate and asked that this be done by informal agreement rather than by vote.

**D. Valentiner:** represented that the joint committee had a number of questions that could extend the work of this committee beyond March 19th and stated that he was concerned that these other important questions not be lost in the rush to finish this report by that date.

**A. Rosenbaum:** stated that the joint committee will continue to do much of the work on these additional questions and we’re not delegating all of the responsibilities over to this new committee but simply using this as a way of getting access to the data that we need and that we don’t seem to be able to get in other ways.

**W. Baker** called for a vote on the full motion.

**A. Rosenbaum:** The motion is that the Senate agrees to participate in this commission under the provisions that have been written and amended: faculty members on the committee will be selected by the Executive Committee of the Senate; the majority of members will come from the membership of the Senate, but members can also come from the faculty at large; only tenured
faculty will be selected; the committee will complete its work (on at least the initial question of raise equity across the divisions of the university) by March 19th.

The motion passed with 1 abstention.

E. Rules and Governance - Nancy Castle, Chair

F. Elections and Legislative Oversight - David Wade, Chair

Names were drawn by lot for the committees to evaluate the Executive Secretary of the University Council (A. Rosenbaum), and the Faculty and SPS Personnel Advisor (D. Wade)

The committee to evaluate the Executive Secretary:

D. Blatz (Senate), J. Bujarski (Senate), R. Butler (UC), D. Schneider (UC), M. Giunta (Student)

The committee to evaluate the Faculty and SPS Personnel Advisor:

M. Kostic, R. Blecksmith, R. Feurer

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

X. NEW BUSINESS

XI. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

XII. INFORMATION ITEMS

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

W. Baker made the motion, D. Valentiner was second. The motion passed unopposed.

The meeting adjourned at 4:31 p.m.