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 Web site under Faculty Senate / Agendas, Minutes & Transcripts.

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Abdel-Motaleb, Arado, Bateni, Blecksmith, Brandt, Calvo-Byrd, Cappell, Chen, Collins, Corwin, Cripe, Deng, Elish-Piper, Feurer, Finley, Gaillard, Goldblum, Gupta, Houze, Kolb, Kowalski, Lenczewski, Lin, Lopez, Martin, McFadden (for Downing), Mirman, Nicolosi, Pitney, Rosenbaum, Russo (for Mackie), Sagarin, Slotsve, Staikidis, Valentiner, Vandecreek, Willis, Zahay-Blatz


OTHERS PRESENT: Bryan, Griffin, Haliczer, Latham, Peritz (for Quick), Streb

OTHERS ABSENT: Freedman, Hansen, Prawitz, Quick, Small, Snow, Sunderlin, Waas

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 3:05 p.m.

II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A. Rosenbaum: The draft of the University Mission Statement has been added to the agenda under Items for Faculty Senate Consideration.

R. Lopez: made the motion. A. Rosenbaum: was second.

The agenda was approved with the addition of the walk-in item and without dissent or abstention.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 25, 2012 FS MEETING
(distributed electronically)

S. Willis: made the motion. D. Valentiner: was second.
The minutes were approved as written without dissent or abstention.

IV. PRESIDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Rosenbaum: One item that I do want to call to your attention is a report that was sent out by the president. It was a plan that was proposed by two professors at the University of Illinois and was a proposal for reforming the pension system that would serve as an alternative to Senate Bill 512. This is a very interesting proposal in that it seems to have been well thought out and addresses some of the most significant concerns that we as faculty members have with respect to pension reform. Specifically, it sought to guarantee a secure retirement package for employees, that the package be financially sustainable, that it be constitutional, and that the package be one that would be attractive to new faculty recruits. There are a lot of concerns that the Tier 2 plan that was put in place for new faculty last January 1 is not a very attractive retirement plan. I would really strongly recommend that you read through it. It does involve some sacrifice, such as an increase in the contributions by employees. However, the increase is three percent as opposed to Senate Bill 512 which is eight percent. It also includes contributions by the university, itself, and that would have impact on the university’s budget. It is a plan, though, that seems to share the responsibility among a number of different groups rather than placing it all on retirees and rather than placing it all on the state. It also protects the existing benefits that have been accrued by employees which is very important to us. I think many of us were concerned that whatever pension reform was put into place, not be retroactive and not affect accrued benefits by faculty members. I’ve read through it a couple of times and it seems like a reasonable compromise which means it will probably be completely unacceptable to the legislators. My reading of this is that this is substantially better than SB512. Pension reform is going to become very active in the next couple of weeks. I think I told you last time that Steve Cunningham is willing to come in and talk to us as soon as there is anything substantive to talk to us about and we will be able to ask questions of him.

S. Willis: I was just wondering if you know whether any legislator has any intention of actually submitting this or some modification of it as a bill.

A. Rosenbaum: I don’t know the answer to that. President Peters, when he put this out, didn’t indicate that it had traction with any particular legislators either so I don’t know; it may be too soon for that.

J. Kowalski: I read through it briefly and I will go back to it; but my first impression was consistent with your own in that it certainly seemed that it was making a good attempt to recognize the need for reform, but to make those reforms more equitable and that they were not nearly as harsh as the Senate Bill 512 would be. So it certainly bears everybody taking a close look at it. It may be something that people might want to contact legislators about, not as official representatives of NIU, but as private citizens and let them know about it.

A. Rosenbaum: I think another thing that I liked is that this is a proposal that is put forward by two professors at the University of Illinois so, if the legislature does pay attention to this, they will actually be paying attention to some of the expertise that we have at the universities. So it’s
nice to see some expertise being brought to bear on the problem and it’s a very thoughtful piece of work that acknowledges what some of the real problems are.

The next item is that, as far as I know, there have been no problems with the proposed increments for this year. So those seem to be going forward. Various departments have been asked to submit paperwork that indicates that those raises are most likely going to happen provided that the Board of Trustees gives its approval. I haven’t heard of any obstructions to that plan so that seems to be good news right now and we’ll have to wait until the Board of Trustees meeting in March before we have a final word.

The last item is that meetings have been going on around this accreditation review. Personally, I am on the Mission Statement Committee and we have now generated a University Mission Statement draft. Many of you have been asked to be on other committees and I think it’s important that we have faculty representation on all of these various committees. Thank you all for participating those of you who are involved in those committees.

Our Raise Equity Committee met on Friday. We are moving along toward the spot where we hopefully will have something to present to the senate. I think I mentioned last time, we have to get permission from the committee and the president, or at least support for bringing forward the report and presenting it in public. Right now it’s in draft format and everyone has been asked to maintain the confidentiality of that while it’s still in draft form. But we’re hopeful that we’ll be able to bring this to the senate at the next meeting or the one after it at the latest.

V. ITEMS FOR FACULTY SENATE CONSIDERATION

A. Draft of revised University Mission Statement – walk-in

A. Rosenbaum: The next item is the draft of the revised University Mission Statement and in the paper that was sent out with the agenda, I tried to give you a little bit of information about the committee, about the previous mission statement, the charge to the committee from the Board of Trustees and from Provost Alden. It was a pretty diverse committee. This is being sent around and the purpose is for people to weigh in on the mission statement. My instructions are to have a discussion with you about this and to bring your suggestions, comments, and criticisms back to the committee so they can be incorporated or at least considered by the committee.

J. Kowalski: This is just a comment, having read this I see nothing to object to particularly, but as I read through the list of bullet points and the set of institutional values, there is certainly a part of me that would like to see something perhaps added to the third one where, in addition to simply referring to a broad spectrum of learners to be competitive in a rapidly changing workforce, we might perhaps add “and contributing members to a democratic society.”

A. Rosenbaum: Okay, one of the things the committee tried to consider in being asked to update the mission statement, was what might have changed since 2003, which is the last time the mission statement was revised. And we thought that some of the things that had changed were the use of technology in education. We thought that the university is trying to point more toward distant learning or distributed learning, whichever phrase you like, and so we tried to get in the
idea that we want this to be available to people who are not necessarily resident students on the campus but rather we wanted to begin making our services and our product available to people in the workforce who are trying to get an advanced degree, get a masters, get an M.B.A. and who are working during the day and maybe living in Chicago or Springfield. So those were some of the key things and we tried to capture that in this broad spectrum of learning.

J. Kowalski: “Contributing members to a democratic society” or words to that affect.

A. Rosenbaum: There was a question about citizenship and we, at one point, had the term, “citizen,” in there as a way of sort of getting at this sort of obligation to one’s fellow citizens.

I. Abdel-Motaleb: I think when you mention that we would like to be “a premier institution in the Midwest,” you are limiting yourself. Make it “in the world.” Why “the Midwest”? This is a mission. I mean this is a goal – to be the best in the world.

A. Rosenbaum: We didn’t want to overshoot our abilities and keep in mind here that one of the main purposes of this mission statement is to guide the HLC in its accreditation review. They are going to look at what we say and they are going to evaluate us in terms of how well we’ve fulfilled our mission. I think we wanted to aim a little bit lower so it might be easier for them to say, “Yes you’ve clearly established yourselves as the premier student-centered research intensive university in the Midwest, or not.” “In the world” might be a little harder for us to demonstrate. But it’s nice to aim high.

I. Abdel-Motaleb: But using the same logic, make it “in DeKalb” for example, “the best institution in Dekalb.”

A. Rosenbaum: Well, we didn’t want to aim too low; we tried to sort of aim in the middle ground.

D. Zahay-Blatz: I know how much work you all put into this. It’s so difficult to put a mission statement together, and the real problem is always making it sound unique because it’s very easy to make it very generic so it doesn’t sound like your institution. This to me seems very generic. It doesn’t speak to what NIU is all about.

A. Rosenbaum: Well, what would you want to add to make it more descriptive of NIU?

D. Zahay-Blatz: Well, we say just in our college, “where the classroom meets the business world.” I think we really have this uniqueness of giving a solid academic education, but also preparing students for the business world, in our case, or to be productive members in a democratic society to kind of put it all together.

A. Rozenbaum: Well, we actually thought about that quite a bit and one of the things we did is we looked up the mission statements of several other universities, and it’s pretty hard to tell them apart. Every university has a relatively similar mission, so it’s difficult to be unique. Even in the example you gave, I would be surprised if there weren’t any other that doesn’t have sort of that same sort of mission. It was really very difficult to find anything that was absolutely unique to
NIU and so what we tried to focus on is this idea of the “premier student-centered research-focused public university” because that was the Vision 2020 statement and one of the things that we were asked to do was to be responsive to both the Vision 2020 statement and also to the Great Journey Strategic Plan. It actually is pretty unusual to find universities that are both student-centered and research intensive. Those two things don’t go together very frequently. Most research intensive universities have a faculty that buys out of most of their teaching requirements, if they can.

D. Goldblum: That was a marketing perspective, now a geography perspective. The final bullet point where you have – you start with “regional, national and global,” I was also interested in maybe putting “local” in there. We have a lot of students who do internships and student teaching immediately in DeKalb.

A. Rosenbaum: Okay so you don’t think local is captured by regional?

D. Goldblum: I don’t think so.

A. Rosenbaum: Okay, so add “local” to “local, regional, national and global.”

S. Willis: Okay, well just one quick response that I had to the business perspective, I think the two things that contribute to making us unique are location and value. I think we are unique in being positioned where we are in the general Chicago area and also from, now this is a physics perspective I guess, close to two major national laboratories and being a public university with the associated costs that you don’t get say at Northwestern or the University of Chicago.

This bullet list says that it’s a list of values and I’m wondering if there is a better way to describe what that list is. It doesn’t really strike me as being a list of values. Although I don’t have an alternative to propose right off the top of my head. But it seems that it ought to be sort of aspirational and so I’m looking in particular at the next-to-last one where it says “the use of current technologies” which strikes me as being not particularly aspirational. So perhaps we could say something like we have more ambition than to be just sort of barely keeping up with technology.

A. Rosenbaum: We originally started out with the idea of a vision statement separate from a mission statement, with the vision statement being aspirational and the mission statement being more what we actually do. We ended up putting them together in such a way that the first part of it is more aspirational, that first paragraph, whereas the rest of it is more mission oriented. The idea of that use of current technologies, the way it’s aspirational is the suggestion that we will keep current on technology so we will try to always maintain the most up-to-date current technologies to be used in our pursuit of our research teaching and service missions. I agree with you that maybe the word, “values,” is wrong. We were trying to say that we value these items. Not so much that they are values in a traditional sense but if someone has a better word, that would be good.

S. Willis: It just seems like there might be a better word than “current.”
A. Rosenbaum: Do you have a suggestion?

S. Willis: I was going to say “cutting edge” although that’s kind of tacky.

A. Rosenbaum: We tried to avoid tacky.

S. Willis: “Innovative” somebody said. I don’t know; something that sounds like we’re on the leading edge instead of just keeping up.

A. Rosenbaum: “Emerging”? Is that what someone said? Okay, so we can note that we want a better word than “current.”

S. Willis: Or “the most current technologies.”

A. Gupta: I’ll just share my opinion. I respect the previous comment adding “local,” but my concern is the very fact that our university name is Northern Illinois so we should start with “regional” as opposed to “local.” “Regional” always encompasses “local” and probably – I personally feel “local” may not add much of value to this mission.

R. Lopez: Okay, in looking at bullet four, I see the word, “transmission,” which has sort of a transmitting, handing down this scholarship and artistic expression, expansion and application, and I’m wondering if we shouldn’t use something more connected with actual learning like “transformation” or “transforming” or something like that. The “transmitting” just has this sense of handing it over.

D. Valentiner: When I think about part of the uniqueness of NIU, it’s that NIU is a large public institution in the state but, unlike other large public institutions, I think that we are trying to provide a high quality education and also training to people who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. So to me it seems as though that’s part of the identity of NIU. I think that’s part of how maybe state legislators have seen us and have rewarded us and that’s kind of a value that we have to the state. And so, given that that’s part of our identity and part of how we’re valued, it seems that could be part of what our mission is, that we should own this thing that we do better than everyone else.

A. Rosenbaum: I think that you are right and that is one of the things that the committee was trying to work into this and I think we tried to work it in with this community of diverse people but maybe we’re not stating it as explicitly as we should.

D. Valentiner: It didn’t come through for me that that’s a big part of what we are about and I think that would set us apart and that would make this, I mean that is part of who we are and that’s part of what we do.

R. Feurer: It strikes me, Alan, what you said is not in here. The critical thing about NIU is actually not here – that our courses are faculty taught. If that is, indeed, what makes us unique that we are doing that, it ought to be here. And I say that because, if we as a faculty want to make an impact on this statement, we ought to really do everything we can to preserve that given what
we know which is that the numbers of faculty are going down and the numbers of administrators are going up. So if we want, I think this is an opportunity for us to say something about that. If we can implant that in the mission statement maybe when it comes time for faculty positions we have more leverage. I would really like to see something about critical thinking – that we imbue critical thinking in our students. I don’t see it in here. But we have to equip our students not just to be able get jobs but to be able to be contributing members of democratic society. I like that, but I think “critical thinking members of society.” I know that is clumsy; I don’t want to make the statement too clumsy, but I really feel that that classic aspect of any university mission is in peril and so I would really argue for that being in there.

A. Rosenbaum: Okay again, I am going to bring all of these comments back to the committee. I’m just trying to give you an idea of how the committee thought about some of this material. One of the things that we were very concerned about is that, since this is going to be used to evaluate us in terms of our accreditation, that we did not want to put in things that were not things that we would score highly on. For example, we would have to know how many of our courses or what percentage of our courses are actually taught by full-time faculty members as opposed to adjuncts or graduate students, etc. We tried to get this idea of connections between faculty and students into this engaged learning bullet, so we wanted to make it clear that we value engaged learning and getting students involved in research early in their careers and closer contact between faculty and students. So we tried to capture that in this engaged learning item.

B. May: Bullet point 4, sorry to prolong, but “transmission,” then “expansion,” then “application,” wouldn’t you transmit after you expand?

A. Rosenbaum: I imagine.

B. May: Do you really expand or do you invent or acquire?

B. May: I’m not sure I like knowledge that’s expanded as opposed to invented or acquired. The notion of a research focus suggests making new knowledge if such a thing is possible. I guess I would just prefer something like “acquisition” or “invention” as opposed to “expansion.”

A. Rosenbaum: “Creation.”

D. May: Yeah, something like that.

A. Rosenbaum: “Creation of new knowledge.” I will bring them back to the committee and again, this is also being vetted by the other groups, many other groups, not just the three employee groups. There are going to be a lot of different people bringing input into this and so we will keep you posted on how this evolves. It’s going to happen quickly because this has to go to the Board of Trustees by the March 1 meeting so you’re not going to have to wait very long to find out what happens to this one, but thank you for your comments.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

VII. REPORTS FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND COUNCILS
A. FAC to IBHE – Earl Hansen – no report

B. Student Association – Austin Quick, Speaker – report – Pages 3-4

A. Rosenbaum: Next report, we have a report from our Student Association. Austin quick is not here; we are going to call on Seth Peritz, is that correct, to give us the Student Association report.

S. Peritz: This last meeting we confirmed one of the new Supreme Court justices, George Gomez. There was also another Supreme Court justice confirmed last meeting, which was on Sunday and I cannot for the life of me remember her name. Both of them are members of the College of Law program right now and we were excited to put in two members who seemed very active in the community and who were really interested in making a difference on campus. We allocated $5,000 to the NIU men’s rugby team for a national tournament that they are participating in.

We also confirmed Jasmine Harvell as an election commissioner for the S.A. spring elections which are going to be held in March. We are working on setting up a board to help Jasmine as well from the senate. From the executive branch, we are preparing the students once again for the March elections. We are working on getting tickets together for them to run and we are looking forward to a tough race.

The student satisfaction project just got rolled out today. We started handing out surveys in the Student Association office, the idea being that, with the help of the students’ views, we can improve some of these services that we feel a lot of the students don’t like.

We’re also going back to a program that has been done in the past that we haven’t been doing recently, which is the auditing of S.A.-funded organizations. This is not just limited to the organizations themselves, we are also auditing the S.A., itself, Campus Activities Board, I believe ice hockey team and I don’t remember the list off the top of my head.

The Campus Parking Committee is working to improve lighting and security in the parking lots with the issues we’ve been having with that of late.

C. BOT Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee – Kerry Freedman and Andy Small – report – Pages 5-7

A. Rosenbaum: Next we have our Board of Trustees subcommittee meetings. The subcommittee meetings took place on February 2. I think neither Kerry nor Andy are here. The one thing I do know about that meeting was that they approved all of the sabbatical leave requests that were put before them. Those will have to go to the full board for approval. Several faculty members presented reports on what they did on their sabbatical leaves, which is always a highlight for the Board of Trustees. Other than that, you have the committee report on pages 5 through 7.

D. BOT Finance, Facilities, and Operations Committee – Alan Rosenbaum and Greg Waas – report – Page 8
A. Rosenbaum: The Finance, Facilities and Operations Committee; I attended that one. The major things that were done at that committee, as you can see in the report, were the approval of the student fee recommendations. The student fees will be increased on average of about 2.5 percent. The major contributor to this seems to be the health insurance premiums which have gone up dramatically, I think 17.5 percent this year. This is a substantial savings from the 40 to 60 percent increases that most insurance companies were asking for. So this is quite a good bargain I think for the students. The student health insurance costs are somewhere in the vicinity of $850 or $900 a year. They get 12-month coverage for that. The students were involved in all of these fee increase discussions and approved the fee increases. The 2013 room and board rates also will increase but only by about 1.5 percent which is quite modest as well. There was no increase in the board rates. There is a 1.5 percent increase in the room rates and this has to do with operating costs, energy costs, contractual services, etc. The mass transit contract was approved. The university does about 30 million copies a year. The FFO subcommittee approved the copier contract for the coming year as well as the purchase of copying paper and at that point President Peters noted that we do about 30 million copies a year which he thinks is way too much and he seems to feel that, over the next couple of years, the university should be moving much more towards tablet computing.

E. BOT Legislation, Audit, and External Affairs Committee – Todd Latham and Rosita Lopez – report – Page 9

A. Rosenbaum: Legislation, Audit and External Affairs; we have both Todd and Rosita. Rosita are you going to give the report?

R. Lopez: So, basically, the meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Strauss as the committee chair, Iosco, was not able to attend the meeting. Basically, Trustee Strauss shared the highlights of Quinn’s State of the State speech, urged us to read in detail this address and didn’t share too much specific information. But it was the public pension reform issues that he talked about most. Also, Lori Clark shared a little bit with us on what’s happening as far as the Medicaid and pension reform, the revocation of general assembly scholarships and the revocation of state employee dependent tuition waivers. President Peters shared his opposition to eliminating this employee benefit. Then Brad Hoey from communications and marketing shared the importance of sharing our stories, resources, talents, skills around the university to be used in branding and marketing initiatives at NIU. He basically is stressing that we share the good things around us so that those can get publicized.

A. Rosenbaum: The next Board of Trustees meeting will be March 1 and so, at our next meeting, we’ll have a report on the Board of Trustees meeting which means we’ll say all the same things we just said except they will be official.

F. BOT – Alan Rosenbaum – no report

VIII. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Faculty Rights and Responsibilities – Rosemary Feurer, Chair – no report
B. Academic Affairs – Charles Cappell, Chair – no report

C. Economic Status of the Profession – Michael Kolb, Chair – no report

D. Rules and Governance – Gretchen Bisplinghoff, Chair – no report

E. Resources, Space and Budgets – David Goldblum, Liaison/Spokesperson – report – Page 10

D. Goldblum: We had a short meeting last week and this report reads like previous reports. You'll be surprised that NIU is still owed about $55 million by the state. We received about $38 million for this fiscal year. They did pay us all of last year’s commitments by the end of 2011. The MAP funding that we hadn’t received last semester did arrive and we are now paid in full for the fall by the state. We are still waiting for the spring payment from the state. We had a discussion about some of the uncertainties regarding the state budget, NIU’s budget, with Dr. Williams and he said there are too many proposals up in the air about reforming pensions and funding the university to really make any conclusive statements at this point. But I guess we are waiting to see what the governor will say when he talks about the state budget. He also highlighted some of the capital projects. We all know Cole Hall is now open. The first year residence hall is scheduled to open in August and he did say that we are going to see some more performance contracts, quite a few more roofs, perhaps some electrical projects and steam projects using the performance contract mechanism they’ve been using in the past.

F. Elections and Legislative Oversight – Therese Arado, Chair – no report

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

X. NEW BUSINESS

1. Proposed change to NIU Faculty Senate Bylaws, Article 4, Operating Procedures of the Faculty Senate – FIRST READING – Pages 11-12

A. Rosenbaum: We have two items of new business that are relatively straight forward. The first one is very simply a housekeeping measure. The order of the agenda, is specified in both the university bylaws and the Faculty Senate bylaws. The University Council is working on changing the University Council agenda. We want to change the Faculty Senate bylaws to bring the agenda items in line with what we are currently doing. This requires two readings because it is a bylaw change so we are presenting it today and will vote on it at our next meeting. So, if anyone has any questions about it or problems with it, now is the time to raise those issues and we can certainly consider changing them before we vote on it next time. Okay, that was our first reading. I hope you enjoyed it. If you didn’t read it, you might want to just look at it between now and next month.
C. Cappell: I do have a ticky-tacky comment. In the advisory committees, the Student Association report is always listed in the agenda. Are they an official advisory committee of the senate?

A. Rosenbaum: They are not an official advisory committee of the senate. We are doing it experimentally this year and we had not yet decided whether the experiment was a success or not. We can continue to keep them on there as they are now, as an advisory committee without necessarily changing the bylaws to include them. I would say that this is still a work in progress.

2. Faculty and SPS Personnel Advisor – [position announcement] and NIU Bylaws, Article 9 – Pages 13-15

XI. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

XII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Minutes, Academic Planning Council
B. Minutes, Admissions Policies and Academic Standards Committee
C. Minutes, Athletic Board
D. Minutes, Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee
E. Minutes, Committee on Advanced Professional Certification in Education
F. Minutes, Committee on the Improvement of Undergraduate Education
G. Minutes, Committee on Initial Teacher Certification
H. Minutes, Committee on the Undergraduate Academic Experience
I. Minutes, Committee on the Undergraduate Curriculum
J. Minutes, General Education Committee
K. Minutes, Honors Committee
L. Minutes, Operating Staff Council
M. Minutes, Supportive Professional Staff Council
N. Minutes, Undergraduate Coordinating Council
O. Minutes, University Assessment Panel
P. Minutes, University Benefits Committee
Q. 2011-2012 Meeting Schedule

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

D. Valentiner made the motion. R. Lopez was second.

Meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.