

Minutes of the
NIU Board of Trustees
**ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, STUDENT AFFAIRS
AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**
June 4, 2009

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Robert Boey at 8:35 a.m. in the Board of Trustees Room, 315 Altgeld Hall. Recording Secretary Sharon Banks-Wilkins conducted a roll call of Trustees. Members present were Trustee Marc Strauss, Student Trustee DuJuan Smith, Committee Vice Chair Boey and BOT Chair Cherilyn Murer. Not present was Committee Chair Barbara Giorgi Vella. Also present were Committee Liaison Provost Raymond Alden, III and Board Parliamentarian Kenneth Davidson. With a quorum present, the meeting proceeded.

VERIFICATION OF APPROPRIATE NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Confirmation of Open Meetings Act public notice compliance was provided by Board Parliamentarian Ken Davidson.

MEETING AGENDA APPROVAL

Trustee Strauss made a motion to approve the meeting agenda as amended. Student Trustee Smith seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Trustee Strauss and seconded by Student Trustee Smith to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2009 Board Meeting. The motion was approved.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

I want to welcome everyone today, Vice Chair Boey said, and before I begin, I want to let you know that President Peters could not be with us today because he was called away on university business.

On today's agenda under University Reports, we have six items being presented for action and two information items. The June meeting of this committee is of particular importance for the faculty. This is the time of the year that the Board acts on recommendations for faculty tenure and promotion. Our first item concerns the recommendations for faculty promotions, tenure, and promotions with tenure for the 2009 and 2010 Academic Year. Our other action items include a request for approval of the appointment of the Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts; a request for approval of a new research and public service center; two programmatic issues on the agenda for today: a request for a new degree program in Applied Management and a request for a new specialization in Geoscience Education; and a request to delete a unit within the College of Health and Human Sciences. A follow-up on the outcomes of sabbatical leaves and a presentation focusing on the first-year writing composition program will be presented to the committee for information.

Vice Chair Boey recognized representatives of the University Advisory Committee, Dr. Joseph "Buck" Stephen and Dr. Ferald Bryan. Dr. Bryan thanked the committee and the Board for their continued support of the tenure and promotion process. It is a very rigorous but fair process here at Northern, he said, but it is also vital to the health of the university and to academic freedom.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chair asked Board Parliamentarian Kenneth Davidson if any members of the public had registered a written request to address the Board in accordance with state law and Board of Trustees Bylaws. Mr. Davidson noted that he had received no timely requests to address this meeting.

UNIVERSITY REPORTS

Agenda Item 7.a. – Recommendations for Faculty Promotions, Tenure, and Promotions with Tenure for 2009-2010 Academic Year

As you know, Provost Alden said, our recommendations for faculty promotions, tenure, and promotions with tenure involve a very rigorous process. It is a model of shared governance that has administrative and faculty input at the department, college and university levels. We are very proud to bring forward educators and scholars who are involved in university and national service as well as involving students in their research and service agendas. This year, 42 faculty from 34 different departments are being presented for tenure and/or promotion. Of these individuals, 25 are recommended for promotion from assistant to associate professor with tenure, three associate professors are recommended for tenure only, and 14 are recommended for promotion from associate to full professor.

In looking at the list of the professors who are going from associate to professor and assistant to associate, Trustee Murer commented, what strikes me is how diversified that list is. It is exceptional, from law to nursing to anthropology, engineering, physics and English. Congratulations to everyone. This is a wonderful distribution and example of excellence in academics, which is representative of our university.

To the outside world, Vice Chair Boey said, the least understood two university terms probably are tenure and sabbatical. They do not understand the rigorous system and process we have to achieve these goals. I sometimes wish that somehow we could have a simple one-page description on what it is like to be given tenure and what it is like to take sabbatical, so that the media can run it and make it understood, at least to the local community. It is not a paid holiday. I know that is hard to come by, but maybe you can give some thought to that.

Vice Chair Boey asked for a motion to approve the university's recommendations for faculty promotions, tenure, and promotions with tenure for the 2009-2010 Academic Year. Trustee Murer so moved, seconded by Trustee Strauss. The motion was approved with three yes votes and the Student Trustee abstaining.

Agenda Item 7.b. – Appointment of the Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts

We had a national search last year for a Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts, Dr. Alden stated. It was very rigorous, and we had excellence candidates. Professor Richard Holly rose to the surface as the candidate of choice. Professor Holly holds a master of music degree from East Carolina University and a Bachelor of Music degree from Crane School of Music at SUNY. His degrees are in the field of percussion performance, and he has had a very productive career primarily at NIU. He has been the School of Music's coordinator for undergraduate admissions, coordinator for graduate studies and assistant director. He has also been associate dean of the college for a number of years, and interim dean for the past year. He has published a number of scholarly works, including one that is rapidly becoming a seminal textbook in the field. He has a number of performances and invited appearances around the country and around the world. He has been the President of the Percussive Arts Society, the world's largest professional association for percussionists, and is the largest single orchestral instrument organization in the country. Vice Chair Boey recognized Professor Holly and asked him to say a few words.

I would like to thank the entire Board of Trustees for their very strong support through this process, Professor Holly said. As anyone who has gone through an administrative search knows, it takes several months and is indeed quite rigorous. But I greatly appreciate that rigor because the most important thing is that the College of Visual and Performing Arts continues to move forward, and I am extremely proud to be chosen as the nominee here. I am deeply honored and very excited. Thank you. Chair Boey offered congratulations to Professor Holly from the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee.

The Chair asked for a motion to approve the appointment of Professor Richard Holly as Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts. Trustee Strauss so moved, seconded by Trustee Murer. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 7.c. – Request for a New Research and Public Service Centers

All new permanent research centers require Board of Trustees approval as well as IBHE approval, Provost Alden said. These particular centers represent multidepartment, multicollge efforts. All three have had temporary approval status through the IBHE for up to five years, which is the maximum. They all are going concerns, largely self-supporting and largely supporting either the research and/or service missions of the university. The first is the Institute for Nanoscience, Engineering and Technology (InSET). This center is a multicollge effort supporting nanoscience research and educational efforts. Nanoscience is a hot topic in the country in pursuing practical applications for new materials on the nanoscale and learning to usefully apply them in various types of structures, manufacturing processes and products. The goals of this center are to facilitate the curricular enhancements. As you know, we have specializations in two doctoral programs. Also, the departments of biological sciences, chemistry and biochemistry, computer science, industrial and systems engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, mathematical sciences and physics are all involved in this particular center to increase the research synergy among the different departments. There is a great future for this type of center, particularly because of its affiliation with Argonne. Argonne has an internationally known focus on nanoscience. With the stimulus bill, particularly, they have received a lot of support for developing nanoscience initiatives. NIU has a number of faculty who have joint appointments with Argonne, and we look forward to a half dozen additional faculty being jointly hired by NIU and Argonne as we pursue initiatives through this center.

Particularly, with respect to InSET, Trustee Strauss said, the interdisciplinary nature of this and the cross-college cooperation that allows this sort of activity to go on is commendable. I am happy to see it as an example and hope we will see more of these centers where they are appropriate.

It has been well known that this is a particular area of interest and sensitivity to me, Trustee Murer said, not only as it relates to InSET, but all other research areas as well, because I truly believe that research is the key portal to academic excellence. As we continue to pioneer through new frontiers, as we do in research, that will reflect well on Northern Illinois University. For all of the deans and faculty who have been involved in continuing to reinforce this area, it is very important, especially now. We are at a different juncture in our society, and we are rather open-minded to finding solutions in our country. The more we can do in the reinforcement of research and research excellence will only be beneficial to our university.

When nanoscience first came on the scene five or more years ago, Vice Chair Boey said, there was a flurry of discussion on it. Wall Street picked it up and all sorts of good stock came from different companies, and then it disappeared. So nanoscience is an ongoing, developing science that is slowly coming back again.

Next is the NIU Institute for Neutron Therapy, Provost Alden said. We currently have an institute located at FermiLab doing cancer treatment through the use of very innovative technology. It is one of only two centers in the world that does this kind of therapy. Its mission is to disseminate information on the effectiveness and application of neutron therapy on the treatment of certain cancers and to advise patients on all radiation treatment options as well as actually provide treatment to a select group who would particularly benefit from neutron radiation. Obviously, as part of this, we are looking at ways to optimize treatment protocols and other related research on which genetic components are responding particularly well to neutron and other forms of radiation. When the proton center is developed, it will be directly across from FermiLab, so this would give us a unique combination of therapies that would allow us to begin to look at which options or combinations of these kinds of cancer therapies are most effective for individual patients for certain types of cancer.

The Regional Development Institute is designed to stimulate economic development, Provost Alden said. It has a number of different components. It serves to coordinate many of NIU's activities with various

regional organizations, government, educational associations, not-for-profits, as well as other regional groups, and to increase the inter- and intra- institutional collaborations on regional issues. Again, this is a going concern supported by external grant funding.

Chair Boey asked for a motion to approve the requests for three new research and public service centers: the Institute for Nanoscience, Engineering and Technology (InSET); the NIU Institute for Neutron Therapy; and the Regional Development Institute. Trustee Murer so moved, seconded by Trustee Strauss. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 7.d. – Request for a New Degree Program

This request for a new degree program has been truly a monumental effort on behalf of a number of people in Academic Affairs as well as multiple departments and colleges. It originally began to address an issue in which we thought Harper College was interested. Unfortunately, they decided to try and seek four-year status for a program they were proposing. However, we found that there was a lot of interest on this approach among the other community colleges. It is designed to serve a population that is really not well-served in the region, and that is people with Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degrees in certain areas. In this case, the areas are computer science and information technology or public safety. We have worked diligently with a number of faculty members and the deans to create a rigorous program that provides an articulation and degree completion option for these students and will also allow them to go on to advanced degrees. One of the problems with the Harper approach is they wanted a Baccalaureate of Applied Sciences (B.A.S.). The B.A.S. nationwide is typically considered a terminal degree. People with that degree are not considered for most graduate programs around the country. We wanted a B.S. degree that had the full complement of general education and management courses, as well as the emphasis area. We see this as serving not only these two emphases but expanding it to any number of other areas of community colleges. Because they would be emphasis areas within a degree, they could be approved at the Board level rather than having to wait for the extended period often associated with IBHE approval. At least ten community colleges are interested in this sort of approach, so we see this expanding tremendously in the future to serving a large number of people in our region. This is a very exciting program that can be expanded to a number of areas fairly quickly and can serve various populations that are not district specific throughout the regions.

There is such a valuable role for a community college, Trustee Murer said, and to see it morph into a four-year college loses the distinction. I have been very proud that the university, its President and its Provost, in particular, have extended themselves to not only Harper College but all the other community colleges within our region to see how we can work collaboratively. As a layperson, I look to California and think they have a long history of understanding the appropriate role of a two-year college, two-year degree and a four-year college and then on to graduate school. I hope we continue that tradition here in Illinois and that NIU continues to be very vociferous in making sure that those opportunities remain available to students in our region.

In reply to a query from Trustee Murer, Dr. Alden stated that the degree is entirely cross-discipline. It will be coordinated out of the Provost's office, much like the M.S.T. and the M.A.T. at the graduate level. But it will also have a curricular advisory committee made up of people from the business and the emphasis areas. We hope this is an umbrella under which a number of programs will find a home. The delivery of this program is going to occur largely off campus through a number of different options, Provost Alden replied to a query from Trustee Strauss. Some courses could be on the community college campuses, in NIU's satellite centers, by teleconferencing, online or, what we have found very effective, the hybrid option where there are some face-to-face sessions as well as online course delivery. NIU faculty will be used in some of the specialized areas, the emphasis areas that are technologically oriented. The university also may work with some of the professional organizations for adjunct, but it is largely going to be NIU faculty. Even though it will be a different population, that educational experience certainly will be as rigorous as our on-campus programs.

This is a wonderful program, Vice Chair Boey said, and I hope it goes a long way to mute some of those desires on the part of the two-year community colleges to give four-year degrees. As some of the Trustees have articulated to some of the senators in Springfield, this Harper bill makes no sense. The missions of two-year and four-year institutions are so different, how can you put it all under one roof, not

to mention the difficulty of funding. However, this is a perfect solution to try to meet the needs of some of those two-year institutions.

Not only have we worked on this very diligently in Academic Affairs, Dr. Alden said, but President Peters, Senior Vice President Eddie Williams, Vice President Anne Kaplan and I have been working on new business models to make sure that this is offered at the same cost that is typical for our traditional students on campus as well as off campus, and still have support. We hope to make this a largely self-supporting program where perhaps even a single charge will be made rather than splitting it into tuition and fees. We are looking at a different business model to make this as seamless and self-supporting as possible, yet at the same relative rates as other student charges.

As we look to each of these agenda items and look at them as business items, Trustee Murer said, what we have just said in the last ten minutes and the two motions we have accepted are monumental to our university. We talked about enhancement of research, and now we are talking about cross-disciplinary educational models that also look to new business models. As a Trustee on the Academic Affairs Committee, and I am sure our fellow Trustees feel the same, this is wonderful and we need to continue to do this. We cannot and will not survive if status quo is our model. Thinking outside the box is the only way. We have two choices: progress or regress. What we have heard this morning with these two agenda items is that there is full participation, not just from administration, but also from faculty, our dual governance and our deans saying this is the direction of the university. So, on behalf of this committee and our Board, I personally am delighted to see NIU being aggressive and innovative. Congratulations to everyone who has put forth a great effort in doing what we need to do to make NIU a great university, not just today, but for future years.

In reply to a query from Vice Chair Boey, Dr. Anne Kaplan stated that the programs would most likely be offered as evening programs, because the off-campus student population is heavily a workforce-oriented population. Generally, we tend to start on the assumption that we are talking about evening and late afternoons. We have been careful about saying too much about this degree until its approval. But to the extent that we have been able to talk about it with most of the community colleges in the region, the response has been very enthusiastic, so I have great hopes for it.

Each time I visit any of those facilities, I think it is a great location and a beautiful building, Vice Chair Boey said, why not use it for something like this applied science management program. It is a wonderful way for a person to get a four-year degree in his/her general community.

Vice Chair Boey asked for a motion to approve the request for a new degree program, the B.S. in Applied Management. Trustee Strauss so moved, seconded by Student Trustee Smith. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 7.e. – Requests for a New Specialization

This request for a new Specialization in Geoscience Education is a continuing series of requests we have had for stem content initiatives for teachers, the Provost said. This includes those who may be teaching in STEM areas, but do not have sufficient content in their background. This would allow a teaching endorsement in earth and space science, and would continue the program we already have begun in engineering and mathematical sciences, and it probably will go to other STEM areas in the future. It will serve a clear need both statewide and national. No new resources will be required since most, if not all, of the courses are already available. Vice Chair Boey asked for a motion to approve the request for a new Specialization in Geoscience Education. Trustee Strauss so moved, seconded by Student Trustee Smith. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 7.f. – Requests to Delete an Administrative, Research, Service or Other Unit

The next item to delete an administrative, research or service unit involves the Office of Health Promotion. This program was very active during the 1980's and 1990's to promote and to integrate various healthcare and health promotion issues. It was transferred from the College of Education to the College of Health and Human Sciences, and its director departed in late 1990's. Some evolutionary things have occurred in the college, both in terms of reorganization of the college units and in the development of the Family Health and Wellness Center, and the office has become obsolete.

It is nice once in a while to have things presented to us for deletion, Trustee Murer said, especially since they usually come to us to add. It is a good thing to go back and look at the efficacy and the efficiencies of various programs and, when they are not at optimal levels, be replaced by something better. In reply to a query from Trustee Strauss, Dean Richmond stated that there were no people currently attached to this unit. The Office of Health Promotion was located in the dean's office under the direction of a Director of Outreach. These same tasks are being performed in the schools with the reorganization of the college and with the Family Health and Wellness Center. All of this is transitioned and that Director of Outreach is retiring, so this made it an even more appropriate time to move this recommendation.

Vice Chair Boey asked for a motion to approve the request to delete the Office of Health Promotion. Trustee Murer so moved, seconded by Trustee Strauss. The motion was approved.

Agenda Item 7.g. – Follow-Up on the Outcomes of Sabbatical Leaves

At the last meeting, Provost Alden said, in addition to the typical sabbatical presentations that we make in the March meeting every year, Chair Murer made a request that we produce a report to summarize all of the productivity of faculty and staff who have taken sabbaticals. The Dean's Council had an ad hoc work group set up to develop a process. The Provost asked Vice Provost Virginia Cassidy to briefly describe the process and timeline.

In response to Chair Murer's question about the outcomes of sabbaticals, Dr. Cassidy said, we put together a group that included two deans and the director of our Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center to develop a process to gather this information. That work has already begun, and we will be developing a survey for faculty to complete to provide us with the specifics of their scholarly work, curricular work and new learning experiences developed for students that have come out of their sabbaticals. We will begin that process in the fall when faculty return for the 2009-2010 Academic Year and expect to have a report ready for the Academic Affairs Committee next March when requests for sabbatical for the following year will be brought forward. Dr. Cassidy said this is an ongoing process that currently has a calendar through 2016 so far.

I would like to add that this is kind of a prototype, Dr. Alden said. We have software now that allows faculty to enter all of their curriculum vita and annual productivity reports. We hope that eventually this would be a prototype we could use for annual reports for all faculty and staff productivity, not just for those who go on sabbaticals. Dr. Cassidy stated that the deans were very supportive of this move because this information will be helpful to them as they look at their colleges, and the information, collectively, will be helpful to the Provost as we look at the work in the division.

Agenda Item 7.h. – Presentation on Support for the Development of Students' Writing Skills

I would like to introduce the two presenters on the Development of Students' Writing Skills, the Provost said, and they will describe the program in detail. The first presenter is Dr. Carolinda Douglass. Dr. Douglass has served as Director of Assessment Services at NIU for the past four years. She earned her Ph.D. in Policy Analysis from RAND Graduate School and a Master's degree in Public Administration and Gerontology from the University of Southern California. Dr. Douglass is a professor in the School of Nursing and Health Studies in the College of Health and Human Sciences where she has taught for the past 13 years. Her areas of research include educational and healthcare policy issues, assessment of student learning, and program planning and evaluation. The second presenter is Dr. Brad Peters. Dr. Peters earned his Ph.D. from the University of Iowa and is an associate professor in the Department of English. He is currently Director of the First-Year Composition Program in the department, and he teaches the Internship in the College Teaching of English at the graduate level and the Teaching of Writing for undergraduates, which focuses on approaches to teaching composition at middle and high school levels. He also coordinates the Writing Across the Curriculum Workshops and established the University Writing Center where he served as the founding acting director from 2000 to 2004.

We are grateful today to have the invitation to discuss the support for the development of students' writing skills with the Trustees, Dr. Douglass said. We are going to focus primarily on the First-Year Composition Program. In the strategic planning process, a number of discussions have occurred regarding core competencies, one of the most important of which is writing skills for students. In the first year of the

strategic planning process, one of the four imperatives that came out of that process was to preserve, strengthen and extend NIU's teaching and learning environment. In the second year, two very specific student-centered task forces were established related to core competencies for students and their success and the pedagogy that was related to how they gained those competencies. This past year, in addition to a number of other initiatives on campus related to strategic planning, there have been three initiatives: the Foundations of Excellence, which looks at the first year experiences and particularly how students succeed in the first sequence of courses they have, including First-Year Composition. We are taking a very broad look at general education reform and an even broader look at the review of baccalaureate goals to figure out exactly what the best core competencies, skills, knowledge and abilities are for students as they leave NIU. Certainly, we know that writing is one of the things that is going to be one of the core competencies that is important for student success at NIU and in the future.

One of the things that I am sure we all understand and appreciate is that writing is a very complex human behavior that is closely associated with learning, Dr. Peters said. However, our students do not always recognize that situation when they come in and realize that it is a course they are required to take. To give some background on what writing is in terms of human learning, central to certain modes of development of cognition, it is integrally involved in learning. It is a means of defining self and reality, a way to represent and contextualize information and activity that develops over a lifetime. So a writing course is not an inoculation against bad writing, it is simply a start to becoming a better writer. First-Year Composition is a baseline not an endpoint type of course. It is the way to start students toward the idea of doing good academic writing that is built on a solid foundation. As we know, in the state of Illinois, not all of our schools are funded equally, so students coming to our institution show a wide range in their ability to write. First-Year Composition is also a way of introducing students to academic life – how to do school, how to work on study habits, how to do any number of things.

Our core courses are two semesters of Composition English 103 and 104. In 103, five kinds of writings are targeted – personal narrative, reading response, interview, advertisement analysis and informed opinion. In 104, students do rhetorical analysis, critical evaluation, synthesis of sources, proposal and research. In fact, research is the emphasis of that second course. However, not all of our students are prepared to take those two courses when they come here. We have students coming in from schools where they are at the top of their classes, but they come from underfunded schools. So we have designed one of the oldest established stretch courses in the country. CHANCE students come in and take that course, which is two semesters that add up to 103. They have weekly tutorial support in the writer's workshop. They publish their own textbook of student writing and that is carried forward from year to year. It is a high quality textbook full of very interesting work. English 102P and 103P are taught by experienced full-time instructors. Smaller classes are characteristic of this particular series of courses with increased individual attention. English 105 is for students who come in well prepared. That is a combined advanced course of 103 and 104, and students place into that class through a test. There is an honor section of that course which full-time instructors or experienced Teaching Assistants teach. When students finish the series of courses, we want them to be sensitive to audiences and rhetorical situations; to be able to organize and develop material; to be able to relate to sources, not just simply create information dumps, but to put meaningful research into their papers. We want them to practice critical thinking, and there is quite a list of the kinds of critical thinking that go into writing. We are looking for students to especially have revision strategies that they develop during the course. We also want them to have the control of conventions such as grammar, syntax, spelling and punctuation. And we want students to be able to reflect on what they have learned, because to be able to recognize their strengths and weaknesses is a cognitive skill extremely important to the development of writers. Our set of outcomes was adapted from the National Council of Writing Program Administrators Outcomes Statement. And we also are careful to connect what we are doing in our classes to the Illinois Articulation Initiative, which is a group of postsecondary institutions concerned about making transferability a part of our courses so that if they come from a two-year college, they will be ready to take more advanced work in writing.

We have a portfolio assessment program that has gone programwide this year for the first time. All First-Year Composition faculty, a small group of 78 to 80 people, participate in that. All courses are evaluated when we do that assessment. We have random samples of ten percent of all sections, and we have a three-point Likert scale: 3-exceeds expectation; 2-meets expectation; 1-does not meet expectation. There are two readers per portfolio and a third reader that comes in on a one-point

discrepancy. The portfolio contents are a cover letter that does the reflecting I mentioned earlier, and two five- to ten-page essays that have been revised.

For our first year, you see that we have numbers for the spring and fall semester for audience and situation, where there is some improvement. Organization and development also shows some improvement from 74 percent to 80 percent. In Audience and Situation, students move from a kind of drafting voice, a sense of writing for themselves to a sense of understanding that they are writing for other people, that they are writing for audiences and to be read. In Organization and Development, especially with the second course, 104, they get a strong idea of research format, and they also get an idea of how to develop an argument. Relation of Ideas to Sources shows a slight drop, partly because of the challenge of taking information and documenting it, citing it correctly and integrating data meaningfully into their papers, which is a large leap for many of our students. Critical Thinking shows a small advancement. Most of that is linked to the transformation of data into information. Revision Strategies is probably the part that we want to work on most in our program because we find that that is not as strong as we would like it to be. In Control of Conventions, when students revise, they tend to revise grammar, they tend to revise punctuation. Even though when they reflect, they can recognize other problems they have with writing, they are at a cognitive point. When they take First-Year Composition, they can recognize what their strengths and weaknesses are, but that does not always translate into their writing.

As with the first assessment tool, Dr. Douglass reported, this is also an authentic assessment, and it differs from the first tool in that the first tool looks at a holistic body of work. This particular tool that we have implemented over the past two years looks at just one essay that is written at the beginning of 103 within the first week and then at the end of 104 – two essays each from the same student. We have matched pre- and post- samples of between 25 to 30 students each year in a timed in-class essay, and we are looking at the fluency abilities of the students to write on the spot. We use a rubric, not exactly the same as the one used in the other assessment, but one that is identical to the one that we use in the campuswide university writing project. The rubric we used, on page 3 of your reports, has seven subcomponents, and we have found this to be very beneficial in highlighting specifically where some of the problems are. Not identical to what is used in the portfolio assessment, but similarly, we look at focus, genre, audience, organization, critical thinking, writer's presence and presentation. Like the portfolio assessment, it is assessed by the same group of English faculty, two independent assessments of each paper on a Likert scale from one to three. Because we then add the two independent rater scores, a total score on any individual student's paper could be anywhere from two, meaning both raters said it did not meet expectations, one and one, or as high as six, if both raters said it exceeded expectations on that particular subscore. This is a table from the report that summarizes some of the key findings from the average scores for the students on their English 103 paper in the first week of English 103, and the average scores of what they did in the last week of English 104. As you can see, for all seven of the subscales, there is improvement in the writing in each of these areas.

The Office of Assessment Services widely disseminates this report as well as some others that we do to the University Assessment Panel, the General Education Committee, the Academic Planning Council and the Trustees. They are on our website and are sent out to all chairs, deans, associate deans, and faculty in the hopes that they will use them as they integrate new curricular or programmatic changes in their departments.

We take those scores and that data and we give it back to faculty through two means. I teach English 600, which trains our incoming TA's. That course is designed and tweaked by the way we look at what information we have. Where we are strong, we are happy; but where we are weak, we adjust the training of the TA's to build that up. We always have a series of workshops per semester for full-time faculty and continuing TA's, and, based on the data, we arrange the topics for those workshops according to what weaknesses or areas where we would like to see stronger teaching in the program. Then we take the data and understanding of what to do with it back into the classroom.

There are other writing resources on campus, Dr. Douglass said, and for each of these the website is noted in your information. First, we have the University Writing Center. The philosophy of the Writing Center is that we do not fix papers but make better writers. The most recent utilization statistics for the center show that over 9,000 sessions, which are one-on-one individual consultations with students lasting anywhere from five to 30 minutes, occurred over the last year. There were 2,000 unique clients indicating

that a number of the students come back more than once. The University Writing Center not only serves students, but it also serves faculty and staff with their writing needs.

Dr. Peters went on to say that the Writing Center exists to support students, but it also exists to support faculty, as they are thinking about improving their courses and doing enhanced writing that will adapt and take their students into not just disciplinary writing, but into the kinds of workplace writing they will be expected to do beyond. The Writing Across the Curriculum Program has annual faculty workshops and follow-up with faculty so that they are introduced to up-to-date methods of enhancing their courses with writing. We have also been able to build a very strong working relationship with the Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center where we also offer Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) oriented workshops. Two interactive websites have been developed on that. One is an interactive tutorial, both for faculty and for students on avoiding plagiarism and how to bring that into the classroom so students understand that this is a very important part of what they do, and the other is an effective writing tutorial that takes students back to what basics are prevalent and part of every good writing task.

The final resource we want to mention is the University Writing Project, which is administered from the Office of Assessment Services in conjunction with faculty in the English Department, Dr. Douglass said. It has been in existence for over a decade, and it looks at junior and senior writing for students as they are leaving NIU. The way we have been measuring the students' level of competency for the last several years is through course-embedded assignments. If students are invested in doing their assignments, then those assignments will probably best show the writing of which they are capable, so we ask professors to give us copies of the guidelines as well as the assignments that the students have written. We then use that same standardized rubric with the seven subscales and the same team of reviewers to come up with the analysis. Again, results of this are posted on our website.

How important having these kinds of support services as well as having the assessment program often is not recognized enough, Dr. Alden commented. I interact with provosts from around the country, and all of the regional accreditation bodies are getting into the assessment and accountability area. Many universities, even the best universities in the country, are floundering around trying to figure out, how do we do assessment? How do we make sure that the critical skills of competencies that we expect our students to achieve during their college experience are really being attained? And I think both Carolinda's work with assessment as well as the various writing programs we have are really a prototype for things, as we develop baccalaureate goals and look at revising general education, that will be prototypes for what we have done for a long time. We sometimes tend to take it for granted, and it is something that we really need to emphasize, so I would like to thank both of our presenters today for starting to get the word out.

Trustee Murer asked Dr. Peters if, when he looked back over his 13 years of teaching and how prepared students were coming in from high school, whether all of the new technology and the abbreviating of twittering and e-mails had an effect on writing or if it was totally anecdotal. Dr. Douglass said it was probably anecdotal, but these things consist of basically grammar and punctuation. Our statistics show that we have the lowest scores in that area. While students are accustomed to writing more, because of the twittering and the texting, they are accustomed to using shorthand methods, so there definitely is a transition trying to get them to move into the academic mode of writing.

Our students flip quickly, Dr. Peters added. One of the things that technology has brought to the table as well for our students is the sense of what public writing is, and a lot of writing is public. They come knowing how to design websites, probably because of MySpace and Facebook, and sometimes they do not always have an idea of what information should be public and what should not, but they do have an understanding that writing is a social activity. It is not something that happens in isolation, and it takes other people to respond, to help them along and understand how to do that.

Sometimes we do not give enough thought to whether or not our graduates going out into the world of business or world of industry can write well. If they cannot write well, they have a strike against them in trying to advance in their chosen careers. It is the most important form of communication other than verbal, and most people's initial view is when they see a letter from you.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next scheduled meeting of the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Personnel Committee is Thursday, August 27, in DeKalb.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other matters, the meeting was adjourned without objection by Vice Chair Boey at approximately 10:16 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon M. Banks-Wilkins
Recording Secretary