

TRANSCRIPT

University Council
Wednesday, March 2, 2022, 3 p.m.
Altgeld Hall 315
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Bohanon, Conderman, Costello, Cripe, Elish-Piper, Freeman, Garcia, Hulseberg, Ingram, Martin, Monteiro, Nicholson, Olson, Poyser, Rogers, Scheibe, Stange, Teso-Warner, Timko, Vaughn, Weffer, Yates

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Beyer, Boughton, Burg, Chinniah, Collins, Holmes

OTHERS PRESENT: Blazey, Bryan, Chomentowski, Griffin, McEvoy, Saborío

I. CALL TO ORDER

L. Freeman: It's 3 o'clock, and I'm going to call the meeting to order.

Meeting called to order at 3 p.m.

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

L. Freeman: Pat, can you verify that we have a quorum to proceed?

P. Erickson: We do have a quorum.

L. Freeman: Thank you.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

L. Freeman: Can I have a motion to adopt the agenda?

M. Stange: So moved.

F. Bohanon: Second.

L. Freeman: All right, we have a motion and a second. All in favor, aye.

Members: Aye.

L. Freeman: Opposed? Abstentions? All right.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 1, 2021 MINUTES – Pages 3-5

L. Freeman: Can I have a motion to approve the December 1, 2021, minutes? That was last year.

M. Stange: So moved.

L. Freeman: Thank you, and a second?

L. Garcia: Second.

L. Freeman: Thank you. All in favor?

Members: Aye.

L. Freeman: Opposed? Abstentions? All right.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

L. Freeman: Has anyone approached us for public comment today?

P. Erickson: We have no public comment.

VI. NIU PRESIDENT LISA FREEMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

L. Freeman: In that case, I will move on to Roman numeral VI, the president's announcements and comments. I'm going to keep these relatively short, because I know we have some items that we really want to spend some quality time discussing today. It's really great to see everybody here in person. We missed you last month. We don't miss the snow, and this was a much better day to walk over to University Council.

When I think about this time of year at a university, I'm not really thinking about the academic calendar and looking forward to spring break as much as I'm thinking about Springfield. And sometimes I look forward to Springfield, and sometimes I don't. But we are heavy in the legislative session right now. And so far, so good. I'm sure most of you saw that the governor's budget included a five percent supplement for this fiscal year as a proposal. It will have to be approved by the legislature, and that five percent increment would carry over to next year's budget. There was also an increase in MAP funding and AIM HIGH was held constant. And overall, we view these as very positive financial indicators for the next fiscal year. It's certainly not everything we need. It's not going to let us do everything we want, but we've all been here – at least most of us have been here – when the governor's budget was much less favorable. And we consider this a positive.

The governor is very proud of his investment in higher ed, and this administration sees higher ed as an investment, which we appreciate. But public universities – all 12 of us – worked together to create a slide deck that can be used by any of us anywhere, anytime, to talk about the fact that higher ed is an investment. And I asked Pat to share that with you this morning. I thought it was very nicely done. It was truly a collaborative effort across the university to talk about the value that we add to the state in terms of how we create knowledge, how we educate the workforce, how we create inclusive environments. And I thought one of the more interesting things in there is an economic study that was done by one of the think tanks, basically showed that NIU is responsible

for \$1.2 billion of the \$12.7 billion university impact. So, we're responsible for just under ten percent of the total university economic impact in the state. And that's not a small thing. If anyone has questions about that slide deck, Mat Streb and I are always welcome to answer them. But it's the kind of thing that, if you want to slip in the facts, in a conversation you're having, or take it to an organization that you belong to, or invite one of us to come and present it, we're happy to do that. I think it's really important that people see the value of higher education to the state, as well as to individuals, because it really is a public good.

Going back to the governor and his great pride in higher ed as an investment, we're pretty excited that he's coming here tomorrow. He's going to be arriving at the Barsema Alumni and Visitors Center shortly before 10. I will be introducing him. Mayor Cohen Barnes will also be making a couple of comments. The mayor will then speak for about ten minutes about higher education as an investment, his belief in the MAP program, his pride in NIU. And then we will have three students who received MAP grants speaking. And then there will be a wrap-up, and the students and I will get to take pictures with the governor if we have enough time.

These things are very, very tightly scripted. His security team has been through to see the run of show. I'm entitled to three-and-a-half minutes. The governor gets ten. The mayor gets two. And each student gets, I think, somewhere between one and two minutes. But it's the first time that Gov. Pritzker has been to our campus, and we're pretty excited about having him.

In that context, I found out 15 minutes ago that I need to be on a phone call with the governor's office at 4 o'clock. And so, we are going to be moving down the agenda, but shortly before 4, I will sneak out and make sure that my audio/video and zoom link works for the call with the deputy governor and whoever else is on from the governor's office. And I figured you guys would understand.

I have nothing else in terms of my comments. And so, I think this is my favorite part of the meeting where I turn it over to Pete. And we actually have a substantive discussion item today, so I'm looking forward to that.

VII. ITEMS FOR UNIVERSITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

- A. What is the future of University Council?
Peter Chomentowski, University Council Chair
Simón Weffer, Department of Sociology

P. Chomentowski: We are on to items for University Council to consider. We talked about this, I think, in November, about the University Council and what would we like to see in University Council in the future. We talked earlier about how after the reimagining was done for shared governance, a lot of the new business that came to University Council has now been switched to Faculty Senate. So, as we saw in the last semester, it's not seeing as much new business brought to the University Council. With that, I've been working with Simón, and he has put together a few slides, and we're going to show these slides, and then we're going to have a conversation for about 15-20 minutes to just get people's ideas, if you have some, about what would we like to see for the future for our University Council. Simón?

S. Weffer: Good afternoon, everyone. It's great to see everyone in person again. We started this conversation back in December or November, when we were talking about maybe paring down the meeting schedule. And then we got into this wonderful discussion about, well, what do we think University Council should be, that we need to grapple with that. I was lucky enough, I got in touch with Kendall, and he sends his best to everyone. I think for all of us that are aspirationally thinking about retirement, he said, well, you know we can schedule the discussion whenever, because I really don't keep a calendar anymore, because why should I. So, that was great to hear from his end, and if you follow him on Facebook, he is certainly living his best life in retirement. But I was, of course, envious about the idea of not needing a calendar.

When Kendall and I spoke, he admitted that the bulk of the effort was put into reimagining Faculty Senate, because that's where everything was going to move. And that's where a lot of the heavy lifting came. But also that in any political process, things were traded here and there. Numbers of positions and seats in UC versus Faculty Senate. So, I think Faculty Senate is working well. Everything I hear from our representative in sociology and being able to talk to Peter on a regular basis and in a variety of different forms. And so, I think we need to come back and think about well, what do we want UC to be? What should it be? What does it do, especially if we're talking about 90 percent or so of the work that came to UC now resides in Faculty Senate.

One of the reasons I spoke with Kendall was to get an idea of what's going on on other campuses. And many of you will remember when Kendall was first proposing this re-envisioning of shared governance, he talked about what happens on other campuses. He had a very elaborate slide deck, and I don't think we need that. But I just boiled it down to the fact that really when we look at our peer institutions within the state, they all have faculty senates. They all have various compositions, obviously. Urbana-Champaign is massive. Some of the other campuses are very small. But none of them have a body like this. And I don't want anyone to misunderstand why I'm saying this. I'm not saying this because I think we need to get rid of UC. I think UC has some very specific functions that are important to this campus and unique to this campus. But we do need to think critically about why we have it, because this isn't a bicameral thing. It's not that we have veto power over what comes out of Faculty Senate. It's not the U.S. Congress and Senate or the State Assembly and State Senate. It doesn't work that way.

And now, with limited amounts of traffic, let's think about: Are we the right size – are we the right composition – for what the UC really does? And so, the near comparable organization or institution is at Eastern Illinois where they have a University Planning and Budget Committee. But that's all they do. It's really just that. So, on a lot of levels, it's like our space, budget allocations committee, just a little bit bigger and beefier and has a little bit more to its charge.

And so, Kendall and I, we spoke, and we talked about it a little bit more. And we talked about, well what are the three major functions right now if we had to identify the three things that UC does? And this is just mine and Kendall's opinion. I'm sure Pat could actually probably break down exactly what actually comes before the UC, generally. But I think the biggest and most important is that it provides a forum for faculty, staff and students for a voice in the budgeting process. Last year, we had a very wonderful meeting with VP Chinniah and the provost talking about the budget. And it was really important. We had some great discussion, because, you know, there were things floating around the university and people were saying things and thinking things. And this is the place where we got to have a real conversation about it, where we got to dispel all the mysteries and I think, for many of us, this was where we learned about what the budgeting process is going to be moving forward. And so that's a very important part, and one of the reasons why I think it is

important that we keep UC for just that very discussion. If we're going to be a place that is open and transparent on issues of budgeting so we all know where we stand, so we all know where the pitfalls are and where the opportunities may be, then we need to have a forum for that. And yes, it relates to the academic running of the institution, but it should not be in Faculty Senate. That's not what Faculty Senate is designed for.

The second is, of course, building and capital planning, which flows from the first point. Again, relates to faculty and faculty needs and student needs, but doesn't really make sense to have it in Faculty Senate. But we need to have a place to have those discussions. I'll pick a pet project of mine that I would love to see, just because Jerry and I have been working on it in the past year. Maybe a center on transdisciplinary research. That would be a great thing, I think. A building and people. But that would take capital planning. So, that discussion needs to be held.

And then, finally, we need a place to amend the constitution, a place to have discussions about: How is the constitution of our campus set up? What are we ensuring in that document? What are we providing in that document? We need to have that sort of check and balance and a place to have those discussions. If we're going to be a campus that believes in shared governance, there has to be a place where faculty, staff, students and administration can talk about these core documents, like the constitution. So, that's what I see us dealing with for the most part.

And when I think about, say, our UC Personnel Committee, many of the discussions on the committee have been struggling to figure out what we do, because it doesn't really fit in any of those three things, and it doesn't really fit, like we kept on [inaudible], well maybe this case, no that goes to HR; maybe this case, no that goes to Faculty Senate; maybe this case, no that goes to staff council; maybe this thing, no it would be handled by the ombuds. And so we had a hard time getting our hands around it, because we didn't know what we really were. And so that's where I wanted us to start this conversation.

These are the three key things. There are probably other things, and I would love for us to have that discussion – what am I missing from this list – so that we can think then about, do we have the right mix? And we are all academics in one way or the other. We love to ask questions that don't necessarily have answers. I have no clue. I don't know if this is the right mix. It feels to me like it's too big right now. But that's just a feel thing, and there's nothing empirical to it, it just feels like it's a little bit unwieldy. For example, I'll use faculty. Do we need eight faculty members, plus the Faculty Senate president? That's nine votes. Does that make sense, given how much faculty have a role and say in the Faculty Senate? Would it make more sense to have the Faculty Senate president and one member voted from Faculty Senate body, so two via Faculty Senate, and then one or two at large from the rest of the university? I don't know. But these are the things we need to talk about.

And then we need to think about workload. Can we say we don't need to meet every month? Is the workload such that maybe we have on the books every other month and hold that spot in case something comes up, because, of course, the last two years, it's not like anything has popped up on everyone's radar and thrown everything for a loop. We do want to have that flexibility to meet, but we also don't want to burden everyone with additional meetings. I was speaking with the provost, I guess it was November, December, and we were talking about this idea that meetings in person now should be precious. And even though we're moving slowly away from mask mandates and moving into a period of what may be the new normalcy, that's probably not a bad way to think about it. All of us gathering together should be something that we think of as precious and necessary and important, because if there's anything we've all learned during the pandemic, is we have six million

other things pulling at our time above and beyond what our core duties are to the institution. And so when we make this commitment to be on UC and spend the time, we should really make sure that we're addressing everything we need to.

So, that's all I have. We're going to treat this like a graduate seminar. We'll open it up now for questions and comments. I know we'll all be taking notes, and we'll see where this conversation goes, because I don't know. I'm just here to keep us from going off the rails. Does anyone have any initial thoughts or reactions?

M. Stange: I'm fairly new to University Council, and the one thing that I've noticed over the last two years is that it seems like University Council – and I could be wrong, obviously, I don't know all the history, because like I said, I'm fairly new – it seems to me like this was designed to be a more inclusive body, more geared toward all the constituencies of the university. And it seems to me that, if we are going to talk about inclusion, which we are a lot, as a university, it does not make sense to treat the University Council like a second class citizen. I think that what might be a better approach, since it sounds like a lot of what University Council used to do has shifted over to Faculty Senate, maybe the discussion could also be: is that working? Is that shift of all that stuff over to Faculty Senate, is that working, or really should we be looking to regain more of a balance so that the more inclusive entity or the more inclusive-sounding entity, I should say – I mean it's kind of hard to, since we have a lot of people who aren't faculty, it seems like University Council sounds like a more inclusive-type entity, that maybe we should consider whether the shift over to Faculty Senate was the right choice, whether we need to rethink about how much – do we want to make a better balance so that University Council more represents a greater and wider constituency?

S. Weffer: Excellent, thank you. I don't know, Peter, do you want to maybe talk a little bit about how you feel it's going in Faculty Senate? For those of you who don't know, it used to be that, if you were on UC, you were also a member of Faculty Senate, and so you were often in both meetings, and so you would have had a pretty good sense of what's going on.

P. Chomentowski: In Faculty Senate, I think it's going pretty well. The tough thing is Kendall had the grand scheme of the plan. He believed that the Faculty Senate should have more of the say in all things related to academics, education. That's pretty much, simply, how he wanted it. And so when he came up with this idea of reimagining Faculty Senate, that was the plan behind shifting the responsibilities around. I wasn't part of that; I was on Faculty Senate. The people who were on Faculty Senate, we participated in the conversations, but that's kind of where it went. And then when everything did get done, and they shifted it all, then they realized how much was actually academic and educational. I don't think people realized how much it was. And then after it got changed, and we went back and looked, and we realized that probably the majority of business that came to University Council was. So, the bylaws were just changed last year to actually have that new reimagining of Faculty Senate. Yes, that's something that could be considered about how it was divvied up, but that's kind of why it was shifted around, because everything that was moved was listed as being academic or an educational objective.

L. Saborío: Follow-up question. The universities that you mentioned on your first slide that don't have a comparable governance body to our Faculty Senate [University Council], what do they have? Is it like a combination of Faculty Senate and University Council together?

S. Weffer: That's where it gets a little squishy and not very generalizable. As a sociologist, I always try to get to generalizability. But on some campuses, they have sort of more of an executive council-type thing where it might be the president and deans a few sort of hand-selected individuals. There's one where Faculty Senate has some say on budgeting things. But, really, most of the budgeting stuff is, in all honesty in my read, is a little bit more opaque at other campuses. I don't know what the true history of UC is. But as someone that studies organizations, if I had to guess, I would guess that UC came about, in some part, to take power away from whatever the existing Faculty Senate was. That would be my guess.

L. Saborío: The University Council was established first, from what I understand. And the Faculty Senate, before it was codified in the bylaws, the idea was for faculty to meet the week before University Council to talk about the pending issues and items on the agenda. And then it became codified some time after that. It was University Council, and then Faculty Senate was kind of like a subgroup.

S. Weffer: So, there you go.

L. Saborío: Which is why I think you see that most of the academic was in UC originally, because it was one body from what I understand.

L. Freeman: And I think one of the things that presidents before me, Kendall, all thought was, not in alignment with best practices was AAUP and most shared governance recommendations for best practices is that your legislative practice, your shared governance practices honor the tenant that faculty own the curriculum. So, in our old model, when we had faculty vote on curricular issues, and then it still had to go to UC, and the UC vote was definitive, it really was not in alignment with what should be a fundamental principle of how a university runs. But then, as Simón pointed out, there were a lot of other decisions made in doing the reimagination that sort of took away some of the purity of that.

S. Weffer: Right. Right. I think that's a great point, and I'm happy to be wrong. It happens all the time, obviously. Well, with four kids, you're often always wrong. I think we just need to keep sort of – this is meant to be a brainstorming session and not be – oh please, go ahead.

P. Chomentowski: I have some more about other schools, too.

W. Vaughn: I'm a clinical professor at the College of Law. I don't actually think this group is too big or unwieldy. I think this is a really right group of people. What I like about this University Council is the fact that all these other constituencies that I don't get to interact with on a regular basis are here. And as a relatively new member, too, I think there's a degree of transparency that I'm feeling from President Freeman when we come to this group. I learn things that I might not otherwise know, and I can take that back to my college or my clinical faculty peers, and I like that very much.

I'm wondering – and I don't know anything about the best practices or the past or what would be best – but I do know that there are lots of subcommittees doing work on the campus that I don't think report necessarily to the Faculty Senate, and I'm not sure we really know what goes on in those groups. So, perhaps some feedback from some of those committees of the university.

S. Weffer: Could you give me an example?

W. Vaughn: Well, for example, I'm on the Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee, and we talk about campus security and environmental quality. And it's also a hodgepodge group of folks. But maybe we should report to you and tell you what we're doing or ask you what you think we should be doing, I don't know. I think that, instead of seeing how we can limit the power of this group or reduce our interactions or think about cabining what this is, if we really are about shared governance, we should find ways to collaborate, communicate and be even more transparent.

B. Cripe: Hi, I'm from the College of Business. One of the things that we talked about was how the budget plays a big role in this body. And when I think about my family budget, when I think about my family coming together and talking about our budget, we come together and we bring in the priorities that we have. And as a group of people that represent all of the major parts of the university, we all have priorities and things of our own, and we talk about what those priorities are, and my kids tell me what their priorities are about soccer versus football versus chorus versus all those things. And then my wife and I sit down, and we make a budget based on that. And I would think that this body could provide a rich amount of information to decision makers about what we collectively believe are the priorities of our institution so that you I'm sure, President Freeman, think about the budget every day, you can take these different people that you have assembled here and hear what they have to say. And then, further, you can tell us, here are the constraints, here are the problems, and we can take that information back to the people who elected us. So, when I'm thinking about the most important part of this group, that's how I think about it. Now, I'm an accountant, so budget is a big deal to me. But that's just what I think, so thank you.

P. Chomentowski: A little bit on what you were talking about. When you look to the rest of the universities, like I've been talking with the Illinois senators, pretty much everyone has just a Faculty Senate or a senate at least. While some of them are called academic senate, and the majority of them have, when you read down the list of responsibilities, it looks like a mixture of our responsibilities from our University Council and our responsibilities from Faculty Senate together. If you look at our University Council responsibilities, I think there are nine bullets on there. At Western, they have 16 bullets for what they do under the Faculty Senate, because they have everything in one. Some of them have large bodies too, 55 people, not far from ours, but they only have one. When I talked to them, a lot of Faculty Senate or senate presidents have asked me the same question: What does our University Council do, because none of them have what we have. We're very distinct in that. When they read our bylaws, they have everything from UC and Faculty Senate is, actually, in one body. I've looked at other universities, I was doing it today, some universities do have a University Council and a Faculty Senate separate. I found a few universities, especially larger universities that do that. And they actually have it broken up where the Faculty Senate is educational objective in mind, and the university council is more administrative objective. And I found that at three universities that I looked at, but they were large universities. But in Illinois, I think we are the only ones – in fact, we are the only ones – that have that. Now, some will have an executive council on top of the Faculty Senate, which does stuff, but it's still not like ours. I've had three meetings this year with the group of Illinois senators, and I've got another one in April. And that's a question they keep asking me is: What do you do on both?

S. Weffer: Go ahead. No, you're fine.

L. Saborío: [inaudible]

P. Chomentowski: Yes, all of them do. They all do. They all have students, instructors, civil service, support staff, tenure-track, non-tenure-track. Some of them have clinical, they all do.

S. Weffer: It's all a very different mix. There is no one size fits all sort of thing. There are some that are much more heavily tenure-track faculty, and there was one – I want to say Eastern – that was only tenure-track faculty, which I don't think any of us would advocate for going in that direction at any point.

P. Chomentowski: That's changing. Eastern actually is re-writing their bylaws where they're going to add students and staff. They emailed me, and they've been reading our bylaws. Two of the schools, Eastern and I can't remember the other one, they're redoing their bylaws, because they are now adding staff, instructors, non-tenured and students to their bylaws. And they're using ours as a guideline – of what Kendall created – to actually create their own now and change theirs.

S. Weffer: And before we get back to the Q&A, if you go back, there is a wonderful visual image of what the new Faculty Senate looked like. It was literally the big table, and it was color coded with all the different seats. In general, we are way more representative now in our Faculty Senate than any other campus. That's a credit to everyone that did the work in the past two years to get that done. And that's why, when Peter and I have had some of these discussions, we're not looking to make radical changes, we just want to actually put the time and have the conversations that didn't necessarily happen for this body.

K. Martin: I'm with Engineering, as well as Environmental Studies. I think the thing that can't be understated is the faculty yearn for hearing updates. President Freeman, your updates are probably the highlight of the UC meeting, because you hear what's going on, or what's coming from the provost, or what's coming from [CFO] Chinniah. That's what the faculty are hearing. When I get asked, hey, did you go to UC? Yeah. What happened from them? That's what I think can't be understated the value that that information coming down, and whenever it was, well, it's every other month. Well, is that, what message, possibly it's not important. And so what other updates, whether it's planning, you talk about what things, master planning or any kind of update of what's going on from administration down, that's very valuable. And whether it's one of my colleagues talking about accounting, from budgetary issues, and that's obviously been on administration for where it is. But anything that comes down as far as information is very valuable, and I think would really help with the morale of faculty and understanding of what's going on. So, I don't think that can just be understated. You can't overstate, I don't think, enough, of hearing that type of thing, of getting those emails. It's one thing to get emails, but getting the impacts, whether it's been [CFO] Chinniah talking about the budget or whatever we're talking about, those sorts of updates, I think, really. Well, to think that we're just going to do this as a quarterly update, I guess? That's the only concern that immediately jumps on me is wondering what kind of message is that sending.

M. Costello: Hello, I'm the director at the Lorado-Taft campus, and I'm here representing SPS Council. I just wanted to follow up with what the first speaker said and a little bit about what Wendy said, as well. Just to make sure that whatever comes out of the changes, that those of us who are not faculty still have that voice and have that representation. That's why I'm here. I wasn't really happy about things in my job a few years ago, and instead of finding a new job, I decided to find a way to try to do something about it. So, I found myself on SPS Council. And then from there, I found myself here. And I'm really, really grateful to have the opportunity to be a part of a body that is shared governance. And so, I wouldn't want to, whether the changes that are made, or decreasing the size of council, to miss that representation of different voices. I'm representing the

Outreach and Engagement and Regional Development, so I'm not sure that necessarily I would have a role to play on Faculty Senate, given the way that Dr. Freeman has described it. It doesn't sound like something that would necessarily be something that I should really be a part of, unless it was structured or changed differently. But I believe that this body is important.

S. Weffer: Go ahead.

J. Hulseberg: I have three roles here on campus. First and foremost, I'm a painter, as you can tell. I'm also the operating staff personnel advisor. And my third role is as EAC, so I'm the Employee Advisory Committee member for NIU to the State Universities Civil Service System. And that gives me the opportunity four times a year to meet with my colleagues, civil service employees across the state. And when I describe the University Council and the shared governance system we have here at NIU, we are the envy of all those schools that were listed up there. They are just amazed that once a month there are five civil service employees that get to meet with the president, senior leadership, faculty, students. That does not exist elsewhere around our state. So, Peter, I'm not surprised to hear other campuses are looking at doing something similar to what we have here at NIU. Thank you.

L. Freeman: Oh, you can go ahead of me. I'm sorry, Simón, I know you're supposed to be recognizing.

S. Weffer: No, quite all right, just like at a typical grad seminar. Faculty sit back and don't do anything. Let everyone else talk.

H. Nicholson: Hi, I'm president of Operating Staff Council. I just wanted to say that I think it's a point of pride as how we're seen as transparent with our budgeting process and how we're special and unique in Illinois, and what John was saying. In the absence of the Resources, Space and Budget Committee that we used to have, I think that is really needed. Although, there is the budget roundtable. There are maybe fewer people at that table, and so I think it's important to carry on what we were doing in RSB. And we were able to meet once a month, and I don't think we ever got out early. It was always a very rich discussion. I also think that there is a lot of university-wide initiatives going on that we could address here, such as, I know they're updating the diversity statement. And a few years ago, when we updated the mission, vision, values. And tomorrow, we're having Matt Parks come to talk about the telephone updates. And so, I think there are a lot of other things besides just the budget that need a university-wide approach and representatives from all areas.

L. Freeman: I just want to make two comments to sort of build on what I've heard from the collective voice here before I have to go talk to the Governor's Office. The first is, Simón, when I looked at your slide and you had the core things, the thing that I thought was missing that I just kept in my own head at that point was communication, because I agree with what everyone here has said. Sometimes you can send out transcripts or emails, but it's not the same as a real-time opportunity to get feedback on an idea. It's very valuable to me as a representative of the administration to say something and see how it could be misunderstood before I say it again. And to learn things that I might not otherwise learn just as Kevin said that he learns things that he might not otherwise know. And it's not just a one-way street for communication. It's two ways for the people in this room, but then there's that additional responsibility that was referred to a couple of times of cascading the messages down. So, I do think that's valuable. And then it becomes upon those who build the

agenda, all of us who sit at UC planning committee, to make sure that we do treat the time as precious so that what we spend our valuable time discussing and thinking about cascading down is actually worth that time.

With respect to budget, I see that Dr. Blazey is in the room. And some of you, but not all of you, may remember that when I gave the state of the university address in November, I asked Vice President Blazey, Vice President Edghill-Walden and Dean Brinkmann to take on the responsibility of seeking widespread input and making recommendations for what administration could do at the university level to improve the integration of planning and budget. So, basically, that we could be better at doing what Brad Cripe said he does with his children and his wife. And I think that there is something that will be done at the university level that will probably serve as a model ultimately for what gets done at the lower divisional levels. But I think it's really valuable for Dr. Blazey to be here today [inaudible] saying, because, as he and Vernese and Bob Brinkmann make the recommendations to leadership on what they think would be good in terms of process improvement, understanding that University Council is willing and eager to be built into that process, I think is very valuable. The president's budget roundtable is an advisory group that really serves a different purpose than formal shared governance, and I think there's room for both in our system to make sure we get the right information. Jerry, when are your recommendations due?

J. Blazey: You gave us a charge of coming back with something in May, but I think it may take a little longer than that.

L. Freeman: I don't know if you're asking for an extension here [inaudible] just like a graduate seminar.

S. Weffer: Exactly. A little extension on the paper, yes, of course.

L. Freeman: But I think that the discussions can certainly continue about how that looks, and that would be a good thing.

J. Blazey: I believe many of you we have spoken to, and many of you were at yesterday's leadership exercise, or at least some of you were. And one thing that's coming across loud and clear is that this process that we're going to recommend needs to be very transparent, very inclusive, and I think as many venues in which we can ensure that inclusivity and transparency, it's important to have as many as we can. And so, I think you should keep that in mind as you reconsider the functions of this body.

S. Weffer: Thank you. So, how much time do we have? I was going to do a little summation, I think, at this point, although President Freeman did a pretty good job of it.

P. Chomentowski: Yes.

S. Weffer: I think what's coming through loud and clear is that the inclusiveness of this body and the ability to transmit and communicate mission, vision and values, but also the narrative of the campus, and it being a two-way dynamic, is really the key. And while I isolated three points, and there might be more, I think the next step is for us to sort of engage in and sort of our homework maybe for the next meeting or of the meeting following that is: What are we missing? We came up with some ideas of certain committees that maybe should be reporting here so, again, that information gets disseminated out. I'm thinking of my own role on the presidential commissions

and how are we effective through the presidential commissions in terms of getting our word out. And maybe this is a place where sort of once a semester, the commissions come back and report on out.

There might be other opportunities there to build on the communication aspect of the UC. I think this is great, and I just do want to hammer home the idea that I'm not looking to get rid of UC, and I'm hoping that whoever is on the UC next year keeps pushing forward on this topic, because I think we just need to keep working on it, because a body like this should always be an iterative process. It shouldn't be static. It should always be dynamic and changing and adapting to the reality of our university. Thanks so much, everyone, for your feedback, and I'll turn it back to Peter.

P. Chomentowski: Thank you, everyone, for your input, and we will keep working forward.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

X. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Proposed amendment to NIU Bylaws, Article 6, Grievance Procedures for Students – Pages 6-24
FIRST READING
Peter Chomentowski, University Council Chair
Beth Ingram, Executive Vice President and Provost
Gregory Brady, Deputy General Counsel
Lindsay Hatzis, Director of Investigations, Office of Ethics and Compliance

P. Chomentowski: We'll move on in the agenda now, and we'll move on to new business. We have a proposed amendment to the NIU Bylaws, Article 6, Grievance Procedures for Students, which is on page 6 through 24, and it's our first reading. So, I will read the proposed amendment. NIU Bylaws, Article 6, has been reviewed by a working group representing Faculty Senate, Student Government Association, Office of Ombudsperson, Office of the Provost, Office of the General Counsel and Office of Ethics and Compliance. The proposal is to move procedure out of the bylaws, similar to the decision made by the University Council in spring 2020 in regard to the grievance process for the non-union faculty and staff, and into the procedural documents to be maintained at the Provost's Office website.

Revised Article 6 establishes the student grievance process. The substance of the current Article 6 has been maintained in two procedural documents: 1) Student Grievance Procedures, and 2) Formal Student Grievance Hearing Guidelines. These procedures will be linked to from the revised Article 6.

The modifications were prepared with a focus on providing a process that is understandable and accessible to all parties.

With that, we will open this for any questions or discussion about amendment to the grievance procedures for students.

S. Weffer: Because I haven't had enough mic time. How substantially does this change the actual process of how the grievances play out. Having served on a grievance panel before, are we talking that it looks more or less the same, identical?

P. Chomentowski: Lindsay, would you like to come up to the podium and address that?

L. Hatzis: Here I thought there were going to be no questions at all, and I could just leave. My name is Lindsay Hatzis. I work in Ethics and Compliance Office. I've been part of this student grievance committee for – I don't know – the last three and a half or so years. And so to answer your question, I believe we had talked back when you were on the committee, parts of it are very much the same, and parts of it are very much different. The one thing that we did change is that, moving forward, every grievance that has met all of the requirements will automatically have a hearing. As you may remember, before it was up to the committee to decide whether or not they wanted to have a hearing. We took that part out and said you have to have a hearing no matter what. Also, another difference is in the past, the committee reviewed the grievance and sort of determined is the grievance supposed to be with us or is there a different process at the university that it should be going through, like maybe it should be at the Ethics and Compliance Office, or going through a different process, and the committee could shift it to that process. Now there will be an individual that reviews that before it even gets to the committee, and it will be somebody designated by the Provost's Office. And if they decide that it really should be handled through a different process, they will shift it to that process, and we will not convene the committee at that point.

S. Weffer: I will just say those are two massive improvements, because much of our time initially was spent on should we be hearing it? And given a very truncated window, there's not a long timeframe either. And then the second part as well. If it meets the checklist that there should be a hearing. That was also another very difficult thing to discuss sometimes. The only thing I would add that one of the difficulties on mine in particular without getting into details, confidentiality issues, was sometimes getting documents from other entities on campus. So, I guess the question is, would this process make it easier in those requests in getting documentation in a timely fashion?

L. Hatzis: Obviously, I can't speak for how departments will respond when they are reached out to, but under this process – so currently, the University Council chair oversees the process. Under the new process, it will shift to the Provost's Office. And when a committee convenes, say they think there are some documents they need, whether it be from Registration and Records or from somebody else on campus, they will inform the provost's designee, who will then facilitate getting those documents. So, maybe it will be easier, because it's something coming from the Provost's Office? I'm not really sure, but the hope is that they would cooperate during that process.

M. Stange: Hi, Meredith Stange from the College of Law, sorry for not introducing myself earlier. I have a question, is there a brief that you can give us, a brief contextual history about why the grievance procedure is being revised.

L. Hatzis: Sure. I was not at the university – I was going to say, maybe I was in law school here then – but no, when it first came to be, I can't speak to that, because I was not part of that. But, generally speaking, the whole process is just supposed to address concerns that students might have that are not within another process at the university. So, they still feel like there's something going on that's not okay, but I don't think there's anywhere else to handle this. And in the past few years that I have been part of the process, I have always had to be on the committee. I have always been designated as the HR representative, and I've worked with I think at least three different University

Council chairs, and we have always run into problems when we actually needed to convene the committee. The way it's currently written, there is a grievance pool that consists of 60 individuals; so, it's 15 from SPS, 15 from civil service, 15 from faculty, 15 students. I can tell you, not a lot of people want to volunteer to be in that panel, so we did decide that we needed to reduce that, which we did substantially.

Another issue was the timing. The way that the current bylaw is written, it was just not doable, because our committee had to have five people on it, which included a student. And inevitably, every grievance would happen when we were on a break, and students were not around. And so the timeframes that were set forth in the current bylaws, we were never able to meet, because we would try to get five people together, and back then we were meeting in person. It just wasn't working.

And then Simón sort of spoke to some of this. A lot of the procedures were not very clear in the bylaws. And so when I first started being a part of it, I'm like, well how are we supposed to do this? What do we do? So, I just kind of did what I'm used to doing from doing investigations in my office. But then we also noticed that I had to start conflicting myself off of cases, because we refer students to the process, and so it would look weird if I already know about stuff. And once you removed me as being the constant on the committee, we realized that they had a lot of questions about, well, how should I do this? And so we really wanted to make it more clear in the bylaws and the procedures.

And a couple of years ago, we started this by amending the – I don't know what the proper term is – the non-union faculty/staff grievance process. So, we started with that one, updated it, and we knew that we were going to eventually get to this one. And so we've spent probably the last year working on this one, went over it with students and everything to really make sure that it made sense so that, when the committee is looking at it, they understand what they're doing and that, when students go through the process, they get it. So, I'm hoping that it's more clear now than it was before.

W. Vaughn: Wendy Vaughn, College of Law, hi, Lindsay.

L. Hatzis: Hi. My law school professor.

W. Vaughn: My question is, when we move something from the bylaws into an administrative procedural process, we lose all of the approval processes and input from constituencies. So, while these procedures sound like they're really great, how will modifications be done? And, how can we ensure that there will be input of students and constituencies in future modifications, because we could just amend the bylaws to update them to include these better policies as opposed to moving all of the procedures to an administrative procedure manual that can be amended outside of this process.

L. Hatzis: My understanding is that, when we want to make amendments to the procedures or the guidelines, is that it would actually go through the Policy Library process, where it gets posted for 30 days, there can be feedback from everybody at the university about it before it gets finalized. And, Greg, I know you're here. If that's wrong, you can say something, but that was my understanding of what we would do to make sure that we still have the feedback from everybody.

G. Brady: Hi there, I'm Greg Brady, deputy general counsel. I assisted the committee with the review. Yes, that is definitely a component of update is through the Policy Library process. But also the fact that this is an initiative that's moving from the processing from the University Council to the provost, it's going to be incumbent upon the Provost's Office to maintain the communication and furtherance of any updates between this body and then how her office processes these procedures moving forward. So, I don't feel like it's only going to be through the Policy Library process. It's going to be also through the administrative process of the entity that's now carrying these student grievance procedures forward.

P. Chomentowski: Any more questions. This was a first reading. We will come back and have the second reading at the next meeting. Thank you, Lindsay.

XI. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE – report
Linda Saborío, NIU representative

P. Chomentowski: We'll move on to reports from councils, and, Linda, you get to go? You need to go? That's fine, no, that's fine. We'll have a report from you next time.

- B. University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees – report
Felicia Bohanon, Holly Nicholson, Peter Chomentowski
Katy Jaekel, Karen Whedbee, Greg Beyer

P. Chomentowski: We'll move on to University Advisory Committee to the BOT. Felicia, did you want to speak about anything?

F. Bohanon: There was an extensive and comprehensive meeting of the committee. What I'd like to do is just give you some of the highlights. The meeting was, as I say, pretty extensive. One of the highlights was the undergraduate tuition is increasing and, basically, they're looking at an increase by 1.5 percent, over basically a 1.9 percent in base tuition. And the rationale was that, basically, looking to enhance the structural experiences that we're able to offer students and also some of the social services that students are needing at this particular point, based on some of the experiences that they've had in COVID just dealing with coming to campus. And so, that's a part of the recommendation that was approved in terms of the 1.9 percent increase in undergraduate tuition. And when we talk about what that amount means, actually, we're talking about for full-time students, that basically represents a \$91.27 increase. And for per credit, we're talking about basically \$6.73.

There was also a recommendation for increase in graduate tuition. And when we talk about that amount, we're basically talking about a one percent increase, which represents basically an \$82.56 increase per semester, and \$6.88 per credit. And that was approved also.

There was discussion concerning an increase in fees. There was no recommendation concerning an increase in fees. There was also an increase and approved a recommendation for room and board increase, particularly in terms of Neptune, Gilbert, Grant and represented basically \$170 per semester increase at three percent, and that's just based on increase in cost.

There was also a discussion about increases in health insurance, and there was a slight increase in – one of the discussions was about the increase in the number of students that are participating in university health insurance. And a part of the conversation was that that was attributed to COVID-19 factors.

One of the highlights was the fact that HR, as you know, is moving to campus or centrally located on campus to Neptune. And so, one of the things that there was need for renovation costs related to that move. And that would allow not only greater accessibility, but also to be able to use that space for increased revenue. And so, that was also approved.

The other conversations related to the credit card process and the need for that and renewing the contract for the university to continue to operate and process credits cards.

And then an additional highlight related to the education system, a technology data warehouse. There was a lot of conversation about this, particularly in terms of faculty and the need for this. Initially, prior to COVID, there was an expectation that this data warehouse would be purchased, that we were not able to do that, and that there was an increase in costs. And so, they came back to the Board of Trustees, and that will be on the March meeting.

Additional items for the March meeting relate to the need for roofing repairs; as you may know, related to Faraday, the fieldhouse and also the Convocation Center. And so, there was a recommendation, and that will come before the board in March. And also, additional improvements in terms of [inaudible] repairs related to Stevenson and Grant Towers.

So, those were just some of the highlights from the meeting. It was a pretty robust meeting.

P. Chomentowski: Thank you, Felicia. A few other things I'll just mention that came up from Academic Affairs and the special BOT. Sabbaticals were approved for next academic year. They had to approve full professor for the new dean of the Graduate School. I don't know if everyone knows, but she started yesterday, Dean Kerry Wilks. And then, of course, they recommended the honorary doctorate for Jesse White, who is the 37th secretary of state for the state of Illinois. Just some of the highlights.

C. Rules, Governance and Elections Committee – report
Holly Nicholson, Chair

P. Chomentowski: So, we'll keep moving right along, and Rules, Governance and Elections Committee, Holly.

H. Nicholson: We had a big meeting last week. Shane Sharp conducted a survey to a random sample of undergraduate and graduate students regarding their experiences with cyberbullying. And really out there, there's not much research on that, so we're going to kind of be at the forefront of that type of research. So, that was very insightful. And next, he'll be conducting a survey of faculty and staff. Then that data we're going to use to inform the website that we're building, and also a set of recommendations that we'll send to President Freeman and report here. The recommendations will also include a list of policies that will need language added to address cyberbullying. So, not a separate policy, but just making sure that the existing policies and procedures include cyberbullying. Finally, the website design is underway. We all learned what lorem ipsum text is. That concludes my report. Any questions?

P. Chomentowski: All right, thank you.

- D. Student Government Association – report
Devlin Collins, President
Dallas Douglass, Speaker of the Senate

P. Chomentowski: Student Government Association, I don't see the gentlemen here. I spoke with them today, but I don't think they really have too much. I can just say they are getting prepared for their elections. They happen the 29th and 30th of March. So, they're really busy with moving through that process, which will be happening in the next few weeks.

- E. Operating Staff Council – report
Holly Nicholson, President

P. Chomentowski: Operating Staff Council, Holly.

H. Nicholson: All good news from us. We identified the four winners of the presidential award – I don't remember all of the words, but the presidential award for civil service – and we've started surprising the recipients. President Freeman goes around and surprises them with the news, so that's always very fun.

We've also identified our scholarship recipients, and we'll be announcing that soon. So, that's a plug for our scholarship donations.

And then, finally, we have also awarded our first two grants from the civil service emergency fund, so two employees who identified a very great need. It's really exciting to be able to do that for our fellow employees. So, there's another plug for the civil service emergency fund. Thanks.

P. Chomentowski: Thank you.

- F. Supportive Professional Staff Council – report
Felicia Bohanon, President

P. Chomentowski: Next, Supportive Professional Staff, Felicia.

F. Bohanon: Friday is the deadline for SPS nomination for both our presidential awards, as well as our additional – we have three additional awards that we give. So, those notices went out throughout the university. If there are individuals you would like to nominate, we definitely are still taking nominations.

We recently completed a survey of SPS staff, and we're currently analyzing the data for that, so we anticipate that we'll have that report within the next couple of months.

We also finally have selected an SPS personnel advisor and we'll be announcing that person. I want to make sure that we give them that information before it comes to the body. Actually, we had set a deadline of the 28th, and we receive the nomination of the person, and we're really happy, and I think they will work well in that role. But I have not given them the official, so I won't announce it here. But we have made a decision, and we're moving forward with that.

The other thing is that we have nominations for SPS Council coming out. Actually, we anticipate that we'll have that out in an announcement on Monday. So, if you know of individuals who are interested in serving on the council, we definitely have a number of vacancies coming up as we go into 2022-23. And so, that announcement will be coming out also. Thank you.

P. Chomentowski: Thank you very much.

XII. INFORMATION ITEMS

- A. [Policy Library](#) – Comment on Proposed Policies (right-hand column on web page)
- B. [Minutes](#), Academic Planning Council
- C. [Minutes](#), Athletic Board
- D. [Minutes](#), Baccalaureate Council
- E. [Minutes](#), Board of Trustees
- F. [Minutes](#), Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee
- G. [Minutes](#), Comm. on the Improvement of the Undergraduate Academic Experience
- H. [Minutes](#), General Education Committee
- I. [Minutes](#), Graduate Council
- J. [Minutes](#), Honors Committee
- K. [Minutes](#), Operating Staff Council
- L. [Minutes](#), Supportive Professional Staff Council
- M. [Minutes](#), University Assessment Panel
- N. [Minutes](#), University Benefits Committee
- O. [Minutes](#), Univ. Comm. on Advanced and Nonteaching Educator License Programs
- P. [Minutes](#), University Committee on Initial Educator Licensure
- Q. Approved 2031-32 academic calendar – Page 25
- R. UC meets monthly at 3 p.m.
Spring 2022 meeting dates: Feb 2, Mar 2, Apr 6, May 4

P. Chomentowski: So, I'll move to information items. I just always go to the end, which is R. Our next two meetings for University Council will be April 6, and the last one will be on May 4. Any other comments? All right.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

P. Chomentowski: Can I get a motion to adjourn the meeting today?

M. Stange: So moved.

H. Nicholson: Second.

P. Chomentowski: All right, all those in favor, say aye.

Members: Aye.

P. Chomentowski: All those opposed, say no. Abstentions? All right, meeting is adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 4:06 p.m.