TRANSCRIPT

University Council
Wednesday, February 28, 2018, 3 p.m.
Holmes Student Center Sky Room
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois


VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Bond, Boughton, Campbell, Chitwood, Chung, Click, Elish-Piper, Freeman, Hunt, Krmenc, Ledgerwood, Penrod, Rajagopalan, Song, Zolotor

OTHERS PRESENT: Bryan, Falkoff, Jensen, Klaper, McGill, McHone-Chase, VandeCreek, Wesener Michael, Whitelaw

OTHERS ABSENT: Blazey, Kortegast

I. CALL TO ORDER

C. McCord: A slightly unexpected role of serving as acting executive vice president and provost is that I get to act on behalf of acting president Lisa Freeman while she’s away. So I’ll be her understudy for today’s University Council meeting and begin with a call to order.

Acting Executive Vice President and Provost C. McCord, on behalf of Acting President L. Freeman, called the meeting to order at 3 p.m.

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

C. McCord: And a verification of quorum. So we need to establish that we have a quorum for the meeting. To do so, voting members, if you have not yet acquired a clicker, please acquire a clicker. And we click in just on a 1 to establish you’re here. Press 2 if you’re not here. Thirty-two people represent a quorum. If you’ve straggled in, we’re trying to establish we have a quorum. Grab a clicker, press 1 if you are a voting member of the Council, please. All right, we’re good to go. Very good.
III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

C. McCord: Do we have a motion to approve today’s agenda?

M. Haji-Sheikh: So moved.

R. Scherer: Second.

C. McCord: We have a motion from Haji-Sheikh, second from Scherer. Any discussion? Those in favor of adopting the agenda, please say aye.

Members: Aye.

C. McCord: Any opposed? Okay, thank you.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE, JANUARY 31, 2018 MEETING MINUTES

C. McCord: You should have received the minutes of the January 31 meeting. Do I have a motion to approve the minutes?

C. Doederlein: So moved.

D. Ballantine: Second.

C. McCord: Okay. Do we have any discussion about the minutes, any corrections? If not, those in favor of approving the minutes, please say aye.

Members: Aye.


V. PRESIDENT’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

C. McCord: The President’s Announcements, I’ll limit myself to the three items that you see on the agenda. We’ll have three presentations.

A. Technology Accessibility at NIU – presentation
Katy Whitelaw, Information Technology Access Officer
Illinois Information Technology Accessibility Act 2.0 effective January 18, 2018
Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Refresh effective January 18, 2018
Reducing risk of litigation (PDF)

C. McCord: The first is technology accessibility at NIU by Katy Whitelaw from DoIT, Katy.
K. Whitelaw: Hi, I’m Katy Whitelaw. I did work for the Division of IT for several years. Last year the Division of Enrollment Management, Marketing and Communication asked me to be on their web team. And in December President Freeman asked me to be NIU’s first full-time technology accessibility officer.

Here’s my basic job description. Communicate to and educate our campus about accessible technology. Add accessibility to our procurement process, which I’ll talk more about later. RemEDIATE existing technology as needed. Periodically report to the campus on our progress. And keep current with the legal landscape.

The legal landscape did just change. Updated state and federal laws went into effect on January 18 of 2018. The Illinois Information Technology Accessibility Act came out in 2008, and now we have Version 2.0. And Section 508 was added to the Rehabilitation Act in 1998 to address technology. And the refreshed version also became effective on January 18. And NIU’s new policy on purchasing, developing and maintaining and using accessible electronic and information technology also went into effect on the 18th.

When we talk about accessible, we’re talking about accessibility for people who are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, can’t use a mouse, can’t use a keyboard, or use a wheelchair.

There are many benefits to complying with these new laws. We can recruit students with disability with confidence if our technology is accessible. And we can help them succeed all the way to graduation. Fewer accommodations will need to be made. We’ll have a more diverse campus. And accessibility will get easier, because vendors will recognize that higher education customers insist on it.

This is how the Illinois Information Technology Accessibility Act defines electronic and information technology, or EIT. We’re talking about software applications like MyNIU, videos shown in class and information transaction machines, which are ATMs, ticket purchasing machines and card readers.

The Voluntary Product Accessibility Template, or VPAT, is the standard way to measure accessibility. It’s based on Section 508 criteria, and it shows if the product meets the criteria. For example, Oracle makes the PeopleSoft products that run MyNIU, financial management and Human Resource Services. There are 57 VPATs for PeopleSoft products on the Oracle website. Here are just a couple rows of a PeopleSoft VPAT. The first row is the Section 508 criteria, which says, “Non-text elements need a text equivalent.” This criteria addresses the use of images to convey information. Screen readers can’t read images, even if they’re images of text. If the words below – About, Admissions, Academics, Research, Outreach – if they were images, we would need to have a text equivalent that the screen readers could read. The VPAT states that this product meets the criteria.

The second row is about multi-media. Multi-media, like videos, needs captions. This product doesn’t have any multi-media, so it’s not applicable.
You may be thinking, “The EIT I need to buy isn’t accessible, or the accessible choice isn’t nearly as good, or it costs a lot more.” It may be a small purchase, or you may know exactly who’s going to be using it, and none of the people have disabilities. The law recognizes exceptions. It recognizes undue burden, like the industry standard product is required. Or there is no acceptable accessible choice. Or is there an extreme cost difference? Another exception is knowing who will use the EIT and no one has a disability.

However, the law requires that an equally effective alternative is available when a user with disabilities needs to use the EIT. Equally effective alternative means a person with disabilities is able to independently use the EIT to get the same information, engage in the same interactions, enjoy the same services, in the same time frame as those without disabilities.

So we have basically two situations. We have electronic and information technology on campus right now. And we make accommodations on a case-by-case basis. The smartest thing we can do now is to buy accessible EIT going forward so we don’t have to retro-fit. We’re creating a process to add accessibility to the procurement process, and it will go in parallel to other checks we already make, like security and copyright. And we’re going to make it as efficient as possible so we don’t hold up purchases.

So we’re in Phase 1. Purchase requisitions for EIT will come to me. If it’s inaccessible, I’ll let the purchaser and the vendor know. I’ll ask the vendor if there is a timeline to compliance. And if there is an equally effective alternative available. For now, I’m just getting the word out that NIU is committed to purchasing accessible EIT.

If vendors resist, I’ll remind them that all Illinois universities must comply with these laws and that, when their products are accessible, it’s more convenient for us to buy them. I’ll also create a record system for audit purposes, and I’ll train campus purchasers to check for accessibility.

Purchasers will need to get a VPAT from the vendor. If the product or service is inaccessible, they can ask for and record a timeline for compliance and an equally effective alternative if there is one. All purchases will need vendor accessibility certification wherein the vendor acknowledges that the product is accessible or that there is going to be an accessibility exception in this case.

And eventually, purchasing accessible technology will become easier. Vendors will make their technology accessible, because their customers require it. They’ll have a VPAT readily available. Fewer accommodations will be needed, so we can tackle more difficult accommodations.

The return on investment in accessible technology is really big. Let’s recruit students with disabilities, knowing we can accommodate them, and they can be successful all the way to graduation. We can reduce our risk of litigation. Universities have been sued for non-compliant course materials and campus-wide applications like email and registration. And as students with disabilities are successful at NIU, we’ll earn a reputation for being a friendly campus. We’ll have a more diverse campus. Let’s make NIU a center of excellence for accessibility.
Are there any questions?

L. Saborío: I have a question, Katy. Can I ask you this question?

K. Whitelaw: Yes.

L. Saborío: So if someone is looking for an equally, what is it they need?

K. Whitelaw: Equally effective alternative.

L. Saborío: Who would determine whether that is equally effective?

K. Whitelaw: Well, I think the vendor would, hopefully, have one, because the vendor’s been asked for one before, if the vendor is selling an inaccessible product. And then I would always check it over. And then it depends on the person using it. I’ve seen these posted on other university website, the work-arounds for Google or other applications.

L. Saborío: Okay. And also the Disability Resource Center would be a good resource for us?

K. Whitelaw: The Disability Resource Center is a very good resource. Their main job is to help students who are faced with inaccessible technology on a case-by-case basis. If necessary, they have a graduate student who will help the student through whatever it is in the classroom or online.

C. McCord: Could I understand Linda’s question in a slightly different way? You don’t want people to grant exceptions trivially.

K. Whitelaw: No.

C. McCord: Right. And so often there is a question of, okay, is there some third party, some neutral party charged with validating. I say, “Oh yes, it’s fine with me.” Well I think that’s how I understood Linda’s question. Is there some agency, some party within the university whose sign-off is necessary? Or is it strictly up to the interested party within the university? If I want this software and I say it’s good enough, is that all that’s needed? Or is there somebody else whose sanction I would need?

K. Whitelaw: I think that would be me.

C. McCord: Okay.

K. Whitelaw: Yes.

C. McCord: Okay, thank you for verifying that. Michael?

M. Haji-Sheikh: One of the questions you brought to mind was: A lot of software, especially a lot of software [inaudible] very low run software and often they won’t have, for obvious reasons, all
the efforts put into the engineering software to solve a problem, not necessarily who’s solving the problem. And so I’m not certain the leverage is there for some of the software packages. Just because we’re a university, we’re small players in that game [inaudible].

K. Whitelaw: Well every university that has an electrical engineering department will be facing this.

M. Haji-Sheikh: It doesn’t really matter. We’re tiny. You could add [inaudible] together and our purchasing power is like one small division of a big corporation.

K. Whitelaw: So you tell them, when a contract comes up, you just may not be purchasing from them and you’d look for an accessible alternative, because, think about it, if you don’t, who are you discriminating against.

M. Haji-Sheikh: I’m telling you that there aren’t any. These are suppliers [inaudible] The whole industry [inaudible]

K. Whitelaw: Give me their numbers.

M. Haji-Sheikh: I guarantee, have fun [inaudible] corporate guys $100,000 and charge us $2,000.

K. Whitelaw: Okay.

C. McCord: Other questions or comments? If not, thank you, Katy.

B. Textbook Affordability – presentation
Fred Barnhart, Dean, University Libraries
Leanne VandeCreek, Acting Associate Dean, University Libraries
Ian Crone, Director, Holmes Student Center
Stephanie Torres, Director, Academic Affairs, Student Association

C. McCord: We next have a presentation on textbook affordability. There’s a team with us: Fred Barnhart, Leanne VandeCreek from University Libraries; Ian Crone – is Ian with us today?

F. Barnhart: Ian’s not with us.

C. McCord: And Stephanie Torres from the Student Association. Fred, you have the microphone?

F. Barnhart: I’ll just start us off. I’m Fred Barnhart, Dean of the University Libraries. We did a similar presentation last week at Faculty Senate, so some of you may have new questions since last week. The Libraries recognizes that textbooks have big impact on students, especially the affordability of textbooks. It can make the difference between a student falling behind very quickly in the first couple of weeks of class if they’re not able to afford the textbook, to perhaps even dropping out of the class or school, depending on their availability of the textbook. So we decided in the fall to begin investigating ways that the library could impact this. I might say also that
independently on campus, several different groups have started asking themselves the same question about how they could positively impact the affordability of textbooks. So Stephanie is representing the Student Association. The bookstore has been asking this question. I know a number of different committees on campus, including Faculty Senate, have been asking the same question. So we’re really just representative, and I want to emphasize that going forward, I think communication between all these groups is really important. We’ve started meeting kind of ad hoc, but I think formalizing our communication and our meeting might be really good going forward. So without further ado, I will hand it off to Stephanie. She did a really fantastic survey and has some additional information about the student effect or the effect on students of textbook affordability. And then Leanne’s going to talk a little bit about the Textbook Task Force that we put together in the library. And then I’ll follow up with some of the information about some of the other things that we’ve done in the library as well. So, Stephanie?

S. Torres: And I’ll go ahead and stand, because it’s a little bit easier to see the PowerPoint. But as Dean Barnhart mentioned, the first three points are just basics of nationally what the issues are. But the last one, as Dean Barnhart mentioned, these are the couple of groups that we were in conversations with. And again, we found that these pockets of communication were occurring throughout the university. It was just a matter of kind of bridging them together and communicating in one cohesive voice.

So with that, a group of students created a student survey to better understand what the students’ issues are. It’s really more like a needs assessment, more than anything. Of course, there’s more research to be done, and this survey is not comprehensive. But basically, one of the first questions I asked is: What is your year in school? Most of the respondents were seniors. I also wanted to make sure to include graduate students and law students, just to make sure that the survey was inclusive. But with that being said, I want to say about 84 percent of them said they were full-time students.

So these are students that were taking, or are currently taking between 12 and 17 credit hours. This survey question really stems off from a previous question. I asked: Do you purchase textbooks for courses? About 44 percent they almost always purchase textbooks. About 21 percent said they either almost never or never purchase them. So resoundingly, the main theme here is that most student purchase textbooks. However, they wait until after the first day of class to purchase them. But specifically with this question: What is keeping them from purchasing them? It’s because they want to make sure that the book will be used by the instructor in that class. There was a comment section on the survey, and we found that a lot of times students have on the syllabus, it says “required” or “mandatory,” but it’s not always the case once you come to the first day. It might not always be required and mandatory. So students would rather not invest time and really their finances to buy books that may not be used in the classroom.

Beyond that, the second point, cost was the second highest response. But I think above that – and I know it’s a little hard to tell – but it says, “I wait for disbursement from the Financial Aid Office.” A lot of students are not aware that you can actually charge your bursar’s account, even if your award has not been disbursed yet. And I think there’s a $700 cap limit to that. But that just goes to show that there isn’t a lot of communication in terms of students being aware that it is an option until they have their award ready.
When do you typically acquire textbooks? Like I mentioned before, the main response was: After the first day of class. And if you correlate that with the previous question, it makes sense. If I’m purchasing my books after the first day of class, it’s because I’m waiting to see if the book will, in fact, be used by the instructor. And a small percentage said: Before the first day of class.

So with that being said, on average how much do you spend on textbooks? Most of the students responded between $400 and $499. And it might not seem like it’s a lot, but for a lot of students it is. And in speaking with some students specifically about this question, they asked me to be cautious with the answers, because just because a student might spend $100 on a book, it doesn’t mean that they purchased it from the bookstore. A lot of times, you learn to circumvent the system so that you don’t have to spend that extra dollar or that extra $10 on a textbook.

Where do you get your textbooks? Select all that apply. Most of the students – and I found this surprising – about 40 percent combined obtain their books from VCB and the NIU Bookstore. And I found this surprising, because I did not expect a large majority – 40 percent – to do that. Typically, once you reach your junior and senior year, you learn of different alternatives that there are in acquiring your textbooks. So I think this just tells us that there is a market available for students and that they’re still acquiring them from the vicinity of the university. So there is definitely a market for that.

So with that being said, there’s a couple of alternatives. And the library will speak more toward the open source textbooks. But I was in conversations with the University of [Wisconsin]-Eau Claire, and I really liked their approach. They have a department – or each department has a committee that looks at how long will we keep this textbook. So these are long-term adoptions. And they decide as a whole, will we keep this textbook for six semesters, less or more? The book cannot be changed unless you petition the committee. So again, it allows the book to be recycled more often throughout the different departments. But in general, all three institutions – two of them are in Illinois, the other one is, of course, in Wisconsin – but the premise is, it’s almost like going to the library and checking out a book. You just have to verify that, yes, you’re, in fact, a student here. These are the classes I am taking. These are the books that I need. So I obtain the book in the beginning of the semester. I use them throughout the semester, and at the end, I give them back, again, to be recycled for the next semester. So they have found it to be very useful. This actually works because they include a student fee in addition to the tuition and fees. Specifically with Eau Claire, I believe it’s $89 in addition to the fees. So if you compare that to between the $400 and the $499, it’s a big savings.

In regards to the book swap, this is with Heartland Community College. Basically the premise is: If I give a book, I get a book in return. If I give three books, I get three books in return. So you kind of get a voucher for how many books you provide to the rental program. I was in conversations with our Student Association to see if this is even feasible. Just because it works there, it doesn’t necessarily mean it would work with us. But it seems that, if it’s something the university decides to move forward with, we started looking at how many students we would need, how much manpower we would need. What’s important to know with all of these programs is that there is very limited friction between the university as a whole. You might think that, “Oh, well will this affect the bookstore or the library or other departments?” And they make sure that there is an integrated
system that they’re all working together again for the benefit of the students.

With Cengage and Odigia, these are different learning platforms, but Cengage has a program, it’s called Cengage Unlimited. So for $120 – it’s $119 – but it’s $120.

**J. Stephen:** $129.

**S. Torres:** $129 now?

**J. Stephen:** In the fall. I just talked to [inaudible] this morning.

**S. Torres:** Okay.

**J. Stephen:** Yeah, I was going to bring that up. That’s a great plan, especially for people taking like math and physics at the same time.

**S. Torres:** Exactly, yes. So it does work if it is integrated with other disciplines. But basically for that amount of money, you get to have access to all of the textbooks and not just textbooks, but, for example, MindTap and WebAssign. So there’s different platforms.

Odigia, what I really like about them is that they encourage OER [open educational resources], and they encourage faculty-created curriculum based on OER. They also encourage faculty to create and write their own textbooks to be uploaded to the systems to be shared with other institutions as well.

Some major take-aways: There is definitely more research that has to be done with access codes. I don’t think I know from reading the comments in the student section, there was a lot of frustration with this part just because a lot of students complained that, “well all the work that I did through the access codes, all the homework assignments I turned in, all the tests, all the quizzes. It’s all gone. I don’t get to keep that at the end of the semester.” I know it depends on the course, and it depends on which platform specifically you’re using. Sometimes you get to keep it for more than just the six months or more than just the semester. But generally the students that were stating their concerns with it, they were keeping it for only one semester, or using it only for one semester.

Beyond that, there has to be an interdisciplinary approach so this means it’s not just a student problem. It’s not just a faculty problem. It’s really an issue that affects everyone as a whole. So including the DRC, the library, individuals from the CHANCE Program, individuals from DREAM Action, all these student groups and all these different departments in the university. Everyone has a different perspective. So including them and stating how they’re affected by it or what solution they can see, that is very useful.

Like I mentioned before, the survey is not complete, it’s very basic. It’s foundation level of information. So there’s definitely more room for improvement. Another thing is that students are very innovative, and they will find a way again to save that extra dollar. And I speak from experience, as well, because I am a student. So if I do not find a reason to have a book for my course, I will rely on the materials that my professor gives me. And I rely on alternative resources.
like YouTube videos or Khan Academy. There are all these different resources that are available out there.

Beyond that, there are a couple of comments that I wanted to mention from the students. Some of them explained that there are software programs that are very, very expensive. And they were specifically stating this in the business program. It’s anonymous, and they didn’t give too much details, but that was one thing that a couple of students mentioned. Undocumented students also face a lot of issues with this. And I found it interesting that, since they don’t receive any federal, state assistance, a lot of times textbooks are not necessarily their top priority. They’re all relying on, or they’re focusing on different issues they have to deal with. So they do sometimes spend a little bit more on textbooks.

Professors writing their own textbooks and mandating them to be used in their classrooms is also an issue that students have run into, and they were very explicit about that. The buy-back program is not – at least in their perspective – they don’t see the huge benefit of using it just because, you buy a book for $100, you might only get $10 in return. So they don’t really see the benefit of using it.

There was a lighter note to the student survey. There were a couple of students who mentioned the positive things that their professors are doing, and I thought it was noteworthy to mention them. They mentioned that a lot of professors allow students to use editions that are older. So instead of using the tenth edition, it’s okay to use the ninth or the eighth. And I think, again from a student perspective, it’s a little frustrating to see that sometimes the only difference between the ninth and the newest edition, the tenth edition, is the chapters are rearranged or the figures are different. So the content, itself, is not that different. It’s more of just the physical attributes of the book. Now again, there’s exceptions to that. But typically that’s what we come to find, and that’s why professors say it’s okay to use an older edition.

A lot of students also mention that some professors gather data from other sources, so they look for articles, they post them on Blackboard. Or journals they post on Blackboard, and that just adds a different element to their learning environment. And it does help, because then they don’t have to purchase the textbook. And they also found it helpful for professors to put copies of the book in the library. I know the library will speak to this a little bit more, but they found that to be very helpful. Again they suggested long-term adoptions, and a lot of them mentioned not wanting to necessarily go to VCB or the bookstore to purchase their books, which is unfortunate because it is accessible and it does prepare students to be ready for the first day of class.

And, of course, there was a lot of anecdotal evidence of being on the Ramen Noodle Diet and almost failing classes because they weren’t able to purchase their books. There was a student specifically, and I wanted to quote them, because I thought it was very important. They said, “Yes, I feel that many students are not able to afford textbooks, which keeps them from getting materials they need for their classes. Frankly, I feel that many students are under the impression they are ripped off, which is a negative impression on the university. If they work to make them more affordable, I think it would help retention and graduation rates.” And I could not agree more with this student. I think it’s also a great move for the university to say, “Hey, we’re able to save you X amount of dollars your first semester, second semester, your first two years of your undergrad
degree here. And I think this just goes along to the point that we’re all invested in the same goal. We all want to limit as many obstacles as possible for students to acquire their educational goals. So with that in mind, I’ll move on to the library. [applause]

L. VandeCreek: Hi, I’m Leanne VandeCreek, the acting associate dean for public services in the University Libraries. I want to thank Stephanie for doing such a great job. It’s been really wonderful working with her over the course of the last six months.

So I’d just like to talk a little bit about the library’s response to the textbook affordability issue on our campus. And I think I’d like to start back in the fall of 2017, we started having conversations in the library about the exploding cost of books. This is something that’s been on our radar for a long time. At the start of every semester, the first couple of weeks, nearly every student who comes to the reference desk is asking about textbooks. They come with their syllabi. They come with their list from the bookstore, and they want to know do we have their books. It always feels great that, yes, we do have your book. A lot of the times we don’t. We encourage them to try to request those books through iShare or Consortium if they are available from other libraries. And this is just something that we’ve been doing for years and years.

But back in the fall, in reaching out to the colleges across campus, we got a huge push in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences from their dean urging those faculty really put their required materials on reserve in the library. So that push from the dean, coupled with personal touch from all of the subject specialist librarians resulted in an increase in 30 percent of the materials placed on reserve over what we had seen in previous years. So we were thrilled with that.

At about the same time, Dean Barnhart arrived, and we started having conversations about what else can we do besides increasing personal copies from teaching faculty across campus. And he decided to form a task force within the libraries, and the next thing that we were charged with doing was developing a plan. So we were going to come up with a pilot project for this spring in which we had some money to spend on that to purchase textbooks to place on reserve. And for this pilot reserve program, we were targeting what we were calling high-impact courses. So these are courses with high enrollment and high-cost materials to go along with that high enrollment – a lot of gen eds, per se.

So we sent out a Qualtrics survey to the teaching departments all across campus and at the same time, we requested data from the bookstores, both of them, Village Commons and Holmes Student Center. And so based on – I have some data on that – we got 29 responses from faculty from the Qualtrics survey. And that was just information about these high-enrollment courses – what books they required.

We were able to order, we purchased 18 of those 29 requests. Eleven of the requests that we received from faculty we were unable to purchase for the reserves program. Either there were again issues with those access codes. If the students are required to have those codes, they have to purchase that. Just having the book on reserve in the library isn’t going to help them, because they need access to the electronic parts, whether that’s supplemental materials, homework turn-in, courses, quizzes, whatever additional supplementary materials come with those codes. So there
were 11 items that we couldn’t pick up. Some other items were custom bookstore packets, like those course packs that you put together. Or we didn’t purchase them because we already had them as part of the library’s collection.

The total number of courses, these high-impact courses, there were 15 of those that we were able to purchase items for, and all-in-all we purchased 33 items, 30 print books and three of them were electronic. We would like to have purchased electronic when available, but many textbooks are not available in electronic format.

All right so that’s what we were doing in terms of our purchasing for the pilot reserve program. And it’s been going very well. We’re going to assess it, of course, at the end of the semester. We’re going to be sending out surveys to all of the instructors who were utilizing these materials that were placed on reserve, ask them to disseminate that survey to their students. We’re particularly interested in learning how many students made use. Were they even aware that their book was placed on reserve in the library? How many unique students were using that, rather than maybe just a handful of students constantly using the same book. So as soon as we have that assessment data, hopefully, we’ll have an opportunity to share that with you.

Something else that the task force was charged with was creating a resource guide for everyone on campus, which we did. That LibGuide is linked from the library’s homepage. Right now if you go to our homepage, it’s linked in the photo scroll, in the banner, and will stay there for a while. And then it has an additional permanent location among all of the other resource guides that are there.

It has several parts. One of the parts is aimed at faculty members. And it gives a variety of information, including tips for you, such as the earlier you make your textbook adoptions, the lower price that will be passed along to the students. If you make your adoptions early, the bookstores can purchase their books in bulk, and that savings gets passed along to the students. Additionally, to really think hard about whether or not a book has to be required. Can you find an alternative? Could you sort of build your own required materials based on either books that are available in the library, a series of selections of journal articles or essays or materials that you might be able to essentially create your own. With your input, the library has spent millions and millions of dollars cultivating this content, so we would hope that there would be some materials that you could find in there to use.

The other part of the LibGuide is actually aimed at students. And it also gives some tips and selections for them about once they know what courses they’ll be enrolled in, when is the best time to buy. It provides information about rental programs and other online avenues that they can explore through which to purchase their bookbooks so that they can make those comparisons and, based on their own finances, find the best deal that’s financially feasible for them.

In addition to information about our reserves programs, about our e-books, and tips and tricks for both faculty and students, there’s information about the OERs, the open educational resources. And we see that as the natural next phase of what the task force has been working on. Open educational resources are available. We just joined one of many of them, but the one that we joined is called the Open Textbook Network, which we joined through our library consortium. It has over 600 titles.
available in there. And, of course, the beauty of the OERs is that, if they’re not perfect for your, if they don’t contain everything you want, they’re free to use. You can adapt them. You can add to them. And you can make them your own, customize them for your own course. I’ve heard faculty say this many, many times: No textbook is perfect. Well, if no textbook is perfect, it might as well be free; and then you can improve upon that book and maybe make it just perfect for you and for your students’ needs as well.

So the other part of the Open Textbook Network, in addition to providing those 600 texts, it provides a platform on which you could create your own. So if you’re so inclined, you would have the ability to do that within this OTN. There’s a training coming up soon. I believe it’s in April. And the library will be sending at least two representatives to that training. And hopefully, when they come back, we will have a better sense of what all goes into assisting faculty members with creating their own OER textbooks and related materials. So stay tuned for additional details about that.

Oh, and I guess lastly, another thing, a deliverable from this Textbook Task Force that we hope to share with you at some point. In addition to assessing the success that we’ve had with this program, or how it’s positively impacted students, we’re researching what’s happening on other campuses and where we’re going to go next.

We will be extending the pilot reserve program for the upcoming fall semester. So we have additional funds to spend on that. A huge thank you to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences for contributing some funding to that. So look again, be on the lookout for a Qualtrics survey that will be coming your way. So if you’re interested in having your materials purchased by the library and placed on our reserve program, that survey will be coming around, probably just after spring break or maybe even before. We’re just getting that together now so that we will have adequate time to order those materials and have them ready to go on Day 1 of classes in the fall semester.

I think that’s it. I’m happy to take any questions. I’m sure Stephanie will be happy to take questions that you might have. Thank you.

**C. McCord:** Gary.

**G. Chen:** First of all, I would like to say thank you for the library taking on this initiative for our students. And I believe our students will appreciate it in their realm. My question is really not in the context of the library task force, but just out of my personal curiosity, because from the presentation made by Stephanie, at the beginning you mentioned about, according to your study, the textbook price in this nation has gone up 88 percent over the last decade. And through your study before the survey, did you get why or a couple of whys? Why this nation’s textbook price has gone up so much?

**S. Torres:** From what I was able to find, and also in speaking with other students, it was the constant new editions of the books. Every new edition is a little bit more expensive than the previous one. But that was the main issue. And also just the transition from the physical aspects of the book to an online aspect. So again, the access codes. And most of the times, we find that there is
a package now. So it’s not just the physical book, but it comes with the access code with the online version. So it’s just the way the industry is shifting as well.

C. McCord: Kendall.

K. Thu: Thank you for the presentation. The second time around, I learn a little more each time. When you did the presentation before Faculty Senate last time, I raised the issue of what I thought was a policy at the university about being careful of using your own authored book in your classroom. And I emailed my colleague, David Ballantine, in the college office real time during the Senate meeting. And what he found, thankfully, is that we do have a Conflict of Interest Policy. That’s where it really resides. And so it doesn’t necessarily mean it absolutely is a conflict of interest. But the relative cause here is that a conflict of interest occurs when there is a divergence between an individual’s private interests and his or her professional obligations to the university. So you have to be careful about being seen as profiting from your own books in class.

C. McCord: Buck.

J. Stephen: One of the things about profiting was an author on a book that we used in math. And we just gave our profit, the check I got would go to charity. One thing that I think that would work for the sciences is that many of us use the Cengage materials. And she talked about that one semester access for $129. It’s better than that. From what I understand from my conversation with the rep this morning, if a student signs up to take our three-semester calculus sequence and pays that $129, that access carries over for all three parts of the course. So for instance, the student could take Calc 1, Calc 2, and then when they take Calc 3, maybe they’re taking Physics 253, which uses Cengage materials, so automatically they get that book free. I don’t know how popular Cengage books are out of the science departments, but they’re used in chem, physics, math and I think bios uses them too. So that could be quite a money saver. But the important thing is that the students need to sign up – like if they wanted to keep that for three semesters, as far as I know, the best bet would be, if they’re taking Calc 1, is to sign up for Calc 1 because that gives them three semesters. If they sign up for 251, 252, I don’t think use it, but to make it as a primary course for linked courses like that. And then it just keeps going.

F. Barnhart: One of the hesitations I think with Cengage is how wide that commitment is then, whether it’s just for the students or the faculty that decide to use it, or whether it’s a wider institution commitment to use Cengage materials. So I think with some of these online textbooks, there’s a question about how much does the institution have to commit to in order to get that deal. So I think there’s a lot of different models out there to explore.

J. Stephen: Of course, they want more of our market, but we have enough engagement now for that to work. They sign up for that three calculus, but again it depends on which one your sign up for your premium, for your primary course.

F. Barnhart: Sure, it’s worth exploring.

C. McCord: Dave.
J. Stephen: It might be cool if someone kept track of who uses Cengage.

D. Ballantine: I had a similar conversation with a rep from Cengage and just some additional information. A one-semester subscription was quoted to me as $119.99, but there is a discount if a student wants to sign up for multiple semesters, so there is potential for additional savings. It is limited right now to the electronic library. Now they do have their entire catalog in electronic format, but if a student wants to have a physical copy, they can also request a hard copy as a rental, and they get it for free, all they have to do is pay shipping. So there are some attractive features to that plan.

C. McCord: Other comments?

S. Torres: And I just have a follow-up to that as well. I agree with both. I think when I spoke with the Cengage representative – I think she came to all of us at the same time – that was one of my concerns, that it will only work if there’s enough interest and there’s enough courses that actual require me to purchase it. Because there’s no point in me having just one course required when all these other courses do not. So that’s something that I think, when other institutions look at, and specifically again with Eau Claire, when the department looks at: Like, okay, let’s all agree on purchasing from this one vendor, then it does benefit as a whole. But again, it brings up the question of how much commitment is there. It’s kind of evaluating both, but seeing, according to the department, what might work best for that specific entity.

D. Ballantine: Also a follow-up, it’s my understanding from the conversation with the rep that students can purchase these individually. It does not necessarily require a commitment on the part of the institution. So that’s number one. Number two, I think as an institution, we need to be very careful that we don’t infringe on the academic freedom of faculty to make selections for courses. But I think students, when they sign up for courses, they get access to their textbook list, they can then make a decision based on which of their courses have required text materials from Cengage and whether or not there’s any potential savings there.

C. McCord: Just one small observation, to echo a comment that Stephanie made about textbook affordability, Council of Deans had a presentation this morning from DREAM Action, which advocates on behalf of the undocumented community. When asked what could we do to help, what could we do to help, what could we do to be more supportive, their very first answer was textbook affordability. And given the many concerns that this population has, it was striking that that was their first response. So I think that strongly echoes what Stephanie noted.

Other questions or comments? If not, thank you, Dean Barnhart and your team, for working with Stephanie. Congratulations again for great work. We really appreciate the student leadership on this, and we hope this effort will continue. This is a great initiative. I think of faculty, staff, students to really try and make this all work better for all of us. So thank you.
C. McCord: I’ve been asked to give an update about some of our doings in Springfield. It’s been a busy month for NIU in Springfield. Earlier this month, at the beginning of the month, we testified in front of the legislature’s Higher Education Working Group. I want to give you a little bit of an insight on that. We have some legislation, specific to NIU, that we are looking to bring forward. I want to give you a preview of that, and we had our senate appropriations hearing last week. I’ll give you a little bit of background on that.

So appropriations is an annual flogging, sorry, an annual ritual, that all universities and state agencies go through. The Higher Education Working Group, though, that’s a distinctive thing. It’s a group that’s been formed, it’s a bipartisan, bicameral working group of 12 legislators, all of whom I think are sincerely very concerned about the future of higher education in Illinois and are really motivated by two immediate drivers, if you will.

One, as President Freeman often says, is the 700-plus days without a state budget, the fiscal hangover that has resulted from that. But there’s an awareness across the state that, while that fiscal hangover may very well have accelerated the out-migration of students from Illinois, it didn’t cause it. There was an outmigration of college students from Illinois well before that, which certainly accelerated in the last few years. Legislature is very concerned with what’s driving that outmigration.

So those twin concerns really drove the Higher Education Working Group to come together. They’re in very early stages. They invited universities to come, present before them, really for an opportunity for us to educate them about us. Now they had specific questions, and I’ll spend a moment – because I think it’s worth you knowing what kinds of questions they’re asking, I think it’s revealing about their thought process about higher education – but it was also a chance for NIU to make its case: Who are we? What are we here for? What’s our distinctive place within higher education? I think that’s what we chose, really, to focus on.

Their questions – some of the things they asked about were just vital statistics, just give us the facts and figures about your institution. Some of the things they asked about were tactics: How do you do recruiting? How do you do marketing? What are we doing in retention? How do we apply institutional aid? How do we try to manage affordability?

We gave them those basics, but we really took the opportunity to make the case that NIU’s distinctive value is that we serve a population of largely under-served student populations, and we serve those students in a distinctive way, offering them the opportunity to be at a research university where high-quality academic programs, engagement, connecting with the region, and involvement in research are all part of the educational experience. It was the intersection of all of those activities that is what makes us stand out. And I think we really had our chance to make the case to the legislature. Admittedly, even those who were fairly friendly to us, didn’t necessarily know a whole lot about who we are and what we do and how we’re different than anybody else.
So it was a welcome opportunity just to make that pitch. Some of the questions they asked, again, I think are revealing of some of the thought processes that are going on in Springfield. And I should say, by the way, that I’m reflecting not just the questions they asked us, but we presented along with Chicago State, Governors State, Northeastern Illinois University. Other state universities presented on other days that we weren’t there for. We were last, so we had the opportunity to hear the dialog with everyone else, as well as our own.

So they’re very interested in capacity. How big could each institution be? How big should it be? And they were very interested in institutions that could tell the difference between what’s the biggest you could be and what’s your right size. They’re very interested in options of collaboration within the higher education space versus consolidation. But consolidation is certainly on their minds as one possible solution. How could you put institutions together? They realize that it’s not easy. They gave us a lot of space to talk about cooperation in lieu of consolidation, but that’s very much in the discussion right now.

They were very interested in outmigration, of course. And there’s a related phenomenon that I’ll come back to in a moment that came out of the discussion about outmigration. Let me put a marker down for that. They wanted to know some more tactical questions that we were very glad they asked, questions like: How would we respond to an opportunity for multi-year MAP awards to students? We did not have to think hard about that. Yes, we would be strongly in favor of multi-year predictability for students, and their financial aid is vitally important.

Little more challenging questions were: What kind of policy changes would be impactful for us? What kind of funding formula should the state look at? There’s a performance funding right now that only puts a half percent of state funding in play. And even that has sort of been held in abeyance the last couple of years. Half a percent of nothing is still nothing. When we had no state budget, they largely froze out that piece. But they’re asking themselves questions about: We have a performance funding model. It puts very little at risk. Should it go bigger? Should it be dismantled? Should it be modified? So what kind of formula for funding? What kind of performance component should be part of that?

I said there was an interesting thing that came out about the discussion about outmigration. To get at outmigration, one of the questions they asked everybody was: Who do you lose students to? If a student applies to you, is admitted by you, but doesn’t come to you, where do they go instead? Well we knew historically our answer to that for years our top three competitors in that sense have been the same top three, and they just sort of bounce around first place, second place, third place. UIUC, UIC, Illinois State. Those are the top three other schools we lose people to. We lose very, very, very few students to out of state schools. We are essentially not in competition. The students who are outmigrating are a different population than the students who are applying to NIU. Many of our sister institutions reflected the same thing. So what began to emerge, for me at least, was there’s a real – I hesitate to say dichotomy because I don’t know there’s only two parts to this – but the students who are going outside of state appear to be largely looking at, say, UIUC.

But there’s another phenomenon that came to light, again, not just for us, but for a number of institutions. You know who our actual number one place we lose students to? Nowhere. If you look
at the students who apply to NIU, are admitted to NIU, and do not attend NIU, the largest fraction of them go nowhere. Now 13 percent of our freshmen applicants, a quarter of our transfer applicants, go nowhere – not to a community college – nowhere. That was striking. It was striking to us. We didn’t fully appreciate that ourselves, the magnitude of that. It was striking when not only we reported that, but many other institutions reported that. So that really lit up something for the legislators, to realize this isn’t just an outmigration phenomena. There’s a real phenomena of students who are going not able to access higher education.

J. Stephen: Do they show any realization that affordability aspects

C. McCord: So they asked us what we thought the phenomena were that might be driving that, and we had to acknowledge that getting solid data on students who opt not to go to college is difficult. You have to access that population and find out why didn’t you. But there’s fair evidence that strongly suggests, yes, that affordability is one of the number one issues. So that’s now sort of opened up a piece of the conversation. The legislature had been, I think – it’s rare that you actually see somebody at that age in life really act like a light bulb just went off over their head. But that’s the kind of reaction that generated for them. So that really changed the conversation.

R. Scherer: Chris, I wonder, this is difficult to capture, but of the students who are accepted and then don’t enroll, I’m sure a large number of them then are sort of the realization or at least their perception or their family’s perception that there’s no way they can afford it, because they do not or are unaware of all the resources that may be available to them to help them enroll and stay enrolled. It’s a difficult thing to capture, but I wonder if that was part of the study.

C. McCord: Well again, I can’t say there’s been a deep enough study yet to really say we’ve gotten to that level.

R. Scherer: But I suspect that there are a lot of the students say, “Oh, well, forget it, we can never afford it,” and just walk away.

C. McCord: We did not have actually have rock solid evidence that it was affordability. We have a lot of indicators that strongly suggest affordability is the number one issue, but we’re not deep enough into this yet to say that we know that, much less to say, why don’t they know how affordable it is.

S. Torres: And I was just going to mention that, when I was part of IBHE, we talked about the outmigration as well. But I think one of the key factors was that students are being offered great packages outside of state, and that was what was driving them out, to apply to other places. So I don’t know if that was mentioned as well. I know one of the examples was Purdue, that it’s actually less expensive for me to attend Purdue than it is for me to stay in-state.

C. McCord: Let me come back to that, because, again, in the testimony of NIU, when the schools going with NIU, again, the outmigration phenomena we’re really saying is not a phenomena we intersect with very heavily. We lost a vanishingly small number of students to out of state schools. But let me come back to that.
One of the questions was about policy – what would we like to see different. And part of our response to that – of course, we said stable funding. And we knew enough not to say, “Give us lots more money.” We knew enough to say, stable funding. But there’s a way in which we’re trying to codify this. There is something called the IPAC, Investment Performance and Accountability Commitment. This is a proposition that the University of Illinois has brought forward, which basically frames this as a commitment between the university and the state. NIU is working forward – actually this commitment would be codified in a piece of legislation. So NIU is working forward to join this piece of legislation to basically be added to it. I’m not sure where it is right now, but it’s a bill. It’s by no means law. It’s not clear it will become law, but we’re putting it forward as a proposition.

The proposition we bring forward is that we would seek five years of guaranteed funding at our FY15 level. FY15 was the last year before the crash, if you want to call it that. Our funding at that point was $91 million. This year it was $82 million. So we’re seeking five years’ commitment of $91 million from the state in return for which we would make certain commitments. We would hold tuition and fee increases to no more than the rate of inflation. And given that our Board of Trustees has actually pushed very hard that we actually hold tuition flat for most of the last four years, holding it to no more than the rate of inflation is not an aggressive stance for the university to take. We would commit that 50 percent of our new freshmen would come from underserved populations defined as Pell eligible first generation [inaudible] of Chicago Public Schools. Again at present, more like 70 percent of our students meet that definition. We would provide at least 20 percent of our state appropriation and financial aid. Again we are already providing more than that. We would maintain a 75 percent first-to-second-year retention rate and a 50 percent six-year graduation rate. Again, that’s essentially where we’re at now. And we would increase accountability by providing an annual report on enrollment, graduation and spending per student that we would make public to the state.

We are seeking this as, not just, of course, we would be ecstatic to get five years of guaranteed state funding. We could be so much more sensible if we knew we had stable state funding. But we’re also seeing this as a bit of an opportunity to change the conversation about the ways in which we are accountable to the state, about what the dialog with the state and change the conversation about performance metrics. Because this would involve a commitment on the university’s tuition, this will actually come to the Board of Trustees next week’s meeting as something to seek board approval on before we introduce this into legislation.

Finally, we had our appropriations hearing last week. We were in an interesting situation where we were testifying alongside, not other universities, which is normal, but we were testifying alongside state agencies, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, the ISAC [Illinois Student Assistance Commission] – I never remember what ISAC stands for, but they’re the people who manage and pass out MAP money – and the Civil Service Board.

It was my first time being part of an appropriations hearing. I discharged my responsibility of sitting alongside the president and being ready to jump in if a question was ever asked without ever actually having to say a word. Our testimony was very smooth. The president had a very thoughtful statement about positioning ourselves on the leading edge of moving forward in the state and
engaging with the state, rather than simply whining, “Why can’t you give us more money.” I think she made the ask for higher education in a forceful, but very collegial and cooperative way. They asked us only a very few questions, all of which were basically supportive, positive questions, the kind of questions you ask to signal support rather than to challenge. And I think that there were a couple of messages in that? First of all, I think President Freeman is establishing herself in Springfield as somebody that lawmakers respect and trust. And I think the day that she and the team – the day before – meeting one-on-one with legislators in their offices, clearly she was engaging with them in ways that were meaningful to them. We worked hard to prepare our materials for them and make sure that we had thoughtful information and that we were taking them seriously. I think they respected that.

And the other fascinating aspect to come back to Stephanie’s point was, let’s just say the Illinois Board of Higher Education’s testimony earlier in the day did not go so well. And the question of outmigration came up there and was largely responded to by the director of the IBHE, points similar to what Stephanie was making. Literally, we had a senator say, “My daughter has a better offer from Purdue than she has from UIUC. What’s up with that?” The response from the director of the IBHE was, “Well, UIUC can bring in all these students from China at twice the in-state rate. Why would you want to keep in-state students here?” That was not well received. It was not well received by the senators, was not well received by the University of Illinois. Let’s just say discussion ensued.

But I think it really did draw into sharp focus that there’s a lot of public higher education in Illinois that is serving what a now-retired colleague used to call the sons and daughters of Illinois, the underserved populations, the populations that NIU serves and is very proud of, the students for whom this is a transformative experience. There’s that college experience, there’s the Big Ten experience, and those may be beginning to be – not just beginning to be – those were thrown in sharp relief as sort of two different worlds of higher education, public education. And we need to think hard as a state about which of those populations we are really concerned with serving and advantaging.

So I think NIU came out of this process very well. I think we positioned ourselves to be in the conversations. I think we positioned ourselves to be leading on cooperation rather than consolidation. Now the president also did make the pitch for more money. I’m not holding my breath that they will say that was such amazing testimony that we will give you ten more millions dollars, but she tried. Questions? Buck.

**J. Stephen:** You keep using this word, performance. How do they define that? Is that the 75 percent retention and the 60 percent six-year graduation rate? What other components are there to their view of performance.

**C. McCord:** The current performance funding model looks at retention rates – sorry I’m doing this from memory. It’s all out there, but I don’t have it off the top of mind. The current performance funding from the state looks at retention rates, looks at graduation rates, looks at underserved populations, although we argue that their formula does not recognize – the bonus they give you for graduating underserved populations does not align with, frankly, the costs and challenges that go
with serving that well. There’s a bonus for STEM disciplines, but there’s also in the current performance model, if you are classified as a research university, a significant part of your performance funding today rests on your research and public service dollars, which does not serve NIU well. And there was an acknowledgement that the current funding model really tends to help the rich get richer. The current funding model, the current performance model really tends to reward the schools that have the resources to be able to perform well. They have the resources to be able to spend more on research and public service. And so they get more resources.

**J. Stephen:** And we have the problem that, along with an underserved population, we often have students who basically, their families are in financial precarious situations. And that certainly affects their graduation and retention.

**C. McCord:** Right. Agreed, and I think we’re part of these voices saying you really need a different funding model to recognize that. If that’s really where you want to make your impact, you’re going to need to find differently – again, right now there’s not been an intense conversation about the performance model up to this point, because it’s only funded a half percent. It was put in place for a few years and then kind of fell into abeyance again. But it’s coming back to life, and I think there’s a real push. We’ll see where it goes, but there’s a real push to really re-think what performance are you trying to incentivize at the state level?

**J. Stephen:** But I got the impression that they were trying to push it to a higher level of performance in the future.

**C. McCord:** I’m sorry, say that again.

**J. Stephen:** I had the impression from some things I read that performance might affect more than a half percent of future

**C. McCord:** That’s part of the conversation, as well. There are voices saying, “Let’s move it from a half percent to 20 percent.” There are other voices saying, “It’s a broken model, don’t do that.” And that’s why, again, things like IPAC are trying to sort of change the conversation altogether. Michael.

**M. Haji-Sheikh:** Good question on the funding. We’re talking about the main operational funding, but did the Construction Development Board funding for fixing older buildings, was there anything talked about in that end?

**C. McCord:** Yes, great question. Yes, you’re right, mostly this was about operating budgets. But as we look at IBHE, for example, had an ask for $20 million. If I have the number wrong, don’t quote me, but $20 million is what I’m remembering for capital repairs. That was one thing. Then they had a project list. But the real major construction budget, that was not in these hearings. That’s a different board, different appropriations hearing. Certainly we signaled, all the universities signaled, deferred maintenance is a huge concern. And John Heckmann, by the way, our associate vice president of facilities, really put together – sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words – he put together a graphic showing a very modest expectation of what you ought to be spending juxtaposed
against what we’ve actually been spending. And most of the time we don’t get within a quarter of what we ought to be spending. And this is another thing that’s made a real impact. We’ve seen people at the state level look at this and say, “Oh, okay, now we literally see it.” So I think we’re at least trying to get that conversation going as well, that deferred maintenance is a real, really puts in jeopardy a lot of what universities are doing.

M. Haji-Sheikh: I believe that it’s not something that can be fixed overnight, but I think if the state looked, or everybody gets behind just looking at this as little bit of road fixed today is a road that isn’t falling apart tomorrow. And you get to the next piece of the road.

C. McCord: Yes.

M. Haji-Sheikh: I think that’s where we gotta go.

C. McCord: I will note that there is also some concern that the capital budgets have often provided capital funding to private universities and that we would like to politely suggest that perhaps they ought to focus their resources on public universities.

K. Thu: This may be the same – it may be the same answer that this wasn’t a part of the conversation, but was there a discussion of the transfer of pensions and healthcare costs to

C. McCord: Oh yes, thank you. Yes absolutely. So again, the proposition the governor’s budget address was to over a four-year period transfer pension responsibility to the universities. Now in year one, the governor’s proposal calls for a one-for-one transfer of dollars. It is not completely clear that years two, three, four of the governor’s proposal would also be a one-to-one. So it would be simply a transfer of responsibility without a transfer of funding. IBHE took a position that four years is far too aggressive of a timeline, that if there’s going to be a transfer of pension liability, it needs to be managed over a much longer horizon. And I think the universities are quite comfortable signing off on that. Of course, the universities are signaling if you’re going to transfer responsibility, there really need to be two things that go with it. You have to transfer the funds, and you have to find some way – the governor’s statement was, “This is done in order to give universities more incentive to manage pension costs.” The observation we have at the moment is we have no tools for managing pension costs. If you’re going to give us the responsibility for managing pension, give us tools to work with so that we can do so. I don’t have any position what those tools would look like, but if you simply hand us the responsibility and keep us completely regulated, it’s not really a change.

J. Stephen: What do they want to transfer to us, Chris? The three percent? Or making up for the underfunding?

C. McCord: I won’t be able to hold forth on the details with any accuracy, but my understanding is literally instead of the pension payments coming out of the state, they would sit in our budget. So I think they’re looking at transferring the entirety of our pension liability.

J. Stephen: That’s nuts.

V. Naples: I’m not sure about the pension question, but a lot of the other issues you raised with the IBHE were things that were initiated in the late 1980s, and they ended when the chair of the IBHE was, unfortunately, killed in an aircraft crash in Pel Waukee [Airport]. But they had the previous iteration of the Program Prioritization, which was initially called PQP, Priorities, Qualities and Productivity. And they were trying to increase the percentage of our total budget they controlled through that issue. I seem to remember, although this is a vaguer recollection, they talked about capital improvements and their having an ability to affect that as well as the pension issues. It might be worthwhile if you can reconstruct that information, because the history of that involvement might inform us as to where they would like to go in the future.

C. McCord: True. People like Anne Kaplan who were very involved with PQP have told me in vivid detail that. But yes, I think that there is more than an undercurrent of what is the IBHE’s role in public higher education? Are they going to be stronger, weaker, abolished, consolidated? One proposition that is before the state is to consolidate the IBHE, the Community College Board, the Illinois School Board, all into one agency. So there’s a lot of different things at the agency level in play. So consolidation is not just at the institutional level, it’s at the agency level as well. There’s a lot of things in the air right now.

V. Naples: I was here when all of that was going on and, from that previous set of activities with the IBHE, it was very clear that they wanted to increase their influence and do a variety of additional things beyond what they were doing. I somehow doubt that their motivation or their desires have changed.

C. McCord: The personnel have changed completely.

V. Naples: I don’t believe the philosophy has.

C. McCord: And the IBHE went through a long period where they were largely toothless. And I think they are trying to find themselves again. So, Gary and then I think we perhaps need to move on to the rest of the meeting agenda.

G. Chen: Chris, you did mention about collaboration model or cooperation model versus consolidation model. Could you explain a little bit more about this collaboration or cooperation model. What’s the picture out of it?

C. McCord: It’s a good question, and there’s not a single – model would probably put too strong of a word on it. Let’s say a frame of mind, if you will. The state understandably can look at higher education and say, we have 12 largely independent universities, largely doing their own thing in an environment where funding is very limited and we’re losing a lot of students. This doesn’t feel like we ought to just keep doing what we’re doing. How can we get more value out of what we have is one scenario. Let me call that a collaborative approach. How can we work together to get more value out of what we have? Or do we need to have less? Okay. Have less could take any number of
forms. There is no specific proposition on the table. I don’t want to scare anybody. It’s being talked about at a very rhetorical level at this point. There’s no concrete proposal on the table at this moment.

Collaboration means things like: Well some of these things we’re already doing. We’re trying very hard to strengthen our relations with community colleges, not just routing articulation agreements, but things like finding ways to deliver degree completion programs on their campuses, ways to leverage our resources and their resources. So collaboration between four-years and two-years is one mode of collaboration. Actually there’s pathways all the way from high school to community college to four-year that they and we are very interested in.

The other kind of collaborations are what can we and other four-year schools do together? Can we find ways to better leverage our programs? Libraries, of course, already leverage resources heavily across the state. Are there opportunities to share resources other than libraries? These are very exploratory. These are very early-stage conversations, but it’s trying to get into a mode where the four-year institutions can ask ourselves, “What can we do together rather than view each other strictly as competitors?”

All right, thank you.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Ombudsperson End-of-Term Review received by the Office of the President, Lisa Freeman, Acting President

C. McCord: So we have no consent agenda. Unfinished Business, we have one item of unfinished business, which is, as I understand it, is simply to acknowledge receipt by the President’s Office of an end-of-term review for the Ombudsperson’s, Sarah Klaper. We are not going to actually discuss the content of a review. We are simply noting that, per NIU Bylaws Article 20.5, University Council established an Ombuds Review Committee at its September 13, 2017 meeting. The committee included representation from faculty, staff and students, and was charged to conduct an end-of-term review of the ombudsperson’s performance in office, make a recommendation regarding reappointment to the president. This announcement is just to report that the Review Committee has completed its task and submitted its final report to the president. The president, in due course, will be acting on that and reporting on the results of that.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

IX. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE – Linda Saborío – report – Page 3

C. McCord: I will now turn the microphone over to Linda for the rest of the meeting.
L. Saborío: And you all know me, I like to move this along, right? So here we go. The reports from councils, boards and standing committees. A is my report, which you can find on page 3. It’s a written report. If you have any questions about it, feel free to ask me. In particular, regarding item 3, which has to deal with the IBHE and their – I know we talked about this in Faculty Senate so I won’t go over it again – so if you have any questions, please just ask me about that.

B. University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees – no report
   Barbara Andree, Catherine Doederlein, Alex Gelman, Mark Riley, Linda Saborío, Kendall Thu

C. Academic Policy Committee – Terry Bishop, Chair – no report

D. Resources, Space and Budget Committee – Jim Wilson, Chair, and Sarah McHone-Chase Faculty Senate Liaison/Spokesperson – report

L. Saborío: And let’s move on then to Resources, Space and Budget Committee. Do we have, oh good, you’re still here, thank you. Sarah McHone-Chase with the report.

S. McHone-Chase: I’ll keep it brief. Last week on Monday the Resources, Space and Budget representatives were able to go to the collaborative budget discussion meeting with the division heads, and it went really well. We were happy to be there. It seems like a very deliberative process. We were pleased. And our next meeting is this Friday.

L. Saborío: Excellent.

S. McHone-Chase: Thank you.

L. Saborío: Any questions for Sarah? And again, the next RSB meeting is this Friday at 10 a.m.?

S. McHone-Chase: That’s correct.

L. Saborío: And where do you meet?

S. McHone-Chase: Room 125.

L. Saborío: Room 125 in Altgeld, okay, thank you.

E. Rules, Governance and Elections Committee – Therese Arado, Chair – no report

F. University Affairs Committee – Reed Scherer, Chair – no report

G. Student Association – Rachel Jacob, President; Christine Wang, Speaker of the Senate – report
L. Saborío: So next up we have G, which is Student Association. And we have a student here to speak on behalf of Rachel?

I. An: So this week we’ve been having budget presentations from all the student organizations on campus. So this week and next week, so it’s going to be a lot of busy in the office because the student club president will come to defend their budget and tell should we give them budget for next year.

Rachel has been working very hard with Christine to promote safe campuses and gun violence awareness campaign. I think Christine probably could elaborate on it more. Last week Rachel completed all the compliance check training with the students. And now the students are conducting them alongside the Student Conduct Board. Next week Rachel will be having an off-campus social event policy committee where it’s a committee to kind of like sort of making policy changes to how we should make the off-campus events more kind of like safe and all the stuff into that.

And we’re also currently working on the Student Choice Award where all the students have the opportunity to vote for their peers and recognize their peers for their hard work. And, therefore, I yield.

L. Saborío: Okay, thank you. And Christine?

C. Wang: For the senate, we had a really busy couple of next months. So I’ll try to keep this brief. But President Rachel Jacob and I got together to write some essay state priorities that we wanted to give out to state legislators. So we have five points. The first one was that we wanted a continuous passage of a state budget that fully funds higher education. The second one is a full funding of MAP grants and a possible expansion of the program. The third was access to financial aid resources for undocumented students. The fourth was to make affordable higher education in terms of student loans to be safer for students and prevent predatory loan companies from taking advantage of students. And then the final one was to have a willingness to meet with student constituents about issues. So it sounds like from what the provost had said, it sounds like we’re pretty much on the same page for a lot of it, which I’m happy to hear. So these are things that we’ll be passing along to legislators. Hopefully, we’ll be having a lobby day at some point soon in April to encourage legislators politely that we should have a fully-funded budget.

We also formulated some points of pride for Linda. She actually asked us to find some points of pride that we could pass along to the Presidential Search [Planning] Committee, so I’m just going to run through those really quickly as well. We are really proud of the diversity of the student body and the fact that we have equal opportunities and the support of non-traditional students. We’re very proud of our student involvement. We have over 350-plus student organizations on campus. We’re also proud of our communiversity. So we’re very involved in community outreach. And we’re proud of the service and mentorship of students. And then also our experiential learning and research. So those will be sent over in more detail to Linda, probably at the end of this week.

L. Saborío: Thank you very much. I appreciate that.
C. Wang: In terms of the gun violence initiative that Rachel and I want to address, that I had touched on earlier with the issues happening all across the country, and with the Parkland shooting that happened almost literally on the exact same day ten years later from our own shooting, we wanted to make students aware of the issues that are associated with gun violence and to tell them that we have their backs, that we are supportive of all of our students and of our community as well. But we don’t want this shooting to happen again. We don’t want another community to experience the tragedy that we did and that Parkland also did earlier as well. So we’ll have more detail on that – it’s a new initiative – but we’ll have more detail on that by the next meeting.

Some really important things happening. We have our elections happening so we have our candidates meetings. Our last one is tomorrow in the Sky Room from 7 til 9. If you have students who are aware of the SA, or if you know of students who want to get involved, that meeting is mandatory, and I do recommend that you tell those students to go. The ballot’s going to be announced on Friday, March 9. And then the elections will happen March 27 and 28. And then the winners will be announced the next day or the 30th at the latest. So that’s very exciting. We’re handing over the gavel – not the gavel – but the handing over of leadership and doing transitioning initiatives in April as well.

With the NoShame Campaign, we have a lot of April events with undocumented students and also with the LGBTQ community scheduled as well. We’re also finally launching this blog. I have actually written the first post. It’s a very exposing post, so I’m very excited to see that go out. And then we already have students and counselors who are willing to share their own experiences and their own advice as well. So I’ll be passing that link along to Dr. Wesener Michael, and, hopefully, she’ll be able to pass that out through her Dean of Students message as well, which we chatted about today.

So finally, I think that’s actually it, never mind. Are there any questions?

L. Saborío: Go ahead, Michael.

M. Haji-Sheikh: I know that you’re aware on the Parkland students having the protest on the 23rd and that some of the school districts in the high schools are saying they’re going to punish students if they don’t come to class that day. It would be interesting to see that the Student Association put out something along with the university saying that we are not going to take that into account. If you want to go out and protest, that’s your right.

C. Wang: Actually, if I’m not mistaken, NIU did put out a statement yesterday, I think, saying that students will not be – that will not be taken into account.

J. Stephen: They’re a day ahead of you, Michael.

C. McCord: That’s correct, there’s a statement – I don’t know exactly where on the website – but there’s a statement on the website that, as Christine indicated, indicates that the university will not hold any disciplinary action against a student who is applying. So we have made that commitment.
H. Nicholson: It’s on the Admissions website under First Year on the top nav, and I believe it’s under Requirements and Deadlines. And it might be on the Apply page, I can’t remember which.

C. Wang: NIU Admissions put out this statement, which is “NIU supports an individual’s right to freedom of expression. Education and civil discourse are powerful when it comes to sparking change, and your voices are among the strongest. We want to reassure students who have been admitted to NIU or who are awaiting notification from us that if peacefully and responsibly participating in protests against gun violence prompts discipline from your high school, a disciplinary action will not jeopardize your admission to NIU,” which has been very well received by students.

L. Saborío: Yes, I did see that. And by the way, Pat, when you’re transcribing this, that was Holly.


B. Andree: I have a question.

L. Saborío: And that’s Barb.

B. Andree: Are staff able to walk out in support of students without any retribution and/or faculty?

C. McCord: That’s a very fair question. And I think that you have – I will do my best to give the accurate answer. If it turns out that I say anything in accurate, I will come back and correct it. My understanding is that, if you are absent from work, there are a number of mechanisms for being approved by your supervisor to be absent from work and that the reason you are absent from work is not your supervisor’s jurisdiction, if you will.

B. Andree: So would it be sort of like shared governance where you’d be given release time or would I have to use vacation time.

C. McCord: At this point, I know of no commitment to provide release time. If there is a commitment to provide release time, that will be clearly announced.

B. Andree: Thank you.

L. Saborío: Any other questions?

M. Haji-Sheikh: I don’t think that faculty basically can hold a class out in the street if we want if the students want to be out there, so I think it’s a little different in that aspect.

V. Naples: There was a general membership meeting of the United Faculty Alliance at noon today, and one of the questions that was discussed by the people present was the tenure and tenure-track faculty union crafting and providing some kind of a statement of support for these students from Parkland. So we’re going to look at doing that. And that is something that is a thing that most of the people at the meeting were interested in seeing happen. And so we are soliciting additional input.
from the members of our union, because it really is of benefit for us to be proactive in assisting and supporting people who are facing serious difficulties of the same sort that we had to face in the past.

L. Saborío: Okay. Any other questions for Christine before we move on? Okay, thank you, Christine.

H. Operating Staff Council – Barbara Andree, President – report

L. Saborío: Next up we have Barb Andree, Operating Staff president.

B. Andree: The April 5 Operating Staff Council meeting will welcome Brian Smith, who is going to inform us about training that is available for new and existing supervisors on campus. Most of us, as Civil Service employees, are supervised in our various roles. We are advocates of this type of training. In my role as the president of the Operating Staff Council, and as a union steward, I am personally aware of several cases where very experienced and dedicated Civil Service employees have either chosen to leave their current position on campus for another one or they have left NIU altogether. We are encouraged that this training is going to be available, and we hope that as many supervisors as possible will take advantage of this. And anyone is welcome to our Operating Staff Council meeting on April 5, 9 a.m., here in the Sky Room if you’d like to know about that. But I believe he’s also giving that presentation about training for supervisors across campus.

L. Saborío: Okay, thank you. Any questions?

B. Andree: It’s Brian Smith in Employee Assistance Program.

L. Saborío: Any questions for Barb before we move on?

I. Supportive Professional Staff Council – Catherine Doederlein, President – report – Pages 4-20

L. Saborío: Okay, next up we have Cathy Doederlein, SPS Council President.

C. Doederlein: Thank you. There is a report available within the agenda, and I will really, frankly, just allow that to speak for itself. Instead of going graph by graph, which was my initial plan, it’s basically just highlights from the survey of SPS on the campus community. And I do think just two quick things to note: One is the extent to which folks reported that they are typically working over 40 hours. Many people reported that, and a lot of that is due to taking on other tasks. And the thing that was concerning about that were that only 17 percent of those people noted having additional compensation for those tasks. So that’s certainly something I think of interest or note. But on a very positive side of things, 75 percent of the respondents were either somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with their job. And in the scheme of things and concerns people have about morale and other things, it’s nice to see that people are enjoying the work that they’re doing. So certainly welcome people to review that. It’s also been shared with the provost and the president, and I’m looking forward to ongoing conversations with them and shared governance about ways we can improve things for SPS and the whole campus.
The last meeting I mentioned the State Universities Civil Service System was going to be considering a procedure update in early February, and that has passed. And probably the main thing of note from an SPS perspective is that positions that had been audited previously as needing to be considered as operating staff that were shifted to operating staff positions will now have a 16-month window in which that person, that role, needs to be formally shifted over. Previously, institutions were given the opportunity to use their own discretion, and typically NIU’s response was to approach the individual and, if they wanted to shift to Civil Service, they could make that shift. If they did not feel comfortable with that shift, the shift would happen after the role was vacated. Going forward, that will no longer be an option. For those folks already in positions that have been considered for a shift, we haven’t yet learned yet what the time frame will be for making that. But that’s probably the biggest impact that it has for SPS and for the campus.

**H. Nicholson:** Is there a provision for the two weeks of pay that would be missed going from salary to hourly.

**C. Doederlein:** We haven’t learned that yet, but that’s certainly something that’s coming up as a question or concern in that. But that’s definitely a good point.

**C. McCord:** I will note that when – just to explain Holly’s comment – if you are SPS, you’re sort of paid in real time. If you are Civil Service, you’re paid with a two-week lag. And so if you convert from SPS to Civil Service, there is potentially, you might miss a paycheck. When those situations have arisen, we have always made sure that people don’t have that lapse in pay. So as they say, past performance is not always a guarantee of the future, but in this case, our past performance has always been to watch out for that.

**H. Nicholson:** Thank you.

**L. Saborío:** Any other questions for Cathy? No? Okay.

**X. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**L. Saborío:** So next up on the agenda, Item X, Public Comment. Do we have any public comments today?

**E. Mogren:** One of the things I was going to ask is, in the wake of the Parkland shooting, which really did occur on the tenth anniversary of our own, has the university drafted a formal letter of support for the students and the faculty at Parkland. I remember ten years ago it was very meaningful for us, the outpouring of support that we had from across the country, particularly I remember from Virginia Tech. I think that having a statement perhaps even from the president, I think it would be very appropriate. Has that been done? Do we know?

**K. Wesener Michael:** Thank you for that. Yes, within days of 2/14, the President’s Office had sent some sentiment to the institution as well as also some photos from our recovery process and some pieces like that. It was very lovely and passed along, and so we definitely did that. And that came
out of, actually, some initiatives with the 2/14 planning group wanting to make sure that that was passed along and worked with the President’s Office to do that. So thank you for that comment.

E. Mogren: Is that posted somewhere so we can all sort of see it.

K. Wesener Michael: Not to my knowledge, but I will follow up with the President’s Office.

E. Mogren: It might be nice, because, you know, those of us who remember.

K. Wesener Michael: Yep, we’ll take a look at it.

E. Mogren: It would be nice for us too. Thank you.

L. Saborío: Any other public comment? Go ahead.

M. Haji-Sheikh: I want to mention, you know, we’ve had this all the discussion about the issues on student conduct issues. And it’s still, I don’t know if any of you are up in the up on Twitter or anything else, you know that the Northern Star made the watch list the best kept secret in DeKalb. And the best kept secret in and I really think we should all take it seriously, because in this age where the students can communicate at the speed of light, but we, as administrative and faculty work at the speed of snails, by the time we get around to come with an approach to deal with this, this thing will be statewide, in every high school in the state of Illinois, okay? That’s how fast things move. The Parkland students have basically pushed the NRA against the wall with Twitter, okay? Right now, NIU needs to accept that, you know, we’re not moving at a pace or decision-making pace that is satisfied the student body probably at all. And so if you show up as the best of DeKalb and it’s not the best thing you really want to have shown up, maybe we need to and this is a message to those in the positions of power, maybe we need to think about this and really re-evaluate how we approach and answer these problems. Just a point, I’m not trying to, I just want people to think.

L. Saborío: Thank you, Michael. Any other comments, public comments? No?

G. Chen: If I not wrong, I remember that a month ago when I was sitting in the Steering Committee, I made similar comments as Mike was making. I hope that this would not be getting too late to respond, because, you know the kids, they are communicating through electronic devices, not counted by days, but counted by minutes or seconds. So if we do not have an open discussion or to [inaudible] it, I’m thinking that, you know, I’m not trying to predict anything. But I hope that we can have this open discussions publically at least at Faculty Senate as well as University Council, and I believe last week I also made the same comments. I hope that there is some action to this, but not just, “Thank you, any comments.” Thank you.

M. Haji-Sheikh: I’m not here to give solutions. The question is, the question I [inaudible] point out is how do we approach it. I mean we don’t even have an approach.

Unidentified: [inaudible]
M. Haji-Sheikh: The student conduct, the, do you remember the whole watch list thing from last time?

Unidentified: Yeah.

M. Haji-Sheikh: Well that’s going on still, but now it’s gone, the students are now calling it the best kept secret in DeKalb. And in the student newspaper, and it’s moving around on Twitter.

J. Stephen: Okay, I misunderstood your, I thought you were saying the Northern Star was the best kept secret.

M. Haji-Sheikh: The Northern Star had it in the best secrets of the best of DeKalb issue.

J. Stephen: Mixed up with what I heard.

M. Haji-Sheikh: And now it’s on Twitter, because that image is being moved around on Twitter. That’s how fast things happen.

J. Stephen: This poorly labeled watch list, you mean.

M. Haji-Sheikh: Yeah.

J. Stephen: Okay.

M. Haji-Sheikh: And so we, the counter maybe we have to start really bringing the students into the discussion much more quickly than being a top down organization. Maybe we need to bring more bottom up conversation.

J. Stephen: Thank you.

C. McCord: So, Michael, I will note, I hear what you’re saying is not just, “Are we on it?” The answer is yes. But “Are we on it fast enough?” And I will note that I am not the most Twitter-adept, so I might not be the best person to judge whether we’re on it fast enough. We certainly have people watching these things. I believe there is an article coming out in the Northern Star tomorrow which I hope will help bring some clarity to the situation. We are certainly looking at how we can increase transparency and understanding so that there is more awareness of it. Again, whether we’re fast enough, I will understand that’s a fair question. But we are on it.

M. Haji-Sheikh: And inclusive. Are we fast enough and inclusive enough to make sure that it, cause it’s all about, people they want to be democratic. It’s all about democracy. They want to have a voice.

C. McCord: Understand policy is not always policy. There’s policy, there’s principles, there’s practice. There’s a variety of levels, different voices come in at different parts of that. We’re
worrying very much about respecting our existing shared governances processes to make sure we are being respectful of our process.

XI. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Minutes, Academic Planning Council
B. Minutes, Athletic Board
C. Minutes, Baccalaureate Council
D. Minutes, Board of Trustees
E. Minutes, Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee
F. Minutes, Comm. on the Improvement of the Undergraduate Academic Experience
G. Minutes, General Education Committee
H. Minutes, Graduate Council
I. Minutes, Graduate Council Curriculum Committee
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

XII. ADJOURNMENT

L. Saborío: Okay so we need a motion to adjourn. It looks like we lost our quorum here.

H. Nicholson: So moved.

L. Saborío: Thank you, Holly. And a second?

M. Haji-Sheikh: Second.

L. Saborío: Thank you, the meeting is now adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.