Minutes of the November 9, 2010

I. President Baker called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

II. Invocation was offered by Dr. Harold Putt.

III. Minutes from October 12, 2010 were approved as submitted.

IV. Unfinished Business: None

V. Approval of Fall Term Graduates:
   a. Mrs. Andrea Richardson requested approval of fall quarter graduates with the following changes. (See Academic Affairs website, under Faculty Agenda for the distributed list.) Megan Quay (Music) was removed from the fall quarter graduate list. David Lewis and Nicholas Workman (Arts and Sciences) and Daniel Schade (Business) were added to the fall quarter graduate list. Note that these three students’ requests were approved by the registrar’s office, but have not yet been approved by the deans.

VI. Honorary Degree Recommendations:
   a. Vice President David Crago requested approval of honorary doctoral degrees for Sherrod Brown, Robert Cupp, Lynn Elfnner and Jack Ohle. (See the Academic Affairs website, under Faculty Agenda for the Nov. 9 meeting agenda). Requests were approved as submitted.

VII. Questions for the President:
   a. Dr. Forrest Clingerman asked about the recent College Sustainability report card that gave Ohio Northern University a “C.” He inquired about what ONU is doing to improve our rating. Dr. Baker responded that, in 2009, we did not send any information. They collected information on their own and gave us a “D.” This year we did submit information we felt was relevant and substantial regarding buildings, wind turbines and geothermal initiatives. They gave us a “C.” Dr. Baker indicated that the rating process is not clear and that he was surprised about the fact that the rating was not higher.
   b. Dr. Catherine Young asked about the office recycling program and how she can sign up. Dr. Baker will have Leeann Sipe contact Dr. Young regarding the office recycling program.
   c. Congratulations to the men’s rugby team. Ohio Northern University beat the University of Kentucky (33 – 21) this past weekend.
   d. Dr. Nancy Woodley asked when the position requests will be approved. Dr. Baker indicated that they are currently being processed. The focus the past few weeks has been on budget efforts. Once the budget plan is finalized, we will finish processing position requests. Dr. Nancy Woodley commented that the biology department has submitted position requests four times since September. Dr. Baker responded that many colleges are still awaiting approval on position requests.
e. Dr. Baker discussed the proposed student center at Ohio Northern University. Since his arrival on campus in 1999, there have been talks about a new student center. This past spring, the student center became a part of the current comprehensive financial campaign. The campaign is now at $84 million of its $100 million goal.

f. Dr. Baker described reasons why Ohio Northern University would benefit from a new student center. McIntosh is 50 years old and outdated for the needs of modern students. In contrast, new student centers focus on “living rooms” that provide opportunities for students to interact while studying, eating or hanging out. New student centers are in heavy use all day, whereas McIntosh is relatively vacant after dinner. Some examples of new student centers focused on the “living room” concept are as follows:

i. Valparaiso (Harre Union)

ii. Ohio State (Ohio Union)

iii. Cleveland State

iv. Ohio Dominican (Griffin Student Center)

v. Ohio Wesleyan (Hamilton-Williams Campus Center). Ohio Wesleyan’s center was built in 1991 but remains vibrant throughout the day and night because it was structured on the “living room” concept.

vi. Bowling Green (Bowen-Thompson Student Center)

vii. Boise State University

g. Dr. Baker remarked that all of these new student centers also use a lot of glass to bring natural light into the facility.

h. Dr. Baker said the proposed ONU Campus Center would consist of multiple eating areas, a bookstore, informal meeting areas, student organization offices and a student affairs satellite office. The center would be about 100,000 square feet and cost somewhere near $30 million. Funding for the center would occur through fundraising and a student fee.

i. Dr. Baker noted that a timeline is not yet set for groundbreaking. This will happen in our future. We are in the planning stages right now.

j. Dr. Sarah Waters asked about the location of the new facility and the future of McIntosh. Dr. Baker responded that the preferred location of the new facility is on the tundra south of Biggs (Engineering). The primary rationale is that the facility would be located between the residential and academic components of the university. Other locations are possible, including 1) the practice field between King Horn and Engineering, 2) the west end of the tundra rather than the middle or 3) the wooded area west of Lakeview and University Terrace apartments. Dr. Baker also mentioned that McIntosh would remain and become a “major events location.” He noted that there is no reason to duplicate aspects of McIntosh in the
new student center (i.e. the new student center would not have a ballroom since one is already present in McIntosh).

k. Professor Nils Reiss commented that ONU was originally intended as a walking campus and it should remain that way. He suggested placing the student center on the perimeter of campus where access would not be an issue. Valparaiso made a mistake in placing their new student center next to the chapel. Their location choice lessened the impact of the chapel.

l. In response to a comment from the faculty, Dr. Baker stated that vehicle access is a concern. The bookstore and dining areas will need vehicle access. This issue has not yet been resolved, but access has to be part of the plan.

m. Dr. John Lomax commented that student centers at competing schools included fitness centers. ONU’s proposed student center did not contain a fitness center, which is a need for campus. Dr. Baker responded that while ONU’s proposed student center does not include it, an addition to the existing fitness center (King Horn) is also planned (8,000 square feet).

n. Dr. Paul Logsdon commented that the proposed student center is a “black box” right now. The only way to determine the appropriate components of the “black box” is to perform a rigorous survey. Dr. Baker responded that a survey is already planned and will be distributed sometime after Thanksgiving.

o. Dr. Lisa Robeson asked if we are putting the cart before the horse. We already have a proposed location and a projected cost before the survey is done. The student center was not on the master plan in 2008. In 2009, the student center is part of the comprehensive financial campaign. In February of 2010, the facilities committee did not list the student center as a priority. The facilities committee has not met since. What impact will the student center have on the operating budget? What effect will debt have on the bond rating? How will the university pay utilities? What will the effect be on downtown Ada? Why was the proposed student center not put through the normal university master plan process?

p. Dr. Baker responded that the Board has been focused on a new student center for some time and it emerged as the centerpiece for our current capital campaign because of its magnitude. The Trustees created their own task force and thus was not done through our facilities committee. The task force was formed last spring and consists of trustees along with three university representatives: David Dellifield, Vice President Bradshaw and Vice President Ruble.

q. Dr. Ray Person commented that it seems like the faculty are being asked for input after the decisions have been made. It would be better if faculty were just told they did not have input. Dr. Baker responded that the Trustees are committed to a new student center. The Trustees are also committed to a site for the student center south of Biggs. However, the Trustees are still interested in gathering information.
r. Dr. David Kisor commented that his son chose to attend school here at Ohio Northern University because of the academics and faculty, not because of the buildings for student life. How did the student center get ahead of academic building needs? Dr. Baker said that the Trustees feel they have been supporting academic facilities. The non-academic side is a learning environment as well and is a need of campus.

s. Dr. Thomas Finn asked about the effect of the student center on increasing academic excellence. Is there any indication that a new student center entices better students? Dr. Baker responded that he cannot answer that now. Taking care of campus is a need to attract quality students. He would argue that quality students want to come to a quality campus.

t. Dr. Michael Milks asked about the expense of items going into the “black box” of the center. Are students willing to shoulder these expenses? Dr. Baker responded that for the past 12 years, ONU has been able to build new buildings with fundraising or by having facilities pay for themselves, with the exception of the Inn. He doubts we will find donors to pay for the entire student center so we will need student fees. How much is too much for student fees? We have to look at tuition and fees as a package to determine an appropriate cost.

u. Dr. Paul Logsdon asked if one question could be included in the survey that addressed the willingness of the students to pay fees for the proposed center. Dr. Baker responded that they are planning on doing that.

v. Dr. Nancy Woodley echoed Dr. Person’s previous concerns. What happens if the faculty said they did not want a new student center? Dr. Baker said the Board would evaluate that and weigh it in terms of their responsibility to a healthy future for the university. The Board is ultimately responsible for the long-term goals of ONU.

w. Dr. Nancy Woodley asked about the strain of the new student center on the university’s operating budget. The new student center will have annual costs necessary for maintaining the building. Dr. Baker said that we will have to figure out how to maintain it. We have developed a lot of facilities in recent years that we are able to maintain.

x. Dr. Donnie Sullivan noted that rising costs are a concern. We have 11% budget cuts and the cost of healthcare has gone up. Academics are the core of the university and there are vacancies that cannot be filled right now. Should we go forward with a $30 million project if we are still suffering at our academic budget core? Dr. Baker responded that he understands. He feels the pulls and sacrifices we are already in. He believes in this project, but the likelihood is that in December, he will be announcing cuts due to the current financial situation. We still need to plan for our future even in our current financial environment.
y. Dr. Larry Robinson asked if resources could be spent in Ada instead. He has heard a lot of students say that Ada is boring, but has not heard many complain about needing a new student center. Dr. Baker responded that the development of downtown Ada is also part of the plan for the future of the university.

z. Dr. Lisa Robeson doubted that developing downtown Ada and building a new student center could both happen. How can the Board launch into a $30 million project without a marketing or financial plan? Dr. Baker responded that all of the decisions have not been made yet. Many financial models are being examined.

aa. Dr. Chris North commented that it sounds like we are lacking donations in the area of the capital budget. Maybe this is an indication that donors find other investments a priority at this university and are not supporting a new student center. Dr. Baker responded that scholarships and programming are always the most successful parts of comprehensive financial campaigns. ONU is not unique in this regard. This is the case everywhere.

bb. Dr. Firas Hassan asked that all capital projects be thought of in conjunction with one another. He asked that King Horn and McIntosh renovations be considered in addition to a new student center. Dr. Baker agreed. We are not going to duplicate services and will stay focused on all of our campus facilities.

c. Dr. Catherine Young asked about the potential ecological impacts of the proposed student center. Dr. Baker noted that sustainability is a key component of the planning. The university has been committed to sustainability in all of our buildings. Our expectation is that we would be seeking LEED certification for the building.

dd. Dr. Baker asked for comments and concerns to be sent to him.

VIII. There was a motion to adjourn and a second. The meeting adjourned at 5:41 PM.

Submitted by,

__________________________  
Dr. Leslie A. Riley  
Secretary