

Minutes
Urbana-Champaign Senate Meeting
August 31, 2009

A special meeting of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Senate was called to order at 3:15 p.m. on the 3rd floor of the Levis Faculty Center with Interim Provost Robert Easter presiding.

Senate Executive Committee Report

Senator Joyce Tolliver (LAS), Chair of the Senate Executive Committee (SEC), provided the following report.

At the door, please pick up materials for today's special meeting - you were advised last week they were posted on the Senate website. We ask that all non-senators adhere to their assigned seating - administrators and committee members, and media. Photographers/videographers need to stay in the roped-in area near the entrance to this room. As needed, there is additional seating for visitors on the second floor of this building with a live audio-video feed of all open sessions of this meeting.

Floor privileges have been requested, to speak to: SC.10.01, Senate Resolution on Admissions Review Commission (ARC) Report, for Professor Harris Lewin, Director of the Institute for Genomic Biology, Professor May Berenbaum, Head, Department of Entomology, Professor Larry Schook, Department of Animal Sciences, and Mike Ross, Director, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts.

I move that such privileges be granted (there was no objection).

Tellers for today's meeting are Senators Harry Hilton (ENGR), Kim Graber (AHS), and Connie Shapiro (ACES).

The SEC had an eventful summer, which included six meetings between May and today - five of which were attended by Chancellor Richard Herman and two by President B. Joseph White. The SEC has been operating under time constraints to give the Senate an opportunity to provide its advice to the Board of Trustees on the admissions controversy, including recommendations about administrative responsibility.

The original plan was to provide such advice to the Trustees in advance of the September 10 Board meeting. There are indications that the newly constituted Board may not be prepared to act upon these matters at its September meeting. Therefore, I move to postpone consideration of SC.10.01, Senate Resolution on Admissions Review Commission (ARC) Report, until a special Senate meeting to be held on September 14, to give senators more time to read the ARC Report and to provide fairness to the Chancellor and the President.

Senator Mark Roszkowski (BUS) believed there was no need to postpone this item, because everyone has had plenty of time to read the ARC report. Several other senators spoke for or against the motion to postpone. By voice vote, the motion to postpone was defeated.

Senator Tolliver moved that the Senate convene into Executive Session from 4:15 p.m. to 4:45 p.m., after hearing remarks from President White and Chancellor Herman and allowing time for questions to be addressed to these two individuals. The motion was approved.

President's Remarks

President B. Joseph White made the following prepared remarks:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I would like to make some remarks about the admissions problems and then hear your comments and questions.

First, we all regret that these problems occurred.

On August 12, I brought together a hundred University leaders from three campuses, including faculty governance, to begin the urgent work of admissions reform, both for remediation and prevention.

The Senate's Committee on Admissions called in its report of August 19 for faculty input to, among other things, "a code of conduct [for admissions] providing penalties for the circumvention of the specified policy."

This is exactly what is needed. It is what the Admissions Review Commission (the ARC) called building "firewalls" around admissions. The admissions process is sacred in the University. We must protect it.

Reforms will be implemented quickly so we can assure tens of thousands of applicants to our campuses this year that University of Illinois admissions processes are fair and transparent, with equal access for all.

This is the most important thing we can do to set things right and restore trust.

Also in its August 19 report, the Senate's Committee on Admissions said that its recommendations would be based on two principles: campus autonomy and shared governance. With regard to campus autonomy, the Committee said that in admissions: "...final responsibility for determining and following specific procedures lies at the campus level."

As president of the University, I am responsible for the institution. However, the distinction between overall and direct responsibility is important.

Admissions is a campus function. Former President Stukel made this point in his testimony to the ARC.

Three campuses report to me. To my knowledge, the problems that occurred on this campus, primarily in undergraduate and College of Law admissions, did not occur at the other two campuses. They did not occur in the Health Science colleges of UIC, including the College of Medicine, where demand for admission is high. These were Urbana admissions problems.

The ARC did criticize me for failing to exercise appropriate oversight of persons who reported directly to me. It also criticized my personal participation in admissions applications.

With regard to oversight, the admissions problems were an example of the fundamental conflict between campus autonomy and presidential responsibility for oversight. I did not know about Category I or admitting candidates who were noted as denials, a practice with which I disagree.

The ARC's report notes that from all accounts, White "was not a participant in the Category I meetings and was not regularly included in internal correspondence related to Category I." I assure you that had I known about the practices, I would have challenged them.

I did not know about directed admits to the College of Law or other practices related to College of Law admissions cited by the ARC. The report observes that, "President White, for example, met with a COL [College of Law] applicant at the request of a state representative, but did not direct Herman or Hurd to admit the applicant." I did not and would not direct the admission of any applicant - to the College of Law or anywhere on the University's three campuses.

With regard to oversight of Governmental Relations, the ARC's investigation revealed substantial staff involvement and advocacy in cases about which legislators had inquired or expressed interest. I believed that staff's involvement was limited to tracking cases and communicating with legislators. I was wrong.

With regard to my personal involvement, there were three instances cited by the ARC in its report.

In December 2005, I conveyed to the chancellor a message from the chair of the Board of Trustees that the Governor would like to see admitted two candidates for undergraduate admission. I did not know or recognize the name of either candidate. I said in my message to the chancellor that, "If not admitted, I need to talk with [the chair] about how to handle the message before [the] denial letter goes out."

The second instance was a request I made to Governmental Relations to "watch" a candidate about whom former Governor Thompson had inquired. That's the extent of the story.

The third instance was an email message I sent the chancellor that an extended family member with an outstanding academic record had applied for undergraduate admission and I supported the application. The individual had top grades, superior test scores, and many advanced placement credits. I thought that if the person won admission to the University on the merits, it would be in the best interest of the University because the applicant was the kind we value. I would not have questioned a denial.

Let me conclude.

I know that everyone here, including me, has the best interests of the University at heart. Together, we have an obligation and opportunity to protect our admissions processes through reform. This will send a strong message to students, faculty, and administrators as well as alumni and the people of Illinois. The message is that the University of Illinois continues to stand for quality, integrity and fairness in all we do.

Thank you for your attention. I invite your comments and questions.

Senator William Maher (LIBR) asked for a clarification about a recent report in the *Daily Illini*, in which the President was asked if the campus would have

ever found out about Category I if not for the story that broke in the *Chicago Tribune*, and President White replied "probably not". The President reaffirmed that was his answer to the question not because the existence of Category I was being concealed, but because the practice had apparently been going on for some time.

Chancellor's Remarks

Chancellor Richard Herman reiterated some of his testimony before the Admissions Review Commission (Mikva Commission). He believed he did not have the power to stop the admission of Category I students, and thought he was acting in the best interests of the University. He understood that some people were outraged because we hold this University very dear. He expressed remorse that he let himself down, as well as the campus and University community.

Dr. Herman cited a long list of initiatives completed under his watch as Provost and then Chancellor of the Urbana-Champaign campus. He said he will serve as long as his contributions are deemed valuable. He appreciated the support he has received from many corners of the campus, but he has also seen the disappointment in the eyes of many others.

Senator Vidar Lerum (FAA) referred to a quote from Albert Einstein "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." Senator Peter Loeb (FAA) asked the Chancellor how he felt we should proceed. The Chancellor responded that the campus Admissions Task Force, chaired by Law Professor Christine Hurt, has already begun its charge to, among other things, build a "firewall" around the admissions process. Chancellor Herman added that, at the end of the day, a judgment will be rendered.

Senator Tom Overbye (ENGR) asked the Chancellor if he inherited Category I when he came to Illinois. Dr. Herman replied that he inherited an academic environment, including admissions, that was becoming increasingly politicized.

Questions/Discussion

This item was handled under the two preceding rubrics - President's Remarks and Chancellor's Remarks.

Executive Session

The Senate convened in Executive Session at 4:20 p.m. under provision of one of the exceptions to the Open Meetings Act - a public body may hold closed meetings to consider the performance of specific employees. The Senate emerged briefly from Executive Session at 4:50 p.m. to suspend Senate Standing Rule 1 and extend today's meeting time beyond 5:15 p.m. The Senate returned to Executive Session, emerging at 5:15 p.m.

Proposals for Action

By voice vote, the Senate approved a Senate Executive Committee Resolution on Trustee Selection that advised Governor Quinn that the "Senate Executive Committee stand ready to develop further recommendations regarding changes in the *University of Illinois Trustees Act* to provide an improved process for the selection of Trustees and to include faculty representation on the Board." By voice vote, the Senate approved a motion to send this resolution to the Governor and to send a delegation to Springfield to discuss these recommendations (the motion was amended to send the resolution to State Senator Michael Frerichs and State Representative Naomi Jakobsson).

Senator Loeb moved to postpone consideration of SC.01.01*, Senate Resolution on Admissions Review Commission (ARC) Report, until a special Senate meeting to be held on September 14. Several other senators spoke for or against the motion to postpone. By show of hands (91-66), the motion to postpone was approved.

08/31/09-01 Presented for action from the Senate Committee on Committees was CC.10.03*, Nominations for Membership on Standing Committees of the Senate. Senator Kim Graber (AHS), Chair of the Committee on Committees, moved approval of the nomination on CC.08.03. There were no floor nominations and nominations were declared closed.

08/31/09-02 By voice vote, the nomination was approved.

08/31/09-03 Dr. Easter presented for action AD.10.01*, General Recommendations of the Senate Committee on Admissions. Professor Christine Hurt (LAW), Chair of the Senate Committee on Admissions, summarized the highlights of the Committee's recommendations and moved its approval.

08/31/09-04 By voice vote, AD.10.01 was approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Robert C. Damrau, Senate Clerk

*Filed with the Senate Clerk and incorporated by reference in these Minutes.