

HE.01.09  
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**University of Illinois  
Urbana-Champaign Senate  
Final;Information**

**HE.01.09 Report on the IBHE Faculty Advisory Committee Meeting, May 11, 2001**

Interim Provost Linne Waldelind welcomed the FAC to Northern Illinois University on behalf of President Peters. She thanked the FAC, commenting that its reports were helpful to the campus. She noted the campus was in transition with a new president a year ago and a new provost this fall. She said NIU is struggling with three challenges facing it and other universities: First, given legal challenges to affirmative action, finding ways to continue to enrich the diversity of campuses. Diversity is not just a matter of recruiting diverse students and faculty and providing needed support systems; the key is fostering dialogue and fuller interaction of all groups. "We must talk to each other and push people beyond their comfort zones." Second, use of technology to enhance student learning and finding ways to overcome the digital divide that characterizes students as well as society. Finally, accountability is a continuing issue. How do we turn accountability to our advantage rather than it being imposed on us? Performance indicators can be a way of "getting the message out" on what we do while using the measures as a basis for improving student learning.

The subcommittees then met for 75 minutes.

**Election of 2001-2002 Officers:** The report of the nominating committee was presented. Those in attendance voted; those absent will be polled by e-mail with the election completed prior to the June 8 meeting at Augustana College.

**Business Meeting:** The Subcommittee on Access and Diversity statement commenting on the IBHE Committee on Access and Diversity report, *Gateway to Success: Rethinking Access and Diversity for a New Century*, was adopted as amended. The FAC response stressed that access is a beginning but greater stress should be given to ensuring students' success once admitted. Nontraditional students often sense a "chilly climate" on campus and are alienated. The FAC called for "ongoing development opportunities for faculty and staff aimed at enhancing diversity consciousness and creating inclusive classrooms and student support services." "Diversity consciousness" should be a learning objective in the general education curriculum, particularly in the freshman year, and extend through graduate education. The use of technology was welcomed as part of the initiative to improve student learning but caution was urged. Not all students are successful in online learning: some are, the less qualified often are not. (The recommendations in the IBHE report will be voted on at the June 5 IBHE meeting. A copy of the report is on file in the Senate Office and is available on the IBHE Web site.)

The Subcommittees on Technology and Educational Quality were asked to develop a report comparing online learning with direct instruction in terms of quality and cost. Several FAC members believe that online instruction is far more costly in time and resources than most administrators and legislators realize and demands more resources rather than providing savings.

The Technology Subcommittees proposal to request a HECA grant for faculty training in online instruction is being pursued by Burks Oakley and will become part of a U of I request. The subcommittee will monitor the progress of the proposal and its implementation. The June meeting will include a presentation by the Technology Subcommittee on the Merlot project.

Notice was given that the June meeting will include a proposal from a community college member to increase the number of community college representatives on the FAC from 8 to 12 to provide parity with the four year institutions. (Currently the FAC has 12 representatives from the public four-year institutions, 12 from private institutions and 8 from community colleges. Some members never attend.) Proponents see this as matter of equity given the proportion of students in community colleges. One concern raised was that community colleges have their own association and representative faculty group as a means of providing advice representing their particular interests. Current FAC community college members attend FAC meetings regularly and have a prominent role and voice. The change could give them a majority of attendees at some meetings.

The possible formation of “the Council of Illinois University Senates” occasioned comments on the risk of conflicting messages being sent to the IBHE and to Springfield with consequent loss of impact. A previous effort to establish such a group succeeded for a time but then was abandoned.

There was extensive discussion of the lack of clear FAC procedures, the need for orientation of new FAC members, a tendency for procedures to be ad hoc, lack of a clear understanding of whom to consult when questions arise. A three-person subcommittee was named to collect information and relevant documents and codify procedures as a basis for a review by the FAC. The group noted the failure of some institutional representatives to participate. Some attend relatively infrequently causing problems for subcommittees drafting reports. In some instances FAC representatives are appointed by the administration, not elected by or reporting FAC activity to the faculty. Do such representatives represent the faculty or the administration?

Finally, a representative from a small private college raised the issue of increasing costs and difficulty in obtaining health insurance for faculty and students alike. He asked whether a consortium could be formed that would interest insurance companies given a larger enrollment base.

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