

HE.02.12  
September 30, 2002

**University of Illinois  
Urbana-Champaign Senate  
Final;Information**

HE.02.12 Report on the Board of Higher Education Meeting, June 4, 2002.

The BHE met at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Chair Steven Lesnik called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. Chancellor Cantor welcomed the group and noted the interdisciplinary nature of research across the campus and efforts to develop practical applications of basic research findings. She noted work in the Beckman Center, the humanities, and the new research park and a campus focus on preparing students to apply intellectual efforts to solve problems.

Chair Lesnik thanked former chair Rock and the BHE staff for help in the transition. Lesnik hopes his business background will be of help in the current "belt-tightening" in higher education and stressed that the process is far from over. Lourdes Monteagudo was elected vice-chair.

Mitch Vogel of the UPE, who is retiring July 21, addressed the Board. Susan Kaufman will assume his position. He noted a long-time stress on high tuition rates, poorly paid faculty, and underfunded pensions. The latter has improved, but high tuition and poorly paid faculty remain problems with universities at risk due to underfunding by the state. He urged that a new, broad-based coalition be formed to reeducate the public about the importance and needs of higher education. Expressing concern about the rapidity of administrative turnovers, he urged that administrators be found who will commit to the institutions for the long-term.

Executive Director Dan LaVista expressed appreciation to Keith Sanders, former director, and former BHE Chair Rock for their help in the transition, particularly in the legislative arena. He stressed the value of the combined efforts of the public 4-year institutions, the community colleges, and the private sector as a key to the future of higher education, indeed all of education, in Illinois. While the road ahead is difficult, we will continue to build on *The Illinois Commitment* and work to ensure access to higher education.

The Board established a new pattern of having the five advisory groups report and address current agenda issues before the Board votes on substantive items. As Faculty Advisory Council Chair I also extended a welcome to the campus, thanked LaVista for meeting with the FAC the previous Friday and voiced appreciation for placing the advisory reports before the action items. Possible psychological barriers to students who otherwise might continue on to higher education were noted: the perception of the high cost of tuition--often overestimated, fear of debt, the need to contribute to family finances. The threat to limit financial aid by early cut-offs for applications, failure to increase the cap despite higher tuition rates, and the threat to cut off students at the end of four years inhibits students' trust in the promise that they will not be denied an education due to financial need. The impact of debt on career choices was noted. Finally, the possibility of adding a 7<sup>th</sup> item to *The Illinois Commitment* that higher education contribute to the quality of life of Illinois citizenry was noted. Materials distributed to the Board included resolutions honoring Philip Rock, Keith Sanders, and Steven Lesnik. Four reports were

transmitted: calls for Illinois presidents of higher education institutions to sign the American Association of College and University Presidents “Presidents’ Call for the Advancement of Liberal Education”; for strengthening the high school curriculum; for privacy for faculty electronic communication, and an endorsement of best practices for electronically offered degrees and certificate programs.

Other advisory groups stressed the need for a continued coalition of public, private and community colleges to support the needs of higher education and the BHE staff to address the issue of the amount a family should contribute to the student’s education. Budget concerns included the loss of the Quern Scholarship program in the budget crunch; tuition increases as a treat to students’ seeking an education, and the need for financial aid for those forced to attend less than half- time. With regard to the proposed institutional indicators for meeting the goals of *The Illinois Commitment* the need to avoid excess duplication of reporting efforts and to tie these to institutional mission were stressed.

Debra Smitley updated the group on the current budget status—the Governor had not yet acted but the General Assembly had sent him a budget. She noted that the budget as then proposed showed no growth in revenues, a 2.6% cut to higher education after the increased amount for pensions was removed; and that the public 4-year institutions were assessed \$45M for state health insurance—in effect an additional cut. Adult education funds were down 41%, and there would be fewer financial aid awards and no funds to offset tuition and fee increases. Ross Hodel, reporting on other legislative activity, noted that the session really became dominated by budget related issues.

The effort to establish performance indicators to assess progress toward the goals of *The Illinois Commitment* will include a draft report in August with a call for review and final action in December. The committee is making good progress.

The report on access and diversity brought a charge that the UIC was lagging in that respect. An accurate count is problematic because students must declare a disability to be counted—many resist doing so. The report stressed the value of diversity to all students and the need to focus on trends not numbers and avoid any sense of quotas. Trends in Illinois are moving in the right direction with big increases in minority graduate enrollment in percentage terms. The perception of campus climate relative to student diversity is comparatively positive but more diversity is needed in faculty and staff. There is need for more counseling for those with disabilities. The staff promised more information next year in a report focused on recruitment and preparation of low-income students.

With regard to affordability, Illinois students are among those with the high debt load at graduation. Tuition and fees are rising more sharply than inflation and state per capita income. Several sources of concern include the fact that financial aid levels next year will not increase and an earlier cut off. The need for higher education to make decisions on aid, not the political decision-makers as stressed.

Workplace shortages exist in areas such as teacher education, engineering, dentistry, pharmacy and information technology. Some result from short-term economic conditions or the working

(pay) conditions of particular professions such as teaching and nursing. Factors affecting career decisions were noted as well as the need to observe future trends closely. But radical changes in higher education should not be undertaken to deal with short-term situations.

Guidelines for preparing submissions to the Board for noninstructional capital projects were presented.

As the meeting was running long, the consent agenda was adopted in rapid fashion with adjournment following.

Ken Andersen, Chair, FAC to the BHE  
Senate Representative to the FAC