

Report on IBHE Faculty Advisory Council Meeting

September 17, 2010

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The Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) met at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) on Friday September 17, 2010 with 27 members present. The meeting started at 8:30 AM with FAC Chair Abbas Aminmansour presiding. Special guests included IIT Provost Alan Cramb, IBHE Executive Director Don Sevenser and University of Illinois Economics emeritus professor Walter McMahon.

Provost Cramb welcomed the group to his campus and noted that IIT's enrollment is at an all-time high of 7,800 with the largest growth among graduate students. He added that with students from 90 countries, IIT has the highest percent of international student at any institution. Cramb added that the school's budget is on track and that indeed IIT has been aggressively hiring faculty.

IBHE Executive Director Sevenser identified the two R's (Resources and Readiness) as the most urgent challenges for higher education and urged FAC to participate in addressing those issues. Sevenser stated that, excluding pensions, there has been a \$440 million reduction in State support for higher education over recent years. Further, more than 100,000 eligible applicants do not receive Monetary Award Program (MAP) support and the State has \$4.7 billion in unpaid bills. He noted that it is not politically likely that there will be an increase in funds and suggested that a stronger case for higher education funding must be made. Sevenser predicted that IBHE will push this issue after the first of the year and noted that higher education needs to be smarter and more strategic in spending. He pointed out that graduation rates and economic growth potential are important to legislators.

Sevenser announced that Abbas Aminmansour of University of Illinois has been appointed to the Illinois Higher Education Finance Study Commission. According to IBHE web site, "The purpose of the Higher Education Finance Study Commission is to evaluate current higher education budgeting practices in Illinois and to develop recommendations to the IBHE, the Governor and the General Assembly that will align the goals of the Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success with the State's higher education budgeting process."

On the subject of readiness, Sevenser said the goal is to increase the percentage of the college educated adult population in Illinois. He noted high school graduates' readiness for college as critical and added that remediation costs the State a significant amount of money. Sevenser said that FAC is in a position to effectively reach out to others and pass the word that higher education is an investment which will pay off to the State.

Professor Walter McMahon gave a presentation titled "A Strategy for Cooperating in the Funding of Higher Education." He noted that average personal income in Illinois has been on decline relative to US average since 1960 with more and more students being priced out of college education. According to McMahon, community college graduates stay in their area while many graduates with Masters and Ph.D. degrees go to the coasts. He noted that college educated residents have higher income; pay more taxes; are more likely to create jobs; do not rely on State support for income, health and other assistance and are less likely to end up in State's penal system. McMahon identified intellectual capital as an important return from higher education and noted that this significant outcome is often overlooked.

Following Professor McMahon's presentation FAC held a brainstorming session on establishing long term and short term goals and action plans for the organization to pursue. Following an extensive exchange of ideas, the group selected the following four topical areas for further discussions and possible action.

1. Articulation, college readiness, remedial systems, retention
2. Advocacy, marketing, communications, public relations
3. Collaborations, partnerships, alliances
4. Economics of higher education: funding, justifications, human capital

Members of FAC are to share ideas on the above topics with chairs of subgroups leading each discussion. More exchange and planning will be held at the next FAC meeting. The meeting adjourned at 3:20 PM.

The next FAC meeting will take place on October 15 at Oakton Community College in Des Plaines, Illinois.

Submitted respectfully,
Abbas Aminmansour