

Report on IBHE Faculty Advisory Council Meeting

March 16, 2012
(Final; Information)

The [Faculty Advisory Council](#) (FAC) of the [Illinois Board of Higher Education](#) (IBHE) held a regularly scheduled meeting at Eastern Illinois University on Friday March 16, 2012 with 27 [member institutions](#) present. Guests of the council included Eastern Illinois University President William Perry; Debbie Meisner-Bertauski and Dan Cullen, IBHE Associate Directors for Academic Affairs; Meegan Bassett, Senior Policy Associate, Women Employed; EIU Faculty Senate Chair Andrew Methven and Dr. Allison Witt, IBHE Assistant Director for Academic Affairs.

President William Perry welcomed the Council to his campus and reiterated his commitment to shared governance. He noted that it is particularly important for faculty to remain engaged in higher education matters at this time. President Perry pointed out some of the successes of his institutions and in particular mentioned the EIU's [Renewable Energy Center](#) as a national success story.

Council Chair Aminmansour reported on a number of State Senate and House bills regarding higher education. He specifically noted the following bills: [SB3803](#), a college completion report card act; [SB3804](#), a higher education articulation act; [SB0059](#), a higher education transfer achievement act, and [HB5671](#), a higher education MAP grant act. He reported that he has been involved in a number of discussions at the State level on these bills. SB3803 appears to be moving forward. SB3804 has been modified considerably and is now recommending an audit, referred to in the current version as a "study." Aminmansour reported that SB0059 was an active bill and, in his view, was of considerable concern to us. This bill has apparently been placed on hold and may not be moving forward anymore. HB5671 attempts to address a well-known issue of community college students being disadvantaged by the MAP's schedule.

The Council held a discussion on establishing a number of priorities for its future actions. Following a brain-storming session and development of a wish list, the Council tasked its Executive Committee to develop a refined and manageable list of priorities for the Council to consider for adoption at its next meeting.

IBHE staff members Debbie Meisner-Bertauski and Dan Cullen gave a presentation on the [Common Core Standards](#) efforts. According to the ISBE web site, "The Illinois State Board of Education has adopted new Math and English Language Arts standards for K-12 education known as the New Illinois State Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core. The goal is to better prepare Illinois students for success in college and the workforce in a competitive global economy." More information about the Common Core is available at the above link.

Meegan Bassett Senior Policy Analyst from [Women Employed](#) (WE) spoke next and reported on her organization's involvement in a number of State bills relative to higher education. WE has been particularly involved in the development of SB3803 and SB3804 and works closely with the Lieutenant Governor's office. Aminmansour asked Ms. Bassett to consider including faculty representative in the bodies formed by state laws on issues relative to higher education. He further reported that Ms. Bassett

had accepted his invitation to join a small nucleus of (less than ten) individuals for periodic discussions on higher education matters, exchange notes and share activities/plans with each other. This, he said, will help better organize activities of interested groups and avoid unnecessary efforts and duplications.

In other business, the Council caucuses met and reported back on their discussions to the Council. Minutes of the February 17, 2012 FAC meeting at DePaul were approved by the Council. In addition, the council held elected an Elections Committee to handle its 2012-13 elections in May. Finally, the Council discussed and unanimously approved a position statement relative to recent state bills that have been under consideration. This statement will be sent to a number of state higher education leaders and organizations. A copy of the statement is attached.

The meeting adjourned at about 3:15 PM. The next meeting of the Council will be held at Truman College in Chicago on April 10, 2012 in conjunction with the IBHE meeting.

Respectfully submitted
Abbas Aminmansour

Attachment



Illinois Board of Higher Education Faculty Advisory Council Position Statement

The State of Illinois is fortunate to have a considerable number of postsecondary educational institutions that offer high quality education to our students. Our institutions are diverse in their mission, size and public or private sources of funding. But they all share common goals such as offering our students the highest quality education possible; helping students develop the necessary skills that allow them to become successful in their careers and to become leaders within their disciplines at the local community, state, national or global levels. Our colleges and universities are also committed to facilitating students obtaining these objectives in a timely and economical manner.

The Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) is committed to our institutions achieving these goals. Our very active participation in recent efforts by the State legislators and IBHE in establishing appropriate metrics for performance based funding in higher education is an example of our continued commitment to accountability and transparency of our institutions as providers of high quality education to our students and as stewards of public and private funds entrusted to us.

In recent past, a number of bills have been introduced in the Illinois State Senate and House relative to higher education. Our council is grateful for the care and commitment to higher education of those who have initiated these proposed bills. However, we offer the following for consideration by our State leaders and others in pursuit of enhancing higher education in Illinois.

1. Education is a continuum that spans from kindergarten to advanced postsecondary degrees and must be treated as such. Efforts to positively influence student performance and efficiency of our State's higher education system must first identify the relevant issues and offer appropriate and targeted solutions to address those issues. We believe that blanket directives, particularly those that focus on higher education only without examining and addressing issues of quality and efficiency at previous levels are not appropriate and may indeed lead to unintended consequences and potential harm to the very students that such efforts may seek to help.
2. Quality is of utmost significance and must be included in any discussions relative to education. Efforts to increase numbers and rates without serious consideration for quality education and student success are very likely to lead to undesirable outcomes and adversely affect the critical need for the necessary human capital.
3. Decisions such as admission criteria, graduation requirements and the quality of our courses and curricula are academic issues that are best addressed by the faculty. Our faculty are most actively engaged in teaching and evaluating our students on a daily basis and are most suited for offering critical insight into any discussions on these aspects of higher education. They are also most informed about the expectations and requirements in their professional fields and can appropriately offer means for students' high performance and success. We trust that any serious efforts to affect higher education will include faculty input from the very beginning.

4. Our programs and institutions do not exist in isolation. Many of our programs and indeed institutions are subject to and bound by accreditation criteria established by leading authorities within certain disciplines and by nationally or internationally recognized and respected accrediting agencies. Efforts to affect higher education must give serious consideration to such requirements and avoid mandates that may result in loss of accreditation of our programs and institutions.
5. The IBHE Faculty Advisory Council is the most comprehensive organization in Illinois with faculty representatives from all types of postsecondary institutions including public or private four year institutions as well as community colleges. We are ready, willing and appropriately suited to actively engage in any serious discussions on higher education issues. The Council asks all State leaders and others interested in higher education issues to utilize faculty's knowledge, experience and insight by conferring with our group and to include representatives from our council in their discussions.

This statement was unanimously adopted by the IBHE Faculty Advisory Council on this day, Friday March 16, 2012.

For more information, please contact FAC Chair, Professor Abbas Aminmansour (AAmin@Illinois.edu).