

APPROVED BY SENATE

11/18/2013

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE

Prefiled Resolution

RS.14.01 Resolution on Governance Procedures for Changes in Academic Organization

BACKGROUND

With ongoing budget concerns and a strategic plan stressing the importance of change and agility, various units of the University either are considering reorganization possibilities or on notice that such discussions may soon be recommended. University *Statutes* Article VIII Sections 3 and 4 provide for processes whereby units OR administrators at a higher level can initiate changes “such as the termination, separation, transfer, merger, change in status (e.g., department to school), or renaming of the academic units.” Such proposals when made to the Senate must be accompanied by the advice of the unit registered through a secret written ballot of their members. Subsequent advisory votes by the appropriate senate, advice of the appropriate chancellor/vice president, and of the University Senates Conference are to accompany the proposal to the Board of Trustees. Standing Rule 13 of the UIUC Academic Senate provides for reporting of the unit votes in such processes to the Chair of the Education Policy Committee, who then holds a public hearing on the reorganization plan. The votes and a summary of the public hearing are then provided by the Ed Pol Committee Chair to the Senate for its advisory vote.

In two recent cases in separate units, reorganization processes and discussions have been initiated by university administrators for these units over several years. In the case of the Institute of Aviation, faculty had been moved and major programs suspended before the *Statutes*- and Senate Rule-mandated votes on reorganization were undertaken by the unit and the public hearing required by Rule 13 was duly called by the Education Policy Committee.ⁱ In the more recent case involving the School of Labor and Employment Relations, the current *Statutes* and Standing Rules provisions have not yet been triggered, but press reports have made clear that administrators are advocating faculty to embrace reorganization scenarios other than independent status. This has occurred despite the fact that when the unit was asked previously and repeatedly to consider reorganization or merger as part of both the Stewarding Excellence and the Visioning Excellence campaigns, it determined that independent status as a unit remained the best organizational outcome.ⁱⁱ On a policy level, what may be more worrisome is that in the course of these discussions, which have come to light in the press rather than through shared governance processes, administrators have justified these ongoing pressures by saying that other units will be asked to consider reorganization as well.

In light of these examples, it appears that the *Statutes*' language regarding reorganization leaves much latitude for administrators to recommend and shape unit conversations about reorganization, and to limit the alternatives open to units, long before the shared governance processes of the Senate are ever involved. In many cases these conversations may proceed uneventfully and result in reorganization plans that benefit the missions of the units concerned and the tenure home of individual faculty. But it is apparent that in some cases discussions are initiated and shaped in ways that, long before the vote-based advice of the faculty is taken for reporting to the Senate, curtail organizational alternatives that unit faculty deem best suited to their collective missions and individual tenure home.

With these examples in mind, as well as the prospect of many new conversations about reorganization being initiated across the campus by upper administration, the following resolution is submitted to generate a role for the Senate and/or its appropriate committees to provide advice and oversight in processes of administratively initiated reorganization discussions.

WHEREAS, University *Statutes* (Article VIII Sections 3 and 4) allow for discussions about the reorganization of a unit to be initiated within a unit or by higher administration, and

WHEREAS, in recent cases such as the Institute of Aviation and School of Labor and Employment Relations, such discussions have often been undertaken over several years during which changes in faculty have occurred or alternative scenarios have been shaped outside the control of the faculty whose advisory vote triggers the shared governance role of the Senate under Standing Rule 13; and

WHEREAS University *Statutes* Article II, Section 3c, provides that each senate determines for its campus matters of educational policy including but not limited to, “relations among colleges, schools and other teaching divisions; and

WHEREAS discussions of unit reorganization “such as the termination, separation, transfer, merger, change in status (e.g., department to school), or renaming of the academic units” fall under such relations; and

WHEREAS the Academic Senate of the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign should rightly exercise some oversight and advice in the structuring of reorganization plans not just at the end of but throughout development of such plans; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Senate of the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign calls for the review of procedures of Academic Reorganization provided for in Article VIII, Sections 1 and 4 of the University Statutes and Standing Rule 13 of the Senate Rules to provide for the advice and oversight of appropriate Senate committees of these processes during discussions initiated by administrators before a faculty vote, when such advice is deemed necessary by affected faculty, and

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Senate requests relevant committee including (but not limited to) Educational Policy, University Statutes and Senate Procedures, and the Seventh Senate Review Commission to review the relevant statutes and recommend procedures for Senate oversight of reorganization discussions where appropriate, and

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Senate be apprised of developing reorganization discussions in order to offer and provide oversight where necessary.

Sponsored by:

Kathryn Oberdeck, LAS

David O'Brien, FAA

Kristina Riedel, LAS

ⁱ On concerns regarding the changes in Institute of Aviation staffing the may have affected the procedures of shared governance, see http://senate.illinois.edu/ep/Aviation/USSP_Letter_to_Provost.pdf which is provided here as an Appendix.

ⁱⁱ On the process of discussions LER reorganization, see <http://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/2013-10-15/legislative-hearings-planned-ui-labor-school.html>

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Senate
228 English Building
608 South Wright Street
Urbana, IL 61801

February 22, 2011

Richard P Wheeler
Provost & VC Academic Affairs
Office of the Provost
601 E. John St.
215 Swanlund
MC-304
Champaign, IL 61820

Dear Provost Wheeler:

I write on behalf of the UIUC Senate's Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures (USSP) to express our concern with certain developments in the prospective closure of the Institute of Aviation. As you may know, since at least 1982, USSP has been concerned over the policies and procedures for changes in the status of academic units, especially regarding formation, merger, and dissolution. Indeed, over the past five years, the full UIUC Senate, as well as the Senates at Chicago and Springfield have joined us in an effort to ensure that Senate rules and the *Statutes* themselves make clear long-standing understandings of the need for careful and sequential deliberation on proposals for such changes to ensure that the faculty's and the Senate's role in educational policy is observed. This process was recently concluded when the Board of Trustees accepted and adopted the Senates' new text for Article VIII of the *Statutes*. Thus, both the *Statutes'* Article VIII and Senate Standing Rule 13 call for a series of deliberations and votes to occur before a change such as closure is effected.

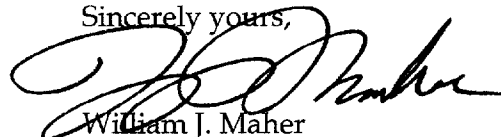
In the case of the Institute of Aviation, we understand that significant budgetary problems and strategic planning have necessitated the reassessment of the campus's ability to continue this program. We are all aware of the careful study of the Institute that was part of the Stewarding Excellence at Illinois (SEI) process and that the SEI report supported a discontinuation or transfer of the program.

USSP does not doubt the amount of discussion, analysis, and pursuit of options that the campus administration has invested in this issue. Rather, what concerns us deeply is how a number of actions have been taken that pre-empt the very consultation and shared governance principles outlined in *Statutes* Article VIII and Standing Rule 13. In particular, by placing limits on transfer students, limiting enrollment, managing transfers of faculty to other units, and most recently admitting Aviation applicants to General Studies rather than to the Institute, the campus has eviscerated any kind of meaningful consultation at the required March 8 public hearing or the subsequent vote by the UIUC Senate.

We can understand the mechanics of the logic that if the Institute might be closed eventually, then making advanced preparations would seem reasonable. However, given the deterministic effect of the transfer of faculty and the strictures on enrollment/majors, we believe that the campus administration has proceeded in a way that not just circumvents policy and procedure but may actually circumvent the principles of shared governance which have otherwise been so important to the national leadership the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has achieved.

Perhaps it is too late to reverse some of these actions and allow the expected process to unfold normally. This is most regrettable. USSP, however, has asked me to write now to underscore that in light of other closures and mergers that might be ahead, the campus administration must pay closer attention to the established policy and understanding of the faculty and students. Without attending to these policies, it will be so much more difficult to secure the campus community's support for the tough choices that lie ahead. We believe that the University can emerge stronger from these difficult times if we take the time required to ensure that the conditions of shared governance we jointly developed over many decades are observed as we go forward.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. J. Maher', written in a cursive style.

William J. Maher

Chair, Committee on University Statutes
and Senate Procedures Committee

Cc: Abbas Animansour
Robert Easter
David Olsen
Joyce Tolliver