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**UC.15.04**  
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**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS**  
**URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE**  
University Senates Conference  
(Final; Information)

**UC.15.04** Report on the October 8, 2014 Meeting of the University Senates Conference at the Chicago Campus

The Conference membership list for 2014-15 can be found here:

<http://www.usc.uillinois.edu/membership.cfm>

The agenda for this meeting can be found here:

<http://www.usc.uillinois.edu/sites/usc.uillinois.edu/files/documents/AGN-1008.14.pdf>

The Conference was joined by President Robert Easter, Vice-President of Academic Affairs Christophe Pierre, and Secretary of the Board of Trustees Susan Kies.

The meeting was called to order at 10:20 AM.

**Comments of the USC Chair:** Chair Chambers ceded the floor to Nicholas Burbules, Chair of the Conference's Statutes and Governance Committee, who provided an update on the planned consultation process on the general revision of the University *Statutes* and *General Rules*.

Prof. Burbules reported that on October 6, 2014, Conference had received the Board of Trustees' response to our comments on proposed revisions, and that in some cases, previous recommendations had been withdrawn; in other cases, very minor changes had been made to the proposed wording sent by the Conference. In the October 6 communication, the Board's Governance, Personnel, and Ethics Committee charged the Conference to forward the proposed revisions to the senates and requested that the Senates forward their advice to the Conference for final transmittal to the Board by February 26, 2015. The Statutes charge the Conference with reconciling any differences in the advice of the three senates before forwarding the Senates' and the Conference's advice to the Board. Prof. Burbules reminded the Conference that, with the exception of proposed revisions to the section on Intellectual Property, only the Conference—not each senate—is required to give its advice on proposed revisions to the *General Rules*.

Chair Chambers thanked Prof. Burbules for his hard work, and commented that the Conference's efficiency and conscientiousness had increased our credibility with the Board of Trustees.

**Meeting with Dr. Susan Kies, Secretary of the Board of Trustees**

Dr. Kies expressed her appreciation for this opportunity to meet with the Conference, and emphasized that the members of this Board are very interested in understanding the wants and needs of the faculty.

Dr. Kies spoke with USC about her duties, which she assumed three years ago, after having served as associate dean of the UIC College of Medicine on the Urbana campus. Among many other duties, Dr. Kies provides support to all the BOT committees, as well as to the presidential search committee.

One of her accomplishments so far has been the replacement of the voluminous paper documentation for Board meetings (called the Board Book) by a BOT digital portal. Every week, Dr. Kies sends a dispatch to the Board members, and each trustee now uses an iPad to access materials. Dr. Kies estimated that this change saved the University about \$15-20,000 per year.

Dr. Kies has also updated the use of technology in the BOT office, moving from paper to electronic records.

After a discussion with Dr. Kies about ways to enhance the relationship between the USC and the Board, the Secretary joined Conference members for lunch.

### **Meeting with President Easter and Vice President Pierre**

The President reported that he and Vice-President Pierre recently visited ten legislators in city and suburbs, with whom they discussed procurement relief, support for undocumented students, and general budgetary issues. An issue of continuing concern is the “sun-setting” of the current income tax increase of 5%, which will occur on December 31, 2014, unless it is re-instituted. It is likely that the University would be asked to assume more of the cost of benefits to employees if the increased income tax revenue is lost.

President Easter and Vice-President Pierre expressed concern about whether the University can sustain current enrollments, especially at the undergraduate level, given our high tuition—in spite of the fact that we have more applications now than ever. The Conference discussed with the President and the Vice-President our shared concern that not enough financial aid is available for students from working-class families.

President Easter emphasized that we must remain competitive with our peers in terms of salary, and we also must be conscious of how we create the resources to pay our bills. He shared the good news that salaries for humanities faculty on the Urbana campus now are at peer levels.

In a discussion with Conference members about salary programs, Vice-President Pierre clarified that core salary increases for employees who work for University Administration (that is, the Administration of the University as a whole rather than one of the campuses) have to come from campuses. The President and the Vice-President praised the work of the UA-level **Budget Review Advisory Committee**, which includes faculty, UA administrators, and campus administrator chairs. The President reiterated a view he had expressed repeatedly: University Administration exists to provide service for the core academic functions, and those being served should have input into whether the services are working well.

### **Business Meeting**

The Conference voted to forward all the proposed revisions to the Statutes to the three senates, and to request that they return their advice by February 20, 2015.

Chair Chambers announced that he would be giving a presentation at the October 30 meeting of the Board’s Governance, Personnel, and Ethics Committee on this year’s goals of Conference, which include drafting of a USC white paper to deal in part with how we see our role in shared governance. He asked all USC subcommittee chairs to share the committees’ respective goals in time for incorporation in that presentation.

Prof. Jorge Villegas reported that the Task Force on Open Access will be sending a draft policy to the senates for their advice. (The Task Force was appointed by the Board of Trustees in response to the passage in 2013 of the Open Access to Research Articles Act. The Act requires that each public university develop a policy on open access to the research articles published by its faculty members.

The Conference discussed the report from the Council of Illinois University Senates on the recent aggressive actions by the Merit Board to question the legitimacy of the classification of Academic Professional positions and to reclassify them as Civil Service positions. Given the crucial role played by Academic Professionals on all three campuses, the Conference decided to write a letter to the members of our Board of Trustees encouraging them to continue their efforts, as representatives to the Merit Board, to preserve the right of the campuses to classify academic positions in accordance with their informed judgment.

Prof. Jorge Villegas, Chair of the USC Hospital and Health Affairs Committee, reported that a third report is now being written on the projected plans for an independently-accredited College of Medicine in Urbana. The Huron Group has been commissioned to provide this report. The USC Health Affairs Committee has also seen a report written by Arthur Rubenstein on the issue. Prof. Villegas offered to share all materials with the Conference.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Joyce Tolliver, USC Liaison to the Senate