

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE
University Senates Conference
(Final; Information)

UC.15.09 Report on the May 26, 2015 Meeting of the University Senates Conference (USC) at the Springfield 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/documents>

The Conference was joined by President Tim Killeen; Vice President of Academic Affairs Christophe Pierre; Special Assistant to the President Michael Devocelle, and Prof. Meena Rao, incoming UIC representative to the Conference

MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KILLEEN

This was the Conference's first meeting after Dr. Killeen formally assumed the presidency. A large part of the hour-long conversation with him was dedicated to news and updates from the President:

The president spoke about the activities of his first week in office, when he carried out visits to all campuses, including Peoria and Rockford. The focus of the intensive week of meetings was the initiation of a conversation about our common future. Faculty at Peoria and Rockford expressed strong support for the idea of transferring the M1 program (first year of Medical School) there in conjunction with the new Urbana College of Medicine. As part of the week of meetings, the President met with editorial boards, business leaders (including representatives of Caterpillar), and mayors; and he held town hall meetings on all the campuses. He characterized the interactions with students as "dynamite." As the President noted, a positive account of the visit to UIC was given in a *Chicago Tribune* editorial.

President Killeen told Conference members that, after his meeting with us, he was planning to attend a lunch meeting of all the public university presidents, to be followed by a meeting with the Illinois Speaker of the House and with the Governor's Chief of Staff. The meetings were designed to emphasize the value proposition of public higher education in Illinois. The President intended to stress the role of the University of Illinois as a leadership voice for public higher education. Pres. Killeen also commented on the remarkable ease of access he had been granted to the leadership of the state.

As the Conference was informed in April, this year's search for a new Executive Director of Governmental Relations was folded and no new hire was made. The President will relaunch this search, with a new, smaller committee.

In a look at summer plans, the President mentioned two key meetings devoted to developing a University-wide strategic plan: in June, a planning exercise in which the guiding principles for decision making would be determined; and the full Board-sponsored university-wide retreat in July.

In relation to the implementation of the UA review that was carried out over a year ago, the President plans to do a "360 review" of direct reports, which will provide feedback for senior leadership. Reviewing the implementation status, he said that, of the 47 recommendations, 22 were fully implemented, 14 are underway, 8 are in the early stages, and 4 are on hold.

The budget task force is currently examining the status of cash reserves, and reviewing the state of the UIC hospital and of the three campuses. The President emphasized the importance of maintaining the appropriate level of liquidity for cash reserves.

The president also expressed his views on some issues:

He praised Prof. Joe White's presentation to the Board of Trustees on the transition toward a new College of Medicine on the Urbana campus, and emphasized the need to follow the correct procedures. Chancellor Wise has written a memo to this effect. No decision has been made on processes to be followed. The Transition Committee report lays out a road map but the Board has approved no resolutions. The transition committee will be involved in follow-up on the processes.

Regarding the allegations of abuse in the Athletics program at Urbana, he called the news of allegations a reputational hit to the whole university, but cautioned that, essentially, management of the issue is a campus question, so campus leadership is managing this. The president said he is paying a lot of attention to the sorts of training in the creation of a healthy workplace environment that are necessary to provide a healthy learning situation for our students. He called it “intolerable” to have even the perception of a situation that undermines the health of the students’ learning situation.

In comments reflective of the President’s general approach to leadership, he:

- 1) Stated that his approach to change is to continually improve rather than to make sudden overhauls and then stop changing;
- 2) Spoke of the need to maintain confidentiality in certain situations, such as searches, stating that “confidentiality is the flip side of transparency”; that is, transparency is threatened when there is no trust that participants will respect confidentiality when necessary;
- 3) Expressed the view that civic engagement is a potential cross-campus initiative, connected to public policy initiatives. He expressed the view that the University is not currently the “go-to place” for higher education policy, taxation policy, etc., and we should be.
- 4) Expressed the desire to avoid having anything “go awry because of lack of contact or lack of process,” gave all members of the Conference his cell phone number, and encouraged each Conference member to feel free to call him directly “if there is something that is emerging.”

BUSINESS MEETING

The Conference approved the final version for circulation of a Conference “White Paper on Shared Governance at the University Level” (attached to this report).

Conference members also discussed proposed amendments to the Statutes that had been approved by the UIS and UIC senates. Upon the advice of the USC Statutes and Governance committee, the USC approved motions that the following recommendations be forwarded to the Board of Trustees:

II.1.a “sole”: Keep “sole” but insert “jointly”: “assembly jointly representing the faculty...”

II.2.a.5: last sentence to read “The bylaws and any changes thereto shall be reported to the campus senates and to the Board of Trustees through the president.”

(Also approved parallel revision of USC Bylaws (Section 8.4).)

III.4 to read “...that the form of the administrative organization of the department be changed from a chair to a head, or a head to chair...”

IX.5.c to read “Full-time employees shall not receive compensation for services with the University in excess of a normal schedule except for a reasonable amount of instruction . . . or other specialized functions, all to be done at a time that does not conflict with other university duties and that are not within their home unit. Exceptions may be made to this rule in special cases which are approved by the dean or appropriate administrator...”

This completed the Conference’s processing of the proposed revisions to the *Statutes* and *General Rules*.

USC members also considered issues of faculty governance and process in the formation of a policy on criminal background checks, including the question of practical difficulties of conducting the check after a faculty member has accepted an offer of employment. The discussion was informed by the AAUP document on background checks co-authored by Urbana faculty member Matthew Finkin: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40252613>.

A draft document proposing five principles of implementation was discussed; among these principles were the consent of the prospective employee. The Conference decided to consider the following at the June 2015 meeting:

- 1) The “five-principles” draft document;
- 2) a recommendation that the check be done at the short-list stage but not before;
- 3) the Finkin et al AAUP document.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Joyce Tolliver, USC Liaison to Senate Executive Committee

UNIVERSITY SENATES CONFERENCE
WHITE PAPER ON SHARED GOVERNANCE AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL

Approved 5/26/15

As we enter a time of transition that will accompany major changes in administrative leadership and the development of a new strategic vision encompassing the entire University of Illinois, the University Senates Conference affirms its commitment to the principles and practices of shared governance and in this White Paper conceptualizes the role of shared governance in the function of the University.

The Conference is the agency whose responsibility is representing the faculty of the entire University of Illinois to the President and the Board of Trustees. Conference members are elected by their respective campus senates. While Conference members represent the perspectives of their home campuses, each member is also committed to working for the common good of the entire University. This dedication to the good of the entire University and to each of its three campuses is a unique characteristic that sets the Conference apart from other elected faculty governance groups, and is an essential aspect of its mission. (See “University Senates Conference Statement on Excellence at the University of Illinois” and “University Senates Conference Resolution on Avoiding Cross-Campus Conflicts,” appended.)

The foundation of shared governance requires the active participation of faculty at all levels in decisions and decision processes. When faculty are actively involved in decision making and setting priorities, they will better understand the evidence the reasons behind reforms, and be better able to provide ideas for proposed solutions. When they are directly engaged in the planning process, they have a say in plans developed and hence a more robust stake in seeing reforms succeed. When deliberations entail hard choices and sacrifice, and elected faculty representatives have helped determine these decisions, then other faculty are more willing to accept the outcomes because they trust that their interests were considered and represented in the deliberations. When administrators engage faculty via shared governance in the decision processes, the administrators have greater success, both in the particulars of advancing new initiatives and in their leadership roles more broadly. Shared governance provides a necessary vehicle and an effective platform for dialogue between faculty and administrators.

Ultimately, effective shared governance requires three essential interacting principles: (1) clear statutory rules and organizational structures that instantiate a set of consistent procedures; (2) a tradition of productive relationships formed and sustained over time between faculty and administrators, through the established structures of shared governance (i.e. senates, Senates Conference, and their subcommittees), involving open channels of communication, respect, and trust; (3) a general ethos across the University of shared responsibility for governance, in which administrators at all levels and the faculty as a whole understand the reciprocal (and often overlapping) spheres of responsibilities that administrators and faculty each manage.

In fulfilling its responsibilities the Conference has monthly discussions with the President, the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, other administrative leaders of the University and members of the Board of Trustees. The *Statutes* and *General Rules* specify certain occasions when the Conference's advice *must* be sought, such as the appointment or re-appointment of University Officers or proposals to amend the University's governing documents. The Conference's conversations with the President and the President's cabinet are designed to provide for the free flow of information and perspectives on any number of issues affecting the University, from ever-present budgetary concerns to matters such as strategic planning or protecting academic freedom, as well as anticipating areas of concern and interest. To facilitate these interactions, the Conference Chair and the President schedule frequent meetings to maintain open lines of communication.

In recent years, the Conference has reached out to representatives of the Board to share faculty views and to keep the Board informed about issues the Conference is discussing. Similarly, the Board has consulted with the Conference. Members of the Board now meet regularly with the Conference to build and enhance mutual understanding, to learn about faculty concerns, and to seek the Conference's input on issues the Board is considering. The Conference is now organized to have four subcommittees that parallel the charges of the Board's committees. In addition to interacting with the subcommittees of the Board, Conference members make presentations at Board meetings.

Institutional questions that remain paramount for all sectors of the University and require discussion include: What are our core values and missions; How do we define the interrelated missions of teaching/scholarship/economic development/diversity/service/community engagement in the context of our specific campus identities; How do we balance the tensions between campus autonomy and centralized authority; What are the special responsibilities of a flagship University, particularly in the context of the land grant mission for the University of Illinois; and What are its special responsibilities to the state, the nation, and the world?

The University Senates Conference is committed to the principles of shared governance. Our goal is to promote and enhance trust, understanding and productive interactions among the Board of Trustees, the University Administration and the faculty of the University of Illinois.