

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE

URBANA SENATE OBSERVER

(Final; Information)

SC.20.09 Report on the January 16, 2020 meeting of the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois System in Chicago

Opening Events

The Board held an election of the Board's officers. Chairman Donald J. Edwards was nominated and elected unanimously for another term. Trustees Ramon Cepeda and Patricia Brown Holmes were elected unanimously to the Executive Committee. The Board Secretary (Dedra Williams), Comptroller (Avijit Ghosh), and University Counsel (Tom Barrows) were re-elected.

UIC Chancellor Michael Amiridis provided an update of news and events from his campus. He highlighted distinguished faculty achievements and emphasized the need for more faculty hires and their centrality to the teaching, research, and public impact of the university.

President Tim Killeen offered a presentation, "Empowering Extraordinary." This is the second of a planned series of four presentations. President Killeen highlighted the potential of the University of Illinois to be a "pre-eminent national model" of public higher education for the 21st century. This talk focused on the research and innovation mission, and the centrality of outstanding faculty to success in this context. He itemized a number of past and current faculty achievements in research and innovation. Trustee Smart said the presentation "gave her chills."

Executive VP Barb Wilson offered a presentation on tuition, fees, and housing costs. She reiterated the system's commitment to maintain accessibility. Financial aid has tripled over ten years. The Illinois Commitment program has significantly helped. Due to the five-year tuition freeze, Urbana is now fourth among peer institutions in tuition, and the gaps are closing. Several universities are facing increases which will probably move them ahead of Urbana. The need for more faculty hiring and better salaries requires new revenues, justifying the proposed "very modest and sub-inflationary" tuition increase.

Public Comments

There was one public speaker, Jonna McHugh from the Engineering Career Center at UIC. She identified inadequate compensation and benefits for low-wage university workers, which she argued are below market rates, and their consequences for overwork, stress, and unsafe working conditions.

Board Decisions Affecting the Entire UI System

Before voting, Trustee Edward McMillan said that while he supported the tuition increases, he wanted to see greater emphasis on lowering overall costs in higher education and seeking non-

academic cost savings in the budget. Trustee Stuart King offered a statement in agreement, saying that he wanted assurances that tuition revenues would be used efficiently and effectively. Trustee Ric Estrada commented on the potential impact of tuition increases on students from lower-income backgrounds. Trustee Ramon Cepeda agreed, as did Student Trustee Susan Panek. Board Chairman Don Edwards concluded that “at this point, this is the responsible thing to do . . . We can’t sustain a freeze forever.”

Approve contract extension for Timothy L. Killeen as President, University of Illinois. Following a “robust and thorough” Board review of his five-year performance, the new term of employment will be for four years commencing July 1, 2020. Dr. Killeen will receive an annual base salary of \$835,000, subject to annual increases consistent with the University’s annual merit-based salary program.

Approve Gregory J. Knott, previously Assistant Dean of University Libraries at Urbana, to serve as Secretary of the Board of Trustees and of the University, non-tenured, on a twelve-month service basis, on 100 percent time, at an annual salary of \$182,500, beginning June 1, 2020. Mr. Knott is succeeding Ms. Dedra Williams, who is retiring June 1, 2020, after serving as Secretary of the Board of Trustees and the University for four years.

Revisions to University Policy Background Checks: these revisions are mostly minor updates to “system/university” language in the document.

Approve Tuition Rates, Academic Year 2020-2021 20. The increase at Urbana is 1.8% for both resident and non-resident students. This increase is locked in for four years for new incoming students.

Approve Student Fees for Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield, Academic Year 2020-2021 21. At Urbana, this will mean an increase from \$1,543 to \$1,581 (2.46%).

Approve Rate Changes for University-Operated Housing Facilities, Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield, Academic Year 2020-2021. At Urbana, this will mean an increase of 3.65 percent, following two years of no increases and a smaller increase of 1.5 percent last year. Students who continuously live in University Housing residence halls will pay the same room and board rates from their time of entry, for up to four years.

Personnel Decisions Affecting Urbana

Appoint Associates to the Center for Advanced Study, Urbana: Christina Bashford, Associate Professor, Musicology; Eric Calderwood, Associate Professor, Comparative & World Literature; Xiaohui Chen, Associate Professor, Statistics; Julie Cidell, Professor, Geography; SungWoo Nam, Associate Professor, Mechanical Science & Engineering; James O’Dwyer, Associate Professor, Plant Biology; Nicole Riemer, Professor, Atmospheric Sciences; Rebecca Thornton, Associate Professor, Economics; Dov Weiss, Associate Professor, Religion; and Alexander Yong, Professor, Mathematics.

Appoint Fellows to the Center for Advanced Study, Urbana: Catherine Christian, Assistant Professor, Molecular & Integrative Physiology; Amanda Ciafone, Assistant Professor, Media & Cinema Studies; Kaiyu Guan, Assistant Professor, Natural Resources and Environmental Science; Niao He, Assistant Professor, Industrial & Enterprise Systems Engineering; Daniel Miller, Assistant Professor, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences; Alyssa Prorok, Assistant Professor, Political Science; Stacey Robinson, Assistant Professor, Art + Design; Lila Sharif, Assistant Professor, Asian American Studies; Diwakar Shukla, Assistant Professor, Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering; and Chadly Stern, Assistant Professor, Psychology.

Award Honorary Degrees, Urbana: James Delany, Commissioner, Big Ten Conference -- the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters; Mario Molina, Professor, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego -- the honorary degree of Doctor of Science; and Rahul Pandharipande, Professor of Mathematics, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich -- the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Curricular Decisions Affecting Urbana

Establish the Master of Veterinary Science in Livestock Systems Health, College of Veterinary Medicine and the Graduate College, Urbana

Establish the Master of Public Health in Epidemiology, College of Applied Health Sciences and the Graduate College, Urbana

Establish the Humanities Research Institute, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, Urbana

Eliminate the Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Biomedical Science, College of Veterinary Medicine and the Graduate College, Urbana

Construction and Renovation Decisions Affecting Urbana

Approve Project Budget and Award Construction Contracts for Renovation, Townsend Hall and Wardall Hall, Illinois Street Residence Halls, Urbana

Closing

Chairman Edwards noted that the reputation of the University of Illinois System is “once again ascendant” under President Killeen’s leadership. The alignment of the Board, President, and University leadership in mission and priorities is unprecedented.

President Killeen concluded with his thanks: “For all that we’ve accomplished there’s more to do.”

Submitted,
Nicholas C. Burbules