

October 15, 2024

David Dalpiaz, Chair, Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures  
Procedures Via email ([dalpiaz2@illinois.edu](mailto:dalpiaz2@illinois.edu))

Dear David Dalpiaz,

I would like to first thank you and your committee for all your efforts on this matter.

Pending final vote and approval, the Council of Academic Professionals (CAP) respectfully submits its objections to the proposed revisions to the Statutes known as ST-83, which are intended for submission to the President and the Board of Trustees via the University Senates Conference (USC). Our objections are as follows:

1. **Insufficient Time for Review:** Stakeholders have not been afforded adequate time to thoroughly understand and respond to the extensive revisions proposed.
2. **Lack of Clarity in Document Versions:** There exists a significant lack of clarity regarding document revisioning, leading to extreme difficulty in achieving a comprehensive understanding of the proposed changes.
3. **Ambiguity Surrounding Substantial Changes:** The reasoning behind substantial changes to the statutes is inadequately articulated, and there has been insufficient opportunity for meaningful dialogue concerning the ramifications of these changes.
4. **Obscured Process and Procedure:** The process leading to these revisions lacks transparency, raising concerns about the integrity of stakeholder involvement.

Before the President provides final approval, CAP asks for an understanding in the overall goals surrounding the proposed changes and the need for modifications. We ask for increased focus on transparency and explanations of any revisions made that would result in substantial modifications to the roles and responsibilities of any and all stakeholders involved in the governance of the University.

Given the accumulated complexity of these numerous revisions and their potential impact on the entire University of Illinois System, we believe the time provided to the stakeholder committees, was not nearly enough for thorough research, understanding, evaluation and articulated response. More time would facilitate appropriate consultation with all affected parties, ensuring the development of informed recommendations. In hopes of securing the necessary additional time, a formal request for extension was submitted by the CAP chair.

We find that the stated purpose of the revisions to ST-83 is to address the concerns expressed by the Urbana Senate and to clarify the University of Illinois Statutes: clarify definitions, remove vague terms, make clear categories, the definitions of faculty and staff positions, lay out the implications of this inclusion for governance, remove the vague term 'academic staff' and provide definitions for 'staff' categories, and define the senate's role.

These revisions are identified as clarifications; however, they do not appear to be focused on clarifications but far-reaching changes in both scope and principle. Many of the changes were seemingly made without definition or explanation. In addition, the official version (pdf, senate version dated 8-28) presented to CAP has the comments truncated. This makes full understanding of the changes extremely difficult, which is compounded by the numerous revision versions, many of which were not provided to CAP for review.

In addition to addressing the general concerns posed, CAP also wanted to provide a few examples of specific issues.

1. The Senate Version of the ST-83 statutes dated 8-28 states, starting on Line 459:

*Each university shall have an advisory committee or committees as defined at the university level, elected by staff (as defined in Article II Section 6) with at least a 50% appointment. System-level staff shall be eligible for membership in an equivalent advisory committee at the university or system level, as determined by the president or their designate.*

There is considerable confusion as to the intent of this passage. Does it define an additional system level committee or is it reducing and combining all advisory committees into this one? The revisions can be interpreted as allowing the system level to create their own CAP equivalent or that CAP would suddenly include and be responsible for other classifications. Changes of this nature should not be allowed without first addressing the directly affected stakeholders and allowing opportunities for explanation and conversation.

2. The Senate Version of the ST-83 statutes dated 8-28, starting on Line 2208:

*It is the policy of the University of Illinois System to maintain and encourage full freedom within the law of inquiry, discourse, teaching, research, and publication and to protect all faculty and those academic professionals engaged in such activities as part of their university employment against influences, from within or without the University of Illinois System, that would restrict the individual's exercise of these freedoms in the individual's area of scholarly expertise.*

The revision of the word "interest" to "expertise" can easily equate to a major change with very real and substantial ramifications. No definition of expertise or intent behind the change, is provided. This introduces a large amount of ambiguity into who is potentially allowed Academic Freedom. This change seems in direct conflict to the understood goal and intent of the statute revision which is to define and clarify Academic Freedom.

It is discomfoting that a single small group would be emboldened to make such startling and significant changes without very detailed review and discussion with those the changes impact, moving to place a truly flawed document, which was rejected by two of the three senates, in front of the President for transmission to the Board after an inadequate review period and process. Is this shared governance? For these reasons and for all of the reasons stated above, CAP objects to the finalization of the current version of ST-83. We appreciate your attention to these critical matters and look forward to a constructive dialogue.

Sincerely,

Eric Kurt  
Chair, Council of Academic Professionals