

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

UC.13.07 Report on the March 27, 2013 meeting of the University Senates Conference at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus

The Conference membership list for 2012-13 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/AGN-0327.13.pdf>

The Conference was joined by President Robert Easter, Vice-President of Academic Affairs Christophe Pierre, Executive Director of Governmental Relations Kappy Laing, Visiting Senior Advisor to the President Bill Adams, Senior Communication and Evaluation Coordinator Jason Kosovski, and News-Gazette reporter Julie Wurth.

The meeting was convened at 10:00 AM.

I. Remarks from the USC Chair

Chair Burbules commented on four topics: significant cuts to the University's budget projected for the upcoming year; the future of the University's hospital in Chicago; continuing challenges produced by the state regulatory environment; and internally-produced challenges to the University's governance processes, including the blurring of lines between collective bargaining and shared governance. As an example of the latter, he cited a post on the UIC faculty union site protesting the fact that the union was not consulted about whether the campus faculty should participate in MOOCs.

II. Discussion with President Easter

President Easter discussed a broad range of topics with Conference members, including:

- a. the importance of **harmonious relations** between faculty members and administration, particularly in a time of challenges. The President quoted Ben Franklin: "We must all hang together, or we will hang separately."
- b. California **legislative initiatives** to grant credit for MOOCs, which might be related to the challenges of rising tuition rates. He also discussed, in more general terms, the delicate line between legislators' legitimate oversight of the operations of the University as a public body, on the one hand; and paralyzing intrusion into those operations, on the other.
- c. ongoing fiscal challenges in our **Health Services operation**. Forty percent of patient bills are paid by Medicaid, and another forty percent by Medicare. Fifty million dollars of charity care was provided at our hospital last year. If the hospital experiences a financial shortfall, it is the responsibility of the University to cover it.
- d. **ST-72**, the proposal to revise the *University Statutes'* language on academic freedom. Pres. Easter expressed a desire for more information about some of the language in the current draft, and solicited suggestions about who could best guide him in considering this proposal.

- e. Report from the Records and Information Management System committee on archivists' oversight of "**records of enduring value.**" (See February 19, 2013 USC report.) President Easter proposed a discussion with the archivists to make sure the Conference's concerns were understood. Conference members clarified our perception that the language in the General Rules section on records (Article VI) was the heart of the problem, and not the current practices of our archivists.
- f. the University's **reserve funds**: Figures without context may be deceiving. The States owes the University over \$480 million, which shows up as revenue in our accounting system, even though we do not actually have that money. We are now using reserves to pay for things like the renovation of the Urbana campus's Natural History Building, and critical infrastructure needs on the Chicago campus. Reserve accounts represent an aggregation of all units, and include funds such as ICR, restricted donor funds, discretionary funds that units have accumulated, health insurance reserves, and faculty research accounts. None of that money is available for the central administration to distribute to salaries.
- g. **Involvement of faculty in budgetary decisions**: On the Urbana campus, the Campus Budget Oversight Committee, which is composed of faculty members, makes recommendations to the Provost regarding appropriations to colleges. The Deans' Budget Committee meets with administrative units that provide support, and the college faculty executive committees also discuss the budget with their deans. In fact, the *Statutes* require that department and college advisory committees be consulted by their executive officers about the unit budget.

On the cross-campus level, however, the President would appreciate more guidance. The State appropriation to the University is divided by a fixed percentage that goes to each campus. When there are cuts, the cuts are implemented according to this same percentage. If we were to need to revise the relative percentage of expenditure to each campus, the President would want the Conference's guidance about how to make that decision.

III. Discussion with Vice-President Pierre

Vice-President Pierre has asked the campus chancellors to organize **campus-based reviews** with the aim of setting campus goals and outlines of how to achieve those goals over the coming three years. While these reviews will be tactical rather than strategic, Vice-President Pierre emphasized the importance of moving from year-to-year planning to mid-term and long-term planning.

The Vice-President shared his projection of next year's **budget picture**, which is of serious concern, given the Governor's plans for cuts to our appropriation, in combination with the possibility that the University will be obligated to begin paying a larger contribution to employee pensions. He emphasized that we cannot plan to raise tuition to cover these additional expenses, adding that, in contrast to many other states, the state of Illinois has not increased support of public higher education in order to avoid further tuition increases.

IV. Discussion with Executive Director of Governmental Relations Kappy Laing

The Conference discussed a wide range of legislative issues with Executive Director Laing. Here are some highlights:

- a. **Pensions**: there is a desire to resolve this problem quickly, as the pension liability grows by about a billion dollars every year. Some legislation is making its way through the House, and other legislation through the Senate. SB1, for instance, calls for making a choice between the Cost of Living Allowance and continued eligibility for health coverage. When there is some clarity on the bills, Executive Director Laing will be holding meetings on the campuses and will remain in touch with the Conference.

- b. Legislative **regulation of the academic enterprise**: textbooks, MOOCs, intellectual property. Ms. Laing encouraged the members of the Conference to express their views on proposed legislation in these areas.
- c. A proposal to change the way the members of the **Board of Trustees** are appointed, which would allow the Alumni Association to forward a list of nominees to the Governor, from which he would be obligated to pick.

V. Discussion with Special Advisor Bill Adams on the Review of University Administration

Dr. Adams gave the Conference another update on the ongoing UA review. The website for the UA review can be found here: <http://web.uillinois.edu/UAreview/>

Seven review committees are involved in the general review of the operations of the University Administration. The reports of these committees should be finished in April, at which time each of the review team chairs will meet with the leaders of the reviewed offices to discuss the committee's perceptions and ask for the leader's input. A draft report will then be submitted to the review steering team. The steering committee will examine reports and share the written report with the units reviewed. Units may then submit five-page responses, which will go back to the individual teams. The review teams may make changes in the final reports if they wish. These final reports will be tabulated by the steering committee. Final recommendations will go to Vice President Pierre, then to the President and the three chancellors.

Dr. Adams clarified that, after this general review, each unit will be regularly reviewed.

Chair Burbules commented that the goal of this review process is to **rethink the relationship between UA and the rest of the university**; it is not just a micro-level review of individual UA units.

VI. Highlights from the Business Meeting

- a. Among the items classified from Senate meetings was the approval of a **Minor in Liberty Studies at UIS**. The members of the Conference's Academic and Research Affairs committee requested some background from the UIS Conference members on the discussions that culminated in the approval of this program. UIS colleagues reported that, although the proposed program generated controversy, the UIS Senate ultimately found it to be an academically sound program.
- b. 2. OT-295 (**Resolution on Campus Jurisdiction Over the Statutes and the General Rules**): The Conference continued its discussion of the proposed Resolution, which we began in January. Some Conference members expressed the view that the document would more appropriately be forwarded by individual campus senates, while others contended that the Conference was the proper venue to generate a statement related to University-wide governing documents. The Conference voted to approve the Resolution, along with a cover letter to be drafted by the Conference Executive Committee. The Resolution and its cover letter, which were transmitted to Senate chairs on Feb. 22, 2013, are attached to this report.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Joyce Tolliver, USC Liaison

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Chicago • Springfield • Urbana-Champaign

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February 22, 2013

TO: University of Illinois Board of Trustees (c/o Susan Kies)
President Robert Easter
Chancellor Paula Allen-Meares
Chancellor Susan Koch
Chancellor Phyllis Wise
Professor Lynn Fisher, Chair, UIS Campus Senate
Professor Philip Patston, Chair, UIC Senate Executive Committee
Professor Matthew Wheeler, Chair, UIUC Senate Executive Committee

FROM: Nicholas Burbules, USC Chair



RE: Resolution concerning the University *Statutes* and *General Rules* as basic governing documents (USC OT-295)

The University of Illinois *Statutes* and *General Rules* provide the framework for shared governance at the University of Illinois. These documents express the common principles that define us as an institution, and they specify the processes that translate those principles into action. It is these documents that allow the University Senates Conference to function as an elected governing body representing the Senates across the three campuses. For these reasons, one of the central responsibilities of the Conference is to uphold and explain the *Statutes* and *General Rules*.

The Conference takes no position on the merits or wisdom of faculty unionization on any of the university campuses. It is the legal right of faculty members to decide whether to unionize, and collective bargaining is a key component of that right.

The Conference does assert, however, that any collective bargaining agreements that contravene the provisions of the *Statutes* and *General Rules* would represent a threat to shared governance, and to the functions of the Conference, because there can be no common faculty governance structure if the campuses operate by different, self-determined rules. The attached Resolution, approved by the Conference on February 19, 2013, documents that position.

Enclosure

UNIVERSITY SENATES CONFERENCE RESOLUTION
Passed: February 19, 2013

The University *Statutes* and *General Rules* are the basic governing documents of this university and all its three campuses.

There are processes for revising these documents, which necessarily involve all three campus Senates, the University Senates Conference, and the Board of Trustees (*Statutes*, Art XIII Sect 8; *General Rules*, Art VII).

Therefore, it is not within the jurisdiction of any individual campus to unilaterally change or make exceptions to the University *Statutes* and *General Rules*.

The University Senates Conference affirms that any provision of a campus collective bargaining agreement that contravenes the *Statutes* and *General Rules* would undermine shared governance at the University of Illinois, because it would compromise the shared principles and practices that define us as an institution.

This resolution shall be forwarded to the three Senate chairs, the three Chancellors/Vice Presidents, the President, and the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois.