UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN
Senate Executive Committee
Minutes
Monday, August 28, 2017

Present: Chair Bettina Francis, Vice Chair Nancy O’Brien, Nicholas Burbules, Shawn Gilmore, Kim Graber, Sam LeRoy, Gay Miller, Bryan Parthum, Rahul Raju, Jeff Stein, Mark Steinberg, Matthew Wheeler

Absent: Scott Morris

Guests: Chancellor Robert Jones, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs William Bernhard, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Danita Brown Young, Campus Faculty Association Representative Andy Bowman, University Student Life Chair Mark Dressman, Senior Director of Strategic Communications Chris Harris, Associate Chancellor for Public Affairs Robin Kaler, Faculty and Academic Staff Benefits Chair John Kindt, Jay Rosenstein (Prof. College of Media), Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost John Wilkin, Associate Chancellor for Diversity Assata Zerai

Media: News-Gazette – Julie Wurth

A regular meeting of the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) was called to order at 3:12 pm on Monday, August 28, 2017 in the Senate Conference Room, 232 English Building, with Chair Francis presiding.

1. Introductions
   Introductions were made.

2. Approval of Minutes
   The minutes from May 22, 2017 were approved as distributed.

3. Chair’s Remarks
   Chair Bettina Francis welcomed all new and returning committee members. Francis reviewed procedures for setting the Senate agenda which is an important regular task of the SEC. Francis also mentioned a current vacancy on the SEC, the University Senates Conference (USC) representative that is elected to serve on the SEC. Harley Johnson will continue as a USC member, but has resigned as the SEC representative. The SEC is responsible for nominating willing USC members for this position. The SEC is also responsible for filling vacancies on the Senate Committee on Committees. Lisa Monda-Amaya has resigned and a replacement is needed.

   Francis announced that the Senate and Office of the Senate will be undergoing an internal governance audit. Francis and Vice Chair O’Brien will keep the SEC up to date on the progress of the audit.

   Francis reminded attendees that the Illinois Open Meetings Act (OMA) requires completion of an online training course for elected and appointed member of the Senate and Senate committees.

4. Chancellor’s Remarks
   Chancellor Robert Jones welcomed everyone back to campus. Jones mentioned that in his 39 years in higher education he has never seen anything like Quad Day. It was exciting to see optimism and enthusiasm on the students’ faces. It serve as a good reminder as to why we are all here and why we have committed ourselves to higher education and this great university.

   The state of Illinois has finally passed a budget and the numbers are close to what was anticipated. Funding has been secured for at least another year. The lack of state budget created some delays which caused program delays and escalated costs to programs.

   Over the summer, the H1B visa premium process was reinstated. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced a $104 million grant award to Illinois’ Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and Environment (iSEE) and the Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology (IGB). Danita Brown was hired as our new Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and the university is already benefiting from her leadership.
Unfortunately over the summer there was also the tragic kidnapping and presumed death of Yingying Zhang. The university and community has supported the family during this tragic period of bereavement.

The new semester is underway as of today. There are many exciting and challenging things to move this university forward. Jones will continue to fill the vacancies on his leadership team. The finalists for the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost will be announced in the next few days. Interim Provost Wilkin has done a fantastic job in the position. Vice Chancellor for Research (VCR) Peter Schiffer has decided to leave Illinois for Yale. Schiffer was one of the most successful VCR in a long time. Jones will announce a plan to move forward with filling this vacancy as well. Illinois has reached a critical point in its research portfolio. We must continue to move forward so that others do not take our research opportunities; therefore prudent decision at this time is to name an interim VCR, rather than starting another search at this time. It will take a unique set of skills to manage the VCR portfolio. Jones plans to name an interim VCR in the next 7-10 days.

Jones discussed the progress on the strategic planning process. A retreat was held with the deans, and a few decisions have been made. It is not necessary to completely disregard the old plan, but to note and celebrate what was achieved under the existing plan and look for new opportunities to build on it

Jones shared that he will move forward on the implementation of the recommendations that came out of the diversity review. A senior level diversity leader position will be created. There is also a plan to re-energize public engagement. He noted that Illinois does all kinds of amazing and engaging things, but those things are not talked about.

The Carle Illinois College of Medicine continues to move forward. Many institutions talk about having interdisciplinary programs, but the ECE (Educational Credentials Evaluators) was impressed by the way Illinois really lives it.

In October, a multi-billion dollar campaign will kick-off Illinois’ fundraising and philanthropic efforts.

The floor was opened for questions.

Steinberg asked about faculty hiring plans, the funding of graduate programs, and efforts to be competitive now that a state budget has been passed. Jones responded that faculty hiring is a priority and graduate funding is also a key part to moving the strategic plan forward. Jones discussed possible incremental salary increases to increase competitiveness. The Chancellor added that there also needs to be an effort to keep education affordable and accessible.

Wilkin noted that the deans were supportive of the budget process and the outcomes. All of the proposals approved were exceptional. The details on the distinguished faculty program are being worked out. Wilkin remarked that we can all agree that we are not doing enough to provide graduate financial support, and there is a plan to work on a bigger framework for providing more scholarships.

LeRoy asked Chancellor Jones about his decision to retire the war chant. LeRoy, expressed his disappointment in the process, rather than in the decision itself, and was surprised that President Killeen was not aware that the music was being retired. LeRoy again expressed disappointment that those involved in making an inclusive game day were not involved in the decision.

Jones replied that after being here almost a year he has heard many perspectives on the issue of Native American imagery and music. Jones and the athletics department have been discussing this issue the entire time since Jones’ hire, and they mutually agreed to end the playing of the war chant music. The Chancellor stated that there are times for administrative discretion and felt it was appropriate in this situation.

Jones stated that 18-20 seconds of music should not define Illinois as a university. There is nothing Jones can do to satisfy everyone surrounding this situation. The war chant was originally intended to motivate and involve the crowd. It has become less and less effective, especially with increased use of the scoreboard. The status quo is not good enough and debating the issue was not moving Illinois forward.
5. **New Business**

A. **Proposed revisions to the Statutes, Article XIII, Section 8 – to authorize the University Senates Conference to initiate revisions to the Statutes. (USC ST-79)**

   Burbules reviewed the process for amending the *University Statutes* and noted that this revision has gone back and forth between the three Senates, the USC and the President’s Office. This revision was part of a larger package of changes that was proposed. With such a lengthy process, campus administration, university administration, and the Board of Trustees have all gone through turnover, creating difficulties in moving the package forward. The USC is working on a background statement and will resubmit ST-79 to the Senates.

   Burbules noted that he has recommended to USC that, in order to move the majority of the changes forward, the agreed upon changes should go forward to the Board and the proposed changes that the President did not agree on will be worked on separately.

B. **Subcommittee to Nominate Faculty for Committee on Committees Vacancy**

   Chair Francis asked for volunteers to serve on the subcommittee. Subcommittee members will be Steinberg, Gilmore, and Burbules.

C. **University Senates Conference (USC) Member to Serve on the SEC**

   Chair Francis noted this vacancy in her remarks. Clerk Roether will ask for self-nominations from the remaining Urbana USC members.

6. **Announcements/Verbal Reports for Information**

A. **Urbana Senate Observer for the Sept 7 Board of Trustees Meeting in Urbana**

   Chair Francis will serve as Urbana Senate Observer.

B. **LeRoy shared highlights from the conference of Big Ten students that he attended over the summer. This group discussed how to work with legislators, a possible Big Ten wide voting initiative, and general sharing of information was great.**

C. **Steinberg updated SEC on the discussion held with members of the Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure (AFT), the Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures (USSP), and University Counsel on the proposed changes to the Academic Freedom provisions in the Statutes. This group is scheduled to meet with Vice President Wilson this Friday to continue discussions. This is USC item ST-72. Burbules and Steinberg agreed that the President’s Office should be involved much earlier in the process in order to continue to move the process along smoothly.**

D. **Stein noted that the Council on Academic Professionals (CAP) plans to elect academic professional (AP) committee members for the current Senate committee vacancies soon.**

7. **Adjournment**

   The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 pm.

   
   Jenny Roether  
   Senate Clerk