UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN
Senate Executive Committee
Minutes
Monday, December 4, 2017

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

Absent: Kim Graber, Scott Morris, Rahul Raju

Guests: Chancellor Robert Jones, William Bernhard (Vice Provost for Academic Affairs), Andrew Bowman (Campus Faculty Association Representative), Danita Brown Young (Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs), Robin Kaler (Associate Chancellor for Public Affairs), John Kindt (Faculty and Academic Staff Benefits Chair), John Wilkin (Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost)

A regular meeting of the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) was called to order at 3:10 pm on Monday, December 4, 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 November 6, 2017 were approved as amended.

3. **Chair’s Remarks**
   Chair Francis noted that the provision to tax graduate tuition waivers is in in the House bill, but not in the Senate bill.

   Francis mentioned an article in the Chronicle of Higher Education about a John Grisham novel that has brought the student debt issue to the mainstream public.

   She also noted that Bloomberg Businessweek reports that Purdue University has initiated a three year bachelor’s degree in liberal arts. The degree does not cut requirements, but uses summer courses and a somewhat heavier workload during the regular academic year. It also allows for an abbreviated study abroad experience.

4. **Chancellor’s Remarks**
   Chancellor Jones announced that the Board of Trustees has restructured their committee meeting schedule, which will lead to some conflicts. The Audit, Budget, Finance, and Facilities committee meetings are now scheduled at the same time as SEC. Unfortunately the Office of the Chancellor was not consulted prior to the change. The Chancellor has expressed his concern over the conflicting meeting times to the Board Office.

   Jones recently took a trip to China. As part of the ongoing sesquicentennial celebration, he met with numerous groups of alumni. The alumni consisted of a wide range of younger and older alumni as well as some that visit Urbana-Champaign regularly and many that have not returned for 20-25 years. Jones also had the opportunity to personally thank some of our scholarship sponsors. It was an enjoyable trip.

   The Illini event in Chicago has been updated and will be a scaled down version of the campaign launch that was held at State Farm Center. Jones is excited to have the opportunity to spend time with alumni.

   Jones thanked the SEC for the support and advice on the Gies family naming of the College of Business. Jones is optimistic that this type of gift will be presented to the university again.

   Jones is concerned about the proposed tax bill. The taxation of graduate tuition waivers would be very detrimental for our students. Jones was able to participate in discussions with a small group of university presidents, and he and his staff will continue to closely monitor the development of the Senate bill and House bill.
LeRoy thanked Jones for the statement made by the university in response to racist ads by Suburban Express and also to their release of student information. Kaler added that the university does not conduct any business with Suburban Express and does not condone Suburban Express’s continued illegal ads in classrooms.

Burbules inquired about the Discovery Partner’s Institute (DPI) initiative in Chicago. Jones replied that times have changed and we need to serve the masses. The masses are in Chicago. We need to have a strategic high impact presence wherever we can. DPI is a big idea about how we can do this at a large scale. We are not trying to do this alone, but together with the whole system. Chicago is involved and Springfield also, if they want to. We are not trying to compete with UIC. We want to create a physical presence to get more of our graduates to stay in Illinois and in Chicago. A lot of our graduates go to the east coast or Silicon Valley. DPI will not be issuing degrees nor trying to establish a four-year campus. Each university will have their own degrees. There is a need to create a place for our students to work, if we want them to remain in-state.

Steinberg noted that there does not appear to be a clear policy on donor influence. Jones stated that donors will not have inappropriate influence or dictate things outside of what is appropriate.

Burbules added that the Senate Committee on General University Policy (GUP) is drafting a set of guidelines for donors and what they are and are not entitled to ask for. GUP plans to discuss the set of guidelines with the Chancellor at GUP’s next meeting.

Steinberg expressed concern about the possible taxation of graduate tuition waivers and asked if there is a contingency plan in place if the tax bill is passed. Jones replied that work is being done and that the situation will continue to be monitored.

5. New Business
A. Current Status of Online Education at Illinois
   Kevin Pitts, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, presented information on online education.* Pitts noted that the undergraduate experience is about being physically on campus. There is no intention of creating a four-year online degree-seeking program. Online graduate students tend to be highly motivated learners, and not physically on campus.

   Online activity is growing, with $30 million in gross revenue for FY17. The units, not the Office of the Provost, are directing where the next online programs are coming from.

   Online summer session courses differ somewhat. Our own students are taking online courses, but there are also outside non-degree seeking students. There were almost 350 Summer session courses available.

   Three years ago winter session was introduced. The idea was for students to take one course over the few weeks between the spring and fall semesters. 84% felt it was as good or better than most face-to-face courses. Winter break this year is only three weeks long. It will be a challenge.

   Traditional online offerings are largely in the graduate programs. There is a significant revenue stream that largely goes to the unit. The only online doctorate is the Doctorate in Education (EdD) and it just debuted this year.

   The Coursera relationship began about five years ago with MOOCs (massive open online course). More recently we have developed online degree programs. There are currently four degrees offered through the Coursera platform and Illinois offers three of those four degree programs. Coursera offers a marketing platform for us to reach students. Illinois went from being an online player to being an online leader. These courses are not video recorded on YouTube. They are interactive and have capstone projects.

   Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL) is not the only producer of online courses on campus, but CITL is the campus place that has built up expertise to help deliver and work with those that are content experts.
Online course offerings are growing, but we have to wise about what is pursued. The undergraduate residential experience is important and a departure from this model is not expected.

During a discussion after the presentation, Fein noted that teaching assistants (TAs) are highly utilized to teach online courses. The ratio ranges from one TA per 30 to one TA per 50 students. Different ratios are used in different colleges.

Miller expressed concern about the effectiveness of those students that only have online experience. Pitts stated that there is no distinction noted in credentials for online or residential degrees. We have the quality so we do not distinguish. If we distinguish between online versus residential, then we are saying that online is of a different quality than residential.

O’Brien inquired if there is data collected on students taking winter session and summer session and time to degree. Pitts replied that his staff are definitely looking at this data.

Miller made a motion to add a similar presentation to the December 11 Senate agenda. The motion was seconded and approved.

B. Setting of the December 11, 2017 Senate Agenda
   The December 11 Senate agenda was set as amended.

6. Announcements/Verbal Reports for Information
   A. Board Of Trustees Senate Observer
      No one volunteered to serve as the Observer at the January 18, 2018 Board of Trustees meeting in Chicago. Clerk Roether will send an email request to all SEC members asking for a volunteer.

   B. Other
      Gilmore noted that USSP is discussing the language in the Statutes, Article II and Article III, concerning the of authority of the Senate and the authority of the colleges. Gilmore will keep SEC apprised of any updates.

7. Adjournment
   The meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Jenny Roether
Clerk of the Senate

*Filed with the Senate Office and incorporated by reference in these minutes.