A regular meeting of the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) was called to order at 3:10 pm on Monday, January 22, 2018 in the Senate Conference Room, 232 English Building, with Chair Francis presiding.

1. Introductions
   Introductions were made.

2. President's Remarks
   President Killeen noted that the government shut down has been averted, but the University will continue to closely watch the issues under discussion in Washington DC. Killeen plans to visit Washington DC next week to meet with legislators on various topics.

   Killeen mentioned that the worrisome provision regarding taxation of graduate student wages has been removed from the tax bill. The University has a budget and is solvent. Killeen thanked everyone for their support of higher education. Furloughs were not implemented during the budget impasse, but our competitive edge is lacking in regard to salary. The Board of Trustees has approved the budget request which will return the University to the FY15 funding level. Killeen would like to be able to provide salary increments to allow the university to attract and retain faculty.

   The University announced continuation of the tuition freeze for a fourth year. We are dedicated in our commitment to affordability for Illinois students, and the tuition freeze really demonstrates this commitment. Killeen would like to see the tuition freeze continue for another couple of years, but the quality of education or of faculty cannot be sacrificed.

   The strategic enrollment plan is derived from internal discussions and is not a one size fits all plan. Chicago’s plan is more focused on increased undergraduate enrollment, while Urbana is more focused on professional masters programs. There has been a trend in the out-migration of high school students which needs to be turned around. The University is one of the highest costing institutions in the Big Ten, but significant progress is being made on affordability. There has been an increase in applications with no erosion of potential or quality of applicants.

   A $60 million initiative has been launched for faculty hiring. There have been six nominations to date. One from Urbana was about $1 million. This is one-time funding for things like grad student support or lab space. The applications received so far are stellar. Killeen encouraged nominations of faculty.
Now that there is a state budget and the strategic framework is in place, energy and funds need to be put into our facilities. In Urbana-Champaign, Altgeld Hall is on the list of priorities and next in line. Facilities maintenance is an ongoing effort.

Additions are being made to IPAC (Investment, Performance, and Accountability Commitment) such as additional support for underrepresented minorities and pension support that would help with retaining and attracting faculty. A massive fundraising campaign was just started. The Gies donation was historic.

The realignment program is in the third phase of restructuring of the administration. There will be numerous FTEs moved out of central administration to the campuses. The savings are in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Only items that saved money and did not reduce function were implemented.

A new set of guiding principles has been published that addresses free speech on campus, globalization and immigration, and civic engagement. The way this document was created is a process that might be used in the future to get an authentic voice on important issues. There is a continued effort to have the kind of conversations that allow for discussion on these types of issues. Killeen thanked all of those who were involved in the development of the guiding principles.

There are challenges ahead. Work is being done to secure funding for FY19. There is robust federal support for research. If the government shut-down had lasted, it would have really slowed things down.

Killeen introduced the topic of the new Discovery Partners Institute (DPI) as part of the Illinois Innovation Network (IIN). DPI will help build up the state and the University. It will provide job opportunities and internships for our students through real world challenges. Governor Rauner really supported the creation of DPI. It is great that a public institution like ours can lead something for a state that really needs it. DPI can help with faculty recruitment, economic sustainability, and global sustainability. Killeen invited Vice President for Economic Development and Innovation Ed Seidel to further discuss DPI.

Seidel noted that DPI will encompass thousands of students, hundreds of faculty, and numerous companies. Companies can harness the talent base that the University can provide. For example, 10% of the computer scientists nationally come from the state of Illinois. This is just one example. DPI will help to build something to attract and keep talent in the state. Students who participate in DPI not only get an interdisciplinary experience, but also learn about entrepreneurship.

The IIN is a network of economic nodes. The University of Illinois is the exemplar for the state. Other institutions have already shown interest. IIN will help create a real synergistic atmosphere so both sides really benefit.

After a couple of meetings in Chicago and here in Urbana, the project received attention from Governor Rauner. DPI became Rauner’s project for a while. And now there is an effort to build up faculty, and DPI will involve faculty from all three campuses.

3. Questions/Discussion

Seidel responded to a question of how DPI will connect with those outside of the sciences by giving the example of a graphic design student who worked on a project with Caterpillar. The student became much more than just the communications person and was involved with other aspects of the project. There will be projects with non-science leaders and not just a members.

Steinberg expressed concern in the lack of excitement in the arts and humanities. Humanities play a part, but do not seem as essential as the sciences. Killeen responded that there has to be a change in reality so that this perception goes away. This is core. There has to be some suspension of disbelief and a willingness to go down a path of leadership from the inside.

Killeen encouraged everyone to nominate faculty, especially in areas that individuals feel are important; and to encourage department heads to nominate stellar humanists. This has to be faculty driven. If there are good nominees, we will pursue them. Jones added the importance of submitting proposals from across the campus.
Killeen noted that all of the issues we are grappling with as a society will continue to involve everyone. Many companies do not have the breadth to address these issues. Conflict resolution, food and hunger, smart cities, transportation—these issues need solutions from all areas.

Jones noted that the University has been anchored in Urbana-Champaign and needs to continue being anchored here, but we need a strategic and high impact vision in a metropolitan area like Chicago. This is not all about making money. It is about solving complex issues and complex societal issues. We are not going to focus just on engineering.

LeRoy was concerned about how to manage so many partnerships and ensure that the University of Illinois and our values will continue to drive DPI. Seidel responded that the University will stay at the helm. A Board has not been populated. DPI needs to remain true to our land grant mission.

Killeen and Jones both made assurances that donors are not decision makers and the University will not stray down a path just for money. The Gies gift is a wonderful opportunity. We will do our best so that we hold onto our values and will follow our guiding principles.

Kindt introduced the topic of pensions and health care benefits and the impact on recruiting and retaining faculty. Killeen responded that the University needs to be competitive on benefits and right now we are not optimally positioned. Killeen will continue to talk to legislators in Springfield.

Gilmore noted that the language in the Statutes states that the president transmits information to the Board of Trustees, but it seems that instead of just transmitting items the President’s Office often weighs in on the item and sometimes sends the item back to the Senate. Killeen replied that items that go forward to the Board go forward with the President’s recommendation of approval. If this is to change, we would need to have another conversation.

Any questions or concerns regarding DPI should be directed to Seidel.

4. Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 4:37 pm.

Jenny Roether
Clerk of the Senate