

University Senates Conference (USC)
Tuesday, March 27, 2012
(Final; Information)

PLACE: Room 407 Illini Union, Urbana

PRESENT: Andersen, Boltuc*, Burbules (Vice Chair), Campbell, Chambers (Chair), Fadavi*, Fisher, Francis, Gibori, Graber, Leff, Mallory, Mohammadian, O'Brien, Patston*, Struble, Villegas

ABSENT: Erricolo, Shanahan, Wheeler

GUESTS: Christine Des Garennes, Roopali Malhotra, Christophe Pierre, Steve Veazie

*Attended by phone

Chambers convened the meeting at 10:05 AM. Chambers welcomed members to the meeting and emphasized that we must work toward the greater good of the university. The minutes from the USC meeting on February 21, 2012 were unanimously approved. Chambers then asked to move into executive session to discuss a personnel matter. The Conference returned from executive session at 11:20 AM. Upon returning, the Senate minutes for Chicago, Springfield, and Urbana-Champaign were unanimously classified. Mohammadian agreed to server as the Observer to the Board of Trustees on May 31 in Chicago.

Andersen thanked members of the ad hoc Committee who reviewed and recommended changes to the existing USC Confidentiality Guidelines (Andersen, Graber, and Mohammadian). The existing guidelines were reviewed by the ad hoc Committee in order to be in compliance with the requirements of the Open Meetings Act (OMA) while also helping members understand what topics could be considered confidential. Legal counsel suggested that draft documents contain the phrase "privileged and confidential draft document for discussion purposes" until draft documents are approved and become a public document. Professor Andersen moved to accept the new version of the Confidentiality Guidelines with a few minor changes, and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Veazie, Deputy University Counsel, and Roopali Malhotra, Assistant University Counsel, discussed the Open Meetings Act to help members better understand the implications. After providing a general overview, they answered a series of questions that had previously been forwarded to them.

- a. It is possible to tape record a meeting without disclosing that one is doing so. When a meeting moves to closed session (e.g., to discuss personnel matters), there must be a verbatim recording of the meeting.
- b. The Board of Trustees is considered a public body.
- c. Meetings where there is an intent to conduct business are subject to the OMA.
- d. Standing committees of USC must adhere to the OMA, however, ad hoc committees might not have to adhere if membership does not represent a quorum of the USC membership.
- e. Soliciting information into a draft document is not a violation of the OMA.

- f. If discussing public business electronically, OMA regulations would be in effect. Electronic discussions of draft documents that will be brought to a public meeting, however, do not qualify.
- g. A quorum of members present must exist before members can attend a meeting by phone or video.
- h. If the Executive Committee holds a conference call in relation to planning the agenda for upcoming meetings (and not in relation to public business), the OMA does not qualify.
- i. Members of a public body must complete OMA training.

Vice-President Pierre joined the Conference at 1:30 PM. After a brief executive session, he discussed the President's Award Program which is designed to increase student diversity and give the university the ability to recruit and retain high-achieving in-state students. The program began in 1985 and is primarily for minority students but also addresses those with financial need (e.g., those from rural, low economic communities). In recent years there has been a decrease in black students but an increase in Hispanic students in the program. Six-year graduation rates, however, have improved significantly in the past few years. In 2012, the program was enhanced in order to increase student quality, yield, and retention. Overall, there was an increase in the GPA minimum and overall student qualifications in order to be accepted into the program. In turn, annual awards were increased as long as students maintain a minimum GPA. In the funding model, campuses make the decision to admit the students and University administration matches campus funding. The award has been raised to \$5,000 for four years. The program began with 110 students, and there are now over 1,000 new freshman students in the program each year.

Vice-President Pierre briefly commented on a report related to underrepresented minority faculty. There has been an increase in faculty numbers, however, this has taken 20 years to occur. The proportions of minority faculty are in sync with the number of individuals enrolled in doctoral degrees. We have approximately 10% of minority faculty (which reflects the percentage of those enrolled in doctoral programs), but everyone competes for these candidates, and we often lose them to higher paying private universities. Unless the numbers change in relation to minority students in the pipeline (undergraduate and graduate school), we will continue to struggle in relation to recruiting and retaining higher numbers of minority faculty. In the STEM fields, we are making better progress. Overall, we have made good progress and university administration is working on the campuses to the degree that they can.

As soon as possible, Chambers would like to invite the three campus chancellors to an upcoming meeting along with the other university vice-presidents.

Andersen moved to adopt the *USC Guidelines for Conduct of Business*. After brief discussion he withdrew the motion and postponed action until the next meeting. He requested members to forward additional suggestions to him.

After discussing old business items, such as developing a framework for a University-wide summit on Organization and Governance and hosting guests at future meetings, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim C. Graber