

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

UC.15.07 Report on the February 25, 2015 Meeting of the University Senates Conference at the Chicago Campus

The Conference membership list for 2014-15 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>

The Conference was joined by Trustee Ricardo Estrada and UIC Interim Provost and Chancellor Rick Gislason.

MEETING WITH TRUSTEE ESTRADA

Trustee Estrada shared his views on the transition period the Board and the University are undergoing currently. He expressed his satisfaction at the appointments of new trustees Ramón Cepeda, a UIC alumnus, and

Jill Smart, who holds a degree from the Urbana campus and who served on the presidential search committee. Both new trustees have served on the Alumni Board.

The trustee spoke at length with Conference members about the anticipated budgetary restrictions, and emphasized that the University leadership is in almost daily dialogue with the Governor's office and members of the General Assembly

In response to the Conference's question about plans for a university-wide strategic plan, Trustee Estrada supported President-Designate Killeen's expressed inclination to first listen closely before "charging ahead" with planning.

Trustee Estrada expressed his willingness to hold more direct conversations between faculty and Board members. He expressed his sense that the Board does not have the capacity to make every important decision regarding the University, and for that reason he would like to see the Board committees expanded to include other professionals in relevant fields.

One issue the Board may be dealing with relates to financial support for undocumented students, an initiative that Trustee Estrada would support. He expressed his concern about the dearth of administrative faculty leaders who are Latino/a or African American on the three campuses, supporting the view that "you have to see it to be it." He would also like to see better four-year graduation rates on all the campuses. The Conference also discussed with him at length possible reasons why the campuses have not done a better job in recruiting students of color and from disadvantaged economic groups.

MEETING WITH INTERIM PROVOST-CHANCELLOR RICK GISLASON

Dr. Gislason spoke with the Conference about UIC's recent successes in six-year graduation rates, which is now around 60%. He stated that UIC is known for its diversity in student body and in faculty. Graduation rates in all ethnic groups are increasing, but Dr. Gislason believes the campus must work harder to bring the graduation rate of Latino/a students and African-American students closer to that of Asian and Caucasian students.

Dr. Gislason responded to a question about challenges facing his campus by stating that the foremost challenge facing all the campuses is the impending budget, given the Governor's proposal cut our appropriation by 31%. Dr. Gislason believes that as cuts are made, it will be most important to protect the academic core, and pledged that administrative units and functions would be examined very carefully. He noted his belief that the primary way to increase revenue will be to increase enrollments. The University owns its own hospital, which would be affected very negatively if the Governor's proposal to decrease Medicaid were to go forward.

Dr. Gislason is also concerned about SUCSS's conversions of academic professional programs to civil service positions, which he characterized as "very painful." One of the new provisos is that if an academic professional's position title is the same as that of a civil service employee, the AP is automatically classified as a civil service employee. Trustee Montgomery has been working, as a member of the Merit Board, on behalf of the University to protect AP positions.

Deferred maintenance is another challenge for the campuses. UIC is spending about \$40 million/year on maintenance; deferred maintenance has been estimated at about \$800-900 million.

Regarding upcoming changes, Dr. Gislason reminded the Conference that, over the coming year, UIC will be recruiting a new provost and a new Vice Chancellor of Health Affairs. The VCHA will have expanded duties: the seven health affairs deans will report to the VCHA, who will have more budgetary authority, even though the primary budget officer will remain the provost. The VCHA will oversee the Hospital and all health sciences. Currently the University system has a Vice President of Health Affairs (Jerry Bauman), who reports to the president.

BUSINESS MEETING

.Chair Don Chambers (UIC) began the meeting by requesting a moment of silence in memory of our Urbana colleague Mark Leff, whose partner Carol has served on the Conference for the past few years.

The bulk of the business meeting was devoted to the USC response to President Easter's request for the Conference's advice on the Urbana proposal to establish an independently accredited College of Medicine at the Urbana campus. After extensive discussion, the Conference approved the statement attached as an Appendix to this report.

One of the Conference's functions is to classify the various actions of the campus senates, indicating whether further review is necessary. The Conference agreed that the Urbana proposal to establish a new College of Medicine should be classified as Category I, (the item can be transmitted directly to the Board for its approval), in accordance with Statutes Article II, Section 1 (b).

University Senates Conference
Advice on the Establishment of an Independently Accredited
College of Medicine at the University of Illinois at Urbana

The President has requested the advice of the Conference on the proposal to establish an independently accredited College of Medicine on the Urbana campus. The Urbana Senate approved a detailed proposal on Feb. 9, 2015, following a careful review and analysis by the campus Senate's Educational Policy Committee, Budget Committee, and University Statutes and Senate Procedures Committee. As is USC's custom, we have classified this Senate action according to statutory guidelines, and have determined that it falls under Classification I. On September 18, 2014, the Chicago Senate endorsed a motion to support a single and unified College of Medicine at the University of Illinois.¹

The University Senates Conference is committed to "assist the senates to communicate with one another, with University and campus administrative officials, and with the Board of Trustees (through the president)," and to "develop and implement procedures to enhance such communication" (*University Statutes*, II.2.b).²

A fundamental principle underlying our attempts to enhance communication and cooperation among the three campus senates is that it is not "within the jurisdiction of the faculty or administration of any one campus to curtail the academic planning of any other campus"; and that, "when one proposed campus initiative is thought to present potential impediments to the pursuit of excellence on the part of any of the other campuses," it is up to "administrative and faculty leaders across the campuses to pursue constructive, collaborative solutions."³

The Conference thus recognizes the right of the faculty of the Urbana campus to initiate academic programs it deems in the best interests of its institutional mission, in accordance with campus, University, state, and national approval processes. At the same time, we recognize that in this instance the Chicago campus Senate and members of the UIC administration have raised concerns about the impact of such a program on their own campus, and we therefore urge the administrative and faculty leaders of the Urbana and Chicago campuses to engage in direct dialogue to find ways to mitigate any detriments the proposed College of Medicine might present to the academic mission of the University of Illinois-Chicago.

¹ Received as an information item on the USC agenda, October 8, 2014 .

² University Senates Conference Statement on Excellence at the University of Illinois [http://www.usc.uillinois.edu/sites/usc.uillinois.edu/files/documents/OT-311USC_Stmt_Excellence052214.pdf]

³ University Senates Conference Resolution on Avoiding Cross-Campus Conflicts [http://www.usc.uillinois.edu/sites/usc.uillinois.edu/files/documents/OT-315ResCrossCampusConflicts0825.14_1.pdf]