

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATEUrbana Senate Observer  
(Final; Information)**SC.19.21** Report on the on the March 14, 2019 meeting of the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois System in Urbana

Chair Donald J. Edwards convened the public portion of the meeting at approximately 9:35 AM. The Other Guys, a subset of the Varsity Glee Club, sang the State Song, "Illinois", after which President Killeen introduced the official observers to the meeting.

UIUC Chancellor Jones welcomed the Board to Urbana. He noted that the university is celebrating the unrolling of its new Strategic Plan, following a robust planning process with widespread participation. Its 'simple' goals are to maintain, and to build on, the past 150 years' reputation for excellence. Jones also noted that the university has released its fourth annual Illini success report: 91% of graduating seniors found their first destination within 6 months of graduation; their average salary was above \$60,000. Moreover, a large percentage of graduates said they would be staying in Illinois, demonstrating that the university's graduates contribute to the well-being of the state. Finally, he noted that of students who accepted internships, more than 30% received full-time job offers from the company.

President Killeen reported that 2019 saw the System grow by more than 9,000 students, which means it is on track to reach 93,000 students over the next 5 years. Under-represented minorities are an increasing percent of this student body, having risen from 25% 5 years ago to almost 30% now. The increase in the student body will require increased investment in facilities: and there are plans for major capital improvements, with a state-funded capital improvement plan likely for this year. The increase in students will also require major increases in faculty numbers, and he observed that there are two major hiring initiatives underway. In the Distinguished Faculty hiring Program, 14 faculty have already arrived; he invited three of them to speak.

Nancy Amato, who is chair of the CS department at UIUC, noted that she received her Ph.D. from UIUC in 1995, and came here because it is one of the top five CS departments at a public university. Kenneth Kris, Professor of Public Administration at UIS, noted that he is a 1<sup>st</sup> generation college graduate, son of a factory worker from a small town, who has contributed to developing solid financial planning for (among others) Estonia, Minnesota, and New York City. Finally, David Seposki, a historian from the Berlin Max Planck Institute, noted that he was a Chicago native who came to UIC because of its excellent reputation.

The second hiring program seeks to remedy the increase in student: faculty ratios: while the number of students has increased 10%, faculty numbers have increased by only 2.6%. Therefore, plans are underway to hire significant numbers of new tenure-track faculty. AT UIUC, the plan is for 493 new faculty members, of whom 325 would be replacements for faculty who have left or retired; 168 additional faculty members are to be hired. (Note: the departments mentioned as targets for hiring were mostly in STEM – math, statistics, information science, health sciences). At UIC, 255 new hires are planned, of whom 135 would be replacements. At UIS, 25 new hires are planned, of whom eight would be replacements. In total: 960 new faculty, of whom 448 are

actually additions to current faculty numbers. These increases will require expanding resources to meet the recurrent salary costs as well as the large startup costs.

Killeen then pointed out that the Foundation reports that \$2 billion have been raised in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the current fund drive, which is projected to run for 5 years.

Avijit Ghosh reported on the System's risk management and self-insurance programs. He noted that there are four self-insurance programs, which are necessary not only for cost-effectiveness, but also because insurers will not provide insurance to universities unless they have robust self-insurance programs. The System has 50 separate insurance contracts to supplement the self-insurance. He elaborated on the various reserve funds, and noted that the System's relatively low payouts result in lower premiums now than in the past.

Ghosh also noted that, for this fiscal year, income is up due to increased revenue from tuition, appropriations, and grants. Grants are up by 5%, while other factors increased by 1-2%.

Gay Miller and Prasanta Khalita of the USC Academic Affairs Committee illustrated the intertwining of liberal arts and practical goals of university education, using examples from each university: featuring this year's SOFA-CONNECT project from FAA at UIUC; Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practices at UIC; and noting that the student body of UIS Online comprises students from 84 counties in Illinois; from 46 states and 1 territory in the US, and 14 countries.

The USC presentation was followed by committee reports, consisting of the numbers of those proposals that passed.

Also mentioned were the following:

- There have been 2000 calls to the Ethics Office, which consists of five people.
- Some 2000 bills have been submitted to the General Assembly; although few will go anywhere, this still requires a major legislative effort on the University's part;
- The budget submitted by Governor Pritzker is relatively favorable to the University;
- April 3 is UI Advocacy Day in Springfield;
- There were 1,061 FOIA requests of the University in 2018.
- The three universities have different costs for student health insurance; an analysis of why students opt out is necessary.
- 41 students have been accepted to next year's class at the Carle-Illinois College of Medicine, and the 1<sup>st</sup> year students there are doing well.

Six speakers asked to make public comments. (Because the speakers' names were only given orally, they may be incorrectly spelled in what follows.)

Michael Skibzky, sophomore in Business, proposed a mascot for UIUC. He argued that a mascot is a form of identity for students, and introduced "Champ" the doughboy: a stylized figure of a WW I soldier, carrying a victory flag. He argued that this is a unique, inoffensive mascot; the word is of the same length as "Chief" – and forms part of the name of the city of Champaign. ("Champ" was modeled, in full regalia, after the meeting.)

Richard Skibzky, father of Michael and a UIUC alumnus, spoke in favor of “Champ”, saying that the campus needs a symbol.

Reelyn Faye, self-identifying as a veteran and a Native American, argued for the return of Chief Illiniwek, saying that the removal of Native American symbols is a denial of the heritage of Native Americans.

Ian Dozier spoke passionately about the need to give students the opportunity to form their own opinions. He argued that requiring freshmen to undergo “cultural sensitivity training” deprives them of the opportunity to learn and to form their own opinions. He stated that it is necessary to let all stakeholders have part in the discussion (without saying what the discussion is about), and that the system is broken and the faculty must be held accountable. Finally he noted that his jacket had been “ripped off” during the homecoming parade, and showed an orange patch (which he said was duct tape) on a blue jacket.

Janet Smith, a faculty member in Urban Planning at UIC, commented on the high cost of attending UIC, noting that even with tuition frozen, costs were going up because fees are increased. She asked the Board of Trustees to consider the full range of costs – fees as well as tuition – in identifying the cost of attending the university. Although she agrees that UIC needs new buildings, she is concerned about the assumption that continued increases in student enrollment will subsidize the costs of building, noting that this was not true for Roosevelt University. Moreover, students are asked to pay before the buildings are actually built: will they even derive benefits from them? Currently, tuition at UIC is approximately \$5300; however, fees are an additional \$2300 per semester. In addition, most departments charge a tuition “differential” because their costs are not covered by the standard tuition – this is an additional \$1,000 for undergraduate students, most of whom must pay it out of pocket; it rises as high as \$5,100 for graduate students in Public Health. She requests of the Board of Trustees that they make the actual cost of attending UIC visible.

Anna May Zhialo (The spelling of her name is very uncertain.) spoke in favor of fossil fuel divestment by the University. She pointed out that we are living in the Anthropocene Age, and that UI students understand the significance. The fossil fuel industry spends \$10 for every \$1 spent by environmental groups on discussions of climate change. Yale, Oxford, the City of New York, and Ireland have all divested from fossil fuels. UIUC students are strongly for divestments, voting for it 6:1 in 2013, and again in 2016, by 3:1. Climate change will affect all students: their generation will be universally affected. Meanwhile, the University is exhibiting cognitive dissonance between its beliefs and its actions in refusing to divest from fossil fuels.

After the public comments, votes were taken on actions passed out of committees. The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:45.

Respectfully submitted:

Bettina Francis  
Chair, Senate Executive Committee