

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE**

Final;Information

HE.11.09 Report of the Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE meeting May 20, 2011

The Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE, hosted by Kankakee Community College (KCC), met at 8:30 a.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn in Kankakee on Friday, May 20, 2011. The Council was welcomed by KCC President John Avendano who explained the College was closed on Fridays due to a four day summer schedule. The previous year's closing was projected to yield significant budgetary savings and the savings significantly exceeded the initial projections.

President Avendano stressed that the College is a significant economic engine for the area, noting that the Kankakee area has the state's second highest unemployment rate. The high school graduation rate in the area is significantly below the national average. KCC is the fastest growing community college in the state, a 33% increase in students in the last 5 years. Some of the new students are traditional college-age students, some unemployed. But when unemployment benefits run out the unemployed cannot afford to continue and drop out. Ninety-five percent of the students who enroll need one or more remediation courses and the College works very hard to get them ready for college-level work. The recent legislation establishing performance based funding has potential for enormous impact. Urgent need to adjust standards to different student bodies and needs. Due to the need for remediation many run out of aid before they complete their programs. The lack of summer Pell grants has a very negative effect on the students. The College has 73 full-time faculty who teach 65% of the classes with an average class size of 30 and a semester teaching load of 15 hours.

Allan Karnes, SIU-C has been named to the IBHE with the governor finally acting upon legislation passed some years ago for an active faculty member to serve on the Board. Karnes has been a long-time member of the Faculty Advisory Council. (Some retired faculty members also serve.)

Following an update on staff searches and hires at the IBHE, the Council discussed draft FAC statements on Remediation, Articulation, and Online Education.

The major focus of the meeting was a discussion of pending and potential state and federal legislation affecting higher education by Kappy Laing, UI Director of Governmental Relations ; Charles Evans UI Assoc. VPAA ; Bob Blankenberger, IBHE Deputy Director of AA; and Dave Tretter, President of the Independent Colleges and Universities. They stressed that legislation at both state and federal levels significantly affects what we do. Faculty need to understand the legislative process and its implications for legislation that impacts higher education. Quality is an important goal but needs to be defined and recognized when it exists. Trotter noted that: "President Hogan has done a wonderful job in communicating the value of higher education."

The legislature is dealing with very difficult issues such as pensions, articulation of courses, and carrying of concealed weapons on campus. The latter, a very polarizing issue, has been blocked for this session but will to be an issue in future legislative sessions. Unclear what will happen about pensions. Weekly meetings of university and college government relations individuals discuss issues and how to react. Different universities and individuals agree to focus on different issues. The U of I is concentrating

on pensions, for example, given the threat of a mass exodus faculty if pension changes are adopted. It is very hard to attract faculty when great uncertainty about things such as pensions. Private institutions focus on MAP and student aid funding. The for-profits worry about losing state financial aid for their students. Unintended consequences follow from legislation: recent legislation means a couple of long-established of schools will not be allowed to grant degrees unless the legislation is changed.

With significantly less money to spend, the legislature has moved to greater regulation of schools both public and private. Example, defining a "credit hour," is a hugely complicated issue but the legislature ties aid is to "credit hours." The pressure is for more homogenization in higher ed.

Private foundations and individuals have an agenda tied to their interest in higher education. With relatively small amounts of money they often have a huge impact. Illinois passed legislation in an effort to get "Race to the Top" funding. Did not, but the legislation remains in effect and hard to change as it is "reform." The Gates Foundation has had an incredible impact. We need to channel what they do and as educators we need to be at the table when priorities are set and decisions made.

Time may be on the side of higher education as the legislative session is rushing to a close. But business groups and others are bringing pressure on pensions and other legislative issues and that will continue. Issues such as changes in health insurance or pensions may end up in the courts.

Following lunch the various caucuses met followed by reports. The public university caucus focused on the need for enhanced understanding of the contributions higher education makes to the entire society, contributions that go well beyond educating its students. We have not found effective ways to tell our story. The private institutions caucus spoke of the need to ensure that at least one for-profit institution always have a place in the caucus given the value of the differing perspective they bring.

Following approval of the minutes of the April 8 meeting and discussion of the upcoming election of Council officers, the meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Ken Andersen
Alternate UIUC Representative to the FAC