

Report on IBHE Faculty Advisory Council Meeting

October 15, 2010

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The Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) met at the Oakton Community College on Friday October 15, 2010 with 31 members present. The meeting started at 8:30 AM with FAC Chair Abbas Aminmansour presiding. Special guests included Oakton VPAA Tom Hamel; Senator Edward Maloney, Chair of the Senate Higher Education Committee; Representative Robert Pritchard, Republican Spokesperson for the House Higher Education Committee and Andrew Davis, Executive Director of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC).

VPAA Hamel welcomed the group to his campus and noted that Oakton ranks #6 in population served, #7 in college credit enrollments, but #44 in size of geographic area. He added that Oakton's coverage area consists of some wealthy communities as well as areas with relatively high percent of immigrant families.

Illinois Senator Edward Maloney and Representative Robert Pritchard began their remarks with sharing their backgrounds in higher education. Senator Maloney spoke about the Career and College Readiness Act and noted that initially four schools were included in the plan to address remedial needs in high school. More to be added later. He spoke about the serious/expensive nature of remediation and mentioned that it costs about \$30 million in Chicago alone. Senator Maloney characterized affordability as a major problem in higher education and noted that tuition and fees at public universities are now at about 35% of median family income. The Senator added that the Higher Education Finance Study Commission (HEFSC) is currently looking into ways to address the future financing of higher education.

Representative Pritchard recommends that we target legislators without a four year institution in their district and help them better understand the need for supporting higher education. Representative Pritchard noted that addressing financing of higher education requires bipartisan collaboration. He identified getting more people through the educational system (through articulation, dual credit, and transfers) are helpful ideas. Representative Pritchard also identified higher education affordability as important.

Senator Maloney stated that HEFSC is looking at models including performance-based financing of higher education and improved efficiency in offering Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants. Representative Pritchard said those who drop out of school and don't see higher education in their future need to better understand the potential impact of higher education on their future. He also noted that we need to understand that education begins with K-12. Senator Maloney commented that we need better communications and that higher education needs to tell its story better. He added that a clear spokesperson(s) is needed to break through the clutter and get the message out. Senator Maloney added that K-12 wouldn't stand for flat funding; we need to raise our voice. Further discussions included the role of P-20 Council in addressing issues of remediation and that the senior year of high school may need a review.

Andrew Davis reviewed the idea of bond funding of student aid through ISAC. He noted that this idea is particularly attractive now with the low interest rates. He added that MAP is currently funded at an all-time high of \$400 million. However, still about 140,000 eligible students do not receive any funds. He added that of this group only 28% end up attending college with finances being their major obstacle. Of those who do receive MAP grants, 70% attend college in Illinois. The remaining 30% go to another state or go into the job market or defer going to school for some reason. Davis noted that higher education increases an individual's potential income and generates more tax revenues for the state. According to Davis, if the state borrowed money to fund MAP, the increased income taxes generated by those receiving the MAP grant will be about 1.85 times the principal and interest of the borrowed money. The payback period is 6 years. Davis stated that the bill to fund MAP with bonds will go to the legislature next spring. During the Q and A, Davis stated that about 90% of community college graduates tend to stay in the state after 10 years. He further noted that the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and college trustees association are not in favor of bond funding of the MAP program. A concern expressed is that new funds should go directly to institutions, not to ISAC. Davis stated that ISAC is considering proposed legislation that would require student to use federal benefits before using MAP grants.

In the afternoon, FAC carried out a discussion to establish its priorities for action over the current academic year. This was a follow up to the extensive discussions of the previous meeting. Subsequently, the following four items were selected by FAC as its priorities for action during the current year: remediation; articulation; promoting higher education and establishing faculty representation on bodies affecting higher education. The group will continue to develop specific action plans to pursue these goals in the future. A number of items were taken care of during the business portion of the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM.

The next FAC meeting will take place on November 12 at Illinois State University and will include a panel discussion on remediation and articulation.

Submitted respectfully,
Abbas Aminmansour