

Report on IBHE Faculty Advisory Council Meeting

February 15, 2011

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The Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) held a regularly scheduled meeting at the National-Louis University in Chicago on Tuesday February 15, 2011 with 21 member institutions present. The day included a lunch meeting with the Board and IBHE senior staff.

Regular Council Meeting:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Abbas Aminmansour at 8:30 AM and ended at 12:50 PM to allow members attend the IBHE meeting in the afternoon. Given the fact that the Council was to meet with the Board over lunch that day, the group held a discussion on what topics to discuss with the Board. It was decided that we should thank the Board for its engaging of the Council and appointment of its members to serve on committees and commissions.

The Council also felt that we should discuss with the Board the State of Illinois placing a cap on pensions and its impact on our institutions' ability to recruit and retain top faculty and administrators. It was noted that individual institutions do not establish the market including salaries and benefits for such positions. The concern is that with such legislation, our institutions will have to make up the difference between what the State allows and what the market dictates in order to recruit and maintain high quality people. This, it was noted, amounts to another unfunded mandate and will have the same effect as another budget cut.

The third item for discussion with the Board was the impact of some for-profit institutions establishing "diploma mills" and perhaps following questionable if not unethical practices to recruit students. The Council noted that such incidents damage the reputation of credible for-profit institutions.

Council Meeting with the Board, IBHE Senior Staff and Governor's Representative:

The Council meeting included a lunch meeting with members of the Board and senior IBHE staff as well as Julie Smith, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor. The new IBHE Executive Director, Dr. George Reid, spoke first and offered his commitment to work closely with the Council to pursue matters of common interest to the staff and the Council.

Chair Aminmansour echoed the Council's appreciation for the Board's consideration of faculty input through different opportunities and noted that the Council is grateful for having the opportunity to offer the Board advice on matters of interest to higher education.

Board members responded to the three discussion items noted above. The Council members were very pleased that Board members made comments that indicated their appreciation and understanding of faculty issues. Board member Bergman felt that perhaps the Board should go back to its previous practice of faculty representatives giving brief reports of their activities and share their concerns at each Board meeting. The Council members warmly welcomed this suggestion as they had discussed the matter as well. Board member Washington agreed with the position of the Council on the impact of State's placement of a cap on pensions. He also shared our concern about "diploma mills" and hoped that the appropriate authorities will take action to address this concern. Board member Woodward was very pleased with the ongoing discussion between Board members and the Council and suggested that the Board holds a special four to six hour meeting exclusively with the Council each year. The Council was very pleased with this suggestion and will pursue the idea.

Deputy Chief of Staff Smith from the Office of the Governor noted that the Governor is busy appointing members to boards and commissions. She mentioned that she was hoping to announce the name of a faculty member from a public university to serve a full term on the Board by that day. However, because of the recent public attention given to vacancies on boards and commissions, the Governor has been very busy filling those positions.

The Board had a regularly scheduled meeting in the afternoon.

The next IBHE-FAC meeting is scheduled for Friday March 18 at Kennedy-King College in Chicago. That meeting will include a panel discussion on online education.

Submitted respectfully,
Abbas Aminmansour