

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE
Urbana Senate Observer
(Final; Information)

SC.13.13 Report on the March 7, 2013 meeting of the Board of Trustees held at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus, Illini Union

The agenda and materials, including copies of many of the presentations, may be found here:

<http://www.trustees.uillinois.edu/trustees/agenda/March-7-2013>

A video of this meeting may be found here:

<http://uishelix2.uis.edu/vod/vod/2013/BOT3713.html>

This report summarizes highlights of the meeting that are of particular relevance to the Urbana campus.

The following items forwarded by the Urbana Senate were approved:

1. Academic appointments and sabbaticals
2. Establishment of the
 - a. Grainger Center for Electric Machinery and Electro-mechanics in the College of Engineering
 - b. Center for a Sustainable Environment in the Office of the Chancellor
 - c. TIAA-CREF Center for Farmland Research, Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, College of ACES
 - d. Undergraduate Concentration in Jewish Studies in the B. A. in Liberal Arts and Sciences in Interdisciplinary Studies, LAS

The following items specific to the Urbana campus were also approved:

1. A 16% increase in student health insurance rates for undergraduate students and a 6% raise in these rates for graduate students at the Urbana campus (Trustee McMillan, Chair of the Audit, Budget, Finance, and Facilities Committee, noted that a lower bid on health insurance was filed after his Committee's meeting and before the Board meeting, and that lower bid was accepted.)
2. Amendment of the contract for improvements to the Assembly Hall

Remarks from President Easter:

President Easter addressed the concerns caused by sequestration, noting that it will be some time before we know the full magnitude of cuts. There are indications that Pell grants will not be affected, but that other financial aid programs will be.

It appears that current NSF grants will not be cut, although future grant opportunities will be reduced. The President is working with his staff to clarify what sequestration means for the University.

Based on Governor Quinn's budget recommendations, we can expect to see a \$32.7 billion reduction in our operating budget, which will put us back to 1995 rates. When adjusted for inflation, our budgetary

allotment would be equivalent to what it was in 1965. In interpreting this figure, it's important to note that we have doubled the number of enrolled students since 1965.

The President noted that he is closely following legislation on concealed weapons. He expressed his concern about the safety of employees and students if concealed weapons are allowed on our campuses, and noted that he has requested an exception within the statute that would disallow concealed weapons on our campuses.

Reports from Chancellor Wise:

In her general campus report, Chancellor Wise focused on the efforts made on campus to demonstrate our commitment to diversity. She expressed her conviction that a commitment to diversity implies a commitment to excellence as well as to social justice. The creation of a more diverse group of faculty is crucial, according to Chancellor Wise, and she informed the Board about new measures of inclusion and diversity, which particularly target the recruitment of faculty. At the same time, the efforts to make our student body more diverse continue, as well as programs to help our students succeed once they arrive on campus. The Chancellor thanked Board members who have helped recruitment efforts by personally contacting students who have been accepted to the Urbana campus and encouraging them to accept our offer and to enroll.

The bulk of Chancellor Wise's presentation to the Trustees was comprised by her Dashboard report. The Dashboard reports are designed to inform the Board about campus progress, plans, and challenges in a wide variety of areas, contextualized in comparison with how peer institutions are doing. A copy of the entire Power Point presentation is available here:

<http://www.trustees.uillinois.edu/trustees/agenda/March-7-2013/p-Dashboard-Urbana-BOT-Presentation.pdf>

Here are some highlights from the Chancellor's Dashboard report on the Urbana campus:

1. We have seen a downward trend in admissions yield, or the numbers of first-year students accepted who actually enroll. Our peer institutions are also experiencing a decrease in yield, partly explained by the fact that students tend to apply to more schools now, which means that students also reject more offers. Far and away, the most frequently cited reason when students reject our admission offer is economic: other schools offer them a better financial package. We are working to reverse this trend by simplifying the admissions process, visiting more high schools to recruit students, and coordinating the offers of admission with the notification of financial aid offers.
2. While our campus's student population is the most diverse in the Big Ten, there is continued concern about the graduation rate among underrepresented students. Among these groups, those who do not graduate within four years are more likely not to graduate at all, because scholarships usually are available only for four years. The Chancellor also expressed concern about the drop-off rate between the sophomore and junior years among underrepresented students, and speculated that this could be partially explained by the fact that mentoring programs typically target the first two years, but do not continue as robustly in the junior and senior years.
3. The Chancellor noted that our student-faculty ratio is higher than that of our peers, and that the number of course sections with enrollments under 20 has increased but is still lower than that of the peer median. Chair Kennedy wondered how relevant this figure is as a measure of quality, and the Chancellor responded that, while this number is important for the U.S. News and World Report rankings, it is among the least predictive of quality. One reason why this figure has become less meaningful is that the size of a class in an online format is much less relevant than it is for traditional courses.

4. We are doing very well indeed in garnering NSF grants. Of all NSF grants awarded, 2.5% come to our campus. This is a figure of which we can be very proud. However, the Chancellor cautioned against depending too much on NSF grants, and noted the importance of diversifying the sources of our grant revenue.

Report from Dean Bruce Smith, College of Law:

Dean Smith reported that 98% of our College of Law graduates pass the bar exam, which is the highest rate in the state. He shared his perception that lawyers can contribute in important ways to each of the six major issues identified by the campus Visioning Excellence exercises: Energy and the environment; social equality and cultural understanding; education; economic development; health and wellness; and information and technology.

Report from the University Health Care System Committee (Trustee Koritz, chair):

Trustee Koritz's report focused on finances, and contained very little good news. He reported a decrease in the per diem reimbursement amount paid by Medicaid, and stated that the Board is working to rectify that rate. This would require the State to seek federal approval; such a request has been filed.

The UI Health Care system is currently operating at a loss of \$875,000. Trustee Koritz expressed his hope for a 0 balance for 2013, or, more optimistically, to end the year in the black. He noted that Medicare cuts to teaching hospitals will also affect us.

Report from the Academic and Student Affairs Committee (Trustee Hasara, chair):

Trustee Hasara reported that Associate Vice-President Richard Wheeler had delivered a presentation to the Committee on faculty sabbaticals, that Urbana student Trustee David Pileski had addressed the Committee on financial literacy for students, and that the student trustees had suggested that the University develop more online cross-campus courses.

Faculty report from Prof. Peter Boltuc, UIS, on academic freedom:

Prof. Boltuc's Power Point presentation is available here:

<http://www.trustees.uillinois.edu/trustees/agenda/March-7-2013/p-Academic%20Freedom%20Dr%20Boltuc.pdf>

After providing an historical overview of the concept of academic freedom, Prof. Boltuc emphasized the centrality of academic freedom to the creation of new knowledge. He referred to ST-72, the proposed amendment to the *Statutes* whose aim is to reinforce the guarantee of academic freedom on all three campuses, and recalled President Easter's words after the death of Prof. Carl Woese, whose discovery of a new life form, archaea, might not have been possible were it not for the academic freedom afforded the prize-winning microbiologist by the University of Illinois.

Respectfully submitted by
Joyce Tolliver, Urbana Senate Observer