

University Senates Conference (USC)
August 23, 2012
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
(President's House)
(Final; Information)

REPORT TO THE SENATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

The Conference membership list for 2012-13 can be found here:
<http://www.usc.uillinois.edu/membership.cfm>

The agenda for this meeting can be found here:
<http://www.usc.uillinois.edu/Documents/AGN-0823-12.pdf>

The Conference was joined by Board Chair Christopher Kennedy, President Robert Easter, Vice-President of Academic Affairs Christophe Pierre, and Chancellor Phyllis Wise.

I. REMARKS OF USC CHAIR

In the first remarks of his year as Chair, Nicholas Burbules suggested three broad goals for this year's work of the Conference:

- 1) to improve our avenues of communication with the University-level senior administration, which were constrained by the previous system which limited USC interaction with the vice-presidents only when the president was present;
- 2) to increase our knowledge of the workings of each campus, particularly in terms of budget;
- 3) to revamp USC's organizational structures so as to allow the Conference to deal with multiple issues in parallel fashion, in particular by revising the structure of our subcommittees.

II. DISCUSSIONS WITH CHAIRMAN KENNEDY, PRESIDENT EASTER, VICE-PRESIDENT PIERRE, AND CHANCELLOR WISE

Chairman Kennedy, President Easter, and Vice-President Pierre joined the Conference for the two-hour morning session.

In discussion with **President Easter** about budgetary matters, the Conference learned that the 6% cut in our allocation from the State of Illinois is being applied across the board to include the budget for University-level administration.

We also discussed the still-unresolved question of pensions. University leaders, including the USC, have expressed their support for the Institute of Government and Public Affairs proposal on pensions <http://igpa.uillinois.edu/system/files/SURS-Paper.pdf>.

Chairman Kennedy noted the significant pattern of underfunding by the State of Illinois: for the past four years, he told us, the State has underfunded the University by about \$250 million per year.

Chairman Kennedy expressed his conviction that the University of Illinois should lead a coalition of state institutions of public higher education, noting that the benefits that a research institution such as ours brings to the state are not the same as those of public higher education in general. Conference members remarked on some of those benefits. It was noted that the University of Illinois trains more physicians than any other program in the country, that sixty percent of physicians practicing in the Chicago area earned their degrees from the University of Illinois; and that the University is one of only

two institutions in the state with dentistry training programs (the other program being housed at Southern Illinois University).

President Easter also remarked on Illinois Ventures, the limited-liability corporation that funds start-up companies associated with the University of Illinois: seventy percent of the companies that have been funded by Illinois Ventures have stayed within Illinois and contributed to the state's economy.

Vice-President Pierre discussed three topics with us: 1) staff changes in his office; 2) the development of a process for the review of academic programs; and 3) the process for implementation of the Enrollment Management plan to which the Conference agreed last spring. (You can find the final Enrollment Management plan at <http://www.senate.illinois.edu/empathforward.pdf>).

Vice-President Pierre is reducing the number of staff positions serving his office. Among the positions being eliminated are two University Outreach and Public Service positions (after the imminent retirement of those holding the positions), and one AP position in his Chicago office. Dr. Richard Wheeler, our former Interim Provost, has been appointed Visiting Associate Vice-President of Academic Affairs. He will be working with Vice-President Pierre on the development and coordination of several initiatives, including Enrollment Management and the development of reliable metrics for academic performance.

The University Senates Conference will continue to discuss processes and policies regarding the evaluation of academic programs with Vice-President Pierre. The vice-president would like to have the processes in place by the end of the current academic year. He expressed his conviction that "one size does not fit all" in such evaluations, and that there are several different ways in which academic programs may contribute to the University.

In order to begin the implementation of new Enrollment Management practices, Vice-President Pierre has formed an Enrollment Management Policy Council, which will include the campus provosts as well as Prof. Carol Leff, who will represent the University Senates Conference. The EMPC will begin meeting in September 2012. Dr. Pierre will also have the advice of a Common Application Consortium Assessment committee. The membership of this committee has not yet been finalized, but will include Kim Graber as a representative of USC.

Chancellor Wise joined the Conference for about an hour during the afternoon session. The primary focus of our conversation with the Chancellor was the prospect of fruitful intercampus collaborations, now that all three campuses have permanent appointments in the senior administrative leadership positions. President Easter meets with all three chancellors every month, which facilitates the sharing of information and concerns.

A University-wide committee is considering ways to make the public aware of the distinct identities of each of the three campuses, as well as of the identity of the University of Illinois as a whole. Chancellor Wise emphasized that the strength of the University of Illinois system lies in these three distinct identities. In response to questions from Conference members, she remarked that one area in which the three campuses might be expected to collaborate more closely in the future is the general area of health sciences (as opposed to just Medicine).

III. BUSINESS MEETING

The bulk of the business meeting was dedicated to discussing proposed revisions to the *University Senates Conference Organization and Functions* (see agenda item VI, OT-266). The proposed revision of substance involved the reformulation of USC committees. After a robust and thoughtful discussion, the Conference voted to adopt a committee structure that would mirror that of the Board. In addition to the Executive Committee, the Conference will now feature a Statutes and Governance Committee; a Finance, Budget, and Benefits Committee; a Hospital and Health Affairs Committee; and

an Academic Affairs and Research Committee. (The name of this last committee was revised from "Academic Affairs" to "Academic Affairs and Research" after the Conference voted to accept a proposed amendment to the name.)

Each committee will feature representation from each of the three campuses. The chair of each of the committees will attend meetings of the parallel Board committee, and it is the Conference's hope that the vice-presidents will make themselves available to meet with relevant USC committees. Conference members expressed the desire that the new structure would lead to more significant and regular interaction with the Board and with the vice-presidents.

Chairman Burbules also announced that he had been asked to serve on a small committee charged with identifying passages of the *University Statutes* and *General Rules* that might benefit from revision. A separate committee will be charged with drafting any proposed changes. As stipulated in the *Statutes* themselves, any proposed revisions to the *Statutes* would require the advice of all three senates. The Conference was reminded that revisions to the *Statutes* might also be initiated by any of the campus senates.

Respectfully submitted by Joyce Tolliver, USC Liaison to the Senate