

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE
University Senates Conference
(Final; Information)

UC.15.10 Report on the June 25, 2015 May 26, 2015 Meeting of the University Senates Conference (USC) at the Chicago Campus

The Conference membership list for 2014-15 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>

The Conference was joined by President Tim Killeen; Vice President of Academic Affairs Christophe Pierre; Thomas Hardy, Director of University Relations, and Ginny Hudak-Davis, Office of University Relations

The meeting was convened at 10:00 AM and began with an executive session held with President Killeen to discuss the annual performance review of Vice President Pierre. After about 40 minutes, the executive session adjourned and the Conference returned to its regular open session.

MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KILLEEN AND VICE PRESIDENT PIERRE

President Killeen gave the Conference a report on the small strategic planning retreat that had just been held on June 23-24 at Allerton, which was the first step in a university-wide strategic planning process. The June retreat was designed to generate “working hypotheses” to be explored in the larger July Retreat, and during the follow-up to that Retreat, which will include town hall meetings and webinars. The June retreat had two goals: 1) to build the leadership team; 2) to frame out the July Board Retreat event planning. A third goal was to enjoy each other’s company. The University hired a group of expert facilitators to help coordinate the process.

Among other points, the June 23-24 participants discussed student enrollment. The Conference learned that, for fall 2015, the University is seeing record student enrollment and a higher yield, with no increase to tuition. Average ACT scores are being maintained across the three campuses.

The President expressed the desire that the University strategic plan be rooted in those of the campuses, and asked the Conference for ways to include the voices of beginning faculty members, students, and specialized faculty members.

He stated that decisions to be made about our future are not just about the budget, but about who we are and want to be, what kinds of impact we would like to make. He emphasized that the planning must be informed by data, and that the data used in the process would be shared on a website. Pres. Killeen mentioned that meetings with USC had been very helpful in planning the Strategic Planning process.

MEETING WITH THOMAS HARDY, DIRECTOR OF UNIVERSITY RELATIONS, AND GINNY HUDAK-DAVIS, SENIOR ASSOCIATE OFFICER

Mr. Hardy explained that the Office of University Relations has two basic functions, one related to public relations and communications; and the other focused on carrying out the university’s obligation to comply with the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The office is small, with a staff of only six, divided between Chicago and Urbana. According to Mr. Hardy, each campus also has a small group of

faculty representatives to advise the Office. He directed us to the Office website for the current composition of this group (Uillinois.edu/OUR).

Most of our discussion centered on FOIA, how the University enacts the provisions, and what the relevance of FOIA is for faculty members. Among some of the points made by Mr. Hardy about FOIA were:

It doesn't matter where you store public records in your possession, who requests the records, or why the request was made

- Unrecorded phone calls and face to face conversations are not subject to FOIA.
- Documents that no longer exist are not subject to FOIA.
- Personal emails or text messages are subject to FOIA if they pertain to the transaction of University business
- LYNC messages are subject to FOIA
- FOIA does not require that records be created
- USC Chair Chambers suggested that information on FOIA be provided to recipients of FOIA requests.

Discussion arose over the provision of the FOIA law specifying that a "request" must identify the particular public record the requestor seeks"

(<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=85&ChapterID=2>).

Mr. Hardy and Ms. Hudak stated that they would consider a request for all emails produced within a time period to have identified "the particular public record" being sought.

The Conference also discussed how the University would protect the privacy of its employees and their right not to release personal correspondence that does not "pertain to the transaction of public business" (<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=85&ChapterID=2>). Conference members suggested that requests to employees to produce communications in response to FOIA requests be circumscribed by the phrase "pertaining to the transaction of public [or University] business."

In response to a question from the Conference, Mr. Hardy clarified that there is no restriction on faculty members deleting email messages from their accounts.

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

The slate of nominees for chair, vice chair, and committee members was distributed. There were no floor nominations. Nicholas Burbules (Urbana) was elected Chair; Jorge Villegas (UIS) was elected vice-chair; and the Conference elected Meena Rao (UIC), Kouros Mohammadian (UIC), Peter Boltuc (UIS), and Gay Miller (Urbana), to join the Chair and the Vice Chair on the executive committee.

Committee assignments were approved as proposed and may be found at <http://www.usc.uillinois.edu/membership.cfm>

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Chambers summarized some key points he intended to include in his annual report to the Board at their July meeting. He asked Conference members to suggest nominees for participation in the July retreat from among assistant professors and specialized faculty members, as well as students. USC statement on background checks was postponed until the August 2015 meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Joyce Tolliver, USC Liaison to the Senate