In this report I mention all major points on the agenda with the focus on the issues that may be pertinent to UIS. Thanks to UIS, video of the meeting is at http://uishelix2.uis.edu/vod/vod/2013/BOT3713.html

The meeting convened at 8:00 a.m. and immediately went into executive session. The regular session started around 10:00 a.m. (30 minutes behind the schedule).

After Chairman Christopher G. Kennedy’s Opening Remarks and a state song performance President Robert Easter made his comments on the following issues:

1. Sequestration does not affect Pell Grants but does affect many other sources, especially Federal research grants, including those already in progress.
2. Our inflation adjusted funding from the State is at the 1965 level, but we have twice more students.
3. We are applying for an exception to the concealed weapons law (which IL may have to enact by June).
4. UIS student Trustee John W. Tienken was commended for representing UI well in talking, in Washington D.C., to the Congress delegation from IL about sequestration and other issues.

UIUC Chancellor/Vice President Phyllis M. Wise gave extended welcome remarks:

1. UIUC is proud of a $30 million grant towards student scholarships (that needs to be matched to reach $100 million)
2. UIUC takes Diversity issues seriously. If you do not have diverse faculty you have no room for diverse student population:
   a. The Chancellor of UIUC met with all search committees to bring the issue of diversity down to every faculty hire
   b. Focus on mentoring the faculty in underrepresented groups. It is a very expensive proposition to hire and then lose them.
   c. ‘Stealing’ underrepresented faculty from other institutions, if needed
   d. Avoiding minority student siloes in dorms and other venues
3. UIUC is making concrete steps to implement the word-cloud exercise results:
   a. The top concepts mentioned by a representative group of UIUC stakeholders in the conceptual cloud exercise last Fall include (in the order of magnitude): Energy/Environment; Social Equity and Cultural Understanding; Economic Development; Health; Information Technology; Global Leadership
   b. UIUC administration developed a plan to identify the resources, and motivate leadership, deans, donors to look what we can start doing in those areas. This requires also analysis of what we can stop doing to free up the resources.
c. One tangible implementation of those priorities is the new Center for Sustainable Environment.

Trustee Edward L. McMillan presented a report from a recent meeting of the Audit, Budget, Finance and Facilities Committee. This includes the approval of student insurance rates negotiated for UIUC and different rates for UIS.

Trustee Karen Hasara presented a report from a recent meeting of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee to report on summary of meeting. Importantly, Trustee Estrada visited UIS at the request of our Latino/Latina students who felt somewhat isolated.

Vice President/UIUC Chancellor Phyllis M. Wise gave a report on Dashboard Indicators:

a. Lower acceptance rates, especially in the area of out-of-state and international (full tuition paying) students
b. Slow increases among students from underrepresented groups
c. Coordination of scholarship offers with campus visits of prospective students
d. Underrepresented minority graduate students, but this is largely because of a large % of international engineering students, who technically do not count as minorities
e. Increase in transfer students due to 2+2 agreements with Parkland and other community colleges; aggressive attempts at signing more 2+2 agreements (one of the colleges has them with all IL Community Colleges)
f. Financial reasons are the three top reasons for students not to come
g. An excellent rate of return of sophomores (92%)
h. Promoting blended curriculum for freshmen – including online classes – as a way to enhance retention and timely degree completion.
i. Underrepresented groups have 50% 4 year graduation rate (70% 6 year graduation rate)
j. Exploring the option of offering Coursera classes for credit
k. Working with high schools on prep. classes
l. UIUC is grateful to BoT for avoiding large increases in tuition since tuition is not very competitive or socially responsible (at Berkeley students with family income below $80k pay nothing while at UI even those with incomes below $50k pay).
m. UIUC faculty size decreased and there will be intensive hiring, especially in the areas of the grand societal challenges (indicated in the world cloud exercise). At this point not a great faculty student ratio compared to the top 10 institutions.
n. Increasing the number of classes with fewer than 20 students is an important goal.
o. Increasing faculty presence of underrepresented groups: 21% of new faculty hires are from underrepresented groups
p. Working to increase National Academy Memberships; concerted efforts to nominate
q. Excellent NSF grant level but overall grants below average due to low NIH grants (no UIUC medical school)
r. Advancement below the peer group
s. Promoting online classes, in part to take care of AP courses that some students or applicants may not have had a chance to take
Responses from Trustee Kennedy: We should increase support for high merit/high need students.

In the afternoon session, preceded by an opera performance, Dean Bruce Smith gave an impressive presentation on the achievements of the College of Law at UIUC. Ms. Donna McNeely gave the Annual Ethics Report.

Trustee James Montgomery gave a report on UIUC’s Research Center in Singapore, which is operated by a limited liability subsidiary in the US and a Singapore company. UIUC faculty members teach short term courses on a partial faculty time buyout basis. It has student programs and research in engineering, especially computer engineering – primarily interactive digital media and smart grid program. A film about semantic analysis of video and top tracking technology followed.

Dr. Thomas Farrell presented a report from University of Illinois Foundation. He intends for the 7% yearly growth in giving even before the next capital campaign.

Vice President Walter Knorr discussed Financial Indicators. Expecting 5% cuts in State funding (which may translate into a 7% cut if spread over only 7 months). We await the credit rating of UI which would affect the cost of issuing bonds – the rating of the state of Illinois and its pension problems count against us whereas diversification of our business model, including engagement in online education and steady student demand count in our favor.

Trustee Kennedy commented that looking at the budget it seems that elected officials think that education in Illinois is only for the wealthy, and this is a terrible outcome

Dr. Peter Boltuc, UIS, gave the report from Faculty; it was devoted to the value of academic freedom. Boltuc begun by emphasizing a long-standing focus on freedom of UI faculty, and then focused on the role of Larry Golden as the spokesperson of ACLU in the Skokie case. If Constitutional freedom of speech and assembly extends even to the Nazis then academic freedom may not fall behind. He drew a historical picture beginning with the martyrs of academic freedom (Socrates and Giordano Bruno) to Barbarossa who gave academic freedom to the University of Bologna in 1158. It was largely to establish the court of reason to adjudicate between civil and religious authorities, which justifies a role of professors as public intellectuals also today. Hence, academic freedom predates political freedom of speech and is not a derivative of Constitutional provisions. Boltuc ended by reminding of the call by all the campus senates of UI to extend the meaning of academic freedom in the UI Statutes.

Trustee Kennedy commented that all trustees is prepared to support the notions of academic freedom.

The Board Adjourned at about 3:20 p.m.