USC meets monthly to review Senate actions; USC is also advisory to the BOT through the President, to the President, and to other administrative officers. The agenda for the March meeting can be found at [http://www.usc.uillinois.edu/Documents/AGN-0327.13.pdf](http://www.usc.uillinois.edu/Documents/AGN-0327.13.pdf). Guests at the March meeting were President Easter, Vice President Christophe Pierre, and Kappy Laing, Executive Director of Governmental Relations.

I. Remarks from USC Chair. Burbules commented that the university currently faces challenging issues related to the state budget and the future of the UI hospital system. The University is facing budget cuts and has embarked on multi-year budget planning. Burbules emphasized that the university will have to be willing to make tough decisions and that shared governance must play an important role. He also commented that the regulatory environment in which the university operates is becoming more complex both internally and externally. Burbules concluded with remarks about the UIC faculty union and shared governance. He noted it is important to be clear on what constitutes academic policy and the role of shared governance bodies.

II. Meeting with President Easter and Vice President Pierre. President Easter and VPAA Pierre joined the conference for the two-hour morning session. President Easter opened with a statement about the importance of administration and faculty working together to share in the governance of the institution and critical decision-making. He spoke about challenges faced by the hospital, including changing rules for reimbursement and billing as the Affordable Care Act moves us away from a fee for service model towards managed care. This will be implemented over several years. He noted the university relies on the medical school (largest in the country) and excellent programs such as dentistry as educational resources, and said the university needs to find a sustainable funding model.

President Easter said the proposed revision to UI Statutes concerning academic freedom, approved by the three senates, is being reviewed by university lawyers. The President wants to return to this with a group including the faculty who framed the original proposal. He identified two questions he thinks need discussion: the definition of academic staff, and academic codes of conduct / faculty responsibilities.

President Easter also commented on questions from faculty concerning the RIMS 001 communication outlining new procedures for archiving electronic documents including emails that have historical/research value as institutional records. The President noted there has been no change to the rules on intellectual property. Conference members
President Easter also commented on recent questions from the state legislature about textbook costs, which some had seen as an unwelcome intrusion into academic matters. He said that as a public institution it is incumbent upon us to be transparent and to engage with and anticipate needs of the citizenry. VP Pierre commented that data show that the amount students expect to pay for textbooks each year has been flat for some years but is still high.

**Vice President Pierre** outlined a multiyear budget process combining several components: a campus strategic planning exercise asking how each campus will face challenges over the next several years; FY 14 budget tactical planning; on-going review of University Administration; and the academic unit review initiative led by Richard Wheeler. The goal is to sustain academic excellence despite a challenging budget environment. VP Pierre plans two rounds of budget conversations with Chancellors and Provosts. The first defines campus priorities (complete by end of June), and the second focuses on implementation. A high-level budget template has been given to campuses. VP Pierre emphasized the importance of getting faculty involved and noted planning must be driven by the campuses. Conference members commented on the short time-frame. VP Pierre said he is reviewing this with the Chancellors and Provosts.

President Easter commented on recent media statements about UI financial reserves, noting that the reserve is a somewhat “mythical” figure for two reasons. First, it includes $480 million owed us by the state as well as many funds already committed (including grant and other research accounts as well as student health care accounts) but not yet spent. Second, the reserve is already being eaten into by unanticipated expenses including current repairs to the Natural History Building at UIUC. Conference members asked about involvement of faculty in budget and planning. President Easter pointed to the structure of shared governance at UIUC, including a Campus Budget Oversight Committee at the campus level as well as the statutory requirement that college executive committees review college budgets. The President also noted the UI formula for allocating state funds to the three campuses has not changed in a long time, and he anticipates this question will come up.

Bill Adams, Visiting Senior Advisor to the President, and Jason Kosovski, who staffs the UA Review Steering Committee, joined the meeting to provide an overview of the UA Review process. The seven teams are wrapping up their work, and draft reports will be filed by mid-April. Review team leaders will then meet with unit leaders to share their findings and recommendations. Next, draft reports will go to the Steering Committee for review. Finally, the Steering Committee will come up with an overarching set of recommendations. The final report will be public. Information about the teams and process is on the UA Review website along with a link for public comment ([http://www.uillinois.edu/uareview/](http://www.uillinois.edu/uareview/)). The goal of UA review is to establish an on-going process of annual review of administrative units.
Subcommittees of the Conference met over lunch.

III. Meeting with Kappy Laing. Laing joined the conference after lunch to discuss legislative issues affecting the university. The university is closely tracking budget changes in federal funding agencies, pension proposals, and response to the governor’s proposed 4.9% cut to higher education. Earlier discussions about cumbersome procurement rule have led to encouraging conversations with legislators. The university has concerns about August 1 implementation of a new law regarding income to rehired retirees, due to the substantial changes to software and reporting structures needed. Senator Biss has proposed a bill requiring open access to results of research funded by the public. Biss is revising the bill in response to comments about copyright and other issues. Laing also said the university is having conversations with legislators about having university campuses exempted from concealed carry laws. Conference members asked about opportunities for faculty to contribute to government relations work. Laing said GR has a faculty advisory council, and welcomes conversations about issues faculty would like to be active on. She noted the great impact of SGA lobby days.

IV. Business Meeting. Chair Burbules provided an update on the proposed revisions to the Statutes and General Rules initiated by the BOT this academic year. This will be carried over to next year. The Conference will forward a proposal that the USC should be able to initiate revisions to the Statutes (OT-296) to the Senates for consideration. There was a brief discussion of implications of the Open Meetings Act. The USC Statutes and Governance Committee will draft a rule for electronic participation. There was a discussion of guests to invite to future meetings, followed by brief campus updates and reports from USC committee chairs and representatives on external committees. A Pre-and Post-Award Research Money Policy group that reviewed software products for handling grant accounts last year decided against purchasing existing software and plans to develop software at the university. A review of the TEM system is planned.