

## **Report for the Board of Trustee's Meeting (March 10, 2010)**

I was the UIS faculty observer at the U of I Board of Trustee's meeting in Urbana on March 10, 2010. The Board held several open meetings of their committees the day before on March 9. At the invitation of VP Rao and Provost Berman, I attended the meeting for the BOT Academic and Student Affairs committee to participate in a presentation on the importance of academic sabbaticals. This presentation was timed to correspond with the annual approval of sabbaticals at this BOT meeting (regular agenda item #8). The presentation covered workload expectations on faculty, the kinds of research that faculty do and the fruits that sabbaticals bear for the University. The presentation was very well received. Provost Berman was invited to give an abbreviated version of the presentation to the full BOT the next day.

A group of ten or so faculty, mostly from the University Senates Conference attended the committee meeting in the public gallery. As part of the meeting Trustee Hassara (who chairs the committee) made a point of acknowledging the faculty present and introducing them to her fellow Board members.

The evening of March 9, there was a reception attended by several hundred people with a Pecha Kucha presentation highlighting selected aspects of the Urbana campus. After the reception, I was invited to join the BOT members and University Administrators for dinner and bowling at the Illini Union. I am sorry to report that the faculty did not do very well bowling but in our defense, several of the Trustees were ringers.

The BOT meeting began with roll call shortly after 8am the next morning (March 10). All of the trustees were present, except the governor. The Board immediately moved into executive session to discuss personnel and legal matters. The faculty observers retired across the hall to the room where we had breakfast. Other than bowling, there was not a lot of direct interaction between the faculty and the trustees. However, there were several good conversations among the faculty on the issues of the day and sharing how each campus has been fairing with the budget crisis. These exchanges have helped forge a shared identity for us as U of I faculty. This, to me, is one of the best indirect benefits of attending these meetings. A cross-campus united faculty strengthens our relationship with the BOT and the University Administration.

At 9:30 am the meeting was called back into public session. Interim Chancellor Bob Easter gave a welcome to the Urbana campus. He highlighted two projects that UIS might be interested in learning more about as potential points of common interest and synergy with the Urbana campus. The first is the East St Louis Action Research Project (<http://eslarp.illinois.edu/>) which is a service learning project focused on urban renewal in East St Louis. The second was a new project at the Urbana library that allows people to scan the contents of books directly to a thumb drive rather than traditional Xeroxing.

After the Interim Chancellor's welcome President Ikenberry gave his report. He told the Board that he has been spending a lot of his time in Springfield lobbying the legislature. He believes that a consensus on the budget crisis is "coalescing." He said that the governor's proposed budget has a 6% reduction in the appropriation for the U of I. He explained his reversal on his opposition to legislation granting the University short-term borrowing authority. Initially he saw this initiative as the equivalent of being handed a shovel to continue to dig in our already "generous" hole. However after talking to lawmakers he changed his opinion of the measure. He feels now that it may become necessary to ensure the University's long-term survival.

The President reported that the U of I Foundation is 82% toward its \$2 billion campaign goal. He emphasized that the completion of this campaign would represent a 75% growth in the University's endowment.

The President noted that the state of Illinois is a finalist in the federal government's "Race to the Top" (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop>) education initiative. He noted that this was due in no small part to U of I involvement and the strong scientific support brought to the methodology in that proposal by the involvement of research faculty on the Urbana campus.

The President reiterated his vision for the U of I developing an accelerated 3-year online baccalaureate degree option. He cited that this would be attractive to students coming in with extensive AP credit. He also noted that summer session is an underutilized resource. He sees this as an area where synergy between the campuses could be achieved. There is also the possibility for developing online AP-like courses for high school students. These ideas sparked some discussion among the trustees. Montgomery, Olliver, Strobel, and McMillian in particular seemed interested in exploring the possibilities. Chancellor Ringeisen reminded the BOT of the proposed but unfunded e-learning initiative in relation to these thoughts.

After the President's report there was a quick break followed by a report from the Finance Committee chaired by Trustee McMillan. As part of his report he informed the board about state procurement legislation that is going to cost the University a sizable amount of money and resources to implement. The report also included presentations by VP Knor on the budget and AVP Bass on facilities.

VP Knor's presentation included many of the facts and figures that we saw previously Provost Berman's presentation to the UIS Senate on February 12 ([http://www.uis.edu/campussenate/docs/documents/2010-02-12\\_CS\\_Minutes\\_appvd.pdf](http://www.uis.edu/campussenate/docs/documents/2010-02-12_CS_Minutes_appvd.pdf)). To update those figures, the state is currently \$484 million behind on what it owes the University. That figure includes \$18 million in grants and \$28 million in MAP funds. One of the distressing facts that the VP highlighted was that it took the state two months into this fiscal year to pay the appropriation for last fiscal year. VP Knor believes this could happen again and we

should prepare ourselves not to receive a sizable portion of the promised appropriation ever.

One bright spot in this year's budget is that utility expenditures have been cut by around \$50 million dollars due mostly to the pre-purchasing of natural gas. This brings us back to the 2005 level of spending on utilities.

VP Knor also summarized the University's current debt. The debt for the system is about \$1.7 billion. Nearly all of that is accounted for by debt service on completed capital projects and certificates of participation on continuing and planned capital projects. The UIS campus portion of that is under \$100 million and mostly accounted for by debt service on student housing. This is considered "good" debt because it represents an investment in our infrastructure. The University as a matter of best practice wants to avoid borrowing money to pay operating expenses and has not had to do so up to this point.

Since Information Technology (IT) expenditures has been part of the discussion for reducing administrative costs, VP Knor also presented a quick overview of the IT budget. That budget totals \$202 million for all three campuses. UIS accounts for about 2% of that. University central administration accounts for about 20% of the IT budget largely because they have borne the costs of Banner. The remainder is split between the other two campuses. Breaking it down by type of expenditure, about 44% of the total IT budget is personnel with software, hardware, and telecom accounting for another 40%.

Next there were two presentations from the BOT Hospital committee that were mainly meant to be educational and inform the Board about how the UIC hospital fits into the University's mission.

At noon the Board adjourned for a working lunch and executive session. I had more fruitful discussions with faculty from the other campuses over lunch. The Board resumed the public meeting at about 1:30 pm with a presentation by the BOT Academic and Student Affairs committee chaired by Trustee Hassara. This included a presentation informing the Board about the sabbaticals before them for approval (presented by Provost Berman) and a presentation on faculty diversity by VP Rao.

As a whole, the U of I system leads the Big Ten in representation of women and minorities on its faculty. It is worth noting that even with our smaller absolute numbers that the diversity of the UIS campus compares very well with the other campuses. VP Rao noted that there have been efforts on the other two campuses to educate hiring committees about hidden biases they might have. The University also provides incentives to help build a faculty who's diversity mirrors or exceeds national averages by discipline. The system also has programs to encourage diversity among our graduate students and post-docs to ensure that there are more women and minorities in the "pipeline" to become faculty in the future. Trustee

Oliver commented at the end of the presentation that he would like to hear more about these initiatives at a later meeting.

A presentation by the BOT Governance committee, chaired by Trustee Strobel followed. Trustee Strobel mentioned that the committee had been discussing ethics training, faculty governance issues, the presidential search, and future succession planning for high-level administrative positions. Donna McNeely made a presentation on the implementation of the online ethics training. She proudly reported that the U of I has 99.9% compliance. This coming year, the University has contracted to provide online ethics training for all the other public universities around the state.

At 2:30 pm the Board commenced formal consideration of the agenda items. President Ikenberry took an opportunity to comment on item 6a which concerned accepting the resignation of Chancellor Ringeisen (<http://www.uillinois.edu/trustees/agenda/March%202010,%202010/006a%20mar%20UIS-Chanc-revised.pdf>). At the request of Chancellor Ringeisen, this item had been revised after the morning executive session to include only the provisions for separation made at the time of his appointment.

Trustee Carrol asked if there were any minority contractors in the contracts being considered on the roll call agenda. AVP Bess replied “no.” Trustee Carrol requested that future contracts should be summarized to clearly include information useful to assessing the University’s efforts to contract with businesses run by women and minorities. Trustee Montgomery commented that the University needs to investigate why the number of contracts awarded to minority run companies is down. Trustee McMillian offered that the committee he chairs (Finance, etc.) could take up that matter.

The regular agenda passed unanimously. The roll call agenda also passed unanimously, with an abstention by Trustee Montgomery on the settlement in item #29. Trustee Carrol voted a “reluctant yes” on the roll-call, presumably over her expressed disappointment regarding the minority contractor issue.

Regular agenda item #8 (approved unanimously) was the sabbatical leaves for 2010-2011. At UIS, Professors Siddequee, Li, Brecklin, Williams, and Mooney were granted one-semester sabbaticals. Professor Graf was granted a year-long sabbatical. During the Academic and Student Affairs Committee meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup> the Board members in attendance reported great interest in learning about Prof. Mooney’s proposed research to study legislative decision making in the Illinois State Legislature as an insight into how to best perform their duties.

After the passage of the agenda Professor Nick Burbules (UIUC) addressed the Board as a member of the University Senates Conference on behalf of the faculty. This addresses was relayed to the campus faculty by Professor Tih-Fen Ting in an email on March 11. The point of the address was to communicate to the Board that

the faculty represented by our leadership should be considered an ally and a partner in working through the current budget crisis. It was conveyed that we stand ready to make necessary sacrifices and work to ensure a promising future for the University. This message was very well received by the Board. In response, Trustee Tortelero emphatically stated that faculty should have a seat at the “table” and be considered partners with the BOT. Chairman Kennedy voiced his acceptance of the principle and said that the BOT should discuss how best to include faculty in the University’s decision-making process. The faculty among the faculty in the room was one of pride and great optimism

The public comment section followed. Six individuals addressed the board:

- Jerry George – (UIUC student) Voiced concerns about diversity issues and how they have been handled by academic affairs on the UIUC campus.
- Roberto Martel – (UIUC student, president of Students for Chief Illiniwek) Expressed concerns that university staff and administration have been actively suppressing and disrupting the activities of Students for Chief Illinawik.
- Mitch Hysler – (UIUC student) Advertised the Explore AIES event sponsored by the UIUC School of Agriculture.
- Gavin Raycamper – (UIUC student) Advertised the upcoming Engineering open house on the UIUC campus.
- Ronald B. Jackson - (UIUC professor, Chair of African American Studies) Thanked the BOT for creating his department and updated them on their progress.
- Thomas Porter – (UIUC academic professionals) Advocated for more involvement of UPAC (academic professionals organization on the UIUC campus) in university governance.

Chancellor Ringeisen made some comments about his impending retirement and the progress he has seen at UIS. The Board gave him a standing ovation to recognize his service to the University.

Chancellor Paula Allen-Mears announced that she just learned that UIC would be given a \$25 million gift dedicated to a new center for the study of sickle cell anemia.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:34 pm

Respectfully submitted,  
John C. Martin  
March 25, 2010