

Fall 11-19-2008

Senate Meeting, November 19, 2008

Academic Senate
Illinois State University

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Academic Senate Minutes
Wednesday, November 19, 2008
(Approved)

Call to Order

Senate Chairperson Dan Holland called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Senate Secretary Susan Kalter called the roll and declared a quorum.

Approval of Minutes of October 22, 2008

Motion XXXX-29: By Senator Borg, seconded by Senator Thornton, to approve the Academic Senate Minutes of October 22, 2008. The minutes were unanimously approved.

IBHE-FAC Report (Professor Lane Crothers, IBHE-FAC Representative)

Professor Lane Crothers: We met last at Salk Valley Community College at Dixon, Illinois. We discussed the American Diploma Project. It is an attempt to try to enhance graduation rates by looking at the curriculum in the junior high schools and high schools. This was the first I had ever heard of it. Apparently, there was a big meeting in Bloomington concerning this item on the same date as the IBHE-FAC meeting.

At our meeting, discussions proceeded at pace regarding budgets and other matters. A number of the representatives, and at this point it is only rumor, said that they had been told that 5-6% cuts were likely on their campuses this year; that is a midyear take-back of money. Then there is a rumored projection of 10% cuts next year. I do know that the Governor made some interesting comments yesterday, so perhaps there will be more details, than rumor, on this in time.

At Spoon River Community College, apparently an ISBE, Illinois State Board of Education, initiative has been discussed called the Career Clusters Initiative. The idea is to begin the process of tracking, or at least think about tracking, ninth graders into both academic and nonacademic directions. The idea is that if you begin to test and track people and get them the kind of curriculum they need, they can then get to community colleges and universities without needing any remedial or other work. On the other hand, the question is whether or not if you take a test in the ninth grade, you have your entire destiny laid out before you. They were told that there were 16 clusters of careers and 81 pathways that were mapped out.

A couple of taskforces were formed within the IBHE-FAC, one to look at issues regarding the educational experience, quality, etc., and the other to look at the kind of budgetary and other concerns that we, as faculty, face. I am chair of that subcommittee. We are beginning to work on some ways of helping people understand the broader context of higher education funding and implications. We might be able to add to the equation an understanding of this in a global context. If anyone here has any particular insights or knowledge of global higher education funding and investment, please send me an e-mail (alcroth@ilstu.edu) because we need that kind of data. The truth of the matter is that students are going to be entering a global competition that most of us did not face. Students are going to be facing a globalized world and the notion that they can come through a casual education preparation and succeed in this global context is probably not true. So we are trying to expand the conversation beyond the obvious short-term difficulties of the state's and the nation's budget problems.

Chairperson's Remarks

Senator Holland: Continuing my theme for the year, I would like to congratulate everyone on a fabulous election. We don't have a huge agenda right now, but as people get their work done, the agendas will get longer and longer, so hopefully everyone will not try to have everything during the final two meetings, which ran rather long last year.

Student Body President's Remarks

Senator Mason: At our last meeting, I mentioned our "Pack the House" *Dracula* event. That occurred right after the last Senate meeting. It turned out to be very successful. All of the 250 tickets were given out at least a week before the event. Everyone came and we did fill the house, so we are very happy about that. Last week, Vernetta Cail, our Secretary of Diversity Affairs, lead our first Diversity Week. We did that with the Association of Residence Halls, Black Student Union, PRIDE, and Association of Latin-American Students. That happened Monday through Friday of last week and that turned out really great, too. Last night, we conducted our Safety Walk with Michael Zajac and his office. We walked around campus and looked for potential safety problems, such as lighting. We are going to compile a report to hand off about that walk soon. Our senators have been doing constituent-contact events throughout the past month. The off-campus senators were at a football game getting recycling feedback from students. Our on-campus senators worked with Campus Dining and took food over to Hewitt because they no longer have a dining center. I think that the students there really appreciated that. Our graduate senators have been meeting with graduate students to reestablish the Graduate Student Association. Our underrepresented senators have been meeting with their constituent RSOs. Also, we are going to be replacing a few of our student senators during winter break. There are a couple of people who can't come back next semester, so we had to have a couple of internal elections. Matt Spialek was elected as our new President of the Assembly and Jodi Sullivan as our new Secretary of the Assembly.

Senator Stewart: In your off-campus safety walk, did you happen to go by the new parking deck in uptown Normal where they have that yield to pedestrians sign?

Senator Mason: No, we did not go that way. We went up Willow toward Linden. Then we walked down Linden over to Beaufort and then down Beaufort to the railroad tracks. Then we walked up to the parking lot where the mugging happened a few weeks ago. This was the first time that we did the Safety Walk and we are going to try to expand it to other areas next time.

Senator Stewart: That yield sign right there on College is an accident waiting to happen.

Administrators' Remarks:

President Al Bowman

President Bowman: You probably saw news reports yesterday about the Governor's press release on the state's budget deficit for FY09. Through the first third of the year, overall state revenues were down about \$406 million and the October revenue showed a pretty large drop compared to a year ago. There is a little bit of good news. Gross personal income tax receipts were up 3% last month and, surprisingly, gross corporate income taxes gained a small amount in October as well. There is an awful lot of bad news out there, not the least of which is that the projected overall state budget deficit for this fiscal year is \$2.8 billion.

The Governor's press release is kind of interesting. There was a meeting with legislative leaders and the Governor's staff on Monday. They basically agreed that the deficit would be in the \$2.5-2.8 billion range. They decided to get back together on Tuesday afternoon and discuss it further. Between the meeting on Monday and Tuesday morning, the Governor, without talking to anyone in the General Assembly, issued the press release that laid out his proposed mechanisms for dealing with the deficit. Needless to say, it did not land well in Springfield.

There will be hearings on the budget tomorrow morning and we will offer testimony. There is probably very little chance that the General Assembly will grant the Governor the kind of authority he is asking for, which would include the authority to hold back 8% from this year's spending authority. There is a lot of fear in Springfield that he would redirect those revenues to other places and, of course, an 8% cut in our appropriation, which this year was \$85 million, is pretty big. An 8% cut would equal \$6.5 million. There is not a lot of worry that the Governor is going to be given carte blanche by the General Assembly, but it is clear that the economy in Illinois, and nationally, is very weak and probably will weaken further.

It is difficult to envision a scenario in which we would get through this year and next year without some sort of impact on our budget, but we have been given no indication of what that might be or when that might happen. There are an awful lot of rumors out there and we are listening as closely as possible. As soon as we know something, we will certainly communicate that to the campus.

Senator Van der Laan: Do you have any particular, concrete concerns that you are able to share with us right now that relate to the national and state financial crisis?

President Bowman: No, not in terms of what kind of impact that would have on our bottom line. The appropriated part of our budget has been dwindling year after year; that part of the budget is down to 25%. The positive news is that our tuition revenue is very strong, in part, because of the Truth in Tuition legislation. We have raised our rates to offset some of the losses from the state. We can't live without the state's \$85 million, but I think that since we have been flexible and we have been very conservative with our spending, we can deal with a small cut without a lot of pain. Of course, if it is bigger, we will have to figure out how to make it work. We have been going through this year after year. We received a small increase this year, but during the first two years of my presidency, we had to figure out how to get through some pretty Draconian cuts. The silver lining is that as a result of some of the changes that we made in the early 2000s, we are a lot stronger financially than we were then.

Senator Wang: Given the reports on the budget situation, do you anticipate any impact on the midyear salary increments?

President Bowman: Faculty and staff salaries are one of our highest priorities, so we are going to do everything possible to protect that. We will also protect the core academic functions and, whatever we have to deal with, protect that core admission. We have made up some ground in closing the gaps between our salaries and our national peers and I don't want to lose any ground. I think that we have an opportunity to actually make up additional ground, because, in some ways, the budgets in other states are even worse. California, for example, has a \$28 billion deficit. My goal is to get us through the midyear raise process. If we have something significant happen between now and then, we will have to step back and think about it, but there are no plans to stop it.

The Illinois Senate elected a new president today. I have not heard who won. The two leading contenders are people who we could easily live with, James Clayborne from Southern Illinois and John Cullerton from Chicago. They are very bright and understand higher ed. Whoever takes that seat will bring a different dynamic than what Emil Jones brought to the table. Senator Jones was very close to the Governor and, while we had a very good relationship with him, some of the moves he made were not necessarily very good for overall higher ed budgets. We will see how that plays out, but I think that things will be better going forward.

In the U.S. Senate, they also held elections and Senator Durbin retained his seat as the Majority Whip. The

Governor has not acted on a replacement for President-Elect Obama's seat. Some of the names that are thought to be in the running include people that we know well, Jesse Jackson, Jr., who funded our "pipeline" project, Tammy Duckworth, Gutierrez from Chicago and a couple of others. They are all people that we could easily work with.

Finally, the applications for next year are very strong, not only in terms of numbers, but also in terms of quality. We clearly have moved into an even better position with high school seniors. Additionally, all of the building projects that are underway will proceed without any delay. The student fitness building project was bonded; we have the proceeds and, unless the federal government goes bankrupt, we have nothing to worry about because all of that money is in treasuries.

Provost Sheri Everts

Provost Everts: I would like to add to the good news that the President mentioned about applications. Retention of our large freshman class seems to be very good at the close of advance registration. 95.1% have registered for spring to date, versus 93.6% last year, which was an incredible rate, itself. The freshmen are also generating 7.8% more credit hours.

I will update you on the dean searches. Congratulations to (Interim) Dean Jeff Wood, the search committee and all those involved in the search. The four CAST dean finalists were very impressed with the faculty, staff and students. Also ongoing is the College of Business dean search. The search committee has recommended three finalists and those candidates will be on campus in December. I thank you in advance for that. Finally, the Mennonite College of Nursing dean search committee letters went out today. That search committee has been formed and we still hope to have the advertisement ready before the holiday break.

Vice President of Student Affairs Steve Adams - Absent

Vice President of Finance and Planning Steve Bragg - Absent

Committee Reports:

Academic Affairs Committee

Senator Stewart: The committee met this evening and we are putting the final touches on the university policy on dress codes that will move to the Senate Executive Committee for our next meeting. We looked at (proposed) ten-year limits on prerequisite courses and should have something to Exec by the next meeting, so it should come to the Senate early next semester. We looked at a proposal to drop the "WP", "WF" and just denote "W" as the indicator for the withdrawal from a course/or courses. That will be coming to the Senate early next semester. We looked at undergraduate proficiency exams. That also will be coming up next semester. Additionally, we looked at the policy for the sale and solicitation of academic materials. That should be going to Exec for the next meeting.

Administrative Affairs and Budget Committee

Senator Kalter: We met tonight and had a very informative, collaborative meeting with Provost Everts, Jan Murphy and Kay Moss about the Academic Impact Fund, where it's going and where it's been. We are probably going to extend that conversation, so don't expect anything yet. We do have a policy that is going to be coming forward. We approved the changes to resident halls' alcohol policy, so we will be sending that to Exec tonight. We also talked a little about getting the Presidential Commentary going.

Faculty Affairs Committee

Senator Borg: The committee discussed a number of the issues that had been held over, in one case, for six

years, on the committee. We are making some observations to the Executive Committee. For example, the charge that we had dealing with childcare (and eldercare) has partly been dealt with, thanks to Dean McGuire and others, but there remain a couple of questions that we are asking some guidance on. There is one significant issue that we are going to be dealing with over the course of the next two meetings having to do with a discrepancy between policy and procedures in two different documents that are part of the university. We will be reporting on that probably early next semester.

Planning and Finance Committee

Senator Fazel: This semester, the committee has been exploring the possibility of offering courses during the winter break and also additional courses during the summer, courses in addition to those we have now that are supported by the Office of the President. Jonathan Rosenthal, the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management and Academic Services, was our guest tonight. He shared his opinion with us and answered some of our questions regarding these possibilities.

Rules Committee

Senator Solberg: We met tonight and the first order of business was to welcome a new senator, Todd Leigh, to our committee. In addition to that, we discussed the (proposed) Milner Bylaws revisions, which will be an Information Item shortly.

Information Item:

10.09.08.02 Milner Library Bylaws – As Revised By Milner Library (Rules Committee)

Senator Solberg: Last year, the bylaws of the Milner Library Faculty Council had some revisions that were approved by the Academic Senate, specifically, on February 20, 2008. There was one additional minor revision that the Council wanted to make and that would involve Article IV, as it relates to membership. The bylaws currently require that library faculty must have been full-time faculty members at ISU for at least one year prior to serving on the Council. The proposed revision would remove the one-year requirement in an attempt to open up the opportunity for other faculty members to serve on the Council. We discussed this and it was unanimously approved by the Rules Committee.

Senator Holland: I have one question purely because the text is in italics. It says that the dean of the library serves as an ex-officio. Is this a voting or non-voting ex-officio?

Senator Borg: It is stated in the line above it.

Senator Holland: Ok, I see in the previous line that the dean is a voting member. I know that we needed to go through some of the older documents and specifically state whether the ex-officios were voting or nonvoting.

Senator Borg: I don't object to the issue particularly, but was there any reason given why a year's or a semester's residency was deemed unnecessary?

Senator Lonbom: The numbers are down for library faculty—not because we can't find faculty, but because the positions have not been approved. I think that we are down at least 12 faculty, so we are just opening up the opportunity for new faculty members to serve, as well as trying to balance the workload.

Senator Borg: I assumed that that was the case and this is the time to make people aware that the faculty numbers are down in the library. We need to remedy that eventually.

Honorary Degree Recipient Recommendation (President Bowman)***Executive Session:***

The Illinois Open Meetings Act, Section 5, ILCS 120/2, Section C, 1, allows for closed meetings to consider “The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body.”

Motion XXXX-30: By Senator Stewart, seconded by Senator Thompson, to move into Executive Session. The motion was unanimously approved. The Senate conducted its business in closed session and returned to open session.

Adjournment

Motion XXXX-31: By Senator Borg, seconded by Senator Lonbom, to adjourn. The motion was unanimously approved.