

Faculty Senate  
March 18, 2008

President's report

In my brief tenure as faculty senate president, I have come to more greatly appreciate the importance of the faculty's voice in providing insight and input on university decisions, of listening carefully to administration, students, staff, and my fellow colleagues among the faculty, to know when to raise a critical voice and when to fall in line. To put it simply – how to effectively engage in shared governance.

These lessons have been well honed in the past few weeks. Shortly before the February BOT meeting, reports were released that the President's Office was asking the Board to approve raises of up to 27% for reassigned staff in the president's office. Later it was revealed that these reassignments were the result of a restructuring of the President's office to more directly serve university interests and to reduce overall operating costs. Nonetheless I was concerned with the apparent lack of human resources and affirmative action oversight in the re-development of some of these positions, and the lack of open search processes to fill these positions. After discussing the issue with the executive council, I raised these concerns at the BOT meeting. I then followed up with a visit to the President's office to get input from the President for these position changes and to convey our concern that HR decisions at the President's Office should follow the same procedures as required by the rest of the University. Both President Poshard and Vice-President Haller agreed that such processes should be and will be instituted in the future.

Then late last week, as many of you know, the President requested that the constituency heads meet with him at the Stone Center on Monday morning. Here he explained that, due to serious performance concerns, he was placing Chancellor Trevino on administrative leave pending the outcome of a legal process. We were not given many details about the specific concerns, but he reassured the constituent heads that he had tried everything in his power to try to work with the Chancellor to help him transition into his role here at SIUC. We also learned that the Chancellor will have an opportunity to respond to the President's concerns after which the President will decide whether or not to formally reassign him. We were also told that because a legal process has been put in place that we cannot discuss the particular issues surrounding the President's action otherwise we may jeopardize the outcome of this action.

We are told that until this matter is resolved that we cannot discuss matters such as new search, interim positions and the like. I have asked Provost Rice to say as much as he is able about his role in keeping both his office and the chancellor's office functioning during these times. I have also invited the President to be here to answer your questions to the best of his ability under the circumstances.

In sum, I believe that the faculty has the right to know the basis of decisions made about the Chancellor and we should not only be informed of any future actions in this regard but should be a member of the body that deliberates on these matters, and I will continue to push for that. However, I also believe that for the meantime, it is necessary to get in step with the process that is in place and work together as a united community to get us through these next few weeks.