

Faculty Senate President's Year End Report

April 26, 2011

Dear SIUC Faculty and Senators:

It has been a privilege and honor to serve as the Senate President for the year 2010-11 and as a Senator from the College of Engineering for 6 years.

This term has been productive, rewarding, and challenging for SIUC Faculty and our Administration. On behalf of SIUC faculty, I attended the Chancellor's Executive Committee meetings, Board of Trustees meetings, met with administration on a regular basis, and represented the faculty at many other on-campus and off-campus meetings.

Of all the senate committees, the Undergraduate Education and Policy Committee (UEPC) continued to be the busiest committee of the Senate. This term the Senate acted on over 30 resolutions brought forward by UEPC, including approval of revised program review overview procedures, the slate of internal and external reviewers for several programs, and approval of the motion by the Core Curriculum Executive Council for the student success course to become a Core Curriculum requirement. I would like to recognize the exemplary work of UEPC committee members under the leadership of Senator Lisabeth DiLalla.

At the beginning of this term, the Senate expressed a desire to work with the administration to establish an overload policy, streamline offering of the off-campus credit bearing programs, and set the direction of offering distance learning and online courses. Under the leadership of Senators Lisa Brooten and Jyotsna Kapur, the Faculty Status and Welfare Committee (FSWC) critically reviewed the Distance Education Steering Committee Report, Distance Learning Restructuring Plan, Overload Policy, Code of Conduct, and Code of Ethics. The Senate discussed the committee's recommendations and forwarded them to the administration for consideration. I am hoping that the administration will adopt the recommendations submitted by the Senate. Approval of a resolution honoring Professors David Gilbert and Omar Trinidad and celebrating our faculty's commitment to academic freedom, integrity, and service to the community was well received by the faculty.

We started this Senate term amidst budgetary challenges. Discussions during many of the Senate meetings revolved around budget shortfall and enrollment challenges. The Fall faculty meeting provided an open forum to discuss the effect of budget cuts on academics. Several new terms, such as unpaid administrative closures, furloughs, cash flow, structural budget, etc., were introduced and discussed. During discussions on these topics, the Senate and administration were reminded about the unique shared governance structure at SIUC in which three major constituencies, i.e., Faculty Senate, Faculty Association, and Graduate Council, have defined roles as per the Memorandum of Understanding established in 1999. Therefore, all discussions related to contract, wages and working conditions, administrative closures, and furloughs were referred to the Faculty Associations.

The University has seen significant turnover in the top level administrative positions in recent years. I started my term as the Senate President with a strong conviction that this term the Senate would not have to deal with this virus. However, resignations by Provost Minish

and Interim Engineering Dean Viswanathan once again reminded us about the persistent nature of this virus. I believe that the role played by the Senate on this issue has compromised the Senate's authority and its obligation to shared governance at SIUC. I would like to remind us that the Faculty Senate is a major constituency group, not just another committee. It is empowered to act as an agent for the University faculty and is charged with the responsibility of encouraging and facilitating active and effective faculty involvement in policy determination and decision-making, particularly in all academic units at all levels within the university.

“Shared governance promotes academic excellence,” is our new slogan, and it clearly defines the role of Faculty Senate. I believe that shared governance can only be effective when decisions are made collectively by respectfully sharing responsibility. I am pleased that our administration has made student recruitment and retention its top priority. However, I am concerned that the Senate did not have the opportunity to provide critical review of the major restructuring plan that led to the creation of a University College. It is my opinion that the Senate should have taken the lead role in reviewing the establishment of the University College. I respectfully disagree with those who believe that discussions related to Saluki First Year, which were heavily focused on establishing a Saluki First Year course, constituted the Senate's involvement or approval of the creation of University College. The desire to “move towards a University College-type model” was first mentioned in the Senate meeting by Provost Rice on October 12, 2010 and the plan was on the Board of Trustees agenda for approval at February 2011 meeting. I urge the administration to work closely with the Senate for developing any plans which involve students' educational experiences. This will cultivate a stronger partnership and sense of ownership among the faculty leading to successful implementation of plans. Senators always stand ready to provide their input even at short notice.

As a Department Chair and a member of the SIUC administrative team, occasionally I have had to remind myself that my role as a Senator is to represent the SIUC faculty. It is my opinion that in order for SIUC faculty to be a true and meaningful partner in the shared governance structure, the word “Faculty” in the Faculty Senate's name needs to be emphasized. Yes, everyone on campus holding a faculty rank can be considered a faculty member; but the faculty members with administrative appointments have many other avenues through which they can be a part of University governance. Based on the first-hand experience I gained as Faculty Senate President while serving as a Department Chair, I believe that senators should be elected by and from those faculty members who have no administrative appointment. In order to implement this, change in the Faculty Senate Operating paper is needed. According to the current operating paper of the Faculty Senate, any change to the operating paper must first be approved by the Faculty Senate before sending a special referendum to the faculty for a vote. This issue was brought forward for the Senate's approval a few years ago, but was rejected by the Senate. Since this issue involves defining who should serve on the Senate, I urge the Senators to approve a special referendum and let SIUC faculty decide whether or not to make a change in the operating paper which would allow only faculty members with no administrative appointments to represent them on the SIUC Faculty Senate.

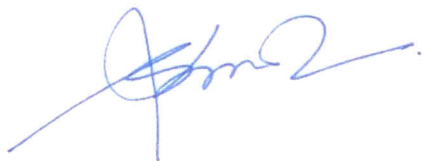
I also would like to urge SIUC faculty to take a more active part in campus governance. Decisions made at various levels affect everyone associated with this great institution. Voting turnout for Senate elections in most colleges has been poor at best. I strongly encourage faculty members to pay attention to the Senate agendas, minutes of the meetings, and how your senators are voting on various resolutions. Faculty members can and must influence important outcomes by providing regular input to your Senators or Senate Officers.

Finally, I have openly expressed my concerns about the tense climate that currently exists at SIUC. We are standing on a slippery slope. We are going to rise or fall together, irrespective of who is right or wrong. Mutual respect is as important as joint sacrifice. Passion, not position, is needed to move ahead. This is not the time to establish authority. During my first meeting with Chancellor Cheng as the Faculty Senate President, I expressed a strong desire and need to eliminate the “us versus them” mentality from our campus. Therefore, once again, I urge the administration, constituency groups, and unions to work together and address all outstanding issues without any delay.

In closing, I would like to thank the College of Engineering faculty for giving me the opportunity to serve on the Senate, SIUC Administration for their support during my Presidency, and the Senators for their co-operation. I thoroughly enjoyed working with the Executive Council members, Senator Gary Apgar (Vice President), Senator Mary Lamb (Secretary), Senator Lisabeth DiLalla (UEPC), Senators Lisa Brooten and Jyotsna Kapur (FSWC), Senator Gerald Spittler (Governance Committee), Senator Om Agrawal (Committee on Committees), and Senator Allan Karnes (Budget Committee). This report would be incomplete without recognizing the outstanding work of Becky Armstrong who not only made my work more manageable, but provided much needed guidance on several critical occasions. Becky, a big thank you from the bottom of my heart! You are the best.

Just remember, today will turn into yesterday tomorrow, today’s happenings will become history tomorrow, and we will only be remembered for today’s work.

Respectfully submitted with Saluki Pride,



Sanjeev Kumar

SIUC Faculty Senate President 2010-11

Motivating one student at a time will change the world in no time