

### Faculty Senate Report-July 2007

Last Fall I brought to the Senate a draft of a report that called for changes in Teacher preparation. That draft was adopted by the Council and has been embraced by the IBHE and the Board Staff. I think it is important to realize this idea is somewhat unstoppable. We may not feel it so much here in Southern Illinois, but in the Chicago Public School system, poor teacher quality and the inability of teachers to pass basic content tests in the subjects they teach has gotten an inordinate amount of attention.

Politically, Board Staff see this as an opportunity to align higher ed with K-12, as P-16 or P-20. If positioned correctly, higher ed could gain access to a more lucrative funding sources. It is hard to find a legislator who is opposed to better funding for K-12, but for some reason, funding for higher ed is not such an easy sell.

This Fall Board Staff will be asking select regional universities (like us) to host a regional meeting on improving teacher quality. Ideally the Provost and Deans of the Colleges of Education, COLA and Science will host and coordinate the invitation and participation of stakeholders. Once the regional meetings take place, two or three larger regional meetings will take place in the spring, then later a statewide meeting to flesh out specific recommendations will take place. Hopefully there will be dollars out there for adopting the eventual recommendations.

Budget Issues: It is a mess. The governor and House Speaker Madigan are battling. President of the Senate Emil Jones is aligned with the governor. As a result, nothing is getting done. The governor maintains he will veto an income or sales tax increase. There might be enough legislative votes to override a veto of either SB or House bill 750 (tax swap), but as long as Jones is in the governor's camp, the bill will never get called in the senate. The governor's GRT proposal was unanimously defeated on a house resolution earlier. Each day the governor is calling a special session, but the legislature opens and closes the sessions in a bout 30 minutes.

There is even disagreement about where we are at-At last count about 900 million in the red. As of right now we are operating on a one month budget. Will they pass another? Good question-There is some momentum for shutting down the state to force a solution.

Possibilities-Big cuts with no revenue increases. A pass on the pension payments-and flat budgets. Some type of gaming expansion-And flat budgets. Some type of tax increase, with moderate budget increases (our 2%). But I have no idea what is going to happen. The whole thing is crazy.